

Levels of Love
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Luke 7:36-50

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, **Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.** And he saith, Master, say on.

41 **There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.**

42 **And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?**

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, **Thou hast rightly judged.**

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, **Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.**

45 **Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.**

46 **My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.**

47 **Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.**

48 And he said unto her, **Thy sins are forgiven.**

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, **Who is this that forgiveth sins also?**

50 And he said to the woman, **Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.**

Today is Show Your Love Sunday. I don't know of any Scripture that would exemplify someone demonstrating their love for the Lord more than this woman washing and anointing the feet of Jesus.

While it is a great example of showing her love, what I want us to notice in these verses today is that there definitely are different levels of love.

Not all Christians love the Lord the same; and I think I could accurately say that not any of us love the Lord to the degree that we should.

I know that I love the Lord, but I also know that my level of love for the Lord could use some growing.

Without question, our command to love is the greatest of all commandments.

Matthew 22:35-40

35 Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, *which is the great commandment in the law?*

37 Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**

38 **This is the first and great commandment.**

39 **And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

40 **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love].

Where is the level of your love for the Lord today?

Is it a 3, or a 5; maybe even a 7 or an 8?

I suppose only the Lord could know that for sure.

Do any of us love the Lord with “all our heart, all our soul and all our mind”?

I didn't think I would see any raised hands on that question.

As the coming of our Lord draws ever nearer, it is becoming more and more evident that nothing will matter more over the next thousand years than the level of your love for the Lord here and now.

I want to move on past this general command in the law to love God; even as it is also the first of our New Testament commands from Jesus.

Those who were considered the disciples of the Lord were given an even more specific command to love.

Did you know that not all Christians can be considered disciples?

A disciple is a pupil, a learner. Not all Christians are, but certainly every one of us should be!

Do you consider yourself to be a disciple of the Lord?

If you are a genuine disciple, you should know that:

I. We have an even greater responsibility to love.

A. What is that greater responsibility?

1. John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

2. What is new about the command to love one another?

3. **1 John 3:11** For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

4. Had they not already been commanded to love one another? What is different now; how is this a new commandment?

5. What is different now is the “**as I have loved you**” part!

B. Jesus had personally and by example taught them how to love one another.

1. **1 John 4:19** We love him, because he first loved us.

2. Jesus was their “Good Shepherd”.

3. John 10:11-15

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

4. He is our Good Shepherd as well.

5. If you indeed are one of the Lord’s disciples, our calling is a higher level of love.

II. What does “as I have loved you” really mean?

A. It means that, like Jesus, we lay down our lives for the sheep.

1. The sheep are our brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. Is Jesus asking us to die for them?
3. Is the Lord asking us to take a bullet for one another?
4. Were it to come to that, I believe the answer is yes.
5. In the day in which we live, that could certainly happen.

B. Dying, however, is not the only way to lay down our lives.

1. John 15:11-13

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that your joy might be full.*

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

2. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection was what it took for Jesus to save us...

3. But for us, there is another, perhaps even better way to give our lives.

4. Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

5. This is what Jesus called Peter to do.

6. John 21:15-17

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my lambs.*

16 He saith to him again the second time, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, *Feed my sheep.*

17 He saith unto him the third time, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, *Feed my sheep.*

7. And Peter answered his calling to that higher level of love.

8. The remainder of his life was given to taking care of God's people; those precious sheep for which Jesus died.

III. This is our calling as well.

A. In whatever your individual capacity may be, we are called to care for each other.

1. That's what a Church is, it's a fold where God's sheep are cared for, nurtured and loved.

2. This is no lightweight calling.

3. Loving my Church as Jesus has loved me is to be my highest priority; it should be yours as well.

B. To love one another is a calling that never ends.

1. **John 15:7-13**

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

2. **Continue ye in my love** means just that.

3. Yes, we may take a break from time to time but our vocation of loving and nurturing the members of this Body, especially the lambs...has no retirement date.

C. Loving God IS loving your Church.

1. How much do you love your Church?

2. Enough to give your life?

Conclusion:

We have a Church because there are disciples who have loved our Church enough to give their lives.

Hebrews 6:10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Every one of us ought to be one of these disciples.