

Chosen to Love
John 15:12-17

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have 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 abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

This text occurs right after Jesus's great statements about abiding in him. It's an incredible passage that I hope you will take to heart, especially during this pandemic.

It is out of that Vine-Branch relationship that Jesus moves onto his next topic which is loving each other. It is only as we relate to God properly that we can relate to each other

First: The Source of our Love. 4-6

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

This is a very simple agricultural analogy. A branch is dependent on the vine for its life and its ability to bear fruit. But it doesn't live to live, but to bear fruit.

When it comes to the issue of love, Jesus says, "*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*" v – 9

What is the fruit God intends us to bear? Love.

You will quickly recognize that I am preaching this message in response to the hatred presently exhibited in the world. God has not called us to this. God has called us to love.

ILL – Katy Perry is a very famous pop star who performed the halftime show at Super Bowl 49.

Picture of Sharks

She was raised Methodist and both of her parents are Methodist ministers.

Her text – "*the first thing I did when the presidency was called is text and call my family members who did not agree and tell them I love them and am here for them. #FamilyFirst. Call your family today. Happy Sunday.*"

Response: *“Those people voted for a man who incited violence and didn’t care whether marginalised groups lived or died.” “THEY should be reaching out FIRST to apologise and that’s the bare minimum before there can be any talk about love and moving forward.”*

“Some of you are behaving like this was a mere ‘difference in opinion’ and not real people’s lives being destroyed by fascism. Very wild to witness ... This is how racism prevails because you white ‘liberals’ want to coddle your relatives who mean the rest of the world harm.”

This is NOT who we are.

They are like this because they are disconnected from God who is the source of love.

First: The Source of our Love – God’s Love

Second: We are Chosen to Give Love. 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 abide

This “choosing” doctrine is not a NT concept.

Deut 7:6 *“For you [Israel] are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession”*

2 Sam 7:23-24 - *You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, Yahweh, have become their God”*

Israel is clearly God’s chosen people. And this idea of “choosing” Israel and “choosing” us raises a lot of questions:

- 1 – Was God showing favoritism in the OT?
- 2 – Does Jesus contradict the OT in extending his love to all nations?

All of our questions about being chosen can be answered when we move the focus from “who” is chosen, which we don’t know in this life, to “why” we are chosen.

- a) God chose Abraham and promises to bless the world through him –

Gen 12:3 - *in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Gen 18:19 - *For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him*

Abraham is chosen not for his own benefit but for the benefit of the world

After God rescued Israel from Egypt and established his covenant with them at Mt. Sinai, he reminded them,

Exodus 19:5 - "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession"

But God explains the 'why' of his choice in the next verse

Exodus 19:6 - "Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"

Israel is a kingdom of priests to God for "the whole earth." What does a priest do? A priest mediates between two people.

What is Israel to do? They are to faithfully represent God as a community of all that represents God and we can get that list of characteristics from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:-7) and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5). In this case,

b) God chose Israel to represent him to "the whole earth."

Again, God chooses one out of many because many have been chosen.

Israel is chosen for a purpose. Salvation to Gentiles was not plan, 'B' in the OT. It has always been plan, 'A.'

Israel is the perfect nation to reveal God to the nations. Why? They have seen and experienced Yahweh's power and rescue for themselves.

c) Even Jesus is God's Chosen One to reveal Yahweh to the world

Isaiah 42:6 - I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,

Isaiah 49:5-6 - "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

John 1:9 - [Jesus is] "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."

Acts 1:8 - *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

God is inclusive, not exclusive in his choosing.

EX: Jesus met the Samaritan woman (Gentile) at the well who then invited everyone in Sychar (Jews) to hear about Jesus (John 4:39-42).

The NT is filled with these kinds of stories of Jesus and his followers extending this invitation to all people (Matt 8:8-12, 28-34; 15:24-28; Lk 17:11-19; Acts 1:8, 2:1-21, 8:26-40, 9:15, 10:17-48, 13:46-48, 15:6-19, 16:1-15, 16:17, 19:8-20).

By the time Peter writes his first letter to dispersed Messianic Jews, he says,

1 Peter 2:8b-9 - *They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Unbelievers are destined to stumble.

You are destined to shine.

Which brings us back to our text for the day –

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have 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 abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Third: This is how Jesus calls us to live. 12-17

1 – We are commanded to love each other. 12

2 – Love is a willing self-sacrifice or it is not....love. 13

There is no such thing as love without sacrifice. Someone always pays the cost of love. It is not emotional debt – “*If I do this for you, you must do _____ for me,*” but genuine sacrifice out of God’s heart of love.

“Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the

person being loved is deserving”
 Ted Tripp in *What Did You Expect*, p. 188).

a) Love is willing sacrifice

- Love calls you beyond the borders of your own wants, needs, and feelings.
- Love calls you to be willing to invest time, energy, money, resources, personal ability, and gifts for the good of another.
- Love calls you to lay down your life in ways that are concrete and specific.
- Love calls you to serve, to wait, to give, to suffer, to forgive, and to do all these things again and again.
- Love calls you to be silent when you want to speak, and to speak when you would like to be silent.
- Love calls you to act when you would really like to wait, and to wait when you would really like to act.
- Love calls you to stop when you really want to continue, and it calls you to continue when you feel like stopping.
- Love again and again calls you away from your instincts and your comfort.
- Love always requires personal sacrifice.
- Love calls you to give up your life.

b) Love is willing self-sacrifice *for the good of another.*

- Love always has the good of another in view.
- Love is motivated by the interests and needs of others.
- Love is excited at the prospect of alleviating burdens and meeting needs.
- Love feels poor when the loved one is poor.
- Love suffers when the loved one suffers.
- Love wants the best for the loved one and works to deliver it.

c) Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another *that does not require reciprocation.*

- The Bible says that Jesus died for us while we were still sinners. If he had waited until we were able to reciprocate, there would be no hope for us.
- Love isn't a “you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours” bargain.
- Love isn't about placing people in our debt and waiting for them to pay off their debts.
- Love isn't a negotiation for mutual good.
- Real love does not demand reciprocation, because real love isn't motivated by the return on the investment. No, real love is motivated by the good that will result in the life of the person being loved.

- d) **Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another *that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.***
- Christ was willing to go to the cross and carry our sin precisely because there was nothing that we could ever do to earn, achieve, or deserve the love of God.
 - If you are interested only in loving people who are deserving, the reality is that you are not motivated by love for them but by love for yourself. Love does its best work when the other person is undeserving.
 - It is in these moments of undeserved love that love is most needed. It is in these moments that undeserved love is true love.

Isn't this exhausting? No. Because (#1), Jesus is the source of our love. It's a Vine-branch love.

3 – We are only Jesus's friends as we love. 14

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

4 – We are not servants but friends. 15

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

5 – We are chosen to bear fruit. 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 abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

6 – Our fruit is love for one another. 17

These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

In so doing, we do what Israel failed to do and that is demonstrate the wonder of being in God's family.

Conclusion:

Does loving people like Jesus loved people gain a person's love or even the world's love?

vs 18-20 - *If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*

Hated for love? Persecuted for love? Oh yes. Ask Katy Perry.

Community Groups:

- 1 – How are you doing?
- 2 – What are your great loves right now?
- 3 – What are your great sorrows right now?
- 4 – Read John 15:12-17
- 5 – How does Jesus describe our relationship in vs 4-6?
- 6 – What does a Vine-branch relationship mean to you?
- 7 – How is Jesus the source of our love?
- 8 – How does that define our love?
- 9 – Read those OT texts used in the sermon that develop the ‘why’ of God’s choosing Israel
- 10 – Why did God choose Israel?
- 11 – How is this not favoritism?
- 12 – How does Jesus demonstrate God’s love for the nations?
- 13 – Discuss this statement, *“Love is a willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.”*
- 14 – Have you experienced that kind of love?
- 15 – What makes it so hard to give that kind of love?
- 16 – What steps can you take to begin sharing that kind of love?

