



Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022 | Message Transcript

# Christ's great example of love

## Main Verse:

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

## Main Point:

We were reading the long passage of what happened when Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. If we look closely at Jesus demeanour and manner before the ruling authority, it is quite unusual. He is surrounded by people throwing false accusations against him. Yet, he barely says a word. In fact, throughout the whole passage Jesus' only utters a few sentences. How can Jesus demonstrate such composure when he's surrounded by such hostility? The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, provides the answer.

Then he tells us, we are to do likewise.

## Intro | Love is what motivates us to care for others

In the past few weeks, through sharing conversations with lots of members of our faith community, I have been struck by how many are in a season where they are looking after someone else.

It may be that they are looking after an elderly loved one whose health is quickly deteriorating. They are unable to volunteer as they normally would, they can't catch up with friends for coffee as often as they'd like – because their priority has become the comfort and welfare of the other.

It may be that their son or daughter has experienced a health crisis, and they are devoting their time to looking after their recuperation. They find themselves cleaning more than normal, doing chores they thought they'd never do, or minding grandchildren more than we expected.

What motivates us to put our life on hold, press the pause button, to accompany our loved ones to doctor's appointments, or pick up their medication, or look after grandchildren or puppies?

And we all said ... 'we do these things because we love them.'

Love motivates us to do things we would never usually dream of doing.

Love motivates us to put up with people's annoying habits, weird idiosyncrasies, and constant forgetting that you've already had that conversation three times today.

We hold our tongue. We refrain from exploding. We take a deep breath – all because we love them.

But how do we know this is what love looks like?

How do we know it is 'love' which motivates us to behave in empathy and compassion?

... Well, we were reminded of what love looks like today – when we read how Jesus conducted Himself at His trial before the Roman Governor.

### **Point 1 | Jesus was a picture of love as he stood before worldly rulers**

Let's for a moment, step into the scene.

Jesus was led, quite violently, into the courtroom where he was brought before Pontius Pilate.

This was not some quiet, peaceful room. It was filled with loud, angry people.

Pilate, of course, was surrounded by his soldiers and advisers. The council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law (Luke 22:66) were all there.

And they weren't silent. Rather, they were hurling accusations about Jesus. (23:2)

Even when Pilate dismissed Jesus' case as being without basis, and sent him off to see Herod, we read,

"... the chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there vehemently accusing him" (23:10)

Then Herod's soldiers joined in, "mocking and ridiculing him." (23:11)

Then, the whole crowd got in on the action, "Away with this man! ... Crucify him." (23:18, 21)

Even the people who stood watching began to sneer, "He saved others let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." (23:35)

Yet, how did Jesus conduct Himself?

As He stood in the middle of all this commotion, Jesus remained virtually silent, barely uttering a word in his own defence (Matthew 27:14).

What motivated Jesus to conduct Himself with such composure and humility?

Well, during Jesus earthly ministry, He had taught,

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13)

Love ... the most powerful force that exists in all realms.

He was motivated by love – the love He had for His Father, and His Father's love for the world.

We see this in the prayer Jesus prayed just a few hours before he was arrested. (John 17:1-26)

After speaking directly to his Father, he prayed for his disciples. Then, he turned and prayed for us,

<sup>20</sup> "My prayer is ... <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. ... May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

### **Point 2 | Jesus asked the Father to share his love with us**

Then, in the middle of his prayer, Jesus made us a promise,

<sup>25</sup> "Righteous Father, ....<sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (John 17:25-26)

What a remarkable promise ... Jesus asked that the love that God the Father has for His Son Jesus ... Yes, that immense, unfathomable love, would dwell in us.

And THAT is why those of us who have God's love in our hearts, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, can be strengthened to show God's love to others.

THAT is what enables us to lay down our lives for those we love.

Let's now see this in action.

### **Point 3 | Paul's letter to the Philippians instructs us to follow Christ's loving example**

When Paul wrote to the believers at Philippi, he was filled with love for them. That's why the letter of Philippians is often called, a love letter.

In fact, when he shared how he often prayed for them, he wrote,

"that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ ..."  
(Philippians 1:9-10)

What a great prayer! ... I encourage you all to pray it for each other.

Then Paul goes on to explain what Christ's love will look like in everyday life.

Just before our passage today, Paul had just finished saying, that because we are united in Christ, we have received great encouragement and comfort from our unity with God, therefore, we ought to be 'like-minded'.

Paul explains that we can be 'like-minded' because we share in the same spirit. It is as though we are able to 'join heads', so to speak, because we have all been given the mind of Christ.

Did you know that? We have been given "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16)

That means that when there is a disagreement between two believers, the only way they can come to agreement is for each to be motivated to discover 'what the mind of Christ' is on the situation.

In other words, they have to lay down their own agendas, desires and wants for the benefit, the welfare, the spiritual and physical health of the other.

And how does Paul explain this?

He tells them that Jesus Christ is the greatest example of how to walk in this kind of love.

In this great hymn of love, verses 5 to 11, we see Christ's awesome example,

He did not demand His rights as the Son of God.

He did not even cling to His status as God.

Rather, because of His love for His Father, He chose to make Himself 'nothing', taking the status of a servant.

He chose to humble Himself, by becoming obedient to death—even the horrific, painful and shameful death on a cross!

And because Jesus humbled Himself, God exalted Him, giving Him the greatest honour.

### **Application |**

So, those of you who are in a season of caring for another, where daily you feel you're being asked to lay down your own desires for the wellbeing of one you love – God wants to affirm that this action is how you live out your worship and service of the Lord.

Caring for another person is an important ministry. It is just as important as volunteering in the boutique or bazaar, leading music or preaching.

Caring for another person is a perfect example of Christ's sacrificial love.

Now, just as all ministry has seasons, this season of being a carer will eventually come to an end. And you'll move on to serve the Lord in other ways.

But there is one call to service that never ends ... and that is our responsibility and call to follow Christ's great example.

We are to live our lives empowered by God's love for us.

This allows us to lay down our desires, wants, needs for the wellbeing or growth of another.

Now, we must remember that God's powerful love is not locked up in heaven somewhere.

No! We can remind ourselves that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)

And it is our experience of God's love that empowers us to serve each other.

It is God's love shown through the unity of the Spirit, that motivates us to lay down our own desires, our needs, our personal commitments, for the wellbeing of another.

We demonstrate God's love for each other when we press the pause button on our lives, in order to care for another.

We demonstrate God's love for each other when we lay down our own personal wants and desires, for the benefit of the faith community.

We demonstrate God's love for each other when we donate our time and effort to working in our shops, wearing a friendly face when customers visit, or by visiting those who are ill in hospital.

May we continue to be walking, talking, examples of Christ's love – for this is how our community here at Southlakes will know that Jesus Christ is Lord!