

"Love Looks Like What?"

Scripture Passages: 1) I Corinthians 11:23-26
2) John 13

Read John 13:

Disappointing One Another: Put yourself in Jesus' sandals for a moment. So what you know is that tomorrow or perhaps sooner, perhaps any moment you will be arrested, and no doubt executed in a brutal fashion. What would you be doing if that was your situation?

On top of that happy news, in order to be arrested, you know that one of your close friends will need to betray you. How would you choose to interact with that person when you saw them?

After your arrest you figure your closest friends will disappear at best, probably deny knowing you at worst. Knowing your friends will make those kinds of choices how would you converse with them?

It is thought that Camus once said something like, "As humans it is impossible not to disappoint one another." So how shall we live with one another, when we know our tendency will be to disappoint each other?

Jesus Gives Us An Example: Jesus sets before us a profound example, in the events of the Last Supper. He sets for us an example of what love truly looks like, loving people even as we know they will disappoint us.

The Example: Think about Jesus' situation. He has poured himself into the 12 disciples. Jesus has high hopes that the disciples will give themselves to a life-long transformational journey, the journey of resurrection. Jesus has high hopes that through those 12 friends the Kingdom of God will grow like a mustard seed. And yet one of those dear friends will betray him, one deny him, and 10 desert him.

It is with that knowledge that Jesus invites all of them, even the betrayer, the one who ends up taking his own life to join him at the table, to gather for the Passover Meal, the meal celebrating God's saving work, the meal celebrating the children of God.

Once everyone is at the table, Jesus strips down, takes a towel and begins washing all of their feet: the betrayer, the denier and the deserters. Jesus loves them all, cares for them, nourishes them, and meets their most intimate needs all while they are in the midst of what we consider their most despicable actions. Their actions didn't make Jesus blink, or pause, or sigh, or become depressed. Instead he loved them by serving them.

Love One Another: As he served them he said, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things you are blessed if you do them."

Then after eating and after Judas had gone out from them, Jesus said to them: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Conclusion: As humans we are going to disappoint each other. We are going to betray one another. We are going to deny one another. We are going to desert one another. Knowing that, will we choose as Christ did to love one another by serving one another? Christ challenges us here to love each other in spite of how we are. That is the pathway of Jesus. That is what it means to live as a disciple. That is what means to be resurrection people. That is what it means to love one another. Thankfully God has chosen to love us in spite of the way we live, the way we treat each other, the way we treat God's creation, the way we treat our Creator. Our God keeps inviting us to the table. Our God keeps reaching out to us.

Tonight as we gather around these tables, let us look each other in the eyes as we pass the bread and cup to each other, let us be aware of our shortcomings and brokenness, and let us choose to love those people at our table in spite of their shortcoming, hoping they will love us in spite of our shortcomings. Let us each day grow in our desire and in our conscious decision to love our neighbor as Christ has loved us. Amen.