

How Can I Be Saved?

Lesson 3: Love in Jesus (Part 2)

Vocabulary:

to behave	to resolve a conflict	eunuch	to bear fruit
to treat people	to lay down one's life	chariot	vine
to resist	approval	to submerge	to wither
temptation	attitude	to unite (adj. united)	life-long
to drive out (demons)	overall	to symbolize	coward
to impact	sinful nature	to long to (do something)	sulfur
to work through	to baptize (n. baptism)	branch	

Discussion:

In the last lesson, we talked about how God wants us to respond to the love he has shown us through Jesus. What is love? What does love look like? A popular American 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 that last time you felt truly loved or unloved. What makes you feel loved by others?

Loving Jesus through Action

As we remember from the last lesson, God *is* love. For this reason, we can learn how to love the way God loves by looking at Jesus, God's living Word. Jesus showed love to the Father by obeying his Father's commands (John 5:19). He depended on his Father through prayer (Mark 1:35) and spoke all that his Father told him to speak (John 14:10). Jesus also loved people from his heart and spent his life helping others to know and love God also. He was the light of God to others through how he spoke, **behaved**, and **treated people**. 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.

Jesus didn't just teach people. He brought his followers into his daily life as well and showed them how to love, teach, and heal others. He prayed over his followers (John 17) and healed their family members (Luke 4:38-41, John 11). He showed them how to **work through** problems they had with each other and how to **resolve conflicts** in their relationships (Mark 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). After he showed them how to love, he then sent them out to do the same for others (Matthew 10). In John 15, Jesus describes how he feels loved:

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... 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.

How does Jesus want us to love him? What would loving Jesus look like today?

Today, Jesus wants us to love him by obeying him and loving others the way he loves them. Even when people hurt us or hate us, Jesus wants us to be love and light to them, forgiving them and showing them love in return, instead of hatred and anger. He wants us to be his light through our words, actions, and **attitude**, and speak as though we were speaking God's words, not the words that the world speaks. He wants us to give to people in need, pray for them, care for them, drive out demons, and heal the sick in his name. Jesus wants us to sacrifice our time and energy to teach them who he is and how to follow him. He wants us to invite them to be a part of our lives and our families so they can see what it really means to follow him.

Paul also 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). Encouraging others can be as simple as picking up the phone to say "Hello," praying together, sharing stories of God's power and love, sharing scriptures, or spending time with one other. Maybe someone needs our physical or emotional help, or simply our words of love and encouragement. Maybe someone needs help moving or practicing English. They might need a meal or someone to babysit their children for a few hours. Maybe they are sick and cannot clean their home. Perhaps our church needs us to serve in various ways. All around us are needs and opportunities to be love and light to others! **Overall**, loving Jesus means that we no longer live for ourselves, but we live for loving him and sharing his love with the world.

Close your eyes and think of someone that you could show love to in a special way this week. Write down their name and how you wish to encourage them.

Loving Jesus through the Spirit

We might be wondering, can I really love this way? I've never loved God or people this way. It's true that we cannot love Jesus or people this way by ourselves because we are sinners. Even as we begin to walk in love, we will face the challenges of our **sinful nature**. Yet, when we place our faith and trust in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our lives, he does something special for us to show how much he loves us:

¹⁵ If you love me, you will obey my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth... You know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... ²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. (John 14:15-17)

⁷ Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you... ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking what is mine and making it known to you. (John 16:7-14)

According to Jesus, how do we receive his Spirit? How will we know if Jesus's Spirit is inside a person?

Why does Jesus say the Father will send us the Spirit in verse 16, and then say that he himself will send us the Spirit in verse 7? (see also verse 20)

Jesus doesn't expect us to obey him or understand all that is true about him without his help. When we decide to obey Jesus, he sends the Counselor to live inside us to help us, guide us, teach us, and remind us of all that Jesus taught. This Counselor is not just sending a messenger; he is Jesus himself living in us! Do you remember Isaiah's prophecy about the son, written in 700 B.C.E.? Isaiah calls the son "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." This Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, who is the Father and is the Son. They are one, and Jesus invites us to be one with him, his Father, and his Holy Spirit. We can love Jesus and others as we depend on the Spirit he gives us.

Loving Jesus through Commitment

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 that shows our commitment to following him. In turn, Jesus **affirms** his commitment to saving us. Jesus promises us in Mark 16:16, "Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved" (ICB).

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

³⁶ As 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? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We 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. ⁵ For 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. ⁶ For 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— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

What do we learn about baptism from this passage? What does going down into the water and coming back up again **symbolize**? (vv. 4-6)

How does baptism express our commitment to Jesus and his oneness with us?

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 when we give our lives Jesus. By being buried in baptism, God reminds us that Jesus by his blood has washed us and that our sins have been buried, forgiven, and forgotten. We come up out of the water, just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we 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. For this reason, new believers in the New Testament ran quickly into the waters of baptism, **longing to** receive Jesus's sacrifice and begin this new life together with Christ.

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

Loving Jesus through Remaining

Just as in a marriage, Jesus asks us to remain in our relationship with him. He commits himself to us when he says, "Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). In turn, Jesus asks the same of us:

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. (John 15:3-6)

Once we are made clean by trusting in Jesus's words, what does Jesus ask us to do and why? (verses 4-5) How is a commitment to Jesus like a marriage?

What happens if we do not remain in Jesus? (v. 6) Why do you think this happens?

Jesus promises that he will never leave us, and he won't allow anything to separate us from his love (Romans 8:38-39), but we must remain with him to stay in our relationship with him. In other words, placing our faith and hope in Jesus and even committing to him is just the beginning. Like a marriage, following Jesus is a **life-long**, daily commitment to live by his teachings of loving God and loving others. That's why we need daily encouragement and strength from his Word, prayer, worship, and relationships in the church. This is why we confess our sins and seek help from the Lord and friends when we struggle. We need to give that encouragement to others as well so that they stay strong and faithful to Jesus. These acts are no longer tasks to be saved, but they are the tools that Jesus gives us to help us remain in him.

Loving Jesus through His Word

From John 1, we learned that Jesus is the Word of God who became a man: "The Word became a man and lived among us." (1:14). Every day we have a chance to experience, learn from, and spend time with Jesus through his Word. His Word is light and life for all who believe in him. While Jesus is full of grace, he is also full of truth. To fulfill all justice, Jesus will return one day to judge those who do not receive his

sacrifice for sin (Matthew 24, II Timothy 4:1). He promises to overcome and destroy all sin in this world and establish a new heaven and a new earth for his children (Revelation 20-22). Jesus cannot save those who do not accept his sacrifice, for he is the only way to be saved. Since they have chosen sin instead of Jesus, they will pay their own price for sin and be destroyed with sin in the end. John describes the world's final judgment in this way:

³“Now God's throne is with his people. He will live with them. They will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone... But those who are **cowards**, those who refuse to believe, those who do terrible things, those who kill, those who sin sexually, those who do evil magic, those who worship idols, and those who tell lies – they will all have a place in the lake of burning **sulfur**...” (Revelation 21:3-4, 8 ERV)

As we recall, God is love, and there is no fear in love. Jesus promises to rescue us from that day when he judges the earth, and he offers the way for us to be saved through the words he has spoken:

Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me... I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness... There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. (John 12:48)

How will Jesus's words play a role in his judgment of our lives? How do his words give us confidence?

If you died today, would you feel ready for Judgment Day? Explain. How can you be ready and confident on that Day?

Jesus promises that if we accept his words, his teachings, his sacrifice, and salvation, we will be saved. Our faith and hope is not in what we do for him, but in what he has done, will do, and will continue to do for us as we remain in him. By reading Jesus's words, praying over them, and putting them into practice, we are strengthened in joy and transformed into becoming more like him. His words turn our hearts away from the world and from sin. They protect us from a world that wants pull us away from what is true and right. When we know his words, we can share them with others that they might find Jesus and be transformed by him. A relationship with Jesus is like a conversation. When we pray, we are speaking to Jesus. When we read his Word, we are listening to him. Are we only speaking? Are we only listening? Both are part of a faithful and obedient walk with Jesus.

John in the book of Revelation confirms Jesus's promise for those who chose to have a living and breathing relationship with the Lord. John says that one day Jesus will return for his followers. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and bring him into his glorious heaven to live forever. In John's description, we see 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). This is his promise for all who believe.

Share any decisions you've made from this study series on faith, hope, and love in Jesus. What next steps do you want to take in knowing, following, and loving Jesus?