

This is My Commandment: Love

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[0:00] John 15 verse 2 This morning love. Selfless love. Love is defined in 1 Corinthians 13 and we'll go there shortly.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 31 in part he calls this love a more excellent way. Love. God's kind of love. Selfless love. Unconditional love. Our Lord Jesus' love.

That's what we're talking about right now today. And in a way you could replace the word charity in 1 Corinthians 13 with love or with Jesus.

The Lord Jesus is right there through 1 Corinthians 13. The Lord Jesus is the more excellent way.

His love is real and powerful. I proclaim to you today that Jesus Christ is relevant for you.

Jesus is relevant for your fears. He is relevant for your pains. He is relevant for your hurts. He is relevant for your marriage. He is relevant for your heartaches.

[1:34] He is relevant to your life story. To your needs. To your real needs. Because God is love. Jesus is love.

Jesus is love.

Jesus is love.

He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love. He is love.

He is love. All that good that I can do is in vain.

It's empty if I do not have love. 1 Corinthians 13, it starts, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, it's just noise.

[4:05] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profited me nothing.

He says, even though I could remove mountain after mountain, that's the sense of it here, it's empty, it's in vain. God defines love. We read of the qualities of this selfless love.

Verse 4, Charity suffereth long and is kind. This is love. Charity suffereth long and is kind.

Be kind. Be kind. In other words, be sensitive, be gracious, be considerate, be gentle with others.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4.32, And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.

[5:19] How is your heart? Are you tender-hearted? Tender-hearted. How is your kindness level? Kindness has been called a special language.

A language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see. Love. The language of love is truly a universal language, known by people from every tongue and nation.

Do we have kindness like Jesus had? He would stop and listen and care. He would stop and listen and reach out.

The leper cried out. And Jesus took notice. The grief-stricken, the torn, the abused, the forsaken.

And he heard them. In love, our Lord Jesus extended his mercy to those most in need, the most chronic of need.

Now sometimes there's something really special in relating with people who are in the most severe of need. The most severe of need. I think of working in the disability sector as such a privilege.

[6:27] To be able to give to those who cannot give back to me. It's precious. There's something special about that. God puts people like that in our lives.

If we just open our eyes and see them. God is love. God, Jesus came and he poured out his life into people. And we can likewise ask our Lord, give me a spirit of compassion for the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, the terminally ill, the jobless, the beggar down the road, the dirty addict, the

unshaven, the friendless.

You know, I'm one of those unshaven. Ask God to help you love those people who are hard to love. You know, ask God for the grace, the grace to somehow enter into people's lives and to care for them.

Ask for grace to enter your husband, your wife, your children's life, to live in their world, to understand where they're at, where they're coming from, to extend mercy and compassion. We don't appreciate one another enough. Sometimes I think we don't walk in people's shoes enough. Jesus stopped in love and he reached out.

[7:45] He gave himself. People weren't an interruption to Jesus. They were his mission. You know, sometimes we treat people like an interruption to what we're doing.

We shouldn't do that, should we? How can we learn the compassion of our Lord? How can we show kindness? How can we be more sensitive to the people God places in our way?

The distressed, the discouraged, the torn, the wounded, they're all around you. Open your eyes and see them today. I think sometimes we live in a world, a life so self-obsessed, a self-centred world. All too often, selfishness, selfishness and the demands of our own rights. You know, everybody's going on about rights for this and rights for that. Rights for the whales and rights for the particular bird in a tree.

Rights for whoever it is. I want, I demand my rights. Selfishness. It's all about rights and comforts and our culture, our mindset.

[8:55] It's all about me and what I want, what I need. Chapter 13 goes on. Charity envieth not, it vaunteth not, itself is not puffed up. Love is not self-seeking and envious of others.

It wants to see others blessed. It wants to bless others. Love gives and keeps on giving. Philippians 2.4 it says, Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. In other words, don't just look out for yourself and your own selfish rights. Stand in other people's shoes and see how they are going.

Love vaunteth not itself. In other words, it's not a braggart. It's not arrogant and full of pride. Our Lord Jesus demonstrated that, didn't he? Our Lord Jesus, he demonstrated love as he stepped down to our level, as he left the heavens glory, as he stepped down from his glorious throne and into human skin, into human shoes, into human streets, into human lives and he can relate.

Jesus is relevant today. Jesus is relevant for you today. Jesus is relevant. He was and is God with us. Emmanuel.

[10:17] God with us. The Lord Jesus, Master of heaven and earth, he wasn't someone puffed up with some swelled head, some windbag, full of his own self-importance.

He stoops down and he reaches out in love to the very lowest of the low. Have you ever noticed sometimes how some people love having a conversation about themselves with you?

Have you ever noticed that? They could talk all day about themselves. This world is consumed with themselves.

They themselves are their favourite topic of conversation. rather, let's think of others. Think of others.

When our Lord Jesus saw need, he was moved with compassion every time. It was others that motivated him. It was real. It was powerful. It was genuine.

[11:24] I've heard it said, love is a verb. Likewise, we could say, Jesus is a verb. Jesus is a verb.

In other words, he was about love in action. It wasn't love in word only. It was love in deed and in truth. It was love active and compassionate.

Active and passionate. 1 Corinthians 13 goes on, verse 5, doth not behave itself unseemly, sinketh not her own. God's love has a special quality of self-sacrifice.

It does not behave itself unseemly. In other words, it's not rude. There was a dignity and a consideration about the love in 1 Corinthians 13, Jesus' love.

Love does not seek for itself. It seeks to bless, to be thoughtful. I read of a man once who was generally lacking in manners and he never opened the car door for his wife.

[12:26] I've been convicted about this lately. They're not here this morning but David in June, David always opens the door for his wife and he goes the extra mile. Not only does he open the door but he gets the seatbelt and helps her put it on.

Wow. Wow. Exactly. But this man wasn't like that. He never opened the car door. He'd say, she doesn't have two broken arms.

And after many years of marriage to this woman, his wife died. And at the funeral as the pallbearers brought her casket out to the hearse, the husband was standing by the car door and the funeral director who knew the husband by name called out to him and said, open the door for her, will you? He reached for the car door and then for one second he froze. He realised that he had never opened the door for her in his life and now in her death it would be the first, last and only time. A lifetime of regrets came crashing down around him. Love is not rude. Love does not behave itself unseemly. Now friends, today I carried a casket for someone this Thursday last.

[13:38] I carried a casket. It was the first time I had served as a pallbearer and it's something telling to carry the weight of a human body. To carry the weight of a human body in a casket and to carry the weight of that body to and from a hearse as their soul goes to another place.

Life is all too short. Life is all too short. Let us love while we can. Let us love now.

Let us love today. Let us love while we can. We have only a limited time on this planet to show love to others. Is there someone in your life you want to express love to?

Say it today. Show it today. Make a point of it today. Jesus did not seek his own way. He did not seek to please himself. Jesus is love.

He's relevant to you and who you are and how you're going today. He seeks after the broken, the hurting, the lost, the suffering, the powerless. He was not self-centred.

[14:46] He had every right to be. He was God. God. Yet he was humble and he was kind and he was other-centred and he ministered to the heart broken.

Luke 4 says the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor and he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised.

Jesus Christ is the love of God incarnate. The Lord, of course the person of Christ, yet God is love and he comes for us in Christ's person, in Christ's flesh, in Christ's spirit and he heals you of your dread disease of sin.

He enters into your grief. He shares your heart heart and you're hurt. He knows your pain, he's been there and he's done that. I read a telling account of someone whose life, whose family was filled with abuse.

It was a shocking account. It's a shocking account. There's people here today who've been there and done that. I know that. Jesus knows, he knows all about it.

[16:08] Jesus knows. And he knows what it feels like. He knows what it feels like. He knows when it hurts. The memories that hurt. He was despised and rejected as well.

A man of sorrows, he was acquainted with grief. He stepped in, into human sorrow, into human heartache, at the funeral of Lazarus in John 11. Jesus saw her weeping.

Verse 33. He saw Mary weeping and it says, the Jews also weeping which came with her. It says, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

He was not removed and distant. Our God is not somewhere in outer space or away. He is here now, right here now with you. He is right here.

He is present. He is relevant. He was and is loved. Mary fell down at his feet and wailed. And our Lord Jesus was tender our Lord Jesus wept alongside her.

[17:11] He identified with this hurting woman. This love will not let us go. Hebrews 4 it says he is a high priest which is not one who cannot be touched.

He is one who can be touched with our feelings, with our infirmities yet without sin. Jesus is touched. It has got the sense of his special empathy, his special relating with us, his care, his

concern, the special tenderness of his great big heart.

And friends today, whatever your situation, right here, right now, your pain touches God. In verse 5 it goes on in 1 Corinthians 13, It's not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

Again, God's love is not selfish. He doesn't hold on to bitterness and resentment, how easily we can. Bitterness and resentment can fill our hearts and slow our stride spiritually.

We need forgiveness. We need to give forgiveness. To not keep a record of wrongs, of things done against us, I could write a big long list of those, I'm sure you can, holding on to the hurts of others of the past.

[18:25] Rather, let them go. Let them go. One married man said to his friend, you know, every time my wife and I get into a conflict, she gets historical. Historical.

His friend said historical? Historical doesn't mean hysterical? Hysterical? No, I mean historical. Historical. She rehearses everything I've ever done wrong in the whole history of our marriage. That's keeping score. That's not love. We can get historical, keeping record of wrongs. Love does not take account of the evil that it suffers.

Some things we're better off forgetting. Ask God to help you forget some things. I'm getting pretty good at that the older I get. God's love helps us have such a heart.

It's all consuming. God's love should impact every dimension, every aspect, every factor, every action. In 1 Corinthians 16 14 it says, Let all your things be done with charity.

[19:34] Everything. Everything. Now friends, God's love is a choice. What did we deserve to merit God's love?

Absolutely nothing. God's love is the highest kind of love. Unconditional. But God commended his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 5 verse 8 Yet sinners, undeserving, unworthy enemies of God, yet he loved you still and me. It was a choice. Love is a choice.

1 Corinthians 13 verse 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth. Love does not rejoice in sin. We've heard about sin this morning. We don't condone it.

We can't excuse it. We've got to say what God says it is. Sin is sin. Love realises what sin is and what sin does.

[20:32] Sin grieves God's love. We grieve too when we see wrong doing, wrong words, wrong actions, wrong behaviours. The Lord Jesus must have been grieved when suddenly thrust upon the scene was a woman caught in the very act of adultery.

John chapter 8 yet he did not stone her to death. He was both righteous and forgiving. He did not condone her sin yet he showed her compassion.

John 8 verse 7 he said he that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her. It's interesting that he said he that is without sin among you.

There was only one without sin there that day. Jesus Christ he stooped down and he wrote on the ground what did he write? Maybe it was the law thou shalt not thou shalt not that was written by the finger of God back in the old time.

Maybe it was just the word love. Love. Because love is the fulfilment of the law. Romans 13 8 love is the fulfilling of the law.

[21:52] Galatians 5 14 the law is fulfilled in one word even this thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. We don't know what Jesus wrote from the ground. He stooped down he came down to her level eyeball to eyeball as others were about to throw stones to kill her.

He extended love. He gave forgiveness freely by his grace. When Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman he said unto her woman where are those thine accusers hath no man condemned thee she said no man Lord and Jesus said unto her neither do I condemn thee go and sin no more.

He sent her away with a changed life go and sin no more love rejoices in the truth love will do right what is right God's love will stand for God's truth and rejoices in the truth of the gospel the soul saving truth of a heart that can be transformed and saved the saving grace of God the truth of the gospel because we love the truth will speak the truth in love we love the truth enough to we love the lost enough to urge them to trust Christ we don't try to pat someone on the back when they're going

down the road to hell we'd rather confront them lovingly with the truth so we must stand for that 1 Corinthians 13 verse 7 it says love bears all things love bears all things it's got an enduring quality to it when trouble comes when we face hardships!

we will endure them love goes the distance our Lord Jesus extends his tenderness still his mercy still to the most undeserving it says love believeth all things hope of all things endure all things it's got staying power it's got power that goes the distance this love that will not let us go he holds us he holds you in his tender embrace nothing can tear you away from his love nothing can tear you away from this relentless love God's love has a steadfast endurance it endures all things God's love is sure we read 1 Corinthians 13 verse 8 charity or love never fails love never fails have you ever been let down love love God's love will never let you down Romans 8 we read shall this or that tribulation distress persecution famine nakedness peril sword can anything separate us nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us and

Paul writes that nothing nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God God's got superglue love amen once he's got a hold of you it's like contact glue his love will not let you go nothing shall separate us from the love of God love is the greatest thing 1 Corinthians 13 13 it says now abode a faith hope charity but the greatest of these is love charity love never ends love is the greatest will you put love into action friends let's get personal now just to wrap up 1 John 3 18 it says my little children let us not love in word neither in tongue but in deed and in truth put your love into action the good Samaritan in Luke 10 it says he was wounded he was battered and bruised laying on the side of the road nobody cared for this wounded traveler yet the good

[25:51] Samaritan put himself he gave to a man who could not help himself and who possibly had little to give in return this is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you Jesus said that and then the next verse says greater love greater love have no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends the greatest is love and there's no greater love than the love that took our Lord to the cross it was love that held him there it wasn't the nails it wasn't the hands of sinful men as they pounded the spikes into his flesh it was love that held him there for you for me and friends greater love has no man than this yet he says to you to me love one another as I have loved you that's a big ask isn't it to know his love and to show his love let us pray