

The Greatest Love Story

Opening Text: John 13:1-9, 12-17

This is the most important week of our Christian calendar. It is important that we approach this week with a sense of reverence and make it a time of personal, deep reflexion. Our whole faith stands on what we celebrate this week.

1. He loved them to the end.

V.1b - *“having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

- *Having loved His own... (2 Timothy 2:19- “The Lord knows those who are His)”*
- *He loved them to the end*

Everything about that act, had to do with love. The washing of the disciples’ feet was an act of love – an illustrated sermon on what love looks like. This was a prophetic act, a moment of great humility also, but primarily it was love – *He loved them to the end!*

He love them to the end - even though he knew that Judas was going to betray Him, that Peter was going to deny Him three times, and that eventually all the disciples were going to be dispersed and retreat in fear. He loved them.

Jesus was not naïve: Verses **1,3,11** and **18** say what Jesus knew. What was to happen did not take Him by surprise, yet He loved them to the end. That is how unconditional is love is. Right until the end, His love remained unchanged, and unaltered. He knew that the commitment of the disciples was shallow and was going to be short-lived, yet He remained committed to loving them.

2 Timothy 2:13 - *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

Lamentations 3:22 ESV - *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

One of the words for *love* in Hebrew is *hessed*. That word means ‘love’ but it is always associated with the idea of covenant, loyalty, or commitment. In some passages, *hessed* was also translated as ‘faithfulness’.

Here’s a passage in the Old Testament where that word (*hessed*) is used:

Hosea 6:4, 6 NLT - *“⁴ O Israel and Judah, what should I do with you?” asks the Lord. “For your love vanishes like the morning mist and disappears like dew in the sunlight.*

⁶ I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings. ⁷ But like Adam, you broke my covenant and betrayed my trust.

That kind of love (*hessed*) is always associated with covenant, loyalty, and commitment. In this passage God says that Israel and Judah's faithfulness, love, loyalty and commitment were shallow. Instead of showing love, they betrayed God like Adam – and like Judas did in the Easter story. Jesus faced betrayal, the abandonment of His disciples, the loneliness of the cross, yet He loved them to the end. He loved them completely and consistently. While man's commitment may fail, His love never fails!

The story of Easter is the greatest love story ever told. It is a story of passion. Jesus demonstrated a type of love that is worth discovering and learning about.

2. We need a fresh revelation of love

V.12: *So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"*

"Do you know what I have done to you?" Do you know this love? We need a revelation of this love.

Ephesians 3:17-19 - *That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

We stop short of the fullness of all that God has for us when we do not know the love of Christ like that. We need a revelation of this love.

a) **V. 18** says, that we *may be able to comprehend with all the saints...*

"Comprehend" means, *to receive experientially* – not simply to understand intellectually.

V.19 AMPC - *[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience];*

b) *Do you know what I have done for you?*

There was so much to understand about that moment:

1. First the humility of Jesus,
2. Secondly, that it is He who washes us. It is Him who makes us acceptable to come to the table.
3. Thirdly that we need to know what love is

1 John 3:16 - *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

3. The blessing of loving like Jesus

V.15-17 - ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, **blessed are you** if you do them.

There is a blessing set aside for anyone determined to love like Jesus.

Jesus said, *I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.* He is our example, our pattern. He showed us how to do it. He showed us the power of His love – and he said, blessed are you if you do them.

Conclusion

Let me just conclude our message today with the words of Jesus just before that last Passover meal:

Luke 22:14-15 - *When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. ¹⁵ Then He said to them, “With **fervent desire** I have **desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*

Jesus had a fervent desire – there was great intensity in His love; His heart was burning for that moment. The passion of Jesus needs to be our passion too.

The church is to carry the heartbeat of God, His pulse, His love, His passion. Jesus didn't die to have a church with a heart of stone or in cardiac arrest, indifferent or lukewarm. No. Jesus is a passionate Jesus with eyes like fire!

We are to be fervent people as well. Once we were passionate sinners, how about we become passionate followers of Jesus?

Acts 18:25 - *This man [Apollos] had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.*

Romans 12:10-12 - *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.*

Easter is a story of passion and the greatest love story ever told. Jesus modelled what it is to love and be passionate. We need to learn the lesson of Easter and love in every direction: God, one another and to love the lost.