

Jesus Loves Me

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] In 1942, Japanese soldiers took captive a group of Scottish soldiers at Singapore.

! The conditions in the prisoner of war camp were so appalling, so terrible that soon the men, the Scottish soldiers actually started turning on each other.

The only law was the law of the jungle. And as they desperately tried to fight to survive, their humanity basically started to disappear.

And as they just tried to make it through one more day. But that all changed when a shovel went missing.

The prisoners were assigned to build a bridge some ways away over the river Kwai. And as they marched from the prison camp to where the bridge was being built, every so often there was a checkpoint to make sure to count all the tools to make sure nothing and nobody was missing.

[1:15] And as one day, as they were coming back from the bridge, they stopped and the tools were counted. And a shovel went missing.

The officer in charge went ballistic. And he determined and decided to find out who stole it right then and there. And he was going to, either the person who stole it, step forward, produce the shovel, or they were all going to pay.

And as they stood there, no one stepped forward. The officer then pulled out his gun and threatened to kill them all right there on the spot if the shovel didn't show up.

And finally, one Scotsman silently stood forward and stood forward from the line.

And the Japanese officer holstered his pistol, picked up a shovel, and mercilessly beat the poor man to death. And when the gruesome moment had finally passed, the POWs were obviously horror-stricken.

[2:32] And they picked up their friend and they carried him off to the next checkpoint. Oddly enough, this time, there was no shovel missing.

In fact, the whole thing was a mistake. There was no missing shovel. Someone had merely miscounted the first time. And the tragedy profoundly affected the prisoners.

They couldn't believe what that man had done for them. They were amazed by grace. And that event actually changed the way that they were behaving towards one another.

They started sacrificing for one another to help them survive. And they began fighting for each other instead of against each other, making sacrifices.

And that's the power of love. That's the power of grace. And tonight we're here to remember an even greater love. Very rarely will a man die for a righteous man.

[3:40] Though for a good man, someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, that while we were still enemies, Christ died for us.

It's a whole different kind of love that we're remembering and talking about this evening. Now, Christ's love saves us from death, saves us from hell.

And it also changes the way we live. We were once biting and devouring one another. Hating and being hated.

And then his love overcame all of that. And in his love, he put a new heart within us. And in his love, he silenced our enmity and our hatred. And so this evening we are meditating on Christ's love for us, but we're doing it as a family.

We're sitting down together. Once we were separate, once we were going our own way. And tonight we remember it together because of what his love has done for us. And I want to do that from John chapter 15.

[4:47] I want to meditate on Christ's love from John chapter 15 and verse 9. So if you would please turn there. John chapter 15, verse 9.

We're going to read this paragraph. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. This is Jesus speaking. I'll repeat that. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now, remain in my love.

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. Just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

My command is this. Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this. That he lay down his life for his friends.

[5:49] You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends.

For everything that I learned from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command. Love each other. There is nothing more important for us to take in, to believe again and again, than that Christ loves us.

That he really loves us. It is only in that gospel of his undeserved love and favor that we find the grace to love each other. And it is only in that gospel of love and grace that we find the strength that we need to obey his commands.

And that is why we desperately need to bathe in Christ's love for us. So how has Christ loved you, dear brothers, dear sisters?

[7:06] Verse 9 says, As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Jesus says, I have loved you like the Father loved me.

And that is absolutely amazing and marvelous if you think about it. Because he loves us like the Father loved him.

Now, Jesus is perfect. Jesus is always obedient. Jesus is beautiful. And he's full of love for the Father. And it's fitting. It's right that the Father should love the Son.

But it doesn't make sense that Jesus should love us like that. We are by nature as enemies. So we won't have this man to rule over us.

We make our own lords. We give ourselves to the idols of our own hearts that we talked about this morning. And so Calvin said, my heart is an idol factory. It's always pumping out new idols, new things, new God substitutes, new loves, new saviors, new lords.

[8:19] And my sin. Who can measure, who can describe the ugliness of my sin? I'll drink a mud puddle and say it's good.

When God's love is right there. I'll ignore my faults. And in my delusion, I'll look down on you and think I'm better than you. And I'll bend and I'll manipulate others and I'll lash out and I'll take one of God's blessings and put it and bow down to it.

But those are just words. Because words can't describe what goes on in my heart. It's incomprehensible. It's a maze of evil.

James says, my tongue, my mouth. It's set on fire by hell itself. And yet where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

And that's where Jesus' words are so amazing. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. And so we ask, how has the Father loved Jesus?

[9:29] Because that's the measure of how Jesus has loved us. That's the description of how Jesus has loved us. Now, the Father loved Jesus and he taught Jesus.

He taught him. He instructed him. That might sound like a very strange place to begin. But actually, that's primarily what this passage is talking about. This passage of John is full of two ideas.

Love and commands. And we've already read that. And you've seen it. The Father loved the Son. And he showed his love to the Son, to Jesus, by teaching him.

Listen to what John 12, 49 says. This is Jesus speaking. For I do not speak of my own accord. But the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

So the Father loved the Son and taught him, taught Jesus, everything of what to say. And so, Jesus loves us like that.

[10:35] Jesus hasn't hidden anything from us. Anything that we need to know. And that's why he calls us friends. That's what he goes on to talk about in the passage. So, suppose you were a king.

And you told the chauffeur, go bring up the car. And the chauffeur, what would he do? He would go and do it. He wouldn't ask, where are you going?

Why are you going there? What's the itinerary? He doesn't ask for explanation. And if you did ask those questions, you say, what's that to you?

Go get the car. Mind your own business. But now, suppose you tell a close friend. You're the king. You tell one of your close friends, hey, go fetch the car.

Now, that friend will probably ask a few questions, right? Well, where are you going? What are you going there for? What are you going to do? The friend would still obey you.

[11 : 36] The friend would still do what you told him to do. But you would let your friend in on what you were doing. You wouldn't think it was an imposition. And so, the difference is, before, we didn't have any understanding.

There was no intimacy. But now, Jesus has loved us. And he's taught us everything. And so, now he calls us friends. We understand there's intimacy here.

And that's how Jesus has loved us. He's let us in on what he is doing. Now, of course, even a king has the secrets that he has to keep.

And we don't have all the answers. And sometimes we want to know, but he doesn't tell us. But we're let in into the circle. Into the close fellowship of Jesus.

Now, young people, you might know what it's like to be let in. To be brought in to the fellowship of the popular group. The important people. It would be sort of how we would feel if we were really good friends with Peyton Manning right now.

[12 : 46] Everyone is dying to know, you know, Peyton Manning. What is he going to do? Is he going to retire? Is he going to stay with the Colts? Does he think he's going to go with another team? And if we were his friend, we could ask him.

And he'd probably tell us what he was thinking. He'd let us in on that. And that would make us feel special. And Jesus is saying, I've let you in. I brought you in.

I've told you everything. There's no secrets here. And that's how Jesus has loved us. He's brought us in. He's called us his friend. The same way that the Father keeps nothing from the Son. And in the same way Jesus has kept nothing from us.

The Father shares his life with the Son. The Father shares his thoughts with the Son. His heart with the Son. And Jesus says, that's how I've loved you. That's how I've loved you.

I've told you everything you need to know. And so he says, I loved you. And I've given you these commands. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you'll remain in my love.

[13 : 45] I've told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. Jesus lets us in. He opens his mind. He exposes himself to us so that we can experience joy.

Joy in fellowship. Joy in having a relationship with him. And as we are obeying his commands, we're staying in that place where fellowship and intimacy can go back and forth.

So Jesus loves us by sharing his mind. As the Father has loved me, so I've loved you. Well, how else does the Father love the Son?

Remember, this is a description. Jesus is saying, the way the Father loved me is the way I've loved you. Well, how has the Father loved the Son?

With complete delight. With complete delight. With a wholehearted emotional engagement with the Son.

[14 : 47] Two times the Father broke in and said, this is my Son with him. I am well pleased. Am I well pleased?

Paul says, Jesus is the Son that he loves. I mean, that sort of is a bit redundant. What is that saying? I mean, another way of translating it, it's the Son of his love.

This is the one where all of his love and affection is resting. So think about how Abraham felt about Isaac. Abraham was delighted in his son Isaac.

And that's why God kept on saying, take Isaac, the son you love. Take Isaac, the son you love, and go sacrifice him. Abraham didn't have a mild affection for Isaac.

He was the joy of his heart, the delight of his soul. Isaac meant the world to Abraham. And that's how the Father feels about the Son. And that's how Jesus feels about you.

[15 : 47] If you've believed. If you've been born again. If you're his brother or sister. That's how he feels about you. Can you believe it? Can you believe that?

You say, but my sins. My sins. My performance hasn't been what it's supposed to be. I haven't loved him like that. I've gone astray.

I've done all sorts of things that I shouldn't have. As a Christian. I haven't loved him as I ought. And I have this cold heart. And we struggle to believe that the good news is just this good.

How long before we learn what grace is? Grace is not getting what you deserve. It's getting what you don't deserve. It's getting blessing instead of scorn.

And so God's grace. Jesus love is really that amazing. And amazing grace is hard to believe. And we struggle to believe it.

[16:50] Do you ever see something? Have you ever seen something that's hard to believe? It's amazing. And you say, I just can't believe it. I see it with my own eyes, but I just can't believe it.

Grace is like that. It's amazing. It's startling. And so how often do we refuse to believe this? That Jesus loves me like that?

And we say, well, yeah, Jesus loves me. But in our minds, it's a strange kind of love. It's a love without any delight. He loves me, but he doesn't like me.

Or we'll say he loves me, but then we say, well, love is an action. As if it's just this cold-hearted, I'm going to do this person good without any feeling behind it.

Just this cold-hearted determination to do them good. But what kind of love is that? It's a love without any fire. A love without any delight. A love without any enjoyment.

[17:52] But listen to what Jesus says. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. And how often do we call Jesus a liar by not believing it?

And so when we feel like we need that acceptance, we feel like we need to be okay, we turn to other people.

We look for their affirmation and their approval. Or we fantasize. We make up people in our own minds that love us unconditionally when Jesus loves us unconditionally already.

Or we go buy a new outfit. We look at porn. We eat food. We just do anything and everything except believe what Jesus has said. That there's truth here.

That Jesus delights in us. And so you can either believe that or you can throw your Bible away because it says you're a sinner. And it also says that God loves sinners.

[19:01] If you believe what it says about sin, you should believe what it says about his love. And if you believe what it says about how holy and great and how great God is, then believe what it says about how full of love God is.

It's saying both. Brothers and sisters, Jesus calls us his bride.

I've never seen an engaged couple that didn't have some sort of affection for each other. Have you? Or they just can't stand each other?

I mean, I suppose it's possible in some places, but not around here. But Jesus, but the Bible says for the joy set before him, Jesus endured the cross.

There was joy on the other side of the cross and Jesus was looking forward to it. And that joy was having his people with him so that he could bless them so that he could be with them.

[20:02] So how delighted is Jesus with us? Well, think about how delighted the father is with the son. The father is absorbed in the son. He loves the son.

He's willing to do anything for the son. And he's all in. He's all there for the son. So. We absorb him. Have you maybe wives? You've seen your husband and he's absorbed in the football game. Right. His eyes are there. His heart is there. His mind is there. The only thing on that couch is his body. Everything else is in that game. Right. Or maybe you've been absorbed in. One of those half gallon things of ice cream and your eyes are there and your mouth is there and your tongue is there and your hands and your mouth are moving.

Your heart is there. You're completely absorbed in it. You've given yourself to the ice cream. You've given yourself to the game. Or maybe you've seen a totally in love couple.

[21:07] Totally in love couples. They don't look out. They don't work on projects. They just got. They're just face to face.

They're completely absorbed in each other. They've given themselves to each other like that. They're all in. And brothers and sisters, the father loves the son like that. And the son says, As the father's loved me, I've loved you.

But you say, my sin. My sin. How can you do that? How can this be?

How could it be that Jesus would love me like that? Well, Jesus doesn't want us to doubt. And he doesn't want us to be always wracked with fear and concern.

And so in the middle of this paragraph, he says, come. Let's go to the cross. And Jesus says, greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

[22 : 15] So how can we know that Jesus loves us? How can we know that he's all in? That he's not holding back? That he's not harboring any secret scorn or any secret stinginess or any or some sort of hidden grudge against our sins?

Because he laid down his life for his friends. And there's no greater love than that. What can he do? What more can he do than that?

He's given us everything. He hasn't held anything back. He's laid down his life. So his love saw your sin. His love saw what your sin deserved.

His love saw your pain and your punishment and the agony and the guilt. And he gave himself for you. He stood in the way. He took the punishment that our sins deserved.

And so what more can he do to convince you of his love? If he's done the greatest thing, then everything else is smaller than that.

[23 : 21] He gave his body and he gave his blood for you. And when you throw yourself into the grave and when you throw yourself into a pit, into the hell, into fire to save someone.

What more can you do? What more can you do to convince them? And what more can Jesus do, brothers and sisters, for you to convince you he's all in?

That he loves you completely, totally. Now we need to know that. We need to feel that and we need to experience that again and again.

And that is what tonight is about. Jesus tells us that he loves us in his word. And he demonstrates that he loves us on the cross.

And at the supper, what we do is we feast on Christ again and on that love again. So tonight we really, experientially, feed on Christ crucified.

[24 : 25] Jesus, in a way, gives us himself again. Maybe that sounds strange. Listen to what our confession says.

Those who, as worthy participants, outwardly eat and drink the visible bread and wine in this ordinance, at the same time receive and feed upon Christ crucified and receive all the benefits accruing from his death.

This they do really and indeed, not as if feeding upon the actual flesh and blood of a person's body, but inwardly and by faith.

In the supper, the body and blood of Christ are present to the faith of believers, not in any actual physical way, but in a way of spiritual apprehension.

So did you hear that? We really and indeed feed upon Christ crucified. Jesus gives us himself again.

[25 : 33] He doesn't die again. He's not a sacrifice again. All those things are in the past. But by faith, we receive and feed upon him.

So we're meant to experience in a real and vivid way as we take the Lord's Supper of the love of Jesus. Jesus is saying, I'm all in.

Here I am. You have all my love and here's the proof. Here's my body. Here's my blood. And so, brothers and sisters, he's all for you.

His body is your bread. His blood is your wine. And tonight, by faith, you do more than remember you receive Christ. And so Jesus gives himself to you again.

He's holding nothing back and he's saying, I'm all in. This is a meal that Jesus provides everything for. He provides the food and he provides the drink.

[26 : 37] There's no stinginess. There's no standoffishness. He's the host and he's the supper. And so as we eat and as we drink, enjoy the grace of the Lord Jesus.

He's here with us. And as often as we partake, he comes and he feeds us and he loves us. And so tonight he is saying, come, taste my love.

Experience my love. Feel my love. See my love. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. And greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Thank you.