

I. 40 Days of Love – Part 2: Loving Like Jesus Loves Me      Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor      April 18, 2010

A. *Mark:12 {29} "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. {30} Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' {31} The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

B. *Jesus: "I'm giving you a new commandment: Love each other in the same way that I have loved you."* John 13:34 (GW)

C. *"I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you!"* John 13:15 (NLT)

## II. **I must accept others like Jesus accepts me.**

A. More than likely, the deepest wounds that a person receives are from rejection.

B. Someone has put you down, left you out, betrayed you, or made you feel worthless.

C. At the heart of the Good News that Jesus brings to the world is that we are accepted by God.

D. *"The Father gives me my people. Every one of them will come to me, and I will always accept them."* John 6:37 (NCV)

E. You hear a lot of language in church that speaks about accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord, and I think that can be misleading.

F. We can never forget that Jesus accepted us first.

G. *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8 NIV)*

H. *"Even if my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will receive me."* Ps. 27:10 (NIV)

I. *"Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life."* Titus 3:7 (CEV)

J. The starting point in living a life of love is recognizing that God has accepted us, and then we must quit rejecting others and show acceptance to all people.

K. I think a lot of us view God as an overbearing parent that can't be pleased. Some have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord but still feel as if they are having to measure up to a standard.

L. If you feel that way about God, that is how you will treat the people around you.

1. Family

2. Friends

3. Co-workers.

M. *"God did not send his son into the world to condemn it, but to save it."* John 3:17 (NLT)

N. *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you."* Rom. 15:7 (NIV)

O. *"We must bear the "burden" of being considerate of the doubts and fears of others..."* Rom. 15:2a (LB)

P. The news over the last week has carried the story of the family who sent back the 7-year-old boy they had adopted from a Russian orphanage. They wrote a note, bought a ticket, and put him on the plane.

Q. Our daughter Hannah is adopted.

1. It was a private adoption, and we never met her birth parents.

2. This was in the early 90s when AIDS screening was just being done.

3. We knew very little about the parents' health; there were all sorts of risks that we were taking.

4. We knew there would be no giving her back if she wasn't healthy, if she wasn't perfect.

- Sandy and I both have a deep sense of our acceptance by God, and we feel the need to accept others in the same way.

**R.Action Step1: This week I will show acceptance to \_\_\_\_\_ (someone who irritates you or is hard to love)**

### III. Loving like Jesus means I must value others the way Jesus values me.

A. *“Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted! Do not be afraid. You are worth far more than many sparrows.” Luke 12:6-7 (NAB)*

#### B. Value depends on who made it

- Display my two guitars
- Martin and Yamaha
- If you owned a guitar that was actually handmade by C.F. Martin, the value would be extremely high.
- My Martin guitar is handcrafted by someone trained in the same tradition.
- This Yamaha was made in a factory on an assembly line.
- It is a fine guitar and has a great purpose, but it could be easily replaced.
- Not the Martin.
- Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.* 1 Timothy 4:4 (NIV)
- “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Eph. 2:10 (NIV)*
- “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Eph 2:10 NLT)*

#### C. Value depends on what someone will pay.

- There are a lot of people that are worried about the value of their house.
- Some of us bought at the height of the market, but don’t forget, we also more than likely sold houses that had appreciated in value.
- I feel sorry for anyone who has been relocated in this market, or who didn’t have much equity in their house and are upside down, but a house is not a very good investment.
- It is a place where you live. Before you buy a house, you should always ask if the value goes down, would I still want to live there.
- My house, like every other house in Jacksonville, is worth about 15-25% less than when we bought it.
- If, however, you asked Sandy or me what the house is worth to us, it is worth every penny we paid for, and every penny we have invested to improve it.
- What the market says our house is worth doesn’t change the value of it for us.
  - The floor plan, the lot, the location are all the same.
  - That is what we value about the house.
- No matter what anyone tells you, you are valued by God.
- “He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.” 1 Peter 1:19 (NLT)*

10. “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you. See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands!” Isaiah 49:15-16 (NIV)
11. “Treat everyone you meet *with dignity*.” 1 Peter 2:17 (MSG)

**D.Action Step 2: This week I will affirm the value of \_\_\_\_\_ (Someone who has low self-worth)**

**IV. I must forgive others like Jesus forgives me.**

- A.I think a lot of people see God as having a chip on His shoulder.
- B.Some view God as an overbearing, impossible-to-please parent or boss.
- C.We can never forget the message of the Bible!
- D. “*I am the God who forgives your sins, and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you.*” Isa. 43:25 (GN)
- E. *Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.* Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)
- F. “*There is now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” Rom. 8:1 (NIV)
- G. “*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for \_\_\_\_\_ the forgiveness of sins.*” Matt. 26:28 (NIV)
- H.Where many of us fail is once we have been forgiven, we deny forgiveness to others.
- I. “*You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*” Col. 3:13 (NLT)
- J. “*Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*” Luke 6:37 (NIV)
- K. “*Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?*” Matt. 18:33 (NLT)
- L.Action Step 3: This week I will offer forgiveness to \_\_\_\_\_ (Someone who has caused you hurt or is carrying guilt or shame)**

**V. I must believe in others like Jesus believes in me.**

- A. Just about everyone has some level of low self-esteem. We all have insecurities. Some are more noticeable and apparent than others. Some are easier to hide. Some of us are in denial and will tend to over compensate.
- B. In fact, sometimes the more successful a person becomes, the more their insecurities tend to become.
- C. Studies support that the younger you are when you first experience rejection, the greater the negative impact it is on your life.
- D. *If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.* 1 Corinthians 13:7 (LB)
- E. This is what Jesus did with the people who were around Him. Jesus looked at the people around him and didn’t focus on who they were but on who they could become.
- F. He didn’t bring up past failures, brokenness or sins. He looked past their past!
- G. Jesus places His trust in his 12 disciples; even though one of them failed, he believed in them and wanted them to know that the Holy Spirit could empower them!
- H. Listen to some of the statements that Jesus made to His followers.
- I. “*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*” John 17:18 (NIV)

J. *If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17:20 (NIV)*

K. *Jesus said, "Everything is possible for him who believes." Mark 9:23 (NIV)*

L. *"Then Jesus told them, "I assure you, if you have faith and don't doubt you can do things like this and much more..." Matt. 21:21 (NLT)*

M. *"The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father." John 14:12 (NLT)*

N. *I want us to help each other with the faith we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you." Rom. 1:12 (NCV)*

O. *"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Heb. 10:24 (NIV)*

P. One of the suggestions that came in the first week of 40 Days of Love is that you might want to sit together as a group.

Q. Did any of you do that?

R. My prayer, and I believe your prayer too, is that people at CrossRoad will grow to be more and more in love with each other.

S. That we will be able to support each other in deeper ways.

T. The only way to really grow in love is to be around other people.

U. Learning to care for people that you might not normally hang with.

V. Reaching out to people because you share a common love for Jesus.

W. Reaching out to people because you want them to know the love of Jesus!

X. Reaching out to people to let them know that with love they can make it!

Y. **Action Step 4: This week I will demonstrate trust in \_\_\_\_\_**  
*(Someone you see has potential for growth: "I believe in you!")*

## VI. Loving Like Jesus Loves Me

A. Friday, April 9, 11-year-old *Nadia Bloom* went missing from her neighborhood in Winter Springs, Fla. – Her sister said Nadia, who has an autism-related disorder called Asperger syndrome, may have gone into the dense woods hoping to make a nature video.

B. She was found alive on Tuesday, April 13, four days after she disappeared into the alligator-infested swamp a half-mile from her suburban home.

C. It wasn't police who located her, but *James King*, who goes to church with Nadia's family, who found her Tuesday morning in a dry patch in the middle of the swamp and called authorities.

D. Shortly after word came that Nadia was alive, her father briefly spoke to the media. "It all came so fast and it just shows the compassion of the human spirit. It should give everybody encouragement," her father, Jeff Bloom, told reporters after rescue crews lifted her into an ambulance. When asked how he felt, Bloom said: "I can't even describe it. Let's give the glory to God."

E. That's the kind of Love that Jesus has for us, that goes into the swamp to find us.

F. When His followers begin to love like that, it brings glory to God!

G. *"May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is." Eph. 3:18 (NLT)*

VII. Prayer: Thank you Father, that you can heal broken hearts and bitter memories and damaged self-esteem and even the tears that are falling right now. Thank you. Thank you that we matter to you. Thank you that patterns can be erased and curses can be reversed. Thank you that you turn nobodies into somebodies. Jesus, I ask that

you help people today, these dear friends of mine, you help them begin to see themselves through your eyes of love. Thank you that we can depend upon your love.

VIII. Now you pray. In your heart say this, "Dear Jesus Christ, help me to see myself the way you see me. Thank you for creating me. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for dying for me. I don't understand it all but thank you that you accept me and that you value me. And that you forgive me and that you believe in me. I want to believe in you. I want to trust you. Help me to care more about what you think of me than what other people think. May the truth set me free."

IX. With our heads still bowed I want you to repeat these truths aloud after me: "Because of Jesus I am acceptable. I am valuable. I am lovable. I am forgivable. And I am capable. Jesus, help me to see myself through your eyes of love. And help me to see others the same way. Amen"