**People of Love**

***31****When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.****32****If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.****33****Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’****34****A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.****35****By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:31-35, ESV)*

We as the church of Jesus have a calling to be the people of God’s love. Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we talk today about another aspect of our Christ-centered lives. As you know, our faith journey has a number of important foundations. The greatest of these is the most important reason for our Savior’s entire ministry. Loves is the reason for all that He did. Therefore, today we are going to cast another glance to see just why Jesus spoken about glorification and especially love in the moments when he was betrayed. Again, we as Jesus-followers ought to be recognized as the people of God’s love. Let us move to the analysis…

For us Christians, being the people of Love advances God’s cause of world-evangelism. Looking at the text, the Lord Jesus picked a very strange moment to say what he did to his disciples. If we read the verses prior to our reading today, we would see that this command to love each other was happening on the same night of the last supper (Jesus’ very last night before death and Resurrection). Jesus had said to them that they were to wash each other’s feet, as he had done them. After that, however, he started to say that not all who were with him then and there were clean; and what is worse, one of them would betray him. In other words, Jesus said what he did in a not so peaceful, not so joyful moment. In fact, John says that Jesus was troubled in his soul. His words, in fact, caused a stir among the disciples as well. Now, Jesus gave a clear signal to John (the presumed “beloved disciple”) about who the betrayer would be, but no one really understood what was happening as Jesus handed the bread to Judas… It is in that moment, additionally, in that evil moment of Jesus’ betrayal, that Jesus declared that God had been glorified and that God would glorify him as well, who was the Son and the Savior. Right there, in that difficult and awkward moment, when Jesus should have been only sad and troubled about his disciples’ blindness, he says, “I am giving you a new commandment – love one another just like I have loved you.” He meant, of course, to love sacrificially, even in the case of death. He also said, in effect, “Love each other because through it everyone will know that you are my followers.” Thus, love was called to be in the same measure as Jesus loved, as much as was humanly possible, and it would also be a sign to the unbelievers that the disciples were Jesus-followers.

Very often we want to know the nature of a person, but we get confused. One moment they are doing something right, the next, a mistake. One moment they are clear in their headed direction, and the next, not. Many people think that this is a sickness manifesting – others also judge and condemn a person based on a single mistake.

Today, however, Jesus comes through this Scripture to remind us that no matter what our deeds look like, our overall life journey and primary foundation needs to be the love of God. Even if we must be crucified for Love, or if tough times await us, may God’s love, which is also Jesus’ love for us, be number one among us. Yes, that love has diverse ways of showing up. In the context of our relationships with each other, however, may the people see genuine love between us (believers). God is calling us to be the people of love, and not something else. Love contains everything that is needed for our salvation journey in this life.

Therefore, today, if you do not know what decision you are going to make regarding a certain situation, or if you are having a hard time talking to someone, or if you have felt pain because of your brother or sister, let love be your compass. If you have doubts about what you are going to do, may the one deed based on God’s love be first on your list.

Let love be our primary characteristic as Christians when they see how we treat each other when we are together as a church. In that way, instead of driving away the sinner with our internal upheaval and disharmony, may we draw them to know the God of Love and cause them to surrender to Jesus out of falling in love with him, and not out of compulsion or reluctance – the latter would simply be lip-service and not a genuine expression of the heart.

My prayer is that all of us would show God’s genuine love to each other; may people come to this place and feel the difference of God’s presence here. May the Holy Spirit heal them and give them new life, because of our love for each other.

For us Christians, being the people of love advances God’s work of world-evangelism. We as Christ’s church have a calling to be the people of love. God bless you all, Amen.