

J.J.

GREATEST KIND OF LOVE
John 15:9-17

John 15: 9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

INTRODUCTION:

Today is actually the anniversary of DCF. Exactly, March 1, 17 years ago, Green Pastures and a Bible study group have merged in order to form Disciples of Christ Fellowship.

We will have an announcement to make
(Call Tony Frias regarding announcing the merger with LINC and then showing the plans)

I was browsing the old photos of DCF of our first year anniversary and I can’t help but make myself shed a tear but also praise God for His faithfulness.
(Show photos)

(Show photo of Mica and Manti)... both of them practically grew up in this church.

God has been faithful to us.

We have gone through many happy times, like the summer camps, the retreats, all the couples nights, all the Christmas parties, all the helping of seniors. We have gone through painful times also with sickness, with misunderstanding.

People have come and go and some have gone ahead of us going home to the Lord like Tatay Ding, Nanay Lily Mae, Tatay Jess, Nanay Luning, Nanay Toning, Tatay Julio, Lhea and of course Janette Batangan. We have come through tough times together and we have gone through the pandemic and even changing venues several times right after.

But one thing is for sure that thing that kept us is the love of the Lord and our love for one another.

It's not the end of DCF because our Lord's church remains forever. It's now a new chapter where we will have the opportunity to show our love for others, where we add brothers and sisters in the church.

At the end of the day, this is the Lord's church and His plans are always good because He is good. And as we all know, this has not been about the church...IT'S ALL ABOUT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Yes, I'm a bit saddened that we are leaving the past BUT GOD'S LOVE IS NEW EVERY MORNING. There's still a lot of work. There's still a lot of souls to be saved and that's the reason the church is here... it's not for us but for the people out there who still needs to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In this new chapter, the Holy Spirit has led me into this verse and I'm excited for what God has in store and how God will continue to use each and everyone of us.

*Isaiah 43: 18 "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
19 See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.*

Yes, we thank God for what is today but let us not be comfortable in it. The first church in Jerusalem where showing their love with one another but God allowed persecution so that they will be scattered and guess who He used to scatter the church? A man named "Saul" who later on became "Paul". You can read it in Acts 8. Sometimes, I am amazed on how God moves. And you know the reason why God allowed persecution and so that they need to be scattered? It's because THE WORD HAS to be preached to the ends of the earth.

*Acts 8:1 And Saul approved of their killing him.
On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.
4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.*

Brothers and sisters, God has allowed this to happen because we need the word to be preached.

And to this end, that's the reason why we need the GREATEST KIND OF LOVE.

Let's continue with our study.

Last week :

And in 1 Corinthians 13, we learned through God's Word that only three things will remain, after everything is gone.

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love

If the greatest is love, today, by God's grace, we'll talk about THE GREATEST KIND OF LOVE.

One of the most popular songs in the past few decades was "The Greatest Love of All" by Whitney Houston. It was released in March of 1986. The title sounds beautiful but in the end, it is worldly, look at how it describes the greatest love of all...

*"Because the greatest love of all
Is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all
Inside of me
The greatest love of all
Is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
Is the greatest love of all."*

Is loving yourself, the greatest love of all? Majority of the people believe that even saying, "How can we love others if we don't even love ourselves?"

People even use the command of Jesus to justify this

Matthew 22: 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

They misinterpreted this verse.

We have to remember that the Bible already assumes that we naturally love ourselves.

When our Lord said to "Love your neighbor as yourself", He is saying, "As much as you love yourself, that's how we should love others."

This means, we naturally want the best for ourselves, we naturally want to take care of others, we want others to respect us, want others to understand us. We want others to be kind to us, to be patient with us, to be gentle with us. That's how we should love others.

So what is the greatest kind of love?

THE GREATEST KIND OF LOVE

We'll talk about its Source, The Sample and _____ (what is the greatest kind of love)

I. THE SOURCE

John 15: 9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

We all know that the source of love is God Himself.

*1 John 4: 7 Dear friends, let us love one another, **for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love***

And we mentioned last week, true Godly love comes from God, flows through His Son Jesus Christ and then flows through us.

And as mentioned, if we let the love of God flow in us flow to others, here's what our Lord said,

11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

We will be full of joy.

So how should we love? And this gives us a hint on what is the greatest kind of love.

II. THE SAMPLE

*12 My command is this: Love each other **as I have loved you.***

We all know how Jesus loved us. But let's look at it again.

Philippians 2: 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

*6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

*7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

*8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

How did our Lord love us? Let's break this down quickly with three things...

What He gave up? What He became? What He did?

First, What He gave up.

He made himself nothing or “no reputation”

Application : Remember He did not lose His being “God”. He was fully God while He was here on earth but gave up His right of the attributes of God to be totally dependent and obedient to the Father.

*6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing*

That’s why Jesus said:

John 5:19 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.

John 8:28 So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

John 14: Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

First, He gave up His right.

And that is exactly totally opposite of the world. Where the world always insists on pushing their rights.

Now we have to be careful here. When I talk about rights, I’m not talking about “social” justice here... for example, “We have the right to worship without fear or intimidation”. We need to practice that right and if it causes us to be persecuted then the Lord is on our side.

Another example : The right of free speech. This means we can share ideas and truth to others. And if we are being persecuted by that...then the Lord is on our side.

The rights that I want to talk about here is based on “personal” relationships.

Example : I am the man of the house, the Bible said I am the head of the family. It’s my way or the highway. Sometimes, we need to give up this right for the sake of a harmonious relationship in the family.

That's why the KJV version says :

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

Illustration: I remember when I was young. When we were young, we'd like to hold on to things. (Until now, I'm like that). So I had this new brand new shiny bike. I was excited to ride it everyday specially after school. When I got home, the bike wasn't there. I was panicking and then I learned that my Kuya used the bike with the permission of my mother. I was so upset. I cried and I cried until my kuya got home and I was mad at him for taking the bike

As people, it's our natural tendency to hold on tightly to things, specially thinking that it's ours.

But as Corrie Ten Boom says:

“I have learned to hold all things loosely, so God will not have to pry them out of my hands.”

Why do we hold things loosely? It's because we don't own anything, even our life.

That's why Jesus as an example :

*by taking the very nature of a servant (doulos...slave),
being made in human likeness.*

What is the characteristic of a slave?

They don't own anything but they are owned.

That's the reason, remember that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD AND MASTER.

But look at what He said.

14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Quick background : Modern translations has placed this as servants. But we have to remember, the original language means “slave”. But it's not the slaves that we know of recently that is full of abuse. Slaves during the time of Jesus were not just workers, they were accountants, builders, engineers,...sometimes the right hand.

And there are slaves that has become so close with their master, that they know all the secrets of the master... he is not only his slave but has become his friend.

Just like our relationship with Jesus..., yes, He is our Lord...we still need to obey Him, trust Him and He will take care of us but He also considers us as His friend...we call it nowadays, his confidant.

Which bring us to the third, “What did He do?”

*8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

He gave up His right, He became a slave up to the point giving up His own life for us because that’s what the Father wanted.

Knowing this is what our Lord Jesus Christ did, and Him saying

*12 My command is this: Love each other **as I have loved you.***

We serve one another but we are close to one another.

That’s why remember what our Lord said in our study of Love in Action.

John 13: 13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

We now go to answer WHAT IS THE GREATEST KIND OF LOVE.

III. SACRIFICIAL

13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

The greatest kind of love is sacrificial. It’s giving up our time, our talent, our treasure and if need be our own life FOR THE PEOPLE WE LOVE!!!

Isn’t that what God did for us?

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

QUOTE : if the root of sin is selfishness, the root of love is selflessness.

Isn’t that the one that the Lord says if we want to follow Him?

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said unto His disciples, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

So the question is, how can we sacrifice ourselves? We sacrifice our ego, we sacrifice our pride, we sometimes sacrifice our own comforts to help others.

This is the essence of the Christian life...it's losing ourselves for Christ and that's how we find love, joy, peace, patience.

Matthew 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

And we all think it's the grand gestures that we lose our life. It's in the every day. Instead of getting angry and pushing our rights, we let go and let God. Instead of us resting but we see that our wife or our husband or our parents are tired, we get up and help. That's dying to ourselves.

Let me end this with a simple gesture of dying to oneself from a little kid.

Let me end this sermon with a story about a dad who brought his kids to the petting zoo :

I took Helen (eight years old) and Brandon (five years old) to the Cloverleaf Mall in Hattiesburg to do a little shopping. As we drove up, we spotted a Peterbilt eighteen-wheeler parked with a big sign on it that said, "Petting Zoo." The kids jumped up in a rush and asked, "Daddy, Daddy. Can we go? Please. Please. Can we go?"

"Sure," I said, flipping them both a quarter (25 cents) before walking into Sears. They bolted away, and I felt free to take my time looking for a scroll saw. A petting zoo consists of a portable fence erected in the mall with about six inches of sawdust and a hundred little furry baby animals of all kinds. Kids pay their money and stay in the enclosure enraptured with the squirmy little critters while their moms and dads shop.

A few minutes later, I turned around and saw Helen walking along behind me. I was shocked to see she preferred the hardware department to the petting zoo. Recognizing my error, I bent down and asked her what was wrong.

She looked up at me with those giant limpid brown eyes and said sadly, "Well, Daddy, it cost fifty cents. So, I gave Brandon my quarter." Then she said the most beautiful thing I ever heard. She repeated the family motto. The family motto is in "Love is Action!"

She had given Brandon her quarter, and no one loves cuddly furry creatures more than Helen. She had watched Sandy take my steak and say, "Love is Action!" She had watched both of us do and say "Love is Action!" for years around the house and Kings Arrow Ranch. She had heard and seen "Love is Action," and now she had incorporated it into her little lifestyle. It had become part of her.

What do you think I did? Well, not what you might think. As soon as I finished my errands, I took Helen to the petting zoo. We stood by the fence and watched Brandon go crazy petting and feeding the animals. Helen stood with her hands and chin resting on the fence and just watched Brandon. I had fifty cents burning a hole in my pocket; I never offered it to Helen, and she never asked for it.

Because she knew the whole family motto. It's not "Love is Action." It's "Love is SACRIFICIAL Action!" Love always pays a price. Love always costs something. Love is expensive. When you love, benefits accrue to another's account. Love is for you, not for me. Love gives; it doesn't grab. Helen gave her quarter to Brandon and wanted to follow through

with her lesson. She knew she had to taste the sacrifice. She wanted to experience that total family motto. Love is sacrificial action.

That's the greatest kind of love and God showed that to us 2000 years ago so that He sacrificed His own Son in order for us to be with Him forever and ever.

That's why Jesus emphasized this again :

John 15:17 This is my command : Love each other.

And the greatest kind of love...is sacrificial love.

S.G.D.