

Sermon Notes

Risk Church, New Zealand

28 June 2020, AM

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Title: How To Make Love Your Highest Goal, Not Fear or Back-Biting

URL: <http://www.riskchurch.org.nz/listen/2020-make-love-your-highest-goal>

Notes

- So little love in Social Media these days - dehumanising
- John 15:9-17 v13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
- Mat 5:43-48
 - Love for enemies. Am I loving only those who love me?
 - How to show love and empathy in a crazy world where everybody's out to get each other.
 - Jesus was a true revolutionary who never raised a sword. The Jews missed Him because they thought He was going to overthrow the Romans who were oppressing them. He came for a far greater purpose.
 - Likewise we need to keep that eternal perspective in mind as we navigate this world. We're not here to overthrow the current government or anything that's trying to overtake the world. We're here for the same greater purpose that Jesus was here for.
 - The mission that Jesus gave His disciples is still the same for us 2000 years later. Nothing all has changed. We are to go into all the world and preach the Good news. We can't do that without love.
 - The stoning of the woman caught in adultery
 - Let the one without sin cast the first stone - Jesus undercut their plans because no one is without sin.
 - If we truly want to love our enemies
 - In that way you will be acting like true children of your Father in Heaven.
 - We won't be acting like true children of our Father in Heaven if we react, if we spew out vitriol and hatred. If we're no better than the world then we're not fulfilling the Great Commission.

- 1 John 4:7-21
 - The opposite of love is fear in the Bible because anyone who is in fear is not in love.
 - Fear underpins hatred; for example, the fear of death, the fear of losing my freedom, fear of God. Hatred comes out of these fears.
 - Fear is fast. It's a frenzy. It acts irrationally. It's always on the go because you run if you get afraid of something (e.g. fear of a spider).
 - Love moves at a far slower rate than fear (ref. The title of this message "The Pace of Fear").
 - When we get fearful of something the adrenaline kicks in. We try to avoid things. We get fearful of something ahead. We start imagining the worst case scenarios. We attack other people for it.
 - But love moves a lot slower.
 - E.g. training for a half-marathon walk. Always conscious of setting a good pace - not too fast to burn out and not so slow as to take all night.
 - "I've heard that the speed of love moves at 5 km/hr. That's like an average paced walk."
 - A walking race is an endurance race, not a sprint. You can't sprint for an entire marathon.
 - So the speed of love moves much slower.
 - Jesus was never in a hurry, never reacting out of fear like when he was going to Jairus' daughter to raise her from the dead.
 - He was never driven by fear. He was always driven by love. So it was always in perfect timing.
 - When going at a sustainable walking pace throughout life, you'll notice people more. But if you're frenzied and driven by fear you'll overlook people and not notice their needs. E.g. The fear of sickness and virus. It's so real.
 - But we cannot live in that fear. Jesus was afraid of no one and no thing. Jesus had no fear because:
 - He knew that he was going to defeat death. Death was nothing to Him.
 - He got up and moved towns because He had a mission. He didn't move on because He was afraid of people trying to kill them. He didn't protest His rights.
 - The Bible says we are to imitate Christ.

- We're not always going to get it right. We need to have the humility to admit when we get it wrong and don't follow the way of Christ, to admit when we don't follow the way of love.
 - Jesus never raised the sword or protested injustice. The disciples did though! And we're so much like those disciples
 - Christ was never rushed or in a frenzy. He knew that He had a greater mission, something else to do, a divine appointment to meet someone.
 - And that's how we are to live, to not live in fear or the hustle and bustle of life, to not live in the frenzy of having to do everything all the time, and to not act irrationally because we want to see something change instantly. That's not what love does
- 1 Cor 13:13 - 14:1 - such a good passage on love
 - Let love be your highest goal.
 - When someone does/says something unpleasant, ask "what do you mean by that?" rather than launching in with an attack. Nothing ends well like that.
 - Constantly thinking, how can I love through this situation. We need to stop being caught up in the politics of this world. We have to be watchful and prayerful, alert, on guard because we have an enemy who's always prowling. But we need to remember that it's not the person or institution or thing that's our enemy. Sin is our enemy. These people often don't know. They're blinded.
 - So the question is how to be an example and a witness to these people who Christ is.
 - Think 20 times before posting that reply, or before responding to that person who's riled you up for having a go at Christians or God. Love has to be the highest goal here.
 - This love is Christ-personified love. What would Jesus do in that moment? He didn't accuse the accusers of the woman caught in adultery. He just challenged them.
 - We don't attack our enemies. Our true enemy is the devil who is motivating and inciting people. So we need to ask God to show us how to love our enemies.
 - Put down the stones. Don't be the one to cast stones.
 - As a parent, love unfolds over time. There's an instant love when they're born, but it unfolds over time as you go through hard things. But there's still this love that doesn't go away regardless of what they've done.
 - When I'm hurried with getting the kids to school, I'm not really showing love: "Hurry up. Get your shoes on. Arrghhh!" Occasionally I'm collected, but not often.
 - We can show love by not being so hurried and not packing your day so full that you don't take notice of someone or forget to pray for them, or to show love in some way.

- Here are some practical things
 - Regarding the scripture about loving your enemies. There are people in this world who don't like us personally, or more generally don't like people who love Christ.
 - How do we pray for these people and for our govt?
 - God showed John Bevere to pray for his enemies in the same way that he prays for himself.
 - All the things that you would want for yourself, pray that for that person. If you want provision, good health, kids loving God, or protection, you pray that over the people that curse or mistreat you. The Word actually says in that verse of loving your enemies that it's those who abuse you.
 - We don't have to bite back. Jesus said to turn the other cheek. The greater thing is that they've come to know who Christ is, not that you've managed to save face.
- God will always have the final say. We don't need to get so worked up that we get angry with others, that we let the very thing that we shouldn't be doing come out. That's not love. Love is patient, kind, self-sacrificing. It doesn't envy or boast.
- The greater things is that over time people will see how you respond to things, and see how you show love, kindness, compassion and empathy (walking in someone else's shoes).
- There's literally nothing you can take to heaven except love, everything you've done to sow Christ's love into others.
- Mission will to preach the Gospel will never change, even up until our dying breath. And the way you can preach the Gospel without having to use words is to show love. Just, you know... be the bigger person ;-)
- Sometimes this is:
 - closing your mouth when you don't want to close your mouth.
 - Deleting something you want to post. Delete! Delete! Delete!
- Pray for them. This sometimes doesn't feel like much, but Jesus is able to speak to hearts. And that speaks louder to people.
- It's laying down the flesh and saying "No! I'm going to let love rule here. I'm going to follow Christ and do what Christ would do."
 - Christ would stop, and withdraw if He needed to pray.
 - He would slow down and take the long way around. Keep in mind that this is an endurance race, not a sprint.
 - You show love in the little things and it will sow seeds and multiply and multiply and multiply. It's the little things that, done consistently, consistently make the biggest change.

- This is something that I'm always challenged with.
 - We never arrive at that place where we feel "Bliss. I'm personifying God's love." It's never like that!
 - It's a battle sometimes - a battle of the mind. Grrr, everything in me right now wants to do that! But I'm going to choose the other road.
 - It is really hard to do sometimes, and you've just got to close your mouth, pray and ask the Lord for help, "How can I respond differently in this situation?" Sometimes God will say to respond immediately, and sometimes God will say, "Don't say anything at all."
- Finally:
 - Ask the Lord for help.
 - Read through the scriptures on love - heaps of them!

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Bible Passages

Jn 15:9 -17 (NKJV)

Love and Joy Perfected

9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should

go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

Mat 5:43-48 (NKJV)

Love Your Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

1Co 13:13 — 14:1 (NKJV)

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Chapter 14

Prophecy and Tongues

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.