

Acts 11:1-18

Psalm 148

Revelation 21:1-6

John 13:31-35

## Sermon May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### *Jesus' Dying Wish*

When someone is dying, they can worry about those they leave behind. They want to make sure their spouse, their children, their grandchildren, their friends, their parents, will be okay when their gone. This worry, this anxiety, often leads to what we like to call a dying wish that is shared by the dying person.

For example, an elderly person asking their adult children to look after their spouse. Or the person dying wants to make amends with someone in their life, and so, requests a visit from this person (**Image**). Or the person dying wants two people in their family or friend circle to make amends.

In our gospel this morning, Jesus knows that soon he will be arrested and killed for challenging the authorities. So, Jesus gives this end-of-life speech to his disciples. Hoping that he can encourage them to keep living out the ministry Jesus started. Even after his death.

Well, in the midst of Jesus' speech, he too leaves his disciples with a dying wish. Love one another as I have loved you. This wish is so important for Jesus that he mentions it several times in this speech.

Love one another as I have loved you.

Now many experts argue that love is a learned emotion. Hence, Jesus says love one another as I have loved you. Jesus encourages his disciples to follow his example. To love those tax collectors, poor, sinner, women, children, Gentile. Those who have been rejected or mistreated by others. To love those who persecute them. To be generous to one another. Taking care of each other's needs. To be hospitable. To be kind and strive for unity. To heal. To forgive. To love as Jesus loves.

Through the gospel narrative, Jesus teaches us how to love by example, and then invites us to do likewise.

So, we learn to love, but we also can be motivated to love. Especially, when we feel loved. Jesus says, love one another as I have loved you. Jesus not only teaches us to love, but loves us. Jesus welcomes us as we are. Jesus prays for us when we hurt him. Jesus is generous to us. Taking care of our needs. Jesus shows us hospitality when others reject us. Jesus shows us kindness and is committed to staying connected to us. Jesus heals us. Jesus forgives us. Jesus loves us.

When we feel loved we are more motivated to love others. We see this in our relationships with others. For example, if we feel loved by our parents, we have a greater probability of developing loving relationships with our peers (**Image**). And later, with our children. If we feel neglected or abused by a parent, we have a greater probability of struggling to love others, especially those we invite into our inner circle. Like our spouse, close friends, children.

When we believe that Jesus loves us, then this feeling of being loved in all the ways Jesus loves us, motivates us to love one another.

Jesus teaches us to love. Jesus motivates us to love. Jesus encourages us to love one another as he loves us, because loving one another in this way becomes a visible sign of God's kingdom.

We witness to the people around us when we are a community that loves one another in the same way Jesus loves us. For example, when we are hospitable to others, people take notice. People feel comfortable entering our space knowing that they can be themselves.

Now the opposite is true as well. When we are inhospitable to others, people take notice. They avoid our space, because they fear being judged.

Or when we are repentant and forgiving to one another we create a space where healing and reconciliation can take place. A community with healthy conflict resolution skills is an attractive community to be a part of (**Image**).

Again, the opposite is true as well. When we hold on to things. When we stay angry at each other. Division and conflict reign, which turns people away.

Or when we are a generous community caring for those in need people see that we are a community trying to make a difference in our world (**Image**). We are an empathetic community who helps those who are mistreated. Our annual clothing giveaway is a perfect example of this. It shows our partners as well as our neighbours that we care about the people who live in this community. We want them to have access to the same things we have access to. And people want to be active participants in these types of communities.

Likewise, when we are frugal with our gifts then people see us as inward, only caring for ourselves. They are less likely to build partnerships with us or to want to have anything to do with our community.

Jesus' dying wish to us is to love one another as he loves us. To follow his example. To be motivated by his love for us. To love one another as a sign and a witness of God's kingdom come. So, others too, will know his love.

Let us pray, thank you Jesus for teaching us how to love. For being our example, so that we can love those who live on the margins of our community. So, we can stand with those who are persecuted and mistreated in our community. Thank you Jesus for loving us. For motivating us to love others. Thank you Jesus for inviting us to be witnesses of this love. Reflecting your Kingdom Come in the world. **Amen.**

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