July 16, 2017

Series: Keys to Life-Giving Relationships

**Life-giving Love**

John 13:18-38

Growth Track Step 3 today -

**Intro:** “How do I love thee, let me count the ways.”

That is such a famous statement. In the past, I have made the mistake of attributing this to Shakespeare, then being corrected after a message -

These were the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning -

*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.*

*I love thee to the depth and breadth and height*

*My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight*

*For the ends of being and ideal grace.*

*I love thee to the level of every day’s*

*Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.*

*I love thee freely, as men strive for right.*

*I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.*

*I love thee with the passion put to use*

*In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.*

*I love thee with a love I seems to lose*

*With my lost saints, I love thee with the breath,*

*Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,*

*I shall but love thee better after death.*

Have you ever counted the ways in which you loved someone?

We have been walking through John - breaking down the passages since the beginning of chapter 12 - and discovering keys to life-giving relationships -

* **Life-giving Desire**
* **Life-giving News**
* **Life-giving Honor**
* **Life-giving Belief**
* **Life-giving Humility**

**Now, Life-giving Love -**

Jesus is continuing the conversation begun after He washed His disciples feet …

No one was or is greater than Jesus - He had been given all authority by God, yet He took the role of a menial servant and washed the disciple’s feet.

Then, He said, “Do you understand what I have done? I have given you an example to follow. You are not better than me. You are not better than those around you. If you want life, you must serve.”

If you want healthy, life-giving relationships in your life, you must serve one another in humility.

Jesus continues that conversation now -

John 13:18-20 - “I am not saying these things to all of you. I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, ‘The one who eats my food has turned against me.’

I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I Am the Messiah. I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me.”

He knows that not everyone is going to enter into a life-giving relationship with Him. He knows that not everyone is going to receive the things He has to say.

Not everyone is going to release their pride and give of themselves to serve others. Not everyone is going to have a desire to walk in humility.

**> Not everyone will receive our love.**

Jesus is beginning to prepare them that one among them will refuse everything He has said.

Judas didn’t want love - He wanted war. He wanted to elevate the man over the message. People still do this today. They elevate the man over the message. People worship preachers. Don’t ever do that. They are faulty. You begin to worship a preacher, you will excuse his faults - you will allow him to continue in his faults - and in that you will destroy the message itself.

Judas didn’t understand humility. He didn't understand love - He didn’t understand God’s love.

He didn’t understand Jesus’ love - so He didn’t receive Jesus’ love.

Judas didn’t get it. Jesus knew his reach was limited to those who would receive.

Not everyone listens to the witness. Not everyone will receive our love.

John 6:44 - For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me…

Who is the Father drawing?

I have had many through the years who haven’t received the message I have tried to give. But it’s not about me. It’s about the message.

We try to deliver the message as best as we can, but ultimately, it’s not about me, it’s about the message!

The message is, Jesus loves you more than you can love yourself - many will not receive that!

Jesus has a better plan for you than you have for yourself. Many will not receive that!

**> When people receive God’s love they receive life.**

It is absolutely necessary that this message of God’s love be accepted.

John 13:21-30 - Now Jesus was deeply troubled and he exclaimed, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!”

The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, “Who’s he talking about?” So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus responded, “It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl.” And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him,”Hurry and do what you’re going to do.” None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. So Judas left at once, gong out into the night.

While it is not about the messenger - it is about the message - in this case, receiving the messenger is receiving the message.

Receiving Jesus is receiving His message. Rejecting Jesus is rejecting Hims message. Rejecting His message is rejecting Him.

Some people want Jesus, but they really don’t want everything He said. It doesn’t work that way.

Judas wanted Jesus - but he didn’t want the message. You’ve got to take both together.

You can’t just take the parts of His message that you like. You can’t just take the message of Jesus forgiving the adulteress without taking the part where He calls some people vipers and full of corruption like dead men’s bones.

You can’t just take the message of Jesus of Jesus forgiving the dirty, rotten thief and saying don’t judge lest you be judged, and not take the message of Jesus saying, “If you don’t receive me and the entirety of this message, you will be judged!”

You can’t just take the message of Jesus saying if you do good you will rise to eternal life, and not take the message of Him saying if you continue to do evil you will suffer ultimate damnation.

You must accept all of the message in order to have life.

You can’t make Jesus into who you want Him to be - into something other than what He is. This is why it’s so important to keep reading the Bible, studying the Bible, listening to good teachers of the Bible - because it doesn’t take much to get off track.

When you receive His message, you receive Him. When you receive Him, you have to receive His message of love - love for you and love for others.

Matthew 10:40 - Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who receives me receives the Father who sent me.

**> Love is the ultimate key to a life-giving relationship.**

John 13:31-38 - As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Simon Peter asked,”Lord, where are you going?”

And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.”

“But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for you.”

Jesus answered, “Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter - before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.”

Here is the confirmation that we have heard the message, received the message, and received the messenger. Love. We will love one another.

* It was love that was taking Jesus to the cross.

John 3:16 - For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 - But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

1st John 4:9-10 - God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Do you have an awareness of God’s love for both the world and for you?

Many do not receive His love.

There was a man by the name of Frederick Lehman.  Born in Germany, Lehman came to America with his parents in 1872 when he was four years old.  They settled in Iowa.  He accepted the message of God’s love at age 11.

Lehman studied for the ministry and became a pastor in at least 4 cities – one of which is New London, Indiana.

THE LOVE OF GOD

*The love of God is greater far*  
*Than tongue or pen can ever tell;*  
*It goes beyond the highest star,*  
*And reaches to the lowest hell;*  
*The guilty pair, bowed down with care,*  
*God gave His Son to win;*  
*His erring child He reconciled,*  
*And pardoned from his sin.*

*Refrain*

*O love of God, how rich and pure!*  
*How measureless and strong!*  
*It shall forevermore endure*  
*The saints’ and angels’ song.*

*When years of time shall pass away,*  
*And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,*  
*When men, who here refuse to pray,*  
*On rocks and hills and mountains call,*  
*God’s love so sure, shall still endure,*  
*All measureless and strong;*  
*Redeeming grace to Adam’s race—*  
*The saints’ and angels’ song.*

*Refrain*

Frederick Lehman wrote those two verses – but it was another verse that inspired him.  The third verse of the song was actually written in 1050 AD by a Jewish man named Meir Ben Isaac Nehorai, a cantor (synagogue singer) in Worms, Germany. It is called the Haddamut.   
  
Then in 1917 in America it was found written on the wall of a man who had died in an insane asylum. He obviously wrote it in a period of sanity.

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,*  
*And were the skies of parchment made,*  
*Were every stalk on earth a quill,*  
*And every man a scribe by trade,*  
*To write the love of God above,*  
*Would drain the ocean dry.*  
*Nor could the scroll contain the whole,*  
*Though stretched from sky to sky.*

*Refrain*

Originally written by a Jewish synagogue singer in 1050 A.D. – then scrawled on the wall of an insane asylum.  Did they realize that the love of God was what took Jesus to the cross for our sins, our salvation and our freedom?

Peter had an element of faith - it needed yet to grow - but he still didn’t quite understand the greatness of God’s love - neither for him or how that love would need to be shared with others.

His love is being shared with you today. Will you receive it?