

**Easter 5**  
**April 24, 2016**

*“Radically Changed by Jesus’ Love”*

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### **JOHN 13:31-35**

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*When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup> “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. <sup>34</sup> “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

The other day we received a magazine from Costco. Have you ever noticed how many ads there are in Costco for vitamins? People are interested in improving their health and Costco appeals to that desire for improved health.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if companies like Costco could sell special pills that help people love each other more. Imagine a mother giving these pills to her two daughters who are always fighting with each other. Imagine a husband and wife taking these pills to improve their marriage. Imagine a teacher giving these pills to her class to help them show greater kindness and respect for each other. Imagine giving these pills to gang members to stop them to help them give up their gang activity. If such a pill was available I would be the first to line up and buy such pills even if they were quite expensive. Remember the words of the song: “What the world needs now, is love sweet love, that's the only thing, there's too little of.”

In the words we just read to you our Lord Jesus speaks to his disciples about love. He tells them to love each other as he has loved them. The greatest blessing you have in life that far exceeds all other blessings, is the blessing of Jesus' love for you. That love is so wide, and so high and so long and so deep that it radically transforms and changes your life. It was his love that moved him to go to the cross to rescue you from your sin. It is his love that can also empower you to love other people. This morning we want to speak to you about how your life is radically changed by Jesus' love for you.

### **Jesus' love gives you a pure source for your salvation**

The love that Jesus' has for you is radically different from any other love you have ever experienced in your life. We see that love in the way he speaks to his disciples the night before he died. “When he was gone, Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.’” The words “When he was gone” refer to Judas leaving the room to betray Jesus. It is hard to imagine how hard it was for Jesus to see Judas leave the room. Jesus wanted Judas to stay with him and repent of his sin. Earlier it says of Jesus, “After he had said this Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, ‘I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.’” Judas rejected the love Jesus had for him just as people today reject the love Jesus has for them.

In spite of all the sadness Jesus was experiencing on this night before his death, he takes the time to remind his disciples of the depth of his love for them. Earlier in this chapter we watch as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and showed them the full extent of his love for them. Now he tells them that the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. Jesus is actually looking forward to being glorified by the Father and giving glory to the Father by giving his life for us on the cross.

In John 12 Jesus said, "Now my heart is troubled and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour? No it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!'" Then the Father spoke from heaven: "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." Jesus found glory in giving his life for us and carrying out what his Father had asked him to do.

Permit me to share a story that might illustrate the glory that Jesus saw when he thought of giving his life for us. In 1968 the navy ship USS Pueblo was seized by the communists in North Korea. For 11 months the 83 men aboard were held in brutal captivity and accused of spying. One day, 13 men were forced to sit rigidly at a table for hours. One of the guards beat a man sitting in the first chair with the butt of his rifle. He did this the next day, hoping to break down the men, as they watched their buddy beaten more each day. On the following day, something happened. One of the young navy sailors sat in the chair where the beaten man sat and took the beating in his place. The next day another sailor did the same thing, until they all shared in the beating and frustrated their captors with their sacrificial love.

Jesus found glory in taking your place. Isaiah 53 says, "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." There is no way I can find glory in what I do to make myself acceptable to God. My hope of being glorified rests in what Christ Jesus has done for me. Let's be honest, brutally honest with ourselves. We don't love people as much as we should. We struggle every day to think less of ourselves and more of others. We fall short of God's glory. I cannot find in myself the pure love that is necessary for God to love me. That love is found only in Jesus. In his love for us he was willing to be punished in our place so we could be loved by our God and share in his glory.

This past week at our Santa Maria Terrace Bible study we were reading about Jesus visiting the Samaritan women at the well. He asked the woman for a drink of water. She was amazed that a Jewish man like Jesus would ask a Samaritan woman like her for a drink of water. Then Jesus said these words to her: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." What does Jesus want for all people? He wants them to know the gift of God. He wants them to know that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." He wants people to know the full depth of his love that spares them from eternal death and destruction in hell. There is nothing in all the world that compares to the love Jesus has for us.

Notice now how he speaks to the disciples about leaving them. "My little children I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now; where I am going, you cannot come." Notice the love and tenderness in the words of Jesus as he calls his beloved disciples "my little children." Even though he would be leaving them soon, he would still be with them. His love would not fail them. He would

continue to be their Shepherd who would carry them in his loving arms. Even though Jesus has ascended into heaven, he has not left us. He is sitting at the right hand of the heavenly Father in great power. He is caring for his people. Romans 8 assures us that nothing in all creation will ever separate us from his love.

The Greek word for love is agape. It has a unique meaning in the New Testament with the stress on sacrificial love. It is also a love that is steadfast and sure and totally reliable. We speak of this unfailing love in the words of Psalm 23 when we say, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life." This mercy or steadfast love is always there. The Hebrew word for "mercy" or steadfast love is the beautiful word "chesed." Jeremiah said, "Your mercies are new to us every morning, great is your faithfulness."

If only I could wake up every morning thinking more of this love that Jesus has for me. If only I could see just how high and wide and long and deep this love truly is then my very existence would be radically altered and changed. Listen to this amazing prayer from Ephesians 3: "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Jesus love is so pure, so perfect and so real. It is the source of your salvation and peace with God, and it enables and strengthens you to love other people.

### **Jesus love strengthens you to love other people**

You won't find a vitamin at Costco that will help you love other people. But you do have this power in Jesus. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jesus says this is a new command. It is new because the power to love is coming from the new life we have in him. It is so radical and so life changing. He is the vine and we are the branches. Connected to him we bear fruit. Listen to these fruits of love mentioned in Galatians. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control."

Jesus says that the world will know that we are his beloved the disciples by the way we love each other. A pagan Greek by the name of Lucian had this to say about the early Christians and their love for each other. "It is incredible to see the fervor with which the people of that religion help each other in their needs. They spare nothing. Their first legislator (his name for Jesus) has put into their hearts that they are brothers." The church father Tertullian wrote, "It is our care for the helpless, our practice of loving kindness that brands us in the eyes of our opponents. 'Look!' they say, 'How they love one another!' Look how they are prepared to die for one another.'"

A lot of words have been written about love. There are songs about love, poems about love, movies about love, and books about love. Yet nothing compares to the radical love that Jesus has for us which radically alters our lives so that we love other people as he has loved us. Some of the best known words in the Bible on love are from 1 Corinthians 13. Even people who are not Christian are familiar with these words. "Love is patient.

Love is kind. It does no envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does no delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

I used to read these words and think, "That's certainly not my life. I could never have that kind of love in my life. Now I know that this is not true. With Jesus' radical and live changing love you and I have the power and capacity to love each other from heart. Just as your heart beats and brings blood to every part of your body, the love Jesus has for you is beating inside of you and radically transforming every facet of your life. A world full of people need to know this love and it is totally free. Amen.