

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading

Giving Time, Talents & Resources

of Discipleship

Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond
the Church

June 26, 2022

Day 1: John 15:12

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.'

Knowing how different the Disciples were from each other made it a lot harder for them to perform what Jesus is asking. As the first disciples were different individuals, from different backgrounds, so are the disciples of the 21st century. Jesus accepted each one with their doubts (John 20:25), lack of confidence (John 11:7-16) and different requests (Matthew 20:20-21). Jesus loved them by making sure they practiced before He sent them out (Luke 10:1-6). Jesus loved them by correcting them and fulfilled His promise to not forsake them. He promised to be with them and to care for them until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).

Question: How is this commandment different from *Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul and your neighbor as yourself*?

Challenge: Think about how Jesus has loved you and see if you can do likewise with those of the faith.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:35-45

Day 2: John 15:13

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

We read this as a prediction of Jesus' death (and it is) but we need to also read it as a reminder that when we answer the question - what are we willing to die for? - we need to think persons, not things. Jesus is redirecting their ambitions and their hopes for the future toward God's creation and specifically people. In the ancient world stone monuments were built to acknowledge great achievements. Jesus wants our great monuments to be built in individuals, not in stone.

Question: I know it's scripture but do you agree with the statement above?

Challenge: Who can you think of that has died for a friend?

Scripture: I Corinthians 13

Day 3: John 15:14

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

There is a hymn written in 1855 that has a chorus that goes – *O how I love Jesus, because he first loved me.* It is a hymn of appreciation for Jesus' self-sacrifice for our salvation. As with most of the Bible, what we think and say is good, but it is what we do that is important. If we sing - *Oh how I love Jesus* - we should follow those words by something like - *I will show that love by caring for my brothers and sisters in Christ.* The words 'thank you' to Jesus are nice but what is called for is to love one another.

Question: If I do not do what Jesus commands, will that affect my salvation?

Challenge: Think about your friends - who do you love and why?

Scripture: Proverbs 18:19-19:5

Day 4: John 15:15

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

Jesus has given us all the resources we need to be in ministry. He has made it clear that we join with Him in God's work of redemption. Our part is to do the proclamation of the Good News and to care for the people. God in Christ has done the hard part (the crucifixion and resurrection), now we are to proclaim to the world that God has come to save His people.

Question: Do you think that Jesus means to say that knowledge separates a friend from a servant? If so, why?

Challenge: Think of some situation where knowledge is power. How have you been harmed because you were not given some information?

Scripture: II Kings 5:8-27

Day 5: John 15:16

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

Bearing fruit is being faithful. Being faithful is expressing the love of God that has been experienced by you, to others in the world you live in. We cannot produce the fruit but we can plant, water, weed and in general tend the plant before, during, and after the fruit appears. God only asks us to do our part. Jesus went to the cross so we do not have to go that far. We are called to plant, water, weed, and tend.

Question: Why do we have to ask in Jesus' name?

Challenge: Are you bearing fruit?

Scripture: John 15:1-17

Day 6: John 15:17

I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

The command to love and to risk our life means that we are in for a long life of service. We risk our life as we love another regardless of racial background, different beliefs, or different hopes for a meaningful life. Love is (I believe) not accepting anything in a person's life but placing someone else's best interests above my own.

Question: How many commands has Jesus given in this passage?

Challenge: How is it possible to love a lot of people as Jesus seems to want us to do?

Scripture: John 17