

Love - John 15:12-17
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

To be loved and loved, this is one of the central needs of the heart. It's why we watch chick flicks and our culture gets so interested in celebrity relationships. We long for a place where we can be loved no matter what, and to experience that love even in our brokenness. But we also believe that love has a mystical power that can change us. Believe it or not, this is actually true, but only one type of love.

In the Old Testament God reminds us over and over of His steadfast love. This term comes from the Hebrew word *Chesed*, meaning God's covenant love that always pursues, never gives up, and never lets go. It is God's love that leads Him to redeem His people from slavery in Egypt, and to continually forgive them in their utter rejection of Him. The New Testament equivalent word in the Greek is *agape*, a word that means self-sacrificing and never giving up covenant love. This love always originates with God the Father, is made visible in Christ, and is felt through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle John knows this love. He was a wreck, called the son of thunder because he had the reputation of outbursts and making trouble. But John was loved by Jesus, and becomes known as the Apostle of Love. This is because Christians in Asia Minor (where John lived late in life and the recipients of his writings) had been loved by John, they had seen this love in action. John could recall numerous times when Jesus' expressed love personally to him, and many others where Jesus taught them that loved people love. He knew that the way we could know that Christ's redemptive love was true was when this love showed up in the lives of people. Our text this week is one of those times, as Christ teaches His disciples what it will mean to follow Jesus, He has emphasized over and over again the importance of love (see John 13:1, 34-35, 14:15-21, 15:9). Now, in a concise statement Jesus shows them the importance of being loved and then loving. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Notice, Jesus does not give us a suggestion, but a commandment.

So, if we are going to follow this commandment, we need to know a few things. First, we need to know the nature of agape love. I think it involves three things. First, this love does stir my affections. I cannot love someone without any feelings for them. Sometimes I will hear someone say, "I love everyone," or tell me they have a love for someone with whom they have no relationship. But indifference and distance cannot be love. God's love for us is not a distant indifference, rather it is an indication that God's affections and pleasures are revealed in His pursuit of us in Christ. In this passage Jesus tells his disciples that they are not slaves, rather, He will treat them and love them as friends. Think about how sweet and beautiful this is, that those whom Christ redeems are His friends. Second, love involves a desire to want the good for another. Agape love looks at the other person and desires the best for them, found in grace and redemption. It longs for the other person to know forgiveness, grace, and the power of the Spirit. We see this as Jesus tells His disciples that He chose them to bear fruit that will remain, and in the previous verses when Jesus reminds them that the production of fruit in their lives is for their joy. Third, love involves motion and action. In other words, it is not really love if I don't move toward you in relationship and act for you. Again, we see this in Jesus' statement about love and laying down one's life. Of course, we must read this first as a declaration by Jesus about what He would do the next day, willfully giving up His life on the brutal cross for our redemption. This beautiful laying down of life is central to the whole story of love in the Scriptures, and the ultimate demonstration of chesed, agape, covenant love. We never have to wonder if we are loved. Christ has pursued us, and demonstrated His great affection for us by entering our world, becoming one of us. He did this because He sees a version of us that is not possible apart from grace. His affection looked at me, a wretch deserving His justice and poured grace into me. And this happened through the definite act of Gospel grace, the Son of God laying down His life for His

friends. Follower of Jesus, know this, you are loved with a supreme and priceless love.

But the other thing that is clear here is that loved people love. If the love of Christ is real in us, then it will mean that this love is transformative, making us a loving people, and that the love we have for one another will be so visible that it becomes compelling to the outside world. Sadly, this type of Christianity is fairly foreign in our day and age, as many of us seek a religious experience that allows us to keep others at an arms length. Does they city of Eureka get a glimpse of the love of God when they see how we love each other and how we love them?

This is the point of our love, by the way. In a real way, God pours His love into His church, and then sends us to each other, to our enemies, to the broken and hurting in the world, and to our neighbors as loved people. And loved people love. But this love is not just ours, it is the Gospel love of Christ in us. Which means that in a real and tangible way our love is really the love of Christ being made real and present to those whom we love. So love hilariously, generously, graciously. Move toward people who seem unlovable, stir your affections, give yourself away to them. Get in community and have a group of "one anothers" where you love and are loved. Forgive those who hurt you. Live out the implications of this commandment, and see how Christ will love the world through you.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Genesis 30	Genesis 31	Genesis 32	Genesis 33	Genesis 34	Genesis 35	Genesis 36

Reading from this past week: John 15:12-17

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: John 15:18-16:4

Family Worship

The Lord our God - Kristian Stanfill version here

<https://youtu.be/NTbY24n-8Ik>

Gospel Project Main Point and Big Picture Question

Story: Jesus Ascended to Heaven

Main Point: Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud.

Big Picture Question: What is our mission as believers?

Answer: Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Scripture: Acts 1:4-14

Scripture

John 15:12-17

*What are some ways that Christ shows His love to us?

*If Christ loves us, who are some people we should love?

*How can we demonstrate the love of Christ to other people?

Prayer

*Spend lots of time thinking of all of the good and beautiful gifts given by God, and giving thanks with your family.

*Pray that you would be marked by the love of Christ demonstrated to your church and neighbors.