

Sermon Manuscript for “The Way of Jesus – Part 4 – BIG LOVE



Way of Jesus Recap

#1. I have begun following Jesus, and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.

We are Christ followers on a journey. We rely on the constant infilling of the Holy Spirit for supernatural power to be overcomers and servants of Christ.

#2. I have been sent by Jesus to bless others and to invite them to follow Him. We find our significance in obeying the Great Commandment – to love God and others. We define our success in fulfilling the Great Commission – to Go and make disciple-makers.

3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my Attitudes, Behaviours, Character.

Developing Jesus’ attitude, behavior and character is a life-long journey between learning God’s word, listening to his Spirit, and trusting in His provision and work for our holiness.

#4. I am learning to love God and to love others.

The English language kind of stinks when it comes to the word “love”.

You always have to qualify it, or almost “disqualify” it – “I love you, but only as a friend.

You can say you love pizza, and you love your wife. – which one do you love more?

The obvious reply there is, “Well, what kind of pizza are we talking about?”

The writers in the Greek New Testament got around that problem because in the Greek there are different words for love that stood for different kinds of love.

I want to highlight two in particular today that are essential to the way of Jesus: Agape and Phileo love in particular...

Agape love is that selfless, sacrificial love that recognizes the image of God in others. It’s the kind of love that God demonstrates that he has for us...

-Agape love is more than natural affection - it is a supernatural fruit of the Spirit.

“...the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit is love...” Gal 5:22

-Agape love is a matter of will rather than only feelings (for Christians must love even those they dislike).

Mt 5:44 “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”

Agape love is kind and generous even when the other person is unkind, unresponsive and unworthy.

-Agape love is the basic element in Christ-likeness.

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.” John 15:9

-Agape love is love in action.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...” John 3:16

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters...¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:16,18

-Agape love is the ideal that is at the heart of our relationship with God and with others.

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“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matt 22: 37-40)

Phileo love speaks of natural human affection, fondness and liking another person.

It’s the kind of love that exists between brothers, sisters and close friends.

Phileo love is what love looks like when you genuinely LIKE someone.

It is important that both expressions of love are active in our lives.

After Peter denied Jesus three times at the crucifixion, the risen Jesus catches up with Peter and he asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?”

Twice uses the word agape and the final time he uses the word “Phileo”.

At first, Jesus was impressing upon Peter that he needed to walk in agape love – God’s type of unconditional, powerful love – to continue to function as a disciple and to make other disciples.

But then, the final time he asks Peter, “Peter, do you **like** me? Are we friends? Brothers?”

Jesus knew that reconciliation and harmony requires both agape and phileo love between two parties.

So how can we grow in our Agape and Phileo love for God and others?

I am learning to love God by obeying Him.

1Jn 5:2-4 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Jn 14:21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

Pr 3:12 “...because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.”

Victory over destructive sin, learn to trust in God’s power to keep us, his correction comes from His love for us.

I am learning to love God by living in His presence.

Human things must be known to be loved; but Divine things must be loved to be known.

Blaise Pascal

*1Co 8:3 ...the man who **loves** God is known by God.*

We learned last week that God influences our behavior and forms our character when live in loving and close relationship to Him. - **“Beholding equals becoming.”**

Ps 73:28 But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

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I am learning to love others by serving them.

1. I am a living sacrifice. (I am available to Jesus - ABC.)

Ro 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

2. I am Christ's Ambassador. (I represent Jesus.)

2Co 5:14-15 For Christ's love compels us...that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2Co 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

3. I am a Vessel of love. (I deliver Jesus' love to others.)

2Co 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

A starter guide to loving your enemies... and everyone else:

1) Start small.

Start by forgiving the guy who cut you off in traffic/ kind words/ solve a problem.
You don't necessarily have to absolve your worst offender today, at this second.
God has a way of bringing us through different stages of forgiveness and generosity.
"You have been a good steward of this small thing, now I give you something larger..."

2) Love your neighbour as yourself.

Humans have a powerful instinct of self-preservation and self-fulfillment.
We want food and clothes for ourselves.
We want a safe place to live.
We want meaningful work and pleasant activities to fill our days.
We want our life to count in some way.
All this is self-love - it's normal and healthy.
But to stop with only loving yourself turns it into self worship, which is not like Jesus.
Jesus' command is to "love your neighbor as you love yourself."
How aggressively do you pursue your own well-being?
Pursue your neighbor's well-being that aggressively, too.\

*Gal 5:13 - You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.
But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another
humbly in love.*

3) Act lovingly even if you don't feel it.

*"When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.
If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him
a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less." – C.S. Lewis*

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Actions influence your feelings. Motion results in emotion.

The ability to love is established not so much by fancy words as it is by often repeated deeds.

The curious thing about love is that if we CHOOSE to act in a loving way, we will begin to FEEL love for that person.

It also shows us that phileo brotherly love – “liking someone” – can grow from practicing agape love – loving someone sacrificially.

Big Love

Love is a big deal. It's everything really.

We learn to love God as we obey Him and draw near.

We learn to love others as we serve them.

We serve by starting small, loving others like ourselves and just getting on with it.