

MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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As I Have Loved You

Jesus commands us to love each other (John 15:12). When people were plotting to kill him, he led the disciples to Jerusalem to an upper room and instructed them with the final lessons of his ministry here on earth. This is like a death bed request; just prior to facing the cross he emphasized the most important. He says “this is my commandment.” It is not a request, or a suggestion, it is a commandment. This command stands out above all others because he said “this is my commandment.” This is it. This is what is important.

Love is emphasized by Jesus throughout his ministry. During the famous Sermon on the Mount, he tells the audience to love your enemies. Now, that may be the hardest commandment of all to obey but it is very important and is to be taken seriously. Here he does not just say love one another; he says love your enemies. Later on, when some of the religious leaders were challenging him, he told them that the greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and that the second greatest commandment is to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mat 22:37-39). Love of the Lord has to be top priority in life. If you are a sincere follower of Jesus you follow his instructions and imitate his life. You have to put God first in your life and be governed by love. God’s love has to be reciprocated and passed on to others. He further didn’t just say to love your neighbor, he instructed us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. It is plain and simple. God doesn’t just love us, God loves everyone in the world.

There are several aspects of love. There is lust and desire for romance. There is selfish love for personal gratification; love for another so that your needs are met. There is vanity; the love of the self. There is family love that is totally different from your love for others. There is love for your friends: I tell my best friend that I love him from time to time. But we are to love like Jesus. We are to love others like Jesus loves us. This is more love than we deserve. Along with this love that we receive from the Lord is the commandment that we have this same degree of love for others. We must love one another as much as he loves us. “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34).

Jesus has a special kind of love. It was carried within him everywhere he went. It is unselfish, sincere care for others everywhere. If you want to make a difference in the world, if you want to make sure you are right with God, make sure you love one another as Jesus loves you. The problems of the world would not exist if we simply lived by this command. There would be no violent crime, no violation of human rights, no taking from others. The Christian is called out of the world into the heavenly realm.

A Christian is an example of Christ within contemporary society. Without the love of Christ ruling in your hearts, it is hard to love your enemies, it is hard to love your neighbor as yourself, and it is hard to love others as Jesus loves them. But with the love of the Lord ruling in your heart, these commandments are not only easy to follow, they come naturally. When the world sees this characteristic within you, then the world will know you are his disciple.

Thank you,

George