

Catch up of series

Not a new thing, just a simple way of saying it. If you have been around. I certainly hope none of this seems like a surprise. Jesus has given us his marching orders. We have just tried to give simple words to describe it for our time and place here and now.

Follow Jesus

- relationship (intimacy with Him)
- Obeying his commands

Love People

- Ethan last week talked us through what loving those who are already a part of this family look like. So encouraging to hear of so many examples of people in this church doing exactly that.

Today, we are going to tackle the other thing we mean, when we say love people.

We don't get to just be a group of people who really like and even love each other, but only the ones already in the family. We're to love people even if they're not "in."

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)*

Rich Villodas - It really is a terrible evangelism strategy to despise the people you are trying to bring to Jesus.

He is right, and I think we have seen plenty of that.

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)*

Words are great, but sometimes I know I need to see an example of it lived right out.  
Instructions vs. YouTube.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." (Luke 15:1-2)

Love looks like getting close. Proximity is a powerful thing.

It's kind of a side point but we can't be a church that just expects people to show up here ready to go. We go to them. We prioritize them, we invite them into not just our churches but our lives. We could talk about that for more than one week, but I think it's worth noticing here. Most of the work of this mission happens outside of these walls, and in each of your lives. Because we as the body can get the most work done.

Doug Sr. story. God has drawn these people to him.

So He told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:3-7)

I love this story because in this example, Jesus, Who very obviously is the shepherd, shows us how He feels about those who are lost, who are away from Him, and what that love demands.

Love demands action (no thoughts and prayers over here for the sheep)

Prayer meetings about Burden in Yarmouth

This aching in our chests – I never got it, until I had kids. And until I lost one of them.

Angelo lost at beach

Love looks like risking for them- the cost is real. Are we ready for it?

We love risk assessment.

Story of Matt's friend.

Here's a blurb from their bio:

For 18 years, Ron and Carrie lived with the Siawis, an isolated people group of the lowlands of Papua New Guinea. Their jungle home was accessible only by air as the Lindsey family worked hard to learn the Siawi culture and language, build relationships and present the gospel.

A tragic automobile accident during a 1989 visit to the US almost ended their ministry midstream. A drunk driver hit the family car, killing their eldest son, permanently paralyzing their 3-year-old son, and breaking Carrie's back. The accident delayed the arrival of the Gospel to the Siawi people, but the Lindseys did not let it stop them. When they were able, they returned to the jungle. In 1992, together with the rest of their missionary team, the Lindseys helped present the Gospel to the Siawi people and experienced the joy of a tremendous response. Today the Siawi people continue on with the complete New Testament translated into their language and their own Siawi Bible teachers leading the church.

Other parts of the story...

- At the time of the accident, their kids ranged from newborn (who was unscathed in the accident) to a 7ish year old.
- It was almost two months after the accident when the family was reunited for the first time (all in different hospitals because of injuries).
- Driver of the car was also killed
- Lawyer said they were pretty much guaranteed a \$7 million settlement, but it would take about seven years and they had to stay stateside until it was completed, which meant they would not go back to the Siawis.
- After prayer and fasting it was clear that God was calling them to go back. But seven million is a lot of money. "What is seven million worth when you get it while being disobedient?"
- Upon returning, the elders of the tribe came and said ...
  - We would never leave the body of a loved one behind.
  - You left your son in America.
  - What that says to us is that the message you want to give us is more important than life and death. So we commit our village to listen to everything you say until you finish.
- Anecdotally, when the elders of the tribe heard what happened, while the Lindseys were still in recovery, they went and knocked on one of the team member's door at night. With a group of men in traditional war gear, they asked to be pointed toward America so they could avenge the Lindseys' son's death.

Compelling story. Convicting story.

Left \$7 million minimum on the table, because of their love for those people who didn't know Jesus.

And you and I fold because it will cost an awkward conversation.

Because it takes up seconds of our oh so precious time that we then waste anyway.

It costs us some of our perceived control over our life that is an illusion anyway.

Our money which, let's be honest. for most of us is extra, but we think we are entitled to.

I'm not heaping judgment here, I am the same way. But that is not how it should be.

And I will tell you right now. I am not leaving 7 million dollars on the table just because some pastor told me to one time. Not because of some strategy to “reach the lost” not because some moral code demands it of me.

You leave 7 million on the table because you have a deep burden, a deep love.

Love is not ok with people staying lost.

This shepherd doesn't finally find this sheep and berate him for being lost. And he also doesn't say, “Oh you want to come back? No? Ok I wouldn't want to press the issue.”

Instead what do we see? He lifts him up on his shoulders

Love celebrates those who have come home.

Kids at birthdays story

If you haven't caught it, this kind of love isn't just something you can muster up, program your way through, or just make a habit. Because it's motivation. Of course we can't. It will only happen as we surrender more fully and get to know more deeply the One Who has modeled this kind of love.

One of the cool things about this mission – the cycle

I don't know a single person who has a burden for the lost, who doesn't also have robust relations with Jesus. Intimacy, prayer, Scripture, time.

Christians, let's go before God and ask Him for this kind of love.

Those in here who don't know Jesus - call to salvation

He is where you are.

He has sprung into action for you.

He risked it all for you.

He won't let you stay where you are. If you let Him, He will lift you up, put you on His shoulders, bring you home.

And we will celebrate the heck over you.