

“Like Jesus: Love in an Age of Fear” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | October 11, 2020

Old Testament Reading: [Deuteronomy 7:6-11](#)

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, 10 and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. 11 You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.

Epistle Readings: [Galatians 5:19-23](#)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control....

[1 Corinthians 13:1-8](#)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends.

Gospel Reading: [John 21:12-21](#)

Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Introduction

We become like what we gaze at. As we meditate on God’s Word, we imitate the love Jesus has for us. Instead of being driven by fear and a hunger to have our needs met, we begin to give of ourselves to others.

Background

1. What love isn’t.
 - a. Love’s opposite is fear. ([1 John 4:18](#)) Real love requires vulnerability. Selfishness is “safe,” but it separates us from others.
 - b. Love’s counterfeit is attraction. We cannot build a life on the feeling of “being in love.”
 - c. When we merely use others, our lives mirror the list in [Galatians 5:19-21](#).
2. What love is.
 - a. [1 Corinthians 13](#) describes God’s love, which gets inside us and changes us.
 - b. [Deuteronomy 7](#) shows that God loved Israel because he was faithful to them, not because he needed anything from them.
 - c. Through the cross, Jesus took our place and gives us his life.
3. How we become more like Jesus.
 - a. Peter denied Jesus three times because of fear. But in [John 21](#), he has been changed by seeing the resurrected Lord.
 - b. To meditate on God’s Word, we turn it over in our minds and dwell on it.
 - c. As we imitate God’s self-giving love, we become more like Jesus.

Discuss

1. How can we know whether we are loving someone or merely seeking to use him or her?
2. Can you describe a time you acted selfishly out of fear?
3. Can you describe a time someone showed you God’s love as it is described in [1 Corinthians 13](#)?
4. What does Jesus’ death on the cross teach us about love?
5. What is one practice we could adopt to meditate on God’s Word?

Conclusion/Application

There are many things to fear in this world. But when fear dominates us, we isolate ourselves for protection and try to use people instead of loving them. To give true love, the fruit of the Spirit, we must meditate on God’s love and allow it to work in and through us.

Prayer

Father, you are perfect love. We confess that we often exploit others and build walls around our hearts because of fear. Thank you for breaking down those walls by giving yourself to us. Please help us focus our gaze on you and love others as Christ has loved us. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." 19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"