

Greater love John 15:9-17 Easter 6 May 6, 2018

Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. John 15:9, 14

Dear friends in Christ, we talked about abiding in Christ and his love last week. We talked about staying in word and sacrament, that in them Jesus would be with us, that in them his spirit would be with and in us, and that we would abide in him. That it wasn't just confirmation students who should remain in God's word, but all his children..

Today Jesus goes further, he speaks of how we are to live as we abide in him and he in us. He tells us what life abiding in his love looks like. He tells us about greater love.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. Jesus speaks these words, and he speaks of God's love for us, that we who were sinners are called friends, that God has revealed himself in Christ to us, and that God himself laid down his life, God himself went to the cross that we would not die, but live, That we would be innocent and holy and reconciled to God.

But he doesn't just do this to tell what he was about to do. He holds it up to his disciples as love. He tells his disciples to love one another with this greater love.

We live in a superficial age, where likes and coverage matter, where we can keep up with each other and exchange birthday wishes on facebook and think that is enough. Where we think it is enough to show a little interest. And that passes for love. Or at least we think it is a good substitute,

Love is hard. Love isn't just a feeling of being kindly disposed toward someone, its not just that you greet them when you see them in the supermarket or over coffee. Love is an action that costs. That Greater love is reflected Parents love their children and sacrifice their time and their energy, their very lives to make sure that they are warm and clothed and fed and safe. They change their diapers, endure their tantrums and sacrifice for them. That is the greater love.

That greater love is reflected even in small things, the time and energy put into special friends dinners, put into quilts for people we will never meet. That too is the greater love.

Yet sometimes we get confused. Sometimes we think that this love comes from us rather than God. We forget that we bathed in the love of Christ. It changes who we are as we feed us body and soul. We see we can serve by using these flowers, these banners, these acts, and we think these acts are love rather than the God who loves the one they are for.. Parents can forget they became parents out of love for their kids and demand the kids serve them. We can quilt because we have to but consider it a chore. So abide in the love of Christ.

And act on that love. The question often isn't about is this right or wrong, because if it isn't a direct command from God you could argue. The question isn't did we do it before this way or not. Communion on 1st and third Sundays, Thanksgiving dinner with fixings, flowers for mothers day, we have freedom in all these things. But we are commanded to love, to give up our life. The question is "does it help?" /and for the joy set before him Christ endured the cross. And for the joy set before him we don't push for a dinner that mom can't make, but perhaps provide, for the joy set before him we invite others to church, and for the joy set before him volunteer at school.

This is love, that someone lay down his life for his friends, Give form the life God gives you today and serve your friends, for God is love.