

Ephesians 5:25; John 13:34-35 (NLT)
Love like Jesus

Introduction

Today we are gathered here to worship God. By His grace, He has provided the help we need to set up this church and to bless people both inside and outside the church. Indeed, we are grateful and thankful to Him for His presence with and provision for us.

Besides being grateful and thankful to God, we also want to dedicate ourselves to the Lord. We pray that we will serve one another in this place with the love of God in Jesus Christ; that we will so use this place that those who come to us will also experience the love of God in Jesus Christ.

I have a photo here—a family photo taken some time ago. I have kept it with me to remind me that this is not just a family photo. More importantly, it is a picture of love in which all in the picture are to show love to one another. But I must admit that I don't always love the others in my family like Jesus; and the others in the picture also don't love me like Jesus all the time.

Why so? It is because human love is imperfect no matter how “good” it may seem.

The Bible tells us that God is love, and He loves us in Jesus Christ. In turn, He wants us to love others with His love—i.e. to love others like Jesus. Jesus' love is the love of God and comes from God—it is called agape love; it is self-giving/selfless love; it is not self-serving/selfish love.

How then can we learn to love like Jesus?

I. We learn to love like Jesus when we love people like how He loves the imperfect church.

Ephesians 5:25 – “For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ...”

In the Bible, the relationship of marriage is compared with Jesus' relationship with the church. There is love, caring, protection, and strong commitment on the part of Jesus for the church.

If you and I are to be honest, we must admit that the church is found unlovable from time to time. The church is made up of imperfect people, BUT Jesus loves her all the time. The imperfect church lacks faithfulness from time to time, BUT Jesus commits His never-ending faithfulness to her all the time.

As Christians, we share life and serve Jesus together. He calls us to love and

commit our faithfulness to one another (imperfect we may be), just as Jesus loves and commits His never-ending faithfulness to the imperfect church.

People of the world will say, “Love your friends, hate your enemies. Bless those who can help you, bully those who are helpless.”

But the Bible teaches us that “the loving correction of a friend is better than the fake kisses of an enemy” (Prov. 27:6), and to “correct oppression; bring justice to the weak and helpless” (Isa. 1:17).

So, when we learn to love one another not like the world, but like Jesus, we show His love and commitment to people in spite of human imperfections.

I believe that you will not be angry with me when I say that all of us here are imperfect people. We may not tell others and they may not know what these imperfections are. But deep in ourselves, we know we are imperfect. And those people who come to us here for help and friendship are also imperfect people. But as we share life and serve together in this place, may the love of Jesus be seen in us and be shared with all who will come into this place.

A second way we can learn to love like Jesus is ...

II. We learn to love like Jesus when we guard our unity and celebrate our uniqueness in Him.

John 13:34-35 – “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Jesus said these words to His disciples in the NT. But the call is also for all of us here today. You and I come individually and together as followers of Jesus today; as His disciples.

In Jesus’ time, all His disciples were one in Him. Yet they were also very different individuals with their own uniqueness. E.g. Peter was not like James; James not like John; John not like Peter. But in spite of whatever differences they might have, Jesus called them to love one another just as He had loved them.

As Christians, we are already one in Jesus as fellow believers/disciples. But in this oneness, we are also different because God has created you and me with our own uniqueness.

So, Jesus loves us not because we are all the same, but we are all one in Him. He celebrates the rich varieties we bring into our life and service together as a result of our own uniqueness.

So, how then can we best handle the differences among ourselves?

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1. Acknowledge and accept differences. The fact of life is that no two persons are totally alike. Even twins have their differences. When there are two different views, it is often not so much one view is right and the other is wrong. The two different views are just simply ... different.
2. Make one another complete. Jesus has blessed us with this place for us to serve together, and not to compare and compete with one another. Jesus wants us to work together for His good purpose in and through this place. Jesus wants us to complete one another so that we can strengthen one another, and together we can truly “be fruitful and multiply”.

We are gathered here today not by accident, but by God's appointment. There is something each one of us can do in this place. We may not all do the same thing, but we do different things with the same love of Jesus for one another and for those who will come into this place.

Conclusion

One day, a 60-year-old woman looks into the mirror and exclaims in horror, “Oh ... no! I look so ugly!”

Turning to her 60+ years old husband, she pleads, “Can you please say something true AND good about me?”

The husband replies, “Sure I can. For your age, your eye-sight is very good. You can see yourself very clearly.”

Yes, like an old married couple, we may find it more and more difficult to show and speak the truth in love and grace to each other as the days and years go by.

Today, we come together because Jesus wants us to do some lovely things among ourselves and for people outside in our neighbourhood. Through us, Jesus wants these “outsiders” to hear, see, and feel His love for them in very real ways.

Jesus sees people as precious and not as problems. To love like Jesus is to show His love and speak His truth to people with His compassion and grace for them.

Jesus has brought us together today to share and serve together in His name. And He who has started this good work in us has also promised to be with us to strengthen and guide us to complete what He has started in and through us (Philippians 1:6).

So as we dedicate ourselves to show and share the love of Jesus, may we all look to Him and seek Him to help us be true in faith and faithfulness to what He has called us to do together, both inside and outside of this church.

The Lord Jesus so helps us. Amen!