

**John 13: 34 – 14: 6; “If You have Love”, A Sermon for the Funeral of Ray Titcomb,
Delivered on October 6th, 2015, by Pastor Paul Rendall,
at the Reformed Baptist Church.**

John 13: 34 – 14: 6 – “Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer.” “You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you.” “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.” “I go to prepare a place for you.” “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” “And where I go you know, and the way you know.” “Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’” “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’” “No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Ray Titcomb was a man who really came to understand the meaning of verse 34 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” It appears that He was converted to Christ back about 1970. But in May of last year, his dear wife Polly died, and God chose to do something very special for Ray. He did a very great work of grace in his heart to open his eyes to what he needed to be doing as a Christian. During that difficult time of the decline of Polly’s health, and following her death, God the Holy Spirit was doing a mighty work in Ray’s heart, so that his eyes were opened to see the love of the brethren for Polly and also their love to him. And it caused him to realize that he did not have that love in as great an exercise as he should have had it in exercise, before that. And so he changed, by the grace of God. And what a change it was; one of the most radical and decisive changes that I have ever seen in any Christian in my life. All the glory goes to God for this, and he himself would tell you so if he were here. Oh, it is not as though Ray did not have faults, and it is not as though he reached perfection before he died, but he made significant progress in righteousness and holiness, and in understanding how to love, and to minister to people around him. It is the truth of what God’s grace can do for a man that we have come here to remember here today. If Ray were here today to speak to me, he would say to me, Pastor Rendall. Preach the gospel. It will not be necessary to eulogize me, but preach the gospel. And so, this is what I will do.

There are certain times in our lives where we are given a very real opportunity to consider the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to believe in Him. This will be one of those times if you will listen, for true and saving faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. If anyone will believe in Jesus Christ today, today will be the day of your salvation; of your being given the gift of eternal life. Jesus, at this time in His ministry was getting ready to go to the cross. As the Son of God He was on a mission, having been sent by His Father into this world. He was going to go the cross to lay down His life for every person who knows that they are a sinner; for everyone who knows that they need Him to be their Savior. Jesus’ disciples knew Him as their Lord, but they did not understand where He was going. They had given up everything to follow Him, but now, He was telling them that He was going away, and where He was going, they could not follow Him. They could not understand why their Lord would have to die.

Now, we need to realize, that our Lord Jesus Christ did not have to die because he was a sinner, for He was the only Man in the history of mankind who never sinned. Jesus knew that He had to die if we were ever going to have eternal life. All of us have to die because of Adam’s

sin; because of his fall into sin at the beginning of the world. And therefore, the Bible says: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and then comes the judgment." But the Bible also says: "The wages of sin (that is – our own sins) is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord." Salvation is a free gift because we cannot work for it, and we cannot earn it. Sometimes we mistakenly think that it is what we do for God that merits us eternal life. But this is not the case. Not the best of our good works can save us; they are not enough to save us from our many sins. Sometimes we are like Peter and we think that Christianity is asking ourselves what would Jesus do in this situation, or that situation, and we think that if we can learn to imitate Him that we will attain eternal life. But look at poor Peter. He says, "Lord, where are you going?" "Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward. "Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now?" "I will lay down my life for your sake." "Jesus answered him, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake?" "Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times." Peter's motives to follow His Lord were very good, but He did not understand that Jesus had to go to the cross to die for him. Peter would not be able to go with Him in this. It would only be later on, after Jesus was raised from the dead, and after He sent the Holy Spirit to His Church, and to Peter, that Peter would have the power to preach and the power to die for His Lord. Sometimes, we who are Christians do not realize that the Lord Jesus had to die in order that we could really learn how to love people around us.

This is where, in our text, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God believe also in Me." They were indeed troubled. Perhaps you are troubled today as well. Your loved one has died and you are not sure about what happens when a person dies. Well, let me see if I can be of help. Jesus says that if you believe in God, you should also believe in Him; that in His Father's house there are many mansions, many dwelling places. He says that He has gone to prepare a place for each one who will believe in Him; who will take Him as their personal Savior and Lord. Jesus went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, so that if we believe in Him we will be forgiven of all of our sins. Jesus rose from the dead to prove that He conquered sin and death, there at the cross. He purchased your redemption there if you believe in Him. He buys you back out of your sin. Jesus lived the perfect life of righteousness in your place if you will trust in Him. Jesus can now clothe you with garments of salvation if you will trust in Him and give Him your life. He has been raised from the dead and He now sits at the right hand of the Father on high, and He ever lives to make intercession for all of you who will believe. When you believe in Jesus, you are given His Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you and bring you to heaven. This is what happened with our dear brother Ray.

If he were standing here now, he would want to tell you this. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him. Jesus is God's only appointed way for you to come to have eternal life, and once you believe in Him, God undertakes to begin a work of grace in your heart, and to perfect that work all through your life, and then bring you to heaven in the end. The only persons who end up in hell, are those who do not think that they need Jesus; His blood and His righteousness. What is very wonderful is that God is a very good teacher. "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He teaches sinners in the way." "The meek will He guide in justice, the meek will He teach His way." This is what God graciously did with Ray, and then when He knew that Ray had learned enough, and given enough, he took Him home to be with Him. Be assured, my friends, Ray now knows that in the Father's house there are many mansions. A place has been prepared for Him, and a place will be prepared for you too, if you will turn your life over to Him, and let Him save you and change you to be more and more like Jesus. But realize that God alone can bring about this mighty change in you that He brought about in Ray. It comes when you see your need of Christ.

Do you see your need of Christ? Do you see that you have been guilty of many, many sins in your lifetime; sins which you could never make up for, and which desperately need to be forgiven. They must be forgiven if you would go to heaven. "God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish (will not die eternally, everlastingly, and perish in the lake of fire), but have everlasting life. I must declare to you what the Bible declares: The person believing in Jesus will never die spiritually, will never die eternally, but will rejoice forevermore; first in the glory of heaven after they die, and then in the glory of the New Heavens and the New Earth after Jesus returns to bring this world to an end. These are the glorious things which Ray is rejoicing in, even now, and would want you to understand, and believe, and receive. The greatest joy which Ray has now is in beholding the face of His Savior, the Lord Jesus. May you indeed reach out in faith to receive Him by faith, and be saved, even now.

In closing this message, I wanted to give you the testimony of two of the ladies of our church to what Ray's Christian love meant to them. In this way, I think you will understand something more of the grace of Christ.

Here is what our sister Rita Rice has to say about Ray:

This dear man that we loved was a great testimony to the wonderful grace of Jesus...When his wife of 53 years passed away a year and a half ago, I truly believe that "our Father's full giving was only begun." Ray embraced Jesus as his only hope, and in his time of deepest sorrow, the Lord, *out* of his grieving heart made him to live all the more fully...

He did not sink down in despair. He rose up and cared for everyone around him like no one else I have ever met, entering into our lives in such a way as to leave a mark that will always remind us how faithful Jesus is to those who hope in Him.

He embodied the grace of God that made him into a beautiful instrument of lovingkindness to all who knew him...and a very rich man indeed.

We miss him terribly, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope. For we know that Jesus has him fully enveloped now, in a love that is eternally alive with everything that God is...

"He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials he multiplies peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again."
- Annie Johnson Flint

The other testimony is from Rita's daughter Lilly Rice: She says this -

Charles Spurgeon said "carve your name on hearts, not marble." Yesterday in church I kept thinking of all the hearts Ray Titcomb used love to write his name on.

Ray was one of those rare humans who truly used his life tirelessly and selflessly to continually put love in action. It often struck me how he just knew when something was wrong. There were a couple times he told me why I was sad when no one else even realized I was. He truly, deeply cared, which meant the world to me.

I'll never forget, at the time in my life when I was weighed heaviest with grief, he gently came along side me and told me this: "Avoid self-pity." "When you have a wound like this, it doesn't heal from the inside." "It has to scab over from the outside." "Self-pity is like an infection, keeping the wound from healing." I hadn't even realized I was pitying myself. But the most amazing thing about his words was knowing that he had just lost his wife a couple weeks earlier. I remember thinking that if someone with a wound as painful as his could live a life of joy, of giving love over and over without letting self-pity close them up and make them miserable, then surely I could, too. I know this life is full of sorrow, and I hope I always remember Ray's words on my hardest nights.

I want to let pain make me love harder, like he did. I want it to drive me to greater thanksgiving, greater levels of joy in all I still have, like I saw in Ray. I want to let it fill me with compassion and love so big it hurts, for those who truly suffer.

"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13: 35 This man's relentless joy and selfless love truly changed my life. I'm so thankful for the time I had with my "best buddy", and I can't wait to see him in heaven!

Let's pray together: Lord, we are thankful for the life of this dear man whom you gave to us for a time in order to show us Your love through him. We pray that we would learn the lessons of grace while we have time. Teach us to number our days that we may present unto You a heart of wisdom. Help us each and every one to trust in you and walk in the truth, and walk in love. For we pray, asking these things in Jesus Name.