
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe

“The Love of Jesus”

John 13: 18-38

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

*“The love for equals is a human thing--of friend for friend, brother for brother. It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles. The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing--the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world. The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing--to love those who succeed where we fail, to rejoice without envy with those who rejoice . . . The world is always bewildered by its saints. And then there is the love for the enemy--love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens, and inflicts pain. The tortured's love for the torturer. This is God's love. It conquers the world.” - Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat**

“While I regarded God as a tyrant I thought my sin a trifle; But when I knew Him to be my Father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against Him. When I thought God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could ever have rebelled against One who loved me so, and sought my good.” - C.H. Spurgeon

“What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life . . . The long painful history of the Church is the history of people ever and again tempted to choose power over love, control over the cross, being a leader to being led. Those who resisted this temptation to the end and thereby give us hope are the true saints.” - Henri Nouwen

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?

Why do we need more than a pronouncement and words about the love of Jesus? How does Jesus' time with his disciples in the Upper Room invite them and us to more than that?

Tim Keller often communicated that “to be loved and not known is superficial; to be known and not loved is a nightmare. Only Jesus knows us to the bottom and loves us to the sky.” Have you experienced being both known and loved? How is it different than the other two alternatives?

What comfort is it to you that Jesus loves us in our weakness, failure, self-interest, and confusion? How do the folks in the Upper Room bear this out?

How do we receive the love of Jesus and give it away?