

Becoming Like Christ

I have found that one of the dangers facing believers is for us to think that life comes from our churches. It is human nature to look to things outward rather than things inward. We meet here this weekend to encourage each other. We rally around a unique structure of church life or philosophy of ministry--one that seeks to integrate the family into church life rather than separate the family.

Although it is encouraging and needful for us to talk about church leadership, structure, philosophy of ministry, and family values, I think you would agree with me that the life of the church isn't derived from the facts that we have seen the importance of family and integrating the family into church life. These things cannot give us life and should not be the focus of our worship. Life is in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him alone. For that reason, I want to encourage us and perhaps more strongly, admonish us that the goal of all of what we do in the family integrated church movement is to become like our Lord Jesus Christ in the way we live.

To become like Christ
we must
Love like Christ

To become like Christ, we must love like Christ.

Jerome, an early church father of the fourth century, wrote about John, “the blessed evangelist” who in extreme old age at Ephesus was carried into the congregation in the arms of his disciples and was unable to say anything except, ‘little children, love one another.’ At last wearied that he always spoke the same words, they asked: ‘Master, why do you always say this?’ He replied, ‘Because it is the Lord’s command, and if this only is done, it is enough.’”

Tonight I would like to lead us through Jesus’ last discourse and see what we can learn about loving like Christ. Let us begin with prayer and I invite you to ask Jesus to meet with you and give you hunger to be like Him.
by loving like He loved.

A Look at Jesus' Love

John 13-17

Let's take a look at Jesus' love first.

He loved His own.

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

DONT READ --The reason we are looking at the love of Jesus Christ first is that it is a recurrent theme in the 5 chapters, but more importantly it is on the heart of our Lord and Savior as He approached His last hours on this earth. Let's consider what was on His heart...

1. He knew He was going to be crucified and He knew his disciples would be troubled, confused, disillusioned, and their faith tested like never before.
2. He knew He was going to start the process of betrayal, give Himself over to be abused and ultimately offer His body as a sacrifice for sin.
3. He knew what the result would be of that sacrifice.
4. Primarily His heart was to do His Father's work. I think He was consumed with zeal and love for His Father and love for those God gave Him.
5. I want us to see the love pouring out of Jesus' heart for His Father, his disciples, and for us.

READ

He loved to the end.

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

John stressed the extent of Jesus' love--He loved them to the end. To the end of what?

1. To the end of his life.
2. To the end of sin's penalty.
3. To the end of their lives--our lives.
4. To eternity.

He laid aside His body to
cleanse us completely.

John 13:2 During supper, the devil
having already put into the heart of
Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to
betray Him,

He laid aside His body to
cleanse us completely.

John 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, John 13:4 got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

Please take notice of a number of things.

1. The oddity in the timing--during supper.
2. The relation of the timing to what Jesus was thinking –
 - he knew his time had come to depart from this world.
 - he knew what Satan had put in Judas' heart
 - he knew all things had been given into his hands
 - he knew he was returning to the Father

What was in the mind of Jesus? It is clear in this text. It was loving His Father and loving his disciples to the end--it was what he was about to do on the cross to love them and what he was going to do for them in going back to the Father. He was going to cleanse them from their sin and to do that, he will have to lay aside his covering--his clothing--his body to wash them.

He laid aside His body to
cleanse us completely.

**John 13:5 Then He poured water into
the basin, and began to wash the
disciples' feet and to wipe them with
the towel with which He was girded.**

Jesus had two things in mind as to how he was going to love them/us.

1. Cleansing completely from a lifetime of sin all at one time. – He was going to wash them completely.
2. Return to the Father having done His will so the HS would be sent so He could continue to love them to the end through each other—they would cleanse each other on a daily basis from the stain of sin that occurs each day as they forgive each other and bear one another's burdens.

Let's notice what took place.

He laid aside His body to
cleanse us completely.

John 13:6 So He came to Simon Peter.
He said to Him, “Lord, do You wash my
feet?”

John 13:7 Jesus answered and said to
him, “What I do you do not realize now,
but you will understand hereafter.”

He laid aside His body to
cleanse us completely.

John 13:8 Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

John 13:9 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.”

He laid aside His body to
cleanse us completely.

John 13:10 Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

John 13:11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, “Not all of you are clean.”

What he did to them in washing their feet was not symbolic of the work at the cross--that symbol would be a bath. Instead it was symbolic of their daily need to be loved and forgiven through each other. In going to the cross he once and for all removed their sin, but in returning to His father He could love them on a daily basis through each other.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

John 13:12 So when He had washed
their feet, and taken His garments and
reclined at the table again, He said to
them, “Do you know what I have done
to you?”

John 13:13 “You call Me Teacher and
Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

John 13:14 “If I then, the Lord and the
Teacher, washed your feet, you also
ought to wash one another’s feet.

Then Jesus explained what he had done--He gave them a moral
obligation and example

1. Moral obligation: I am Lord means you are slaves. You ought to do
as I do
2. Example. I am teacher means you are disciples.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

John 13:15 “For I gave you an example
that you also should do as I did to you.

John 13:16 “Truly, truly, I say to you,
a slave is not greater than his master,
nor is one who is sent greater than the
one who sent him.

John 13:17 “If you know these things,
you are blessed if you do them.

Jesus made a promise with this instruction: there is blessing.
But before we move on, let's also notice vs. 16. Jesus was making sure
they understood He was sending them to love and that even though he
had emptied Himself, humbled Himself to serve them and do the
lowliest job, He was still greater, He was still master.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I
give to you, that you love one another,
even as I have loved you, that you also
love one another.”

Jesus reaffirmed his point so it would not be missed: Loving one another as I have loved you is a commandment. You are to obey me if you love me. Bottom line: If you love me, you will love each other as I have loved you.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

John 15:12 “This is My commandment,
that you love one another, just as I have
loved you.

John 15:17 “This I command you, that
you love one another.

He said it again in John 15.

How significant was this to the disciples? How important should it be to us?

Let's look at how Peter, John, and the Paul understood what Jesus said.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

**1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience
to the truth purified your souls for a
sincere love of the brethren, fervently
love one another from the heart,**

What is the truth we obey? Fervent, sincere love of the brethren from the heart.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 Now as to the love
of the brethren, you have no need for
anyone to write to you, for you
yourselves are taught by God to love one
another.

Paul: God teaches us to love one another.

He loved so we would love
one another as He loved us.

**1 John 3:11 For this is the message
which you have heard from the
beginning, that we should love one
another;**

**1 John 3:23 This is His commandment,
that we believe in the name of His Son
Jesus Christ, and love one another, just
as He commanded us.**

John: From the beginning the message was this: love one another. It is His commandment. To believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, is to love one another as He commanded us.

Bottom line. If we love Jesus, we obey his commandment to love as He loved. We become like Christ in the way we love.

A look at the relationship
between Jesus' name, His
work, and His love

His name = His work = His love

As we look through John 14–17 we see a relationship between Jesus' name, work, and love.

I would like to suggest that in the mind of Jesus, these three are almost synonymous with each other.

What's in a name? His Work

John 14:10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.
John 14:11 “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

What's in a name? His Work

John 14:12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

John 14:13 “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

What's in a name? His Work

John 14:14 “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

I would like for us to notice Jesus' line of thinking. Believe in me. Believe my works, ask in my name, love as I command are almost synonymous.

God's Work is to Love

1 John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

1 John 4:17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

When we love we are in Jesus' Name

1 John 3:11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

1 John 3:23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 15:8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

John 15:9 “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 15:16 “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

John 15:17 “This I command you, that you love one another.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 16:23 “In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.

John 16:24 “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 16:25 “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.

John 16:26 “In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf;

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 16:27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

Jesus communicated that He was sent by the Father to love them. When Jesus loves them, the Father is doing His work. When we love, we are doing the Father's and the Son's work. Loving others is to be in Jesus' name. Loving others is to love God, and that's our challenge.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 17:6 “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 17:11 “I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

John 17:12 “While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

What makes us one?

John 17:22 “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

Jesus' love makes us one.

Colossians 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

It is the glory of God to make us one with the Father and Son through the HS by the love of Jesus Christ.

It is our love for God that unites us. As we face this challenge of loving God, we must realize that you can't train others to love God if they haven't experienced God's love.

Jesus' Love / God's Name

God's love for His Son is Jesus' glory.

John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus' Love / God's Name / God's Glory

God's love for His Son is Jesus' glory.

**John 17:25 “O righteous Father,
although the world has not known You,
yet I have known You; and these have
known that You sent Me;**

**John 17:26 and I have made Your name
known to them, and will make it known,
so that the love with which You loved
Me may be in them, and I in them.”**

He loved His own to the end.

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

He loved His own to the end.

He manifested His name/love/glory.

He kept them in His name/love/glory.

We are united in His name/love/glory.

We ask in His name/love/glory.

He loved His own to the end.

He washed us in His death.

He washes us in His life.

He unites us in love.

His love is in us and He is in us.

To love Jesus is to obey His commands.

He commanded us to abide in His love and love
with His love.

When we give our lives for others, we love as He
loved us.

When we love as He loved us, we are in His name.

When we love in His name, we may ask whatever
we wish.

When we love like Jesus, we glorify the Father
and Son.

Clearly loving like Jesus loved is a test of true regeneration.

Do you hunger and thirst to become like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—to love God and others like He loves?

Note, I'm not asking if you do love like He loves. I'm asking if you desire it. Do you hunger and thirst for it? If you do, you are blessed and you will be satisfied. He will fill you.

Is hungering to love like Christ an intentional part of your message to your children?

Do you live to love like our Lord? If we are going to face the challenge of loving God, we must realize that we must become a lover of God like Jesus was a lover of God. And to love God is to love others. They are alike because when we love like Jesus we glorify the Father and Son and express our love.

May the Spirit of Christ Jesus our Lord fill us with His love for each other and for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us hunger and thirst
to become like our Lord
and Savior, Jesus Christ
BY LOVING LIKE HE
LOVES.

The call to face the challenge of loving God is not a call for more effort, it is a call to experience the love of God in Christ and to express the love we experience through Him to our spouses and children.

If our children can live 20 years in our homes, in our family, and not experience and express the love of Christ, then we have failed in the most important area of discipleship. Jesus told his disciples to go and teach all nations what he taught them. And what is clearly one of the most important messages that the disciples received was this message of Jesus' love and his commandment to love. May God give us a hunger and thirst to become like our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ by loving like He LOVES.