

and make a difference, changing that person, and in the process changing our community.

Let's listen to an example of Jesus love at work, as a mother forgives the person who murdered her son.

Let us pray.  
Jesus, thank you for loving us completely. Thank you that on the cross you gave yourself completely for us, that we might be built up according to our needs, that we might benefit. Fill us with the Holy

Spirit that we live this love of yours to every person we meet this week. Free us from being self-centred and grow us in being centred on you, denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following you, to your glory, honour and praise. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553  
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

8 March 2009

## LOVE COMPLETELY.

One Month to Live—3



Today's theme in our 'One Month to Live' challenge is to 'Love Completely'. A life lived without love would be miserable. A life without someone to love would be a waste. A life without being loved would be horrid. To live life completely we need to be loved and to love others.

Who would agree with that statement, that to live life completely we need to be loved and to love others? I certainly believe it.

I know when something good happens I want to share it with someone else. I also know that when I'm going through tough times I don't want to do it alone. I don't want to be existing alone; I want to be sharing my life with other people.

But there's the trick, people make life complicated. I don't want to be alone and I don't want stress, but with relationships comes complications.

Sometimes I retreat into my cave; shutting people out, but caves are cold and dark, not at all conducive to living life to the full. If you're hiding, having retreated into the false safety of your recluse lifestyle, today is the day to change and risk stepping out into the warmth and joy of other people's love.

In the Gospel reading for today we have Jesus working through some of the common hassles with relationships. We have Peter who totally misunderstands Jesus and has a totally opposite goal to Jesus. Misunderstanding and

going in two totally different directions stresses any relationship.

Peter is telling Jesus off as Jesus is sharing with the disciples about the goal of his life, about his ultimate act of love. But Peter figures Jesus ultimate act should be to exterminate their enemies, and live in lavish luxury, enjoying the good life. To which Jesus says; "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (Mk 8:33b)

That's an interesting question; what are the concerns of God? That you live in lavish luxury, enjoying the good life at the expense of others misery. As you destroy your enemies. I don't think so. Our world has seen

too many wars for anyone to believe the good life can be found through killing your enemy, through revenge, hatred, envy, greed.

What's on God's agenda? In 1 John 3:16 we read; "This is how we know what love is Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for one another."

Here's God's agenda, a community of people who know how to sacrifice themselves for each other, rather than sacrificing each other.

Paul in his letter to the community in Ephesus puts it this way; "Don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that I may benefit those who listen." (Eph. 4:29)

Paul is showing how we love completely: we use our words to build the other person up, not tear them down, and we do it according to their needs, not my idea of what should be happening. I'm to do it to benefit them.

When I give a person a piece of my mind so

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### What's on God's agenda?

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that they can get their act together, maybe I need to stop and try and understand them so that when I speak it builds them up according to their needs, so that they benefit, and I'm not simply left feeling better after having verbally vomited over someone.

So Jesus says; "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mk 8:34b) To

love completely I need to deny myself, in other words, don't be selfish. Don't live a self-absorbed lifestyle, learn to deny yourself.

Guess what's hard to do? Deny my whims. Put another person ahead of myself, spending my time, effort and even my

money that they prosper and not to seek reward or even recognition. That's when I begin singing to myself that song; 'What about me, it isn't fair.'!

But that's the nature of love. So God puts us in families, where as a parent I'm daily faced with wonderful opportunities to deny myself for someone else's benefit. That's why God invented marriage, that ultimate place of self-denial, where I stop and think of the other first, second and when in doubt third, so that they are built up according

to their needs that they benefit.

I hope this all sounds good, because there's only one minor problem, I'm by nature selfish. When I get up in the morning and look in the mirror you'll never guess who I see. I realize straight away that I'm hungry. By my very nature I'm self focused and quite naturally live selfishly thinking life revolves around me. That makes it very hard, if not impossible for me to deny myself.

Let's look at that reading from 1 John 3:16 again; ""This is how we know what love is Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for one another."

Notice it starts with the fact that Jesus Christ laid down his life for you and I. I, we, now have a new foundation to face life. I now have

a new motive, a changed nature to live from. Jesus has laid down his life, I am love, I am now empowered to deny myself, for in Jesus I have all I need and more.

Jesus is about changing me so that instead of being consumed by the

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### I'm by nature selfish.

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things I want to make my life great, sacrificing others to get there. I'm now empowered to sacrifice things so that people get the love they need.

Jesus put it this way: "whoever wants to save their life – chasing after all that they desire – will lose it, but whoever loses their life – denies themselves, spending all their time, possessions and yes money on others for no reward – whoever loses

their life for me (Jesus) and for the gospel will save it." (Mk 8:35)

Jesus' love for me enables me to die to myself so that someone else will profit. Could you imagine a community where this love was lived out, where people died to their own selfish

desires and lived to benefit the other according to their need? Could you imagine a community where we sought to lay down our lives for each other?

One powerful way we do this is when we forgive one another. One great thing about life is you'll always have plenty of opportunity to forgive others. You can hang onto your hurt, your anger, your resentment, you can harbour bitterness in your heart, but don't expect to be able to love completely. Or you can let Jesus' love flow through you