

How Much Love?

READING: John 15:9-17

INTRO

Lowell Sallee said something in an online study I don't think I've ever heard asked, or thought about in this way - "I don't know that I've ever loved anyone as much as Jesus loved me, but that's the challenge."

Today, I want us each to ask ourselves, "Have you ever loved anyone as much as Jesus loved you?"

First I'll say, I don't know if that's even possible; I think it's probably not; and I think that's exactly what Bro. Sallee meant by starting his statement, "I don't know that I've ever..."

I think most of us have loved such a great deal that it's hard to imagine loving any more, but I think Jesus did.

And I think Lowell ended his statement properly, "but that's the challenge."

- 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: **just as I have loved you**, you also are to love one another. ' John 13:34
- John 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another **as I have loved you.** '

So, again, the question this morning is, "Have I ever loved anyone as much as Jesus loved me?"

PRAYER

- I. How much has Jesus loved me?
 - A. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."
 1. Well, that says, "God loved," not Jesus. Look...
 2. John 10:30, 'I and the Father are one.'
 3. John 17:21, 'that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. '
 4. So we know that "God" and Jesus are one. We know Jesus was God in the flesh; that Jesus the son was with God the father "in the beginning; that Jesus came to do the will of the father; so it is that whatever the Father loves, so does the Son love. If "GOD so loved the world," so did Jesus; and if Jesus "so loved the world," and I am in, or of, the world, He so loved me.
 - B. Evidenced...Galatians 2:20, '... the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. '
 - C. How much has Jesus loved me? He "gave himself for me."
 1. If we hear someone say that some person "paid the ultimate price," we know they mean the person died.
 2. John 15:13, 'Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. '
 3. That's how much Jesus loves me.
 - a) He went all the way.
 - b) He gave it all.
 - c) He loved to the fullest extent.

That makes our question a little more scary, doesn't it? Have I ever loved anyone as much as Jesus loves me?

- II. How much have I loved others?
 - A. I've felt good things for people.
 1. We know that feelings aren't enough to fulfill Jesus' command to "love one another."
 2. NEVER is ONLY a feeling commanded; and I think because feelings CAN'T be commanded.
 3. What can be commanded, as is commanded, is ACTION--action that would typically accompany good feelings, but that can still be performed, even if the *feeling* isn't there.
 - a) I.e. We don't "jive" with every person do we?
 - b) In Jesus' time, Jews didn't jive with Samaritans, but did that stop Jesus from using that exact relationship to illustrate his teaching of "love your neighbor as yourself?" "LOVE your neighbor."
 - c) He said, "Love your neighbor," someone asked, "who is my neighbor," and he answers with the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a Samaritan helps the man robbed, beaten, and left for dead in the ditch.
 - d) And in the end, Jesus asks, "Who was a neighbor to the man in need?" And they said, "the one who helped."
 4. Having good feelings for someone doesn't mean I truly love them.
 - B. I've told people I loved them.
 1. Words are one thing, but actions are another.
 2. "You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?"
 3. Words can be meaningless.
 - a) They can be lies to the recipient, or...
 - b) They can be lies we tell ourselves.
 4. Words *prove* nothing
 - a) Mt. 7:21, "Not everyone who **says** to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom."
 - b) See "For Your Consideration" in bulletin, on "lord."
 - c) What Jesus is saying is that just *calling* Him "lord," i.e. "saying" it, does not get anyone into the kingdom.
 5. Simply *saying* I love someone doesn't mean I actually do.
- III. How do I truly love someone as much as Jesus loves me? How will I know? What will it look like?
 - A. That last question, I believe, is the key.
 - B. It WILL. BE. SEEN.
 - C. Matthew 7:15-18 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. '
 1. Context is false prophets.
 2. The implication is for the good and the bad ("every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.")

- D. It is something that WILL. BE. DONE. (I.e. not simply felt or said)
1. Jesus said, "If you love ME, KEEP my commandments."
 - a) Not "feel" it.
 - b) Not "say" it.
 - c) "Do" it.
 2. Jesus said, "Love your neighbor" by HELPING him.
 - a) Not by "feeling" it.
 - b) Not by "saying" it.
 - c) By "doing" it.
- E. Jn. 15:9-17 was read at the outset; and within the lesson I've read verse 12 & v. 13, but let's read it once more, together, in context.
1. "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."
 2. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
 - a) What He does is **define** the love he wants us to have for others.
 - b) He **defines** what it is to love as much as He has: [paraphrased] "There is no greater way to love, than by giving your **LIFE** for someone else."

CONC.

Have you loved anyone as much as Jesus loves you?

Have you ever given your life for someone?

[IF TIME...I'm reminded of the wounded Secret Service Agent who took a bullet for the President.]

Thankfully, we've probably never had the opportunity to give our lives for someone.

But we've probably given our lives TO someone.

But the most important person to give our lives to is Jesus, our savior, our LORD.

Have you given your life to Jesus?