

“The Christian Walk: Walking in Love”

(Ephesians 5:1-2)

Introduction

- This year’s Summer Sermon Series is titled “The Christian Walk” as we are going to preach on different biblical aspects of what it truly means to live as a Christian (e.g., walk by faith, walk in wisdom, walk in obedience, etc.). In the Bible, the word “walk” (*peripateō*) can be used literally or figuratively. In the figurative sense, it describes a person’s behavior – the day-to-day, step-by-step, moment-by-moment, decision-by-decision living of one’s life.

As we saw in the first sermon of this series, “[Walking the Christian Walk](#)” (Eph.2:1-10), every non-Christian is walking in darkness and sin – walking according to the flesh and not the Spirit of God – and cannot truly walk the Christian walk (Eph.2:2; 4:17; Rom.8:7-8; Phil.3:18). It is only when a person is saved – when they truly put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and are consequently filled with the Holy Spirit – that he/she can live the Christian life.

- God has supernaturally enabled and equipped every Christian to walk the Christian walk. He has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2Pet.1:3; Eph.1:3; 2:10; 2Tim.3:17; Heb.13:21), and commanded that those who claim to believe in Christ actually live for Christ (Matt.7:21-27; Lk.6:46-49; Jn.3:36; 1Jn.2:3-4).

However, these are much more than just commands to be followed. In the Bible, the various aspects of the Christian walk describe what it means to be a true Christian. They are divine commands to be sure, but they are also spiritual realities. That is, Christians live Christlike lives because they are “*in Christ*” (Eph.1:1, 3; 2Cor.5:17) and Christ is “*in them*” (Jn.17:23, 26).

1 John 2:5-6 ~ “... By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he [Jesus] walked.”

- True Christians have been saved from not only the penalty of sin but also the power of sin. They are no longer enslaved to sin or under the power of the devil. With the presence and power of God’s Holy Spirit indwelling within them, God compels Christians to follow His commands. Furthermore, the Christian has died to sin and – with a new nature, a new heart, a new mind – desires to live for the glory of God (see Ezek.36:27; Rom.6:1-2; 2Cor.5:17; Eph.2:8-10).
- This is true of every Christian. While Christians are not perfect, they desire to faithfully live a life that reflects Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Christians ultimately want to showcase God’s character to the world (Matt.5:16; 1Cor.10:31).

One such characteristic of God, that every Christian seeks to emulate, is God’s love. In the Bible, we read that “*God is love*” (1Jn.4:8, 16). This love is neither tainted by sin nor limited by humanity. God’s love is pure, perfect, and permanent; His love is holy and glorious and eternal. Whereas non-Christians do not possess this love (because they do not have the Holy Spirit of God), every Christian has received this love and therefore seeks to walk in this love.

1 John 4:19 ~ “We love because he first loved us.”

- This brings us to our first aspect of the Christian walk: “Walking in Love.”

Eph 5:1-2 ~ “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

- These two verses are loaded with theological truths, which have great implications for our lives as Christians. To help us understand and apply these truths, I have outlined these verses with four distinct but related headings.

1. The Mandate (vs.1)

- It is important to notice the word *“Therefore”* (vs.1), particularly in the New Testament letters. For it often indicates a concluding point or precedes points of application. In the preceding context of Ephesians 4, Paul had described that those who are truly saved *“walk in a manner worthy”* of being called a Christian (4:1), by putting off the *“old self”* (4:22) and putting on *“the new self, created after the likeness of God”* (4:24).

The whole book of Ephesians can be essentially divided into two parts: 1) Doctrine [ch.1-3], and 2) Duty [ch.4-6]. That is, what a Christian is (who we are in Christ) and how a Christian lives (how we live in Christ).

The Christian life cannot be reduced to a list of do's and don'ts. It is much more than obeying a set of commandments. In fact, *“belief determines behavior”* (and not the other way around). For we do not truly know how we are to live for Christ until we first truly understand who we are in Christ.

- This is particularly true in the command *“be imitators of God”* (vs.1). Obviously, we cannot truly, or faithfully, obey the command to imitate God if we do not know God or if we have a wrong view of God. We must first understand the doctrine of God before we can follow the command to imitate Him.
- The command is to *“be imitators of God”* (vs.1; *“be”* is an imperative verb). The Greek word (*mimētēs*) translated *“imitators”* (vs.1) means to emulate or to follow (see 1Cor.4:16; 11:1). Our English word *“mimic”* is derived from this Greek word. A godly person is one who correctly *“mimics”* God – one who faithfully follows Him in attitude, in words, and in actions. To live a godly life is not a suggestion, it is not optional for some Christians, it is a command of God to live like God.

Matt 5:48 ~ “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Luke 6:36 ~ “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

Luke 6:40 ~ “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

Eph 4:32 ~ “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Eph 5:2 ~ “And walk in love, as Christ loved us ...”

Phil 2:5 ~ “Have this mind [of humility] among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”

1 Peter 1:15-16 ~ “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

1 John 2:6 ~ “whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

1 John 4:11 ~ “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

- At the risk of being repetitively redundant, this is the standard for every Christian. Contrary to what you may have heard, or believe, pastors are not called to a higher standard (they are under a greater accountability and judgment; Jms.3:1). Every Christian is called to the same standard: godliness! We are to reflect and showcase God's (communicable) attributes in our lives. To be holy like God is holy; to be merciful as God is merciful; to be forgiving as God is forgiving; and to be loving as God is loving.

Rom 8:29 ~ “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed [*symmorphos*] to the image of his Son ...”

- Upon hearing or reading these words, everyone should have the same response: to humbly recognize their desperate need for God. For no one can be godly apart from God. Those who attempt to reduce *“godliness”* to a set of religious virtues and morals are deceived and arrogant. We cannot live up to God's righteous standard – perfect, God-like, holiness – on our own. We have no innate goodness, and cannot produce good works, apart from God's saving and sanctifying grace (Is.59:2; 64:6; Jn.15:4; Rom.3:10-12, 23).

2. The Motive (vs.1)

➤ The mandate to “*be imitators of God*” is immediately followed by the motivation for it: “*as beloved children*” (vs.1). As a child naturally imitates the actions and attitudes of their parents, so too we, as God’s children, should emulate the actions and attitudes of our Heavenly Father. Only Christians are “*children*” of God (Jn.1:12-13; Gal.3:26; 4:5-7; Rom.8:14-17; 1Jn.3:1). Unbelievers are described in the Bible as “*children of wrath*” (Eph.2:3) and children of “*the devil*” (Jn.8:44 Eph.2:2).

It is important to note the adjective used to describe Christians as children of God: “*beloved*” (vs.1). If you are a Christian, you are God’s child, and not just a child of God but a child who is dearly loved by God – the Creator and sovereign Ruler of all things!

Amazingly, the Greek word translated “*beloved*” (*agapētos*) is used to describe the love God the Father has for Jesus (God’s one and only Son).

Matt 3:17 ~ [at Jesus’ baptism]: “and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved [*agapētos*] Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”

Matt 17:5 ~ [at Jesus’ transfiguration]: “He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved [*agapētos*] Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’”

Rom 1:7 ~ “To all those in Rome who are loved [*agapētos*] by God and called to be saints ...”

John 17:22-26 ~ “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Rom 8:14-17 ~ “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

➤ Every Christian is deeply and purely loved by God. They are a part of God’s beloved and eternal family. To put it another way, if you are a Christian you are loved by God with a holy and everlasting love – a love not based on your own goodness or merited by your good works. That is, you don’t deserve it and you did not earn it. God loves you because He sovereignly chose to love you. In Christ, He adopted you as His child and loves you as His own!

✓ Illust: “The adjective [*agapētos*] in classical times, with reference to children, meant ‘beloved’ or ‘contented’ but particularly referred to an only child to whom the parents had devoted all their love. In other words, because the child had received so much love, the child had the security of being loved and thus was contented” (Harold W. Hoehner; *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*; 5:1).

✓ Illust: In my opinion, one of the greatest hymns ever penned was written by F.M. Lehman in 1917. It is titled, “The Love of God.”

“The love of God is greater far, Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin.

*O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure, The saints’ and angels’ song.*

Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above, Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.

*O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure, The saints' and angels' song.*

- Christians are saved by God's love and sanctified by God's love. God's love is not a capricious feeling or a fleeting emotion. God's love is not meritorious or deserved. God's love is not manipulative or self-serving. He does not love us because we are so lovable, but because He graciously chose to love us.

Eph 1:4-6 ~ “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [*agapē*] ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved [*agapaō*].”

Eph 2:4-5 ~ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love [*polys agapē*] with which he loved [*agapaō*] us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved”

1 John 3:1 ~ “See what kind of [*potapos*] love [*agapē*] the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. ...” (see Jn.3:16; Rom.5:8; 8:38-39)

Matt 8:27 ~ “And the men marveled, saying, ‘What sort of [*potapos*] man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?’”

Deut 7:6-8 ~ “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. ⁷It 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, ⁸but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers ...”

- Christians are not ultimately motivated by God's wrath, but motivated God's goodness and mercy and love (2Cor.5:14; 1Jn.4:19). It is knowing that we are dearly loved by God that compels us to live a life pleasing to God. We can only be “*imitators of God*” (vs.1) because we are His “*beloved children*” (vs.1), and we only seek to be “*imitators of God*” (vs.1) His “*beloved children*” (vs.1). We are to love others as we have been loved by God!

3. The Manner (vs.2)

- The manner in which we are to imitate God is to “*walk in love*” (vs.2). This is both an instruction and a description. That is, Christians are commanded to walk in God's love and those who walk in God's love are Christians. Since God is love, God's children are to walk in God's love.

Godly love is a hallmark of Christianity. It fuels the greatest two commandments – to love God (Matt.22:37) and to love others (Matt.22:39); it characterizes the greatest sacrifice (Jn.15:13); it represents the fulfillment of God's law (Rom.13:10; Matt.22:40); it epitomizes what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

John 13:34-35 ~ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

1 John 4:8 ~ “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

1 John 4:20 ~ “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

1 Cor 13:1-3 ~ “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And 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. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

- Godly love is God’s love. It is pure and holy, selfless and costly, gracious and merciful, God-pleasing and God-glorifying. God’s love is an expression of His mercy and grace, and in that sense God’s love is unconditional (i.e., undeserved, unmerited).

4. The Model (vs.2)

- It should be obvious that Christ is the model for the Christian life: *“walk in love, as Christ loved us”* (vs.2). To “walk in love” is walk in Christ’s love, and to love as Christ loved. This is not a self-serving, self-gratifying, self-glorifying love. This love is not a fleshly or worldly love. It is the love of God and the love that comes from God.

John 13:1-17 ~ “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

²During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, do you wash my feet?’ ⁷Jesus answered him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.’ ⁸Peter said to him, ‘You shall never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.’ ⁹Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’ ¹⁰Jesus said to him, ‘The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.’ ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’

¹²When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you?’ ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

- To put it simply, Christ – through His life, death, and resurrection – has shown us to walk in love. We can describe this love in three parts.

A. A sacred love

- As the Greek word for *“loved”* (vs.1; *agapaō*) indicates, Christ’s love is a godly love. The fact that *“Christ loved us”* (vs.1) indicates to us that this love is God’s love (1Jn.4:8, 16; 1Jn.4:7), which is obviously a sacred (holy) love. God’s love is absolutely pure, with no wickedness or guile or flaw. This is the love with which we, as Christians, have been loved by God.

Rom 5:8 ~ “but God shows [*synistēmi*; demonstrates or proves] his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

1 John 4:10 ~ “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

- As God is holy so His love is holy. In fact, all of God’s attributes are equally necessary, harmonious, and eternal. No attribute of God is more (or less) important than another, and no attribute is conflicting with another (e.g., God’s love is not more important than His holiness, and God’s grace is not conflicting with His justice). God will not love apart from His holiness, or at the expense of His justice (which is why Christ had to die for our sins). God’s love does not displace or diminish His holiness; His love is executed in His holiness.

So, when God loves you, He loves with the fullness of His divine nature. God’s love is not a feeling or a fleeting emotion. We must not think of God’s love on human terms. For human love can be capricious, conditional, evil, and narcissistic – in a word: ungodly.

- We are to live out our Christian lives in, and in demonstration of, God’s love. God’s love is sacred. It does not express itself in sinful immoralities or worldly idolatries. God’s love does not originate from selfish desires or ambitions, from corrupt motives, or fleshly passions. God’s love neither condones nor revels in sin.
- When we read, “*Christ loved us*” (vs.2) we need to understand that Christ loves us with the highest and the purest kind of love. A love deeply rooted in His divine character. A godly love. A sacred love.

B. A sacrificial / selfless love

- It is imperative to note the phrase “*gave Himself up*” (vs.2; *paradidōmi heautou*). This refers to Christ substitutionary death on the cross, where He gave His own life as the sacrifice for our sins.

Eph 5:25 ~ “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up [*paradidōmi*] for her”

1 John 3:16 ~ “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” (see Jn.10:11, 15, 17)

John 10:11-18 ~ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ... ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Gal 2:20 ~ “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

1 Tim 2:5-6 ~ “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.” (Tit.2:14)

Heb 7:26-27 ~ “For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.” (Heb.9:14)

- Through His sacrificial death, Jesus was – at the same time – both the “*the great high priest*” (Heb.4:14; 2:17) who offered the sacrifice, and the sacrificial “*lamb*” (1Cor.5:7; 1Pet.1:19; Jn.1:29, 36). He is both the Giver and the Gift, as He “*gave Himself*” (vs.2).

Jesus is both Giver and Gift, and we (Christians) are the recipients. For Christ died on the cross “*for us*” (vs.2), as sufficient payment for our sin.

Isa 53:4-6 ~ “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (1Pet.3:18)

➤ Jesus did not die on the cross for Himself – for He had no sin (2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.2:22; 1Jn.3:5). He did not die for angels or celestial creatures. He did not die for creation, or to save the planet. He died *“for us”* (vs.2), that is, for all who would ever believe.

✓ Illust: “Let your soul see Jesus on the cross – bleeding, writhing, suffering, tortured, dying, dead, and then recollect that there was not one pang, or groan, or sigh for Himself, it was all for others – for His enemies. I wish we could all say, one by one, ‘It was for me. He loved me, and gave Himself for me. He endured the cross for me, His blood was shed for me, those agonies and cries and griefs were all for me. For me, the death-pang and the expiring groan, all for me, for me.’ If you believe in Jesus, it is so” (C.H. Spurgeon; sermon “Priest and Victim”; August 28, 1881).

C. A submissive love

➤ Technically, Jesus was not a victim. While those who plotted and executed His death are culpable for their sins (Acts 2:22-24; 4:27-28), in His crucifixion Jesus willfully surrendered Himself as *“a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”* (vs.2). This reference is a rich metaphor from the Old Testament. When the Israelites would, in faithful obedience, offer their various offerings to the Lord, it was a *“pleasing aroma to the LORD.”* This pictures the pleasure of God as He accepted the terms of their offering (see Gen.8:20-21).

The sacrificial offering of Christ’s death *“a fragrant offering ... to God”* (vs.2) in that it was not only pleasing to Him but an acceptable (sufficient) atoning sacrifice – complete forgiveness of sins – for all who would ever believe (2Cor.5:21; Heb.10:11-12; 1Pet.2:22-24; 3:18; 1Jn.1:9).

Heb 10:4, 10-14 ~ “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ... ¹⁰And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

Phil 2:5-8 ~ “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

John 6:38 ~ “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” (Jn.4:34; 5:30)

➤ This is how we are to walk in love. It is not a feeling or an emotion, but a love that is sacred and sacrificial, and submissive to the Lord. We are not to “love” only when it is easy or beneficial. To walk in love is to walk in God’s (godly) love. It is not profane or perverse (see Eph.5:3-5); it is not deserved or earned; it is not self-seeking or self-serving. We are to love others as God has loved us – with mercy and goodness and grace: *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us ...”* (vs.1-2).

John 15:12-13 ~ “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

1 John 3:16 ~ “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

Conclusion

- It is imperative to understand, and to remember, that God did not love us because we were deserving of God’s love. He did not love us because we were so lovable. God loved us while we were still “*dead in [our] trespasses and sins*” (Eph.2:1); while we were “*children of [His] wrath*” (Eph.2:3); while we were “*still sinners*” (Rom.5:8); while we were “*enemies*” (Rom.5:10); while we were “*hostile to God*” (Rom.8:7); while we were “*doing evil deeds*” (Col.1:21).

This is how we are love “*one another*” (Jn.15:12-17; 1Jn.4:7); to love our “*neighbor*” (Matt.22:39; Rom.13:9-10); and to love our “*enemies*” (Matt.5:44; Lk.6:35). To love those we deem lovable, or to love those who love us, is relatively easy and beneficial – and not particularly Christian.

Luke 6:32 ~ “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.”

- We are to forgive as God forgives (Eph.4:32), to be holy as God is holy (1Pet.1:15-16), and to love as God has loved us (Eph.5:1-2). Such things we cannot do on our own. While “walking in love” sounds like a wonderful and simply concept, it is a command that can only be followed by those who are truly and faithfully following Christ. Truly loving our “enemies” – those who hate us, have wronged us, who have hurt us, who persecute us (Lk.6:27, 35-36) – requires that we are saved and submissive to the work of the Spirit of God within us.

It is also imperative to understand, and to remember, that we cannot truly “*walk in love*” apart from Christ or in our own strength (Jn.15:5). We can only follow Christ – and “*be imitators of God*” (Eph.5:1) – if we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. We simply cannot do this on our own – and, thankfully, God has not asked us to.

John 13:34-35 ~ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 15:9-10 ~ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”

- Imitating God’s love is costly – it cost Him the death of His only Son. We must count the cost, and be willing to pay the price – as “*a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God*” (vs.2). For we are called to love others as we have been loved by God – to “*walk in love, as Christ loved us*” (vs.2).