

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Fifth Sunday After Easter

Pastor John Klawiter

John 13:31-35

May 15, 2022

Grace and peace to you my siblings in Christ,

The word “love” is found 39 times in the gospel of John. 75 times, total, in the gospels. 261 times in the New Testament. 686 times in the entire Bible, thank you to the book of Psalms for your 157 contributions.

I was counseling someone this week who lamented how “judgy” her family is of her. Jesus is often used as a tool of manipulation to defend and justify morality positions over others. As if Jesus couldn’t possibly love someone who has a different belief system, culture, values, or lifestyle. It’s weird. It’s the like the Sorting Hat at Hogwarts only goes on their head to be in the chosen “good” house. And it’s a tiny house.

Loving others means loving Jesus. Loving Jesus means we need to understand what’s at stake here. What is Jesus telling us, in this very profound passage spoken on the last night before he’s killed?

Jesus isn’t just sharing a message or a hope. He’s actually giving the disciples something. What is Jesus giving away?

He’s not giving away anger. He’s not giving away fear. He’s not giving away money, possessions, or earthly treasures.

No, he’s giving away love. This is his gift. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

Count on us humans to make it more complicated than it needs to be.

Another friend shared a devotion with me about this commandment to love one another.

*The new commandment given to the disciples anticipates their disorientation and gives them the key to re-orienting in life after Jesus’ death: love each other.*

*Love is not just for their own good, though it certainly will help them through the tough times ahead. They love one another as an act of witness, so people will know that Jesus lives on.*

***In this Easter season, the good news of Jesus’ resurrection changes everything—and yet, he is not here. This commandment of love—given to the disciples before his death and communicated to us after his resurrection—comes to us as the commandment that can help us through our profound disorientation. Love is more than our command. It is our inheritance.***

An inheritance.

Something we get passed down to us, from generation to generation.

Jesus gives us love.

Does this gift come with strings attached?

Nope.

Does belonging to Jesus, as a disciple, come with a load of shame, guilt, and fear? Some Christians would love for you to believe that... but, where in the Bible does Jesus LORD it over his disciples that this is the way to move forward? Doesn't he, time and time again, show the grace? Love????

What do we give in return? How do we give?

That's where Jesus is inviting us into the inheritance. This gift is like a stock that is loser proof. When you invest in it, it can only grow. It doesn't go in the tank when the economy suffers. It doesn't evaporate when wars are taking place around the world. This gift doesn't prefer one political party over the other.

This gift multiplies when we give it away.

Yeah, I know, right???? Through giving, more is gained.

What does this love look like? It starts with a deep look inside here. It's different for all of us—but it starts with our outlook.

Is our heart pointed outward? Is our heart willing to be vulnerable? Is our heart willing to be broken, knowing that Christ will put the pieces back together?

Love is hard. But loving our neighbors isn't about making sure that we convince them to change to be just like us. Loving others means loving who they are. How God created them.

Love more. Love all. Love better.

Jesus loves you, this I know. Jesus also loves your neighbor. Love them, too. Amen.