

Love One Another

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 9th October 2011

Intro-

- The last moments of a person's life are very precious. There is something about death that makes us prioritise what we want to achieve and what we want to communicate to others. If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you take the time to do and say today to those around you?
- We are going to go to the day before Jesus' death to see the things He considers important to do and say before His death.

Read John 13:1 (Jesus then washes the disciples' feet); 13:34-35

It is clear from this passage, that if there was something Jesus had a great longing to get across to His disciples before He died it was to convey His love to His disciples and His desire that they would love one another in the same way. This morning we will look at why we are to love one another, how we are to love one another and the result of loving one another.

Why love one another?

- It is the command of Jesus- v34
- Not a suggestion but a command. This means that if we don't we are disobeying Jesus.
- **Kelal**- The Jews loved to try and boil down the commandments into their fundamental essence. It became a great skill and a sign of a good teacher to find the 'short way' i.e. to see how few rules they could sum up the Torah with. The Jews called these ways of summarising many laws in Hebrew '**kelal**' (meaning 'surround, include'). They would search for particular scriptures that summarised many other laws. Rabbi Simmler (3rd Cent. AD) said this:

Six hundred and thirteen precepts were imparted to Moses, three hundred and sixty-five negative . . . and two hundred and forty-eight positive . . .

David came and established them as eleven, as it is written (Ps. 15): Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tent, who shall dwell in Your holy mountain?

(i) He that walks uprightly and (ii) works righteousness and (iii) speaks the truth in his heart. (iv) He that does not backbite with his tongue, (v) nor does evil to his neighbour, (vi) nor takes up a reproach against another; (vii) in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, (viii) but who honours them that fear the Lord. (ix) He that swears to his own hurt, and does not change; (x) he that does not put out his money to usury, (xi) nor take a bribe against the innocent. . . .

Then Isaiah came and established them as six (Isaiah 33.15):

(i) He that walks in righteousness and (ii) speaks uprightly; (iii) he that despises the gain of deceits, (iv) that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, (v) that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and (vi) shuts his eyes from looking upon evil.

Then came Micah and established them as three (Micah 6.8): What does the Lord require of you but

(i) to do justice, (ii) to love mercy, and (iii) to walk humbly with your God?

Once more Isaiah established them as two (Is. 56.1)

(i) Preserve justice and (ii) do righteousness

Then came Amos and established them as one (Amos 5.4): Thus says the Lord,

(i) Seek me and you shall live,

or (as R. Nahman b. Isaac preferred) Habakkuk came and made the whole Law stand on one fundamental idea (Habakkuk 2.4):

(i) The righteous man lives by his faith

To be able to find 1 master law summarising all others in scripture was seen as the ultimate Kelal, the golden rule or the royal law. Simeon b. Azzai identified Genesis 5:1 (displaying the image of God) as this law. Rabbi Aqiba called Leviticus 19:18 (love your neighbour as yourself) as 'the great kelal in Torah':

"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD." (Lev 19:18)

Hillel was a conservative Rabbi and the grandfather of Gamaliel who taught Paul. There was another more liberal Rabbinic school competing against him -that of Shammai. Both were approached by a Gentile with a challenge to convert him:

'...it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, "Make me a proselyte, on condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." Thereupon he [Shammai] repulsed him with the builder's square which was in his hand. When he went before Hillel, he [Hillel] said to him, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is commentary [perusha, specification] thereon; go and learn it.'

Jesus agrees with this summary and puts it instead in a positive form in Matt 7:12:

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

He repeats it in Luke 6:31:

And as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise. (Luke 6:31)

In Mark 12:28-33 Jesus answers about what is the most important commandment by combining Deuteronomy 6:4 (Love God) and Leviticus 19:18 (love your neighbour)

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." (Mark 12:28-33)

James understood this law of love and called it the Royal law of scripture:

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty." (James 2:8-12)

Paul also did:

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10)

The Apostle John (who wrote down the passage we read) really got hold of this truth. He was ruined by it. Although it is an old command, Jesus gives a new application- we should love the Church as Christ has:

Jn 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

1Jn 3:11 "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,"

1Jn 3:23 "And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment."

1Jn 4:7 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

1Jn 4:11-12 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."

2Jn1:5 "And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another."

- Jerome, the Church historian, relates of the Apostle John that when he became old he used to go among the churches and assemblies everywhere repeating the words, "Little children, love one another." His disciples, wearied by the constant repetition, asked him why he always said this. "Because," he replied, "it is the Lord's commandment; and if it only be fulfilled, it is enough."
- **Application-** All of these disciples understood the importance of Jesus' command to love. Have we grasped it?
- If love is the fulfillment of all the commands of scripture how are we doing with obeying scripture? Do we kid ourselves that we love the scriptures, but are secretly holding on to resentment towards others?
- Do we demote love to below gifting, or other qualities? Love= most important. Can have all the vision and all the gifts, but these are no good if you don't love- clanging symbol (1Cor 13 1-13).
- Love is eternal. 1Cor13:13 "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." - We are never beyond it. In Heaven faith will become knowledge and Hope will be realised, but love will continue for eternity! Therefore do not demote love.
- Bob Jones 'Did you learn to love?'
- Have we taken the command of Jesus merely as a suggestion? Jesus commanded it because relationships are foundational to the Church- Satan attacks to divide us. Satan has no power to divide Christians- we are one in Christ, however, we have the power to divide ourselves, that's why we are commanded to love one another. What attitudes are we holding onto which are causing disunity? Let's choose to repent before Jesus for not obeying His command.

How are we to love one another?

- v34 'as I have loved you'
- We owe it to Jesus because He first loved us- He first modelled it for us-died for us-saved us-gave all.

1John 4:19 'We love because He first loved us'.

Rom 13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Application: how can we receive the goodness of the grace of God into our lives and yet deny others the same love we have received? It doesn't tally up.

- The individuals who make up the Church are His **reward** for what He went through- His inheritance (song- We are Your inheritance). Every individual is precious to Him, and so should equally be precious to us:

"When my parents moved to southern Florida, they sorted through some of the family treasures and divided them among the children. My dad brought me a little box and said, 'Joe, I want you to have this.' When I opened the box and pulled back the cotton, there was an old pocket watch-one of those round ones that usually hangs from a fancy gold chain with a watch fob on it." I have a few antique clocks, so I was somewhat aware of the value of old timepieces. That watch did not have a famous maker's name on it, or a brass or gold or sterling case; it did not have a fancy gold chain or watch fob. In fact, it really was a common old watch with a leather thong tied to it. As a watch, it was not something of great worth." But my dad said, 'This was the first watch I ever owned. My dad gave me this watch.' I remembered that he and I used to fish the St. Joe River every summer, floating down the river and fly fishing in the evening. This was the watch he used to pull out every once in a while to

see what time it was. "You know, if my dad had taken that watch to an antique store, they would have told him it was worth little, if anything. But all the money in the world could not buy that watch from me. That watch is precious to my father, and since it is precious to him, it is precious to me." That is what people are like. That is why God in essence said, 'Love Me? Love people!'"

- **Application:** When we refuse to love one another, we are spoiling the reward of what Christ died to achieve- a united body of the redeemed.

'As I have loved you'- How did Jesus love?

- Jesus loved by showing faithfulness. Faithfulness to disciples-They all fled - He stayed for them. Prayed for Peter and re-instated. God = faithfulness "What a faithful God have I". Israel - often unfaithful. Marriage - bad when unfaithful, no matter what other gifts - money, etc.
- Faithfulness is shown by commitment. Jesus was committed to the disciples- gave up His life for them. Early Church committed to meeting together - Meetings- 'one accord' (book of Acts)-

Acts 1:14 All these with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 2:1 Now when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:46 Day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart,

Acts 4:24 When they heard it, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "O Lord, you are God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them;

Acts 5:12 By the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch

It is no wonder the early Church exploded in growth- they were committed to each other. How committed are we to each other? If away, something missing. We need each other - you are unique - 'Your Country Needs You'.

- **Loyalty.** David to Saul. Not gossip or slander. Make a decision to always speak positively with your lips about the Church or to challenge or share hurts where needed. Unite -team spirit-

Lee Iacocca once asked legendary American football coach what it took to make a winning team. He replied "There are a lot of coaches with good clubs who know the fundamentals and have plenty of discipline but still don't win the game. Then you come to the third ingredient: if you're going to play together as a team, you've got to care for one another. You've got to love each other. Each player has to be thinking about the next guy and saying to himself: "If I don't block that man, Paul is going to get his legs broken. I have to do my job well in order that he can do his." "The difference between mediocrity and greatness is the feeling these guys have for each other." In the healthy church, each Christian learns to care for others. As we take seriously Jesus' command to "love one another," we contribute to a winning team.

Choose to be a team player- bear your own weight and work in harmony with others.

- **Jesus loved by serving.** Washing feet. If I said it now ? Embarrassed ? Unpleasant – my old job on wards, wiping bottoms, but done in love. Be prepared to do servile jobs - set up chairs, welcome. P.A.'s, teas, etc. Team Hoyt - Loving Dad endures pain.

What is the result of loving one another?

- Love shows us to be followers of Jesus- v35 'all will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another'
- Our doctrine is really displayed by our lifestyle (1Tim 1:10- whatever does not pertain to sound doctrine).

'It's not what I don't understand in scripture which worries me, but what I do'

- how much am I living of what I do understand? Am I truly loving others?

Me in a meeting with Evangelicals who were right in their doctrine but had no love- Pharisees. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for not having love. Love is doctrine beautified.

- Practical. You cannot love God who is unseen if you cannot love your brother who is seen.- He who hates his brother, is walking in darkness.

- "I really only love God, as much as I love the person, I love the least" - Dorothy Day, Catholic Social Activist.

Changes happen when you become a Christian.

- Some 4- to 8-year-olds were asked, "What does love mean?":

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca - age 8

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your chips without making them give you any of theirs." Chrissy - age 6

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend whom you hate." Nikka - age 6

"Love is when Mummy gives daddy the best piece of chicken." Elaine - age 5

"Love is when Mummy sees daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford." Chris - age 8

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." Mary Ann - age 4

"I let my big sister pick on me because my Mum says she only picks on me because she loves me. So I pick on my baby sister because I love her." Bethany - age 4

"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you." Karen - age 7

"Love is when Mummy sees daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross." Mark - age 6

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget." Jessica - age 8

- Our fellowship barometer is also a barometer of our relationship with God- love for the flock is a sign of walking with God, absence is a sign of falling away- test yourself and make the necessary changes.
- The mark of true discipleship is the ability to keep loving, when loving gets tough. When we do this, we display to others we are walking as Jesus walked. Jesus went against the way of the world- He didn't get even, but loved by **forgiving**. He knew that Peter would deny and that the disciples would run. Knew that Judas would betray, but still washed feet and gave sop.
- We know that we will hurt each other-
Christian author C. S. Lewis fell in love late in life. Not long after his marriage to Joy Gresham, Joy contracted cancer. Lewis and Joy only shared a few short years together before she passed away. When C. S. Lewis speaks of the pain of love, we know he is speaking from experience. Here is what Lewis writes about the risks of love: "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully around with hobbies and little luxuries ... lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket -- safe, dark, motionless, airless -- it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable ... The only place outside heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love is hell!"
- I will hurt you, let you down and vice-versa. We always seem to hurt the people we love the most in life, but love finds a way to break through it.
- Jesus loved the disciples and also His enemies - "Father forgive them"-
The love for equals is a human thing - of friend for friend, brother for brother. It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles. The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing - the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world. The love for the more fortunate is rare thing - to love those who succeed where we fail, to rejoice without envy with those who rejoice, the love of the poor for the rich, of the black man for the white man. The world is always bewildered by its saints. And then there is the love of the enemy - love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens, and inflicts pain. The tortured's love for the torturer. This is God's love. It conquers the world. _____ "The Magnificent Defeat" by Frederick Buechner
- Not bear grudge. Cover with Love-

1 Pet 4:8 "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins."

Prov 10:12 "Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins."

Love does not keep record of wrongs, do we? Offence = Bait of Satan (book by John Bevere). Nip in bud before it divides. How much forgive if brother sins, 7x? No 70 x 7. Resolve conflict. Log in eye - willing to say sorry. Show brother alone. A witness. Then Church. Then excommunication.

- Evangelistic- Team Hoyt video - atheist crying. World looking for genuine love-

broken families & relationships, back-biting at work etc.

Summary

We must love one another

- Why? Command of Jesus and sums up the Bible
- How? As Jesus loved us. Owe it to Jesus-Gave all for us. Faithfulness, Loyalty. Service - Willing to serve. Forgiveness - Covering with love
- Result? Shows us to be His disciples, attractive to the lost

Song: There is a place of commanded blessing.