



CHRIST
EVANGELICAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (PCA)

Sermon Reflection Guide; John 15:12-13

1. In this section of John 15, Jesus gives us his greatest commandment. What should we notice about what Jesus calls this commandment? What difference does that make?
2. Read Matthew 22:37-40. Why is this the greatest commandment? How should that change the way we think about keeping God's law?
3. Our world talks about how to love people and so does the Bible, what is the difference between the world's love for one another and what Jesus calls us to in John 15? What should we always ask ourselves when seeking to love someone well?
4. What does Jesus say is the greatest evidence of this kind of love? In what ways should we be laying down our lives to one another in love?
5. What is the great shock of verse 13? How is it possible that Jesus can call us friends? Read Romans 5:8-10.

Sermon Summary

In John 15:12-13 we see both Jesus' command to love and the greatest love. In this text Jesus calls his disciples to a radical love and then proceeds to explain what the greatest evidence of that love is. Jesus' teaching in this section of the upper room discourse was challenging and comforting to his disciples then and to us today. It gives us Jesus' expectation of his followers as well as points us to the ultimate love that Jesus has for those for whom he is going to the cross.

Jesus begins this section with a command to love. Notice in verse twelve that Jesus says, "This is *my* commandment..." Christ emphasizes the fact that this is his commandment, this is the one commandment that he wants us to pay the most attention to. It is a special commandment and he wants us to take this commandment most seriously.

What is this special, all important commandment? Jesus says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." The greatest commandment that Jesus gives to us is that we love one another the way that Christ has loved us. Why is it that this commandment is so important that Jesus would call it "my commandment"? It is so important because in it is the fulfilment of the whole law. That is what Jesus says in Matthew 22:37-40, "And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." This commandment is so important because in keeping this commandment our aim is to keep all of God's law. Our love for one another is not of our own design it is to emulate Christ's love for us, which is a Holy, perfect, and fulfilling keeping of the law. Therefore, when we ask ourselves how should I best love a person the answer is always, how does God's word call me to love them? When we begin to think like that, we will begin to fulfill Christ's unique and special commandment in John 15.

When considering how to keep this commandment we should consider "the second table of the law". The second half of the ten commandments (commandments 5-10) teach us specifically how to love one another as Christ has loved us. All these commandments are about how to love one another well. We are to honor our mother and father and all those in places of authority over us. We are to do our very best to uphold life and refrain from injury to any person in any way. We are to preserve the sexual dignity and integrity of all those around us by putting to death lust and loving our spouses well. We are to never injure the personal property of anyone but rather to do our best to increase the wealth of all those around us. We are to never lie about another person or falsely represent a person in anyway, rather we are to only speak perfect truth about one another. Finally, we should never covet the treasure or talent of another person, rather we should thank God for their gifts as well as the gifts God has given us.

Not only are we given Christ's greatest commandment, but we are also told the greatest evidence of this love, in verse 13 Jesus says, "¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." The true shock of verse 13 is not that Christ tells us He will lay down his life for us but rather that he calls us *friends*. You see, in order for Christ to call us friends necessitates that he lay down his life. Without Christ's atoning work on the cross we would remain the enemies of God. Paul writes in Romans 8:10, "¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." In calling us friends Jesus knows he will have to show how much he loves his followers because it is only by his sacrificial atoning death on the cross that we could become friends of God. Praise God that not only did Jesus go to his death on the cross but also rose from the grave!