

Loving One Another- Love Looks Like Something

When Jesus looks at his Father's creation, he sees the reflection of himself. He doesn't see us according to our choices or our situations but he sees and treats us according to His great compassion and grace. He loves what he created and desires for every person, from the beginning of time to the end of time, to know him according to the revelation that he freely gives.

Actions

Read: Matthew 25:31-40

As you read the scriptures in Matthew what do you think Jesus means by verse 40? How is this is lived out by the disciples in verse 35? What does this mean for our actions?

Famous missionary to Mozambique, Heidi Baker, said "Love looks like something." Similar to Jesus' words that we read in Matthew, love gives, intensely fights, freely invests, encourages, drives others, etc. All of these descriptors of love are verbs. They describe the action of love. If you notice, they aren't lazy. It takes effort to let love live through us and rule our lives. That's because "love looks like something".

Name some ways in your life that love has looked like something? Go through the areas of your life (family, friends, work, class, on campus events) and share what love has looked like in these situations.

Perhaps if love is not fully seen, how do you desire love to look like something in these different settings?

Ok, now think about your future career. How will the love of God be used through you in your field? Have any big dreams? How will love have to be a part of your success?

Human Nature v. The Spirit of God

Read Luke 23:32-43

Human nature is a bear. Human nature will cause us to go against the very Spirit of God that lives within us. What would be your response if you were in Jesus' position in this story? Yes, human nature will demand rights, hate, be angry and unforgiving, it will point out wrongs and let pride say we are better. As we look at this story, we see the exact opposite of fleshly and human nature responses. What are Jesus' reactions to the criminals and the soldiers? Isn't it interesting that the Spirit of God does not entitle Jesus to take justice upon himself for all the wrongs these people have done. He could have. He didn't.

Too often we defend what is not ours to defend. We fight for what we think will bring freedom but we are actually fighting for that which binds us to sin. As we look at Christ's example we see that He did not defend His position. He didn't fight for his life. He didn't accuse the criminals on the cross dying next to him. It wasn't his place to accuse or defend or to fight. He

left that for the Father, the Ultimate Judge. His position was not to judge but to extend grace and mercy, atonement and love.

What are some times in your life where you have found it hard to extend the same love and grace to someone that has been freely extended to you? Looking back, how do you wish you would have reacted? Remember, reactions of love mirror that of Christ.

The Condemned

Read John 8:1-11

We can no longer look at things through the eyes of the world. Our flesh will never see what Jesus sees, we must learn to see through spiritual eyes. We must look beyond their physical appearance, the gossip and murmurs. We must look beyond the visible sin and the outward presentation. Jesus always looked at people and saw what no one else saw. He would call those qualities out; calling that person to something higher than the life they were living. Look at verses 10-11. Everyone else called her an adulterous woman but Christ saw beyond the sin and the physical appearance, and looked at the heart. He called her higher by seeing that she COULD live a sinless life, free of shame and condemnation. Our eyes first must see the power of Jesus, not a person's decisions. He sets free, delivers and makes new, anyone that chooses Him.

What would help you be able to encourage people to the God potential in themselves and not condemn them? What are some challenging situations you are dealing with (try mentioning situations not names involved)? How can your love look like something in this situation?

The Untouchable

Read Mark 1:40-45

What are some things you observed while reading this story (Jesus' reaction, man's actions, etc)?

Leprosy is a disease that is contagious. Look it up to see what all it entails! Please note that there are leprosy colonies for the sick in order that no one has to come in contact with them, yet in verse 41, Jesus reaches out and actually touches the man with no fear.

Who is the person you don't want to touch, your untouchable? What situation brings you fear? Let us remember that Jesus touched those which no one wanted to touch.

Take time to pray that God would give you a new revelation of love. May the God that is love, shower you with the outpouring of his unconditional love. Confess your lack of love in the situations and confess your unloving reactions to the people that have been hard for you to love and ask God to give you spiritual eyes to see what he sees.

And lastly, something that will most impact your ability to love like Christ is this: when all you want to do is throw insults at a person in your head, simply begin to bless that person with every

blessing you can think of. Like this, "Lord bless them today and give them wisdom. Bless their finances. Bless their work today. God bless their drive to work and encourage their spirit". Nothing gives the enemy a black eye like speaking a blessing when all the flesh wants to do is insult which tears down. Miraculously, your speaking of truth will help cancel the bitterness. Give it a try :)

Love like it looks like something, today.