

Father's children this now is my nature as well.

So I don't seek to commit adultery, but to remain faithful, just as God is faithful. Faithful to us, as he gave his life for us in Jesus. Dying for those he loved, because he is faithful and can be trusted. This is the character Jesus has birthed in us and empowers each of us to live daily.

So I don't steal, because God is a giver not a taker. God is generous, loving people not things. To God I'm not a commodity to be used and abused. I'm not

expendable so that he can get a new toy. No in Jesus God gives himself totally for us, loving us way more than anything. That's our new nature; loving in person, loving people more than anything.

This week stop and reflect on how the commandments show God's character.

What challenges do you face to loving as you are loved by Jesus?

Let us pray.
Jesus thank you for loving us, for being willing to be sacrificed for us.

Thank you for birthing each of us into your Father's family, and recreating in us your character. Help us to enjoy life with you trusting you, seeking always to let you determine who we are and shape what we do. Jesus grow us to ever greater maturity in loving as we are loved by you. Daily fill us with the Holy Spirit that we have your strength and wisdom to overcome the challenges to love that we each face. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

13 May 2012 CHALLENGES TO LOVE 1 John 5:1-6



Over the last weeks we've been looking at love; that love is sacrifice, that love is action. Now I'd like to take a few moments to look at what inhibits love. So the interview question for this week is; what challenges to love do you face?

(Short clip: Challenges to love – 4:26min)

What challenges to love do you face?

In the reading from Acts we witnessed Jesus overcoming a huge challenge to love. The Jewish nation at that time had divided the world into two groups; the Jews and the Gentiles. How many

dividing walls do we have? How many barriers do we have to loving other people, to loving each other?

If I'm honest with myself I have an in crowd, and the rest. I have preconceived ideas about people which labels them. I have dividing walls which prevent me from loving people. Some of those walls I'm aware of, others I'm blind to. The Jewish nation of Jesus time thought they were doing the right thing by not associating with Gentiles.

Jesus breaks down those dividing walls. Not by saying; 'It's OK, it really doesn't

matter. We're all the same'. Jesus doesn't turn a blind eye to people's behaviour and say it doesn't matter. Jesus doesn't say anything goes.

How does Jesus break down the barriers which prevent us from loving each other? Especially within his family community? How does Jesus break down the barriers which inhibit our love for one another?

The way Jesus breaks down the dividing walls in our life is by uniting us in himself. Outside of Jesus we are all sinners. Outside of Jesus we're all united; we're all sinners. We're all living

outside of the sort of relationship what God wants to share with us.

The only way into that relationship is through Jesus.

Through his death on the cross, which is the price for us to be forgiven. So that we

might together live the new life he has created for us through his resurrection. So now it's Jesus

who determines me as a person. Not what I do or don't do, not what you do or don't do. It is Jesus who determines me as a person. My identity is woven up in Jesus.

Outside of Jesus I lose myself, in Jesus I find myself. I discover life lived in all the fullness that Jesus brings; that's peace.

If anything, or anyone else

determines who I am as a person other than Jesus, then I'm a sinner. In fact it would be classified as idolatry! Jesus shapes me; not my sexuality, not my productivity, not my bank balance, not my popularity, not my intelligence, not that I'm better or

Who determines you as a person?

worse than another person at something. None of these determine who I am as a person. Jesus does; and then he shapes what I do as a living expression of who I am in him. And who I am in Jesus is the Father's child whom he loves and delights in.

So Jesus says; "I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves

at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love." (John 15:9) Jesus has loved us as he is loved and that shapes who I am, and who we are as his community.

Did you notice that this shape is defined. I don't determine God's shape, he determines mine.

Interestingly at the recent pastor's conference this phrase stuck in my mind; 'Each of the Ten Commandments are a reflection of God's character. And he wants us to reflect his character.'

If I use the Ten Commandments to highlight that I'm doing the right thing, that I'm good, they quickly become a

dividing wall. But when I see the Ten Commandments as a reflection of God's character, the character he has placed in me, and in you, through Jesus, they become a uniting force. I want to reflect Jesus' character, and be true to who I am. And with Jesus I want you also to reflect Jesus' character, and be true to who you are in him.

The goal is not to be proven good, but together to grow to ever greater maturity in Jesus. Jesus is our common goal. Jesus is the one who loves us both and is drawing us both to himself, to great maturity in him, in the way we live, in the way we love as we are loved. As we share this life with Jesus we have unity. Jesus unites us and

Jesus shapes us, shaping the way we seek to live together.

Another challenge to the way we love one another is that the devil is still

whispering in our ears; 'Did God really say that?' 'Is that really the way to live

Does Jesus want you to enjoy life?

or are you missing out?' 'Just look at all the fun everyone else is having, it's not fair that Jesus won't let you join in.' 'Jesus is a kill joy, try it for yourself.' The devil is still whispering in our ears seeking to get us to doubt Jesus and go off doing our own thing expecting to discover some wonderful new life. But the devil's lies only bring death.

Daily I'm challenged to believe that Jesus knows best, to trust him with my life, with my identity, with my desire to enjoy life.

Does Jesus want you to enjoy life? Of course he does. Jesus said; "I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my

command: Love one another the way I love you." (John 15:11)

So I don't follow Jesus' commands as some burden imposed on me, but in Jesus I follow the commandments as a means to express who I am in him. For the commandments are a reflection of God, who Jesus is the perfect reflection of and as one of the