

Oh... How He Loves Us

Prayer

When I was praying this week, I asked the Lord what message he would have me deliver to you today... his message to me was clear. I want you to tell my people how much I love them

The Word of God says in John 15:13 HCSB

"No one has greater love than this; that someone would lay down his life for his friends."

Friends this morning consider with me, those fathers and mothers who gave up their sons and daughters to fight in the wars which bought our freedom here today in Canada. These young people fought and bled and died for something that they believed in. They believed in their love for you and me. They believed that our happiness and freedom were more precious than their own lives.

Now I ask you to consider Jesus. He is a part of the Holy Trinity. He always existed and was in heaven with the Father. We are told this in John 1:1-4 HCSB

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men.

Jesus didn't come to the earth, become flesh and then become deified... He was already your creator.

We are told this in 1 John 1:1-3 HCSB

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life — that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us — what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may have fellowship along with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Now God the Father gave his Son for our freedom, for our lives, for our eternal souls. John 3:16 HCSB

"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not

believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God."

This morning is it so hard to accept that there was so great a love in the heart of the Father that he gave his Son for our eternal freedom?

Now this Jesus showed us total, unselfish love. He exemplified agape love. 1 John 3;16 says:

"This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers."

My friends, this morning, I need to ask you a question... Do you know why the bible says that Jesus "laid down his life"?

Jesus did not die against his will. He was, is and ever shall be a part of the trinity and he created the world. It is inconceivable that his life could be taken from him unless he willed it to be so. Jesus stated in John 10:17-18 HCSB

"This is why the Father loves Me, because I am laying down My life so I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father."

My friends, I am reminded of a little knickknack I gave my mother as a child. It was a little child in pajamas holding his arms stretched out wide and the caption read: "I love you this much!" Whenever I think of that little knickknack today, I am reminded of Jesus stretching out his arms willingly to show us how much he loves us.

You know there is another aspect of Jesus great love for us that is often overlooked. Do you remember last week when I preached about the woman who washed Jesus feet with her hair? When he was talking to Simon the Pharisee, it was obvious in his dialog that he had forgiven her even before he told her she was forgiven...

Dearest friends, turn with me to Romans 5:8 HCSB

"But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!"

He didn't die to reward us for being saints. He didn't die because of some great thing we had done. He died while we were still sinners... Today if you feel unworthy, join the club. But if you feel worthless, the creator does not lay down his life for something worthless. He has made you Sons and Daughters. He has made you joint heirs with him. All he asks is that you believe in him.

Today with so many opposing opinions and philosophies one can get confused. It is even more unsettling when one considers that some of these philosophies and religions do in fact have a part of the truth. In most cases though they deny the source.

Jesus told us the only way to God the Father in John 14:6:

“Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

There is no other way... We cannot earn our salvation; it is a free gift. A creator who was willing to die for you gives unto you salvation in love. Like any other gift, it is up to you to receive it.

Now this gift is for all who receive it. Maybe this morning you feel guilty for not being a righteous enough person. Maybe you have done terrible things in your past. Maybe your self worth is in the toilet. The word says that Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. What is interesting is that we don't give them to him. We hold onto them, to punish ourselves... Maybe inside ourselves we feel that others deserve that which we won't take hold of for ourselves. We in our pride, determine for God what he is willing to forgive and what he is not, based on our own opinion.

Friends here ye the word of the Lord

Romans 2:11 HCSB

“There is no favoritism with God.”

Paul says in his letter to the Romans 8:35-39 HCSB

Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: Because of You we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

This from the man who used to persecute Christians unto death... God can seize your heart, your mind and your soul, if you will only let him.

Do you recall the narrative in which Jesus visits the tomb of Lazarus? The Jews cried out “Behold how he loved him!” and yet today it's like pulling teeth to get a Hallelujah, Glory or Amen from a body of believers. Why do we repress our emotion this way today when not so many years ago we had that liberty.

The Word of God says that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks so then why do we look down at an enthusiastic noise; and those who express the love in their hearts out loud.

Does not the word say in Psalms 100:1-2:

“Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.”

Or how about Psalms 98:4:

“Shout to the Lord, all the earth; be jubilant, shout for joy, and sing”

For the record, I would rather have some of that enthusiastic noise in the service than have you stop up the joy in your heart! If Jesus has set you free and you feel the his love this morning can I get an enthusiastic “AMEN!”

This morning can we think on three things?

- What has the love of Christ done for you
- What has the love of Christ done to you
- Is the love of Christ coming from you

John 13:34-35 HCSB

“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

I am reminded of a good friend... he loved his dad very much. I observed on many occasions when he would interact with his dad he would say things like: “Love you Dad!” or “Back soon Dad – Love you!” His father’s consistent reply was a grunt. Sometimes he would call his son over to him and place a fair amount of money in his son’s hand. When he gave his son money, in his mind it was his way of saying he loved his son back. He could not give of himself so he gave of his wallet. Now my friend liked having the money, but on many occasions he remarked to me that he would give up everything he had for a hug from his father and for him simply to say that he loved him back.

How many of you have heard expressions like:

- Stop Crying or I’ll give you something to cry about
- Real men don’t cry
- Never let them see weakness in you

Ask yourself why our society wants us to repress all feelings of love, sadness in fact all emotion. I assert it is because real emotion causes others to feel real emotion. When we love others they feel it.

Don't be afraid to show it. God has given you his love and the gift of eternal life. He has given you all the tools for success you need. His success not mans. Embrace it and do not be afraid to show the love of Christ in your life.

Even if you are crying alone in sorrow Psalms 56:8 tells us that God counts every one of our tears and stores them in his bottle. Many times when my wife has been asleep, I have sat up late into the evening and cried tears of grief over the loss of 9 of our children. They briefly came alive, the expectation of them, their happy smiles, their reaching out and taking my finger in their little hands. Being their dad, only to have my dreams crushed, my life shattered, my wife broken... The God I serve sat with me and had his arm around me. He was with me every step of the way. I do not to this day understand why they died... oh I understand the genetics and the medical reasons, but my God is greater than that. I find myself looking out through Jobs eyes.

I have not lost my faith and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I have a God who loves me and who understands what it means to lose a child.

Today, not that you need it, but you have my permission to:

- Feel
- Love
- Express your emotions.

Holding them inside only causes hurt.

Consider my friend, all the other kids thought it was cool that he always had money. He was very popular, yet inside all he wanted was the love of his father.

Today, Jesus has redeemed you. He has bought you with the price of is blood and you are his special treasure.

He has adopted you. He has made you joint heirs of the kingdom with him and you are now sons and daughters of the most high.

Jesus has propitiated you. He has taken your place. He has born the punishment.

He has redeemed you. He became the substitutionary payment for all the garbage and sin in your life.

He has justified you and made you righteous, by wrapping you in the glory of his righteousness.

He has reconciled you so that you could be in the presence and enjoy the love of the Father.

He has given you the Holy Spirit to do his restorative work in your life and bring about sanctification in you. You have been transformed into a new creation. All the old things in your life have passed away - you are new. Unfortunately like the rest of us, we still have areas we need to work on.

This morning with all my heart, I can truly say: Jesus loves me this I know, for the bible tells me so...

Do you know that Jesus loves you this morning? Accept him into your heart. Even if you are a Christian, let go and give over control to the one who loves you and wanted you before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Jesus said in Rev 3:20-22 NKJV:

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ”

Jesus wants us to respond to him, so that he can pour out his love upon us.

The David Crowder band created a song. In closing today, I would like to read some of the lyrics from this wonderful work this morning and I would like you to think about the words:

He is jealous for me,
Loves like a hurricane, I am a tree,
Bending beneath the weight of His wind and mercy.

When all of a sudden,
I am unaware of these afflictions eclipsed by glory,
And I realize just how beautiful You are,
And how great Your affections are for me.

And we are His portion and He is our prize,
Drawn to redemption by the grace in His eyes,
If his grace is an ocean, we're all sinking.

And Heaven meets earth like an unforeseen kiss,
And my heart turns violently inside of my chest,

I don't have time to maintain these regrets,
When I think about the way...

SING:

He loves us,
Oh, how He loves us,
Oh, how He loves us,
Oh, how He loves.

Yeah, He loves us,
Oh, how He loves us,
Oh, how He loves us,
Oh, how He loves.

Prayer