

How Can I Be Saved?

Lesson 3: Love in Jesus

Vocabulary:

to lay down	to earn	to unite	openly
to resist	tax collector	resurrection	issue
demon	to humble (n. humility)	to crucify	branch
eternal (n. eternity)	wealthy	to declare	to bear
impact	to complain	flesh	to wither
to demonstrate	to wrong	to circumcise	to pour out
to work through	eager	to purify (n. purification)	counselor
relational	to confess	organ (body part)	tn-going
Pharisee	to express	mercy	symbol
tear (n.)	to affirm	transformation	gratitude
to rub	eunuch	to remove	motive
to owe	chariot	to long for	
banker	to submerge (n. submersion)	to confirm	

Discussion:

A popular book *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman describes the different ways that people can feel loved. Through Chapman's study on love, we learn that we all enjoy being loved the way we want to be loved, not always the way *others* want to love us. Some people feel loved through words of encouragement, hugs and kisses, gifts, spending time with a person, being served or supported, or some other way. Chapman's work shows that the ways we *feel* loved is not the same for everyone.

Think of the last time you truly felt loved by another person. What did they do to make you feel loved?

What does love look like to you? What makes you feel loved by others?

Jesus's Love

Jesus describes how he feels loved when he says in John 15, “⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to **lay down** one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command.”

Jesus obeyed his Father's command by teaching others the truth about God. He was the light of God to others through how he spoke and behaved. He loved his enemies and forgave them when they sinned against them ^(Luke 23:34). He led a pure and sinless life and **resisted** temptation ^(Hebrew 4:15). Throughout the Gospels, he gave to the poor, healed the sick, drove **demons** out of people, and prayed powerfully for others in need. He brought people into a relationship with God and made an **eternal impact** on their lives. He devoted his life to serving his Father and depended on his Father for all things. He loved people in all situations and spoke the words of God in every situation.

Jesus wants us to love him the way he loves the Father. What would loving Jesus look like today?

Jesus also **demonstrated** the Father's love in special ways to his followers. He devoted his time and energy to teaching them about God. He brought his followers into his daily life and showed them how to love, teach, and heal others. He then sent them out to do the same (Matthew 10). He prayed over his followers (John 17) and healed their family members (Luke 4:38-41, John 11). He helped them to **work through** problems they had with each other and gave them good **relational** advice (John 10:35-44, Matthew 18:15-20). Jesus loved his followers so much that he called them his family and even **sacrificed** time with his own family to be with them (Matthew 12:48-50).

Jesus wants us to love his followers in the same way he loves all of his followers, including us. What would loving other followers of Jesus look like today?

The Heart of Love

In the book of Luke, we see a story of a woman who is filled with love for Jesus. He compares her to a man who shows little love for others or for God. Here's her story:

A sinful woman in the town learned that Jesus was eating at the **Pharisee's** house. So, she brought an [expensive] jar of perfume. She stood at Jesus's feet crying and began to wash his feet with her **tears**. She dried his feet with her hair, kissed them many times and **rubbed** them with perfume. The Pharisee...thought to himself, "If Jesus were a prophet, he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner!"...

Jesus said, "There were two men. Both men **owed** money to the same **banker**. One man owed the banker 500 silver coins. The other man owed the banker 50 silver coins. The men had no money; so, they could not pay what they owed. But the banker told the men that they did not have to pay him. Which one of the two men will love the banker more?"

Simon the Pharisee answered, "I think it would be the one who owed him the most money." Jesus said to Simon, "You are right...Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you gave me no water for my feet. But she washed my feet with her tears and dried my feet with her hair. You did not kiss me, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since I came in! You did not rub my head with oil, but she rubbed my feet with perfume. I tell you that her many sins are forgiven. This is clear because she showed great love. But the person who has only a little to be forgiven will feel only a little love." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:36-50, NIV).

The people in the town describe this woman as a 'sinful woman.' What sins do you think she did **to earn** this name?

What does the sinful woman do to show her love for Jesus? Why does she do these things?

What adjectives would you use to describe this woman's heart? Explain.

The Pharisee (or Jewish leader) thinks that he has not sinned as much as this woman. Do you think that is true? What sins do you see in him through this story?

Jesus says that the more we see our need to be forgiven, the more love we will show him. Do you think this is true? Explain.

Have you recently asked Jesus for forgiveness for any sins in your life? Explain.

Is there anyone in your life you are not willing to love or forgive? Explain.

How are you like the sinful woman? How are you like the Pharisee?

Similar to the story of the sinful woman, Luke tells another story of a **tax collector** who sees his sin, **humbles** himself to Jesus, and shows love to others. Here is his story:

In Jericho, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a **wealthy**, very important tax collector. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but he was too short to see above the crowd. He ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would come. He climbed a [tree] so he could see Jesus. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. He said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! I must stay at your house today.” Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was pleased to have Jesus in his house. All the people saw this and began **to complain**, “Look at the kind of man Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!” But Zacchaeus said to the Lord, “I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I will pay that person back four times more!” Jesus said, “Salvation has come to this house today...The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them” (Luke

19:2-10, ICB)

What does Zacchaeus do to show his love for Jesus? How does Zacchaeus show his love for others?

What adjectives would you use to describe Zacchaeus’s heart?

Think of someone whom you have **wronged**. How could you respond like Zacchaeus to make it right?

Jesus was **eager** and willing to save the sinful woman and the tax collector when Jesus sees their deep love toward God and others. Jesus also sees their **humility**: They are willing to **confess** their sins and be weak in front of other people. They long to please God and they are focused on what God thinks, not what other people think of them. When Jesus sees the hearts of these people, he saves them immediately!

Take a look at your own heart to show love to Jesus and to others. Today, would Jesus say to you, your sins are forgiven? Why or why not? Ask a trusted and honest Christian friend to share what they see in your life.

Love through Baptism

When we **decide** to accept Jesus’s sacrifice for our sins and follow him with a heart of love, then Jesus asks us to **express** our love for him through baptism. Baptism is like a beautiful marriage ceremony

between us and Jesus to demonstrate our commitment to following him. In turn, Jesus **affirms** his commitment to saving us. Jesus says in Mark 16:16, “Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved”^(ICB). This is a promise from our Lord.

Have you ever been baptized? If yes, why were you baptized? Describe what happened and what you understood about baptism at that time..

In the New Testament, we see many people being baptized. In Acts 8, Philip, an early follower of Jesus, baptized a **eunuch**, or servant of the queen:

³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?”³⁷ Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the **chariot**. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.”^(NIV)

According to these verses, what does baptism look like?

We see from this passage that Philip and the eunuch went down *into* the water. The Greek word for baptism [Gk: baptizó] literally means “to dip” or “**submerge**.” In Matthew 3:16, Jesus also goes down fully into water and is baptized. Why is that? In Romans 6:1-10, Paul, a leader of the early church, helps us to understand why baptism is performed this way:

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵For if we have been **united** with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a **resurrection** like his. ⁶For we know that our old self was **crucified** with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

What do we do with our sin at baptism?^(v. 2) Why?^(v. 4)

Looking at each verse, what do we experience at baptism?

What promises does God give us if we are baptized with this **attitude** and heart?^(vv. 5-7)

Why do you think submerging our bodies in water at baptism is important?

Baptism by **submersion** is a **gift** to us from God. God designed baptism in this way to allow us to experience the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, as well as the death, burial, resurrection of our own lives through Jesus. By being buried in baptism, God reminds us that Jesus by his blood has washed us clean and that our sins have been buried, forgiven, and forgotten. We come up out of the water just

as Christ was raised from the dead to **declare** that we are raised with him into a new life here on earth and for **eternity**! Romans 6 teaches us that through baptism, we are united with Christ, just as we are united with a spouse through marriage. The commitment is sealed. For this reason, baptism is not only a way that we show love to God, but a special way that God shows his faithful and eternal love to us.

In Colossians 2, Paul describes baptism in this way: “Your whole self, ruled by the **flesh** [or sin], was put off when you were **circumcised** by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

What is Jewish circumcision? How is circumcision similar to baptism?

In the Old Testament, circumcision was a spiritual act that the Jews did to **purify** male children by removing the top layer of skin that covers a male’s sexual **organ**. Eight days after a male child was born, he was circumcised as a physical sign of God’s spiritual **purification** and promise of salvation. Paul explains in Romans 4:1-12 that circumcision was a sign of a **seal** or promise first given to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. When Abraham placed his faith in God, God sealed Abraham’s righteousness, promising him salvation and a right standing with God. Circumcision, according to Paul, was a physical sign of that seal or promise: “³Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness... ¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.” In other words, Abraham was not made right with God because of the circumcision; rather he was made right with God through his faith and trust in God’s promises.

So how does circumcision relate to baptism today? Paul says in Colossians 2:13: “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,” and in Romans 5:8, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Examine these two verses. When are we made alive in Christ and forgiven for our sins? What role then does baptism have in our salvation?

We learn from these verses Jesus forgives our sins when we put our faith in him – even before he has removed our sin from us – so that we are forgiven completely by his **mercy** and not by what we do. Through baptism, our **transformation** also happens only because of Jesus’s power, not our own. We see in Colossians 2:11 that it is Christ who circumcises us in baptism and **removes** our sin.

If you remember, Jesus’s sacrifice for our sins is different from the animal sacrifices that people made in the Old Testament. Explain the difference.

Through faith in Jesus’s sacrifice, we are made right with God, just as God’s people in the Old Testament were made right with God through the sacrificing of animals. But with Jesus, our sin and guilt are removed through baptism. Because of baptism, we no longer have to offer yearly sacrifices for our sins. Our consciences are made clean. Then through faith in Jesus’s resurrection, we too are raised into a new, eternal life. The old is completely gone, and we are made new by his resurrection power!

For this reason, new believers in the New Testament ran quickly into the waters of baptism, **longing for** this new life in Christ because they wanted God to set them free from sin (Romans 6:4-5). If we resist dying to our old lives through baptism, then we must wonder if we ever made a genuine decision to

follow Jesus. Perhaps we wanted a Savior, but not someone to be the Lord of our lives. Yet in Christ, we are no longer living for ourselves, but for him who died for us. Paul **confirms** this in Romans 10 when he says, “If you **openly** say, “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised him from death, you will be saved.”^(ESV) We must have the desire for Jesus to be the Lord of our lives and be willing to tell the world about our commitment to him for us to be saved. One way that we declare this desire openly is through baptism.

Discuss the difference between Jesus being our Savior and Jesus being our Lord.

Many Christians today ask the question, “When is a person truly saved: at faith or at baptism?” Many churches have even divided over this **issue**. This is an interesting question, but Jesus never promises us salvation at a single moment in time. He explains how we are saved, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace,”^(Luke 7:50, NIV) but he does not state the exact moment. In fact, here’s what Jesus says about salvation in John 15:

³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No **branch** can **bear** fruit by itself; it must remain in the **vine**. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and **withers**; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

In verse 3, how are Jesus’s followers made clean? What does this mean? [Hint: In John 14, Jesus has just explained to his followers that he is the way to the Father.]

Once we are made clean, what does Jesus ask us to do and why? (vv. 4-5)

If we do not remain in Jesus, what happens to us? (v. 6)

Instead of focusing on the moment we are saved, what should we focus on according to Jesus?

Jesus helps us to see that as followers, we should be focused on following Jesus and obeying him. If this is our focus, then he will transform us, and he will save us. That’s a promise! Yet, an eternal relationship with Jesus is a life-long commitment. It’s not a single decision at one moment in time. Whatever we believe about the time of our salvation matters little if we do not continue to obey whatever Jesus asks of us.

One thing that we know, though, is that Jesus is faithful. In Romans 8, Paul tells us that nothing can separate us from the love Christ has for us^(8:38-39). He will never leave us in our marriage to him, and we should never leave him. As long as we remain in him, the gift of salvation is always there for us, and the door is always open^(Revelation 3:20). Like a ring we receive on our wedding day, baptism is a sign of Jesus’s commitment to us and our commitment to Jesus. If we hold on to our love for him as our Lord and Savior, then we will experience his love and salvation when we die, be raised with him into eternal life, and live with him in heaven forever. The book of Revelation confirms this promise when it describes Jesus ruling in heaven as the King of kings and the Lord of lords: “And with him will be his called, chosen, and faithful followers”^(17:14).

Love through the Holy Spirit

We might wonder, how can we make it to the end, knowing that we are sinners? Jude, the brother of Jesus, declares that Jesus is able “to keep you from falling and present you blameless” ^(CEB) before God on the Day of Judgment. Just as Jesus was the one to bring you into salvation, he is fully capable of keeping you saved until the final day.

How does Jesus do this? Share any verses that you know and share from your experiences.

In John 14, Jesus promises to send his followers his Holy Spirit to live in them and remind them of everything he taught ⁽²⁶⁾. We see this in Acts 2. After Jesus has been raised from the dead, he **pours out** his Holy Spirit onto the believers in Jerusalem. When many who were not believers see what has happened, Peter, one of the earliest followers of Jesus, tells those who are watching that the Holy Spirit is available to anyone who commits his life to Jesus:

³⁸ ...“Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

What do you already know and believe about the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit reminding you of Jesus’s teachings? How else have you experienced the Holy Spirit?

Even though Jesus died, he promised to send us the Holy Spirit, a **counselor** and helper to live inside us, reminding us of Christ’s teachings, and allowing us to experience Jesus’s **on-going** presence in our lives. In this way, Jesus again shows that he is faithful to his promise never to leave us. In Ephesians 1:13, Paul calls the Holy Spirit a “seal” that we receive when we put our faith in Jesus, a **symbol** of his promise to save us and bring us into heaven for his glory. We see the first work of the Holy Spirit in baptism when Jesus frees us from our sins. As we live in this world, the Holy Spirit continues to remind us of sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come ^(John 16:8). When we see sin in our lives, we are to confess these sins to God and to another believer, for “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” ^(1 John 1:9). In all these ways, Jesus keeps us faithful to him until the end.

If you are a follower of Jesus, how are you doing with sin in your life? Do you regularly confess your sins to other believers? How can you grow in this area?

If you want to be a follower of Jesus, have you taken time to confess your sins to a follower of Jesus? Explain.

A Life of Love

Once we are in Christ, Jesus calls us to live a life of love toward others ^(Ephesians 5:2). By helping each other with our troubles, we are obeying the law of Christ ^(Galatians 6:2). The Bible tells us to encourage one another daily, so that we can all stay strong against sin ^(Hebrews 3:13) and grow in our faith ^(1 Thessalonians 5:11). There are many ways that we can show love to one another, and this love helps others to see Christ through us.

What does it mean to help others with their troubles? Give examples.

How can we encourage one another daily?

In what ways can we help others to grow in their faith?

What are some other ways we can show love to one another?

Loving others can be as simple as picking up the phone to say “Hello,” praying with a friend, sharing stories of God’s faithfulness, sharing scriptures, or spending time with each other. Maybe someone needs our physical or emotional help, or simply our encouragement and words of love. In Christ, we are free to love others, not to earn our salvation in Christ, but to show **gratitude** to him for loving us and to share his love with others so that they too can know Jesus.

I Corinthians 13 is a famous passage in the Bible that reminds us of the importance of love. In Christ, love must be the center of all that we do and our **motive** for serving the Lord and others. Jesus says in John 12 that those who serve him must be like him, and that all men will know we are his followers if we love one another ⁽²⁶⁾. “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”
(I Corinthians 3:13) *

What do you want to do to show Jesus that you love him?

How can you begin loving others daily the way Jesus loves you?

This Week:

Write in your journal:

1. Continue reading a chapter a day in the Gospels and praying to God in Jesus’s name. Look for ways that Jesus obeyed his heavenly Father. Write about what it means to love Jesus in the same way.
2. Review your notes in this study and make a personal plan of how you want to show your love to Jesus and to others.
3. Talk about any decisions you made from these studies with a Christian friend.
4. If you have not committed to Jesus through baptism and wish to do this, talk with a Christian friend about your next steps and look forward to your new life in Christ!