

late and I'd leave early so I wouldn't have to talk to anybody. Then one Sunday I got so caught up in listening that I forgot to leave early and the service ended and the people stood up and I couldn't get out the door. Suddenly I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder. When I turned, that big tall pastor was standing there with his hand on my shoulder looking at me and he said, 'What's your name, son? Whose boy are you? Whose son are you? I just shook when I heard those words and I heard that question. But before I could say anything that pastor said this, 'I know who you are. I know who your family is. You have a distinct family resemblance. You're the son of God!' The man said, 'You know, those words changed my life.'

The old man got up and left and a waitress came over a little bit later and said, 'Do you know who you were talking to?' No I said. She said, 'That's Ben Hooper. Two times governor of Tennessee.'

A person learned he was a child of God and it changed his life. He was loved; and discovered he was valuable and acceptable and loveable and forgivable and capable. It set him free, and all the opinions of other people didn't matter any more. He knew that in Jesus he was God's son, whom he loved and was well pleased with.

May we all take Jesus at his word, believing him, allowing him to be the most important person in our lives, filling our hearts, our minds, our souls with what Jesus has said and done. That's the starting point of love, knowing your loved

by God in Jesus; to him you're valuable, you're acceptable, you're forgiven, you're capable.

So I join with Paul in praying; "May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love really is." (Eph. 3:18 NLT).

Let us pray.  
 Jesus 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. Help me to believe more about what you think of me than what other people think. Jesus, help me to see myself through your eyes of love, and help me to see other people the same way. Amen.

## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
 Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

9 May 2010

## LOVING LIKE JESUS LOVES ME

40 Days of Love



Who would like to grow in their relationships? Who thinks their relationships could do with more love? Then Jesus invites you to follow his example. "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you!" (John 13:15)

I hope everyone noticed our starting point – we're loved. In Jesus, God loves you. We seek to love, because loved people love, and in Jesus there is no doubt about it, you're loved by God.

So today we'll look at four ways that Jesus loves, so that we can be following his example.

First; Accept others the way Jesus accepts you.

Here is where we can suffer some of the deepest wounds, the wounds of rejection. Where somebody puts you down, betrays you, belittles you, tells you you're worthless and won't amount to anything

significant. Rejection is a love destroyer.

There is a myth out there that if I could be perfect everybody would love me. But Jesus was perfect and they nailed him to a cross! No matter what you do somebody's not going to like it, they'll disagree, they'll reject you.

So the starting point in learning to love other people is to realize how much God accepts you. How does Jesus love you? "The Father gives me my people. Every one of them will come to me, and I will always accept them." (John 6:37)

Do you ever notice how people want to put conditions on this gracious acceptance we have in Jesus? Jesus accepts you, so long as you obey. No. Jesus loves you because Jesus chooses to love you, it is pure gift based on who he is.

These ungracious judgements happen because I at times confuse the difference between acceptance and approval. I always knew that my father loved me, but he didn't always approve of what I did.

Jesus isn't into using guilt to pound you into the ground. I know I don't measure up to my own standards, much less Gods. If I've had fifteen crashes in my car, I don't wake up Sunday morning saying, "I think I'll drive to the courthouse and let the judge tell me what bad drivers I am." No, that doesn't do any good. I want somebody to teach me how to be a better driver. I want somebody to save me from myself, not encourage me to hate myself.

Paul writes in Romans; "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you." (Rom. 15:7)

So this week practice acceptance. Don't imprison with your conditions, love them. You can, because you are loved, you are accepted by Jesus. Believe it, live it.

Second, loving like Jesus means I'm to value others the way Jesus values me.

How valuable are you?  
How much are you worth?

Let me tell you how worthwhile you are. You are infinitely valuable to God. First God created you.

Second, Jesus died for you. Third, he's daily with you through the Spirit. Fourth, he wants to share his life with you forever. That's how valuable you are to God.

The difficulty is I have problems believing it. I wrestle with what other people say, and I'm tempted to believe them instead. Then I'm tempted to judge people the same way I'm judged, I'm tempted to value people by what they have to offer, or can do: success – failure, good – bad.

When I get things right and others get it wrong I know I'm tempted even more to believe in my performance. But that's a real love destroyer.

Jesus seeking to reassure people of their value said; "Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God.

Even the hairs on your head have all been counted! Do

**Valuable  
Acceptable**

not be afraid. You are worth far more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6-7)

I like the way the Message paraphrases the last thought; "So don't be intimidated by all this bully talk. You're worth more than a million canaries." Don't let anyone bully and intimidate you into believing anything other than in Jesus you are of infinite worth. Believe it, live it, enjoy it.

And when you're tempted to doubt it, look at the cross, extend your arms and rejoice that Jesus has given

his life for you. That's how much he values you.

How can we put this into practice? 1 Peter 2:17 "Treat everyone you meet with dignity." Take the time to listen, to look at the person and give them your full attention. And be polite. Saying please and thank you aren't just quaint old things, but they tell another person how much we value them.

This week whose value can you affirm. Start by valuing your mother, thanking her, making time for her

and always speaking politely.

The third way to love is; I must forgive others like Jesus forgives me.

It's good to be reminded again and again that love forgives. That's its nature, to forgive. That's always been and still is God's nature. In the Old Testament we read; "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)

In Ephesians Paul writes; "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." (Eph. 1:4 NLT) It's always been God's plan to forgive us through Jesus.

So, "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1 NIV). Did you notice the word 'no'. In Jesus God doesn't hold on to even the littlest bit of condemnation. There is no condemnation for you in Christ Jesus.

Our actions step this week is to offer forgiveness to someone who has hurt you. Forgive your mums for not being perfect.

The fourth way of love is; I must believe in others like Jesus believes in me.

One of the legacies of sin is that we all have been left with a sense of insecurity and self-esteem issues. Being severed from God's love will do that to you. We lose belief in what God has made us and end up having to prove ourselves.

In 1 Corinthians 13, that great love chapter, we read; "If you love someone you will be loyal to them no matter what the cost. You will always believe in them, always expect the best of them, and always stand your ground defending them." (1

Corinthians 13:7 LB) That's exactly what Jesus did. He affirmed the people

**Forgiven  
Believed**

around him. Jesus looked at people and he didn't see what they were. He saw what they could become. He saw their potential in his love. He saw their growth as his disciples. He saw what God dreamed possible for them. So Jesus brought out the best in people, not by labelling them but saying, I believe you can do it. Actually he said, with him nothing was impossible for us.

Jesus believes in us so much that he's put the future of the world in our hands. He said; "As you, Heavenly Father, sent me

into the world I have sent them into the world." (John 17:18 NIV)

Let me tell you a brief story which reflects what can happen when we live out Jesus' love. It's a true story.

A pastor was on holidays, he stopped for a coffee and an old man came up and they started talking. The old man said; 'Let me tell you a preacher story. I was born an illegitimate child. I never knew who my father was. It was very, very hard on me

growing up. The kids in school made fun of me. Growing up, I didn't have any friends at all. When I walked around our little town I always felt people were staring at me and looking at me and saying, 'I wonder who's the father of that boy.' I spent a lot of time by myself. I didn't have any friends. One day a pastor came to town. Everybody was talking about how good he was. I had never gone to church but I decided I'd go to hear this guy. I went. And he was good. So good I kept going back. But each time I went to church I'd come