

Dad for his wisdom; it's not always obvious what the most loving thing to do or say is.

Love isn't letting people do whatever they want. This may shock you, tolerance isn't love. Let me repeat that; tolerance is not love. Love isn't not speaking into a situation where a person is doing something which is clearly not on God's agenda. Sometimes love needs great courage.

Thankfully I know the source of great loving courage, Jesus. So I can come to him and seek the courage I need. If I just get tough, I might be in danger of becoming hard-hearted. I certainly don't want that to happen.

Good News, God loves us and has sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. It is in this freedom we get to live. It is this new identity we get to discover.

Today I invite you to sit down and talk over with Jesus what love is. Sit down and talk with your heavenly Dad about those situations and people you find hard to be loving or to love. Invite the Spirit to give you the wisdom you need, and then step out and do what he has placed on your heart

and mind. Step out and act, confident, knowing Jesus has sacrificed his life for you, he's not out to lead you up the garden path, but to grow and mature you in living love.

Today takes some time and invite Jesus to grow you in the love he has for you. Invite Jesus in, and soak up his love for you like a sponge, so when the pressures on, guess what will flow out; his love.

Christ Church Lutheran

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



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

29 April 2018

JESUS LOVES, NOW I CAN TOO!

1 John 4:7-21



Could anyone tell me what came first, the chicken or the egg? I don't know the answer to that question but I can, without a shadow of doubt, tell you the answer to this question. What came first God's love or my love?

What do you reckon the answer is? Here's what John wrote; "This is real love – not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." (1 Jn 4:10 NLT) Talk about Good News. I mean if God was waiting for me to be loveable, he might be waiting a real, real long time. I have floors.

Of course the other trap is that when I'm acting to prove how loving I am, it ceases to be love, for I'm

after a reward. And when I'm after a reward, who's the focus on? Me! Living a life focused on me might end up being somewhat self-focused, which could be seen as being selfish.

How many have felt loved by a person acting from selfish motives?

Good News, God's love comes first.

But I've discovered there's one important thing about love, it is a two way action. For love to flourish is needs to be given, received, and then given back and received.

Have you ever tried to love someone who doesn't want to know you? How well does that work; you ring and they never reply,

you invite them out and they never come, you give of yourself but they stay at arm's length. How well does love work when it is only a one way action?

Love by its very nature seeks to engage the other person. God, in Jesus, gave his life so that we might do what? Ignore him.

If you ignored God would that mean he didn't love you? Or would it simply be a tragic loss; God would be reaching out in love, but without any response, without any love in return, his love would be lost on us. That is a tragic thought.

Does God love you? In Jesus the answer is an unequivocal yes. There is no

shadow of doubt, in Jesus, God loves you.

That's what we just read; Jesus has sacrificed his life for us. It is a done deal. Jesus has, not might, but has sacrifice his life for you. That's God's love in action.

Actually God doesn't know how to act in any other way, for John also told us; 'God is love' (1 Jn. 4:16b) God doesn't love, in the sense that it is just one of his many attributes, it is simply a living expression of who he is. Whatever God does, whatever Jesus does, whatever the Spirit does is love, for that is their nature, their character, their very heart beat. And God always acts true to who he is.

Now if you don't want Jesus' love, it won't be forced on you. Have you noticed, you can't force another person to love you? Actually

I've noticed that the harder I try, the more I push, the further away they go. Forcing someone to love you just doesn't seem to work; have you ever experienced that?

Neither does working hard to get someone to like you. Then you've trapped

What comes first Jesus love or my love?

yourself in a lie, where you've got to keep working hard, or they might discover the real you and that could be the end of things.

Good News, Jesus knows the real you, better than you even do, and he has sacrificed himself for you that you might be forgiven, set free to live in and experience his love for you. That you might then live this love out into all you do, because in

Jesus, that's now who you are.

In Jesus, without a shadow of doubt, you are Father's loved child with whom he is please. You are chosen and marked by his love, the delight of his life. In Jesus, that's who you are, so you can now be growing in living true to who you are.

I always love the fact that Jesus isn't after perfection but after a real down-to-earth, open relationship with me, where we can give freely of ourselves to each other. In Jesus I discover the safest person in the world. So safe I can be totally honest and real, without the fear of rejection.

Did you notice that wonderful phrase; "Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear." (1 Jn 4:18) Good News, God's agenda isn't to make

you scared. Jesus wasn't sacrificed so that you might run away frightened. The Spirit doesn't come to spook you.

Actually I've noticed in life that there are plenty of things and people around to scare me. God really has no need to come and frighten us, humanity is good at doing that on its own. Finding peace is another matter. Finding a safe place where you can let your guard down and be real, be totally honest and vulnerable, now that's another matter.

In Jesus, God has reached out in love toward us, and in that reaching out comes the wonderful potential to live loved. Because we are loved in Jesus, we are now empowered to love. It's not done to earn love but because that's love's very nature. It evokes a response of love.

That's why John invites us to continue to love one another, so that this love of God flows, for love is always a two way action.

It would be wrong to read John's words as God telling us off if we don't love. Jesus isn't there ready to punish us if we don't

I really do need to stop and ask....

love. Threats and intimidation just don't fit in with love, do they. Threats and intimidation might get people to act, but love is never the motive.

So when John uses phrases like; 'anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.' he isn't trying to bully us into action. That would be self-defeating.

Actually if you discovered yourself

acting in a rather unloving way what would be the best thing to do? Would it be reprimand yourself and try harder. Or you could come to your Dad, and have a heart to heart chat with him; experiencing his love anew, being left feeling invigorated, ready to try again.

Which option reflects the fact that Jesus has sacrificed himself for us?

I love knowing that I can always come to my heavenly Dad, and talk heart to heart. I can ask Dad, what it is about his love that I don't understand that has led me to act in this way. What is it about his love that I don't understand that has let me respond in this way to what this person has done to me? For if I'm living true to my new nature in Jesus, I'd be loving.

Sometimes I really do need to stop and ask