**Series: What Jesus Would Say**

*VBC*

*Pastor John Johnson*

*John 13:36-14:4*

*September 21-22, 2013*

**“The Kind of Love People Need”**

Pet peeves—everyone including pastors have them

-first church—I had just preached—and I was spent out

-maybe it was a message calling for commitment—Elijah

-perhaps I had just finished describing Jesus’ passionate cry

-or unpacked the essence of romantic love out of Song of Solomon

*-I just remember being completely used up*

-and then she appeared—a well-meaning mother

-who came forward after a call for decision was made

-with this question—“Pastor, could you give the invocation at my son’s Little League banquet?”

-wait—were you here? Listening? Was I speaking to the air?

-people do these things—*ignore what you just said*

-Jesus must have felt this at times—especially in the Upper Room—preaching one thing

-but people are somewhere else in their minds—*read 13:34-36*

-Peter is moved by such missional rhetoric

-he wants to know more about authentic witness—right?

-no!—Peter is not listening at all—he had stopped listening after Jesus’ earlier remark about His leaving (verse 33)

-and this is all he can think about—he wonders why he is being left behind—*read verse 37*

-John tends to portray Peter this way—as the incomplete disciple in need of maturation[[1]](#endnote-1)

-Peter represents all emerging followers who tend to be overeager, impulsive, foot in mouth, speak before thinking types

-so consumed with their own interests that they sometimes *miss the heart of what Jesus wants them to hear most*

-his behavior prompts us to ask—what might God be saying that could be drowned out by other more personal concerns?

-maybe Peter did not find this new command so important—or so interesting[[2]](#endnote-2)

*-no word is more misunderstood and misused as love*

-maybe he was asking—what is the newness in this?

-love was commanded back in Leviticus 19:18

-most likely—he never heard anything at all—so distracted, so obsessed with Jesus’ departure

-but Peter will have to let Jesus carry the conversation where He will

-and Jesus is firm—“you (Peter) can’t follow Me now”—verse 36

-Peter is not yet equipped to follow Jesus—but it is more—

-Jesus’ aim is not to take us out of the world—but leave us to be *a driving force* in this world

-“Peter—I am leaving you here because you have a mission—this is what this larger conversation is about”

*-Christ fleshed out the Father—the church fleshes out Jesus*

-I AM LEAVING YOU TO BE JESUS

So what does this look like? What is required? Two things—

*1. BE A SOCIETY OF MUTUAL SERVICE—13:1-17*

-this is where discipleship *begins*—*retreating from ambition so others can get ahead*

-pouring out our time and resources for the sake of others

-serving needs—even if they are menial and mundane

*-letting others know there is nothing too beneath us*

*-this is what creates the community that attracts others*

*-this is what defines leadership—this is what declares God is at work here*

-but it is more—which the immediate context underscores—

-to be Jesus means—

*2. BE A COMMUNITY OF MUTUAL LOVE—13:34-35*

-this is the “foundational substratum” of the church

-this is where discipleship is *authenticated*

a. Jesus commands this because love is the non-negotiable obligation of the church

b. He commands this because love does not come easy—sin gets in the way—sin hates love

c. it is commanded because by this *all* people will know You are *My* disciples

*-not because you do amazing miracles or put on impressive concerts—not even because you feed the poor necessarily*

*-*but because you are a community radically devoted to one another

-this is what will tell people you know God

-make God visible—tell the world He is in our midst—confirm that our profession of faith is real

-but HOW does this happen—for the church too often can be a loveless community

—two things:

*A. IT HAS TO BE A LOVE THAT IS RECEIVED FROM JESUS*

-“love one another just as I have loved you—*in order* that you may love one another”—34b

-it’s what in Greek is a “purpose clause” to say—

-He lavishes us with love so we can expressit*[[3]](#endnote-3)*

-“we love because He first loved us”—I John 4:19

-it’s *a basic principle of love*—if you want loving kids—a loving spouse—pour love into them early and often

-*“Nothing is more important for the development of love than being loved”—McKnight*

-John is proof—no one wrote more about love than John

*-it was the center of his moral vision*

-and part of the reason for this was that he was “*the disciple whom Jesus loved”*

-but it is more—

*B. IT HAS TO BE A LOVE THAT LOVES LIKE JESUS*

-our love is *not intended to be original*—but reflective

-“just as I have loved you”

-but what does this mean? How has Christ loved us?

-how has Christ loved you? Could you make a list?

-here’s my list—

*1. LOVE INTIMATELY*

-Jesus uses the metaphor of vine and branches to describe His intention that we be in UNION

-He invites us to partake of Him as we would bread, drink from Him like water—to say something about His intent to love intimately—not from a distance

-what if God has this thing for us—almost like lust?

-Willimon—God seems to have desire for us that is “erotic” in intensity

*-we make a mistake to separate agape from eros when it comes to God’s love*

Illustration—Bonhoeffer—at the end of his life was meditating on Song of Solomon—WHY???

-he was reassured that even in the darkest night—God loved him with a “ravishing” love

Point—Jesus calls us to love like this

*-people will not recognize us as Christ’s disciples if we love from a distance*

-if our relationship is strictly business—detached, aloof, reserved, remote

*2 LOVE SACRIFICIALLY*

-for Christ loved enough to pour His life into them—give His life for them

*-the cross is the crowning proof of God’s love*

-this is how we are to love one another—with love that costs us—is not cheap

Point—to love as Christ loves will cost something of our lives—our time, our resources, our comforts, our strength, our patience, our rights, our wills, our preferences, our convenience

*3. LOVE IMMENSELY*

-Christ loved the disciples “to the full”—not the minimum—13:1

-Paul had the same experience, describing the love of God as “flooding” his heart—as something running over—Romans 5:5

*“God’s love is like the Amazon River flowing down to water one daisy”—FB Meyer*

*4. LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY*

-Christ reached out and called these men to Himself (chapter 1)

-loving them with a love that was not earned—it was spontaneous, uncaused, undeserved

-as Paul puts it—while we were yet sinners—Romans5:8

-what tells the world our love is otherworldly is that it is not based on merit

*5. LOVE CONCRETELY*

-Christ’s love was not merely an emotion, an abstract idea, a concept

-the kind of love Christ loves is action oriented—it does things

-“we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action—I John 3:18

-to love as Christ loves is to go beyond mere sentiment—way beyond Hallmark

-it fleshes itself out in acts—I see this love a lot around here—

-Pauline comes down every Super Tuesday and makes Turkey Noodle soup

-David drives the shuttle; Samir seats the guests; Martha answers the phones; Dan spends 12 hours working on a crashed computer site; Bruce rides the mower; Village men work on the church; Village women sew the quilts; Don gets on all fours and loves our kids, Dr. Dan takes one day a week and volunteers his time etc…*LOVE IN ACTION!*

*6. LOVE CONTEXTUALLY*

-according to what’s needed in the moment

*a. sometimes—Christ’s love HURTS*

-obsessed with Jesus’ departure, Peter wants Jesus to know he is willing to do anything to come with Him

-but Peter’s intentions outstrip his strength—he hasn’t really counted the cost

-he might even be showing a false bravado—this will require love—*read verse 38*

-Peter loves Peter too much to let this go

-don’t make too much of your courage Peter

-and don’t make too much of your devotion—it’s not about you!

-this kind of love can be hard—but necessary in the moment

-it necessarily puts us in our place and quiets us

-Peter will be quiet for the rest of the conversation—we will not hear from him again until chap 18

*b. sometimes—Christ’s love COMFORTS*

-love knows that the corrected also need consolation, encouragement—14:1-3

-Peter—there will still be a place for you

CONCLUSION

-in our One Another Series—we noted what this love in its various expression looks like—the sort that tells the world we are His disciples—

*-it is walking in to worship prepared to expend my spiritual gifts where needed—in order that others might have life*

*-it is getting up earlier to pray for the needs of one another*

*-it is welcoming someone I have never met*

*-it is giving my resources to the whole—rather than dictating where God’s money should go*

*-it is listening when I would rather be on my way*

*-it is singing songs that are not always my preference*

*-it is mentoring the next generation and putting up with their mistakes*

*-it is reaching out to the single dad—the barren woman—the person who is dealing with a medical complication or mental deficiency*

*-it is expecting the best—rather than assuming the worst in someone*

*-it is committed to one’s success*

*-it is giving no ear to gossip*

*-it is always saying thank you*

*This is “just as I have loved” love*

1. Duke, Irony, 96 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Bruner, 800 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Scot McKnight, The Jesus Creed, 107 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)