

# Love One Another

## Better Together? Exploring Kingdom Possibilities

2021-06-06 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass at The Well on John 13:34-35

Welcome to week two of Tallgrass at The Well! Welcome to any who are engaging online and welcome to all who are present here in person.

Better Together? Exploring Kingdom Possibilities—We don't know what the future holds with this exploration of Kingdom possibilities. We do invite your input and feedback and what you're sensing from God in this season.

Better Together? Exploring Kingdom Pizzabilities—Please stick around for pizza and presence with one another after Central Gathering or worship service.

Announcements:

- Give online or in the Black Box or the Joy Box.

What is God up to in His church NOW?! In 2021?

What is He up to in Tallgrass Church and in The Well?!

I'm not exactly sure but I am sure He wants the watching world to know that we follow His Son, Jesus.

*What is the key indicator to the watching world that we follow Jesus?*

- Singing worship songs?
- Bible reading?
- Prayer life?
- Our love for Jesus Himself?
- What does Jesus say that the key indicator is that we follow Him?

John 13:34-35 <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

- Seems simple enough. Love one another in the family of God then everyone will know we follow Jesus and they'll want to join us in following Jesus, right?! Well, yeah, pretty much.
- Simple enough, but not easy.

*Which is more difficult, to love one another...or to love your enemy?*

Matthew 5:43-48 <sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Jesus is setting the tone here for what's to come in the Body of Christ, the Church.
- He's upping the ante for what love is.
- He's beginning to ratchet way up the standard for love while preparing to show that love in the most clearest way ever witnessed.
- Little did these people know that these very enemies would soon be their brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Jesus has in mind a more perfect union of humanity.

Love your enemy > Love one another

Love one another > Love your enemy

Love one another = Love your enemy

- Matthew 22:35-40 <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."
- Love your neighbor
  - Nice and palatable—humanly keepable niceness
  - *Love thy neighbor, y'all!* Who wouldn't put that bumper sticker on their car here in Manhattan, KS...except the people that are principally opposed to bumper stickers on their cars?!
  - People even like Jesus, or at least their version of Jesus
  - What about the crucified and resurrected and ascended Jesus who will return and whose life calls for a total body and soul response from you and your neighbor?

"The new command (to love one another) is simple enough for a toddler to memorize and appreciate, profound enough that the most mature believers are repeatedly embarrassed at how poorly they comprehend it and put it into practice: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." – D.A. Carson, *John*, 484.

- All My Favorite Songs by Weezer (feat. AJR)—All my favorite people make me mad (so mad)
- Family tension
- Divorce
- Church hurt

Galatians 5:13-15 <sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

- Back in the day, there was one church in a city...so you had to figure out how to love one another or you didn't have community with Christ followers. Today, church is like going to the supermarket, you have so many options. Pick your flavor of the month.
- Meanwhile, Jesus is calling us to commit to one another as He has committed to us and to be present with one another as He is present with us.

Let's think about Jesus' 12 Disciples

Joke: A bunch of fishermen, a tax collector, and a Zealot walk into a bar... I don't know how the joke ends up I think it turns out to be world changing.

- *The Chosen* did a great job building the tension between the different factions that made up the 12 Disciples.
- Simon Peter, James, John, and Andrew, all fisherman.
- John referred to himself as the Beloved Disciple.
- Bartholomew Nathanael many scholars believe was the only one of the 12 disciples who came from royal blood, or noble birth.
- James, the Lesser or Younger, son of Alpheus, or Cleophas and Mary, lived in Galilee. He was the brother of the Apostle Jude.
- Judas Iscariot, the traitor, betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and afterwards hanged himself (Matthew 26:14,16).
- Jude was a brother of James the Younger. He was one of the very little-known Apostles and lived in Galilee. By character he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People.
- Matthew, or Levi, was a tax collector.
- Philip came from Bethsaida, the town from which Peter and Andrew came (John 1:44). The likelihood is that he, too, was a fisherman.
- Simon, the Zealot, one of the little-known followers called the Canaanite, lived in Galilee. The New Testament gives us practically nothing on him personally except that it says he was a Zealot. The Zealots were fanatical Jewish Nationalists who had heroic disregard for the suffering involved and the struggle for what they regarded as the purity of their faith. The Zealots were crazed with hatred for the Romans. It was this hate for Rome that destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Josephus says the Zealots were reckless persons, zealous in good practices and extravagant and reckless in the worst kind of actions.
- Thomas Didymus lived in Galilee.
- Luke 8:1-3 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup> and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, <sup>3</sup> and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

- Clamoring for position.
- They all deserted Jesus when it counted most except the women.
- Their leader, Peter, denied even knowing Jesus several times.
- And yet, the disciples stayed the course in following Jesus and His way of love to the point that we are here talking about following Jesus too.

“We also note *the evangelistic power of love*. A loving community, says Jesus, is the visible authentication of the gospel. Love is the ‘final apologetic’ (Francis Schaeffer). Jesus places no limit on this demonstration; *all* will recognize and know it. Unlike other associations which are based upon common interest or outlook, the church is to be marked by an inclusiveness which echoes the universal appeal of Jesus.” – Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*, 206-207.

“It is designated as a community which welcomes all people, irrespective of background, age, gender, color, moral history, social status, influence, intelligence, religious background or the lack of it. To love like Jesus is to love inclusively, indiscriminately and universally. When that kind of love flows within a congregation the world will take note that ‘they have been with Jesus’.” – Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*, 206-207.

- Joke: What kind of car did the disciples drive? A Honda, because they were all together in one Accord.
- We can show the world Jesus by our love for one another. Then people will be able to begin seeing themselves as one of the “others” who are to love and be loved in our church family.
- White collar, blue collar, conservative, liberal, progressive, nationalist...walk into a bar?! Walk into a church?!
- Here’s an inside joke for some of you here at Tallgrass at The Well—An Anglican, Wesleyan, and former Southern Baptist walk into a bar... I don’t know how it ends though.
- We are called to love...to love our neighbor who could be anyone, to love our enemy who could be anyone, to love one another within the Body of Christ who could be anyone.
- Parable of the Weeds in Matthew 13:24-30—A dude sowed a bunch of seed in his field. His enemy planted weeds at night. The servants got up and said, “Do we need to go pull the weeds?” The dude said, “No, if you pull the weeds you’ll pull up the harvest. Wait until the end to pull the weeds.”
  - We are to plant seeds, not pull the weeds...meaning love, love, love.
- Parable of the Net in Matthew 13:47-50 <sup>47</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. <sup>48</sup> When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. <sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
  - We are to cast the net and fish, not sort the fish.
- The Chosen—Sort out the good and bad fish at the end. Jesus and His angels do the sorting.

- John 10:16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.
- John 17:20-21 <sup>20</sup> "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
- Acts 18:9-10 <sup>9</sup> And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, <sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city (Corinth) who are my people."

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#### *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship on Chapter 7: Making Love the Measure of Maturity*

- In summary, we can do a lot of things in an attempt to love someone but are we able to be present with them.

John 13:34-35 <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you **be present with** one another: just as I have **been present with** you, you also are to **be present with** another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you **are present with** one another."

#### *What if we, Tallgrass at The Well, learned to love one another like this?*

Whatever happens with Tallgrass at The Well, whether we wrap up a couple great Sundays together and have made a few more friends in town and that's the extent of it or this becomes a thing that continues, we can love one another and invite in the watching world, our neighbors, into something better than they're currently experiencing. Whatever the future holds, we can be better together for the Kingdom of God in Manhattan, KS.

## PRAY!

Invite Josh Siders up.

- *Love the Other* activity
- Our journeys of faith are different. Let's talk about that.
- Share more of your heart for this city.

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he cried out and breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

- Was this centurion Jesus' enemy? Was he an enemy of the Jews? Of the disciples?
- And yet this hardened, professional executioner was the first to grasp firsthand that something of cosmic significance had just occurred with the death of Jesus Christ, the stone mason from Nazereth.
- Put yourself in his shoes, face to face with Jesus.
- What was his story from this point forward? Can you imagine what it might have been like for him to seek community with the early followers of Jesus? He had just killed Jesus. He had probably crucified other Jews. And now what? He's going to waltz into the early church and just like that everyone are besties?
- Put yourself in the shoes of Jesus, face to face with this centurion.
- What was Jesus thinking? "There is a place where you can find love, where you can find healing from all of your hurt and pain and the hurt and pain you've caused others. There is a place where forgiveness is real and is rooted in blood you just saw pouring from my body. You can find community. It won't be perfect but you can find love in a community where men and women love one another. I will rise again and I will build my Body and I will establish my Kingdom and you belong. I love you."

"It is 'new' also in the sheer depth and demand of the summons to love which Jesus issues. In the light of the cross all other descriptions and definitions of love pale into insignificance. Here indeed is love 'so amazing, so divine' (Isaac Watts). Yet according to Jesus this is the norm for Christian community." – Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*, 206.

- As we sing together, I'd invite you to...
  - Be present with Christ.
  - Be present with one another.
  - Pay attention to who God brings to mind who might need to experience both the love of Christ and the love of one another?

# The Chopping Block:

## The 12 Apostles

- Simon Peter, James, John, and Andrew, all fisherman who lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum.
- James, the Elder, Boanerges, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of John the Apostle; a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem.
- John Boanerges, son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of James, the Apostle. He was known as the Beloved Disciple. A fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem, he was a member of the Inner Circle.
- Andrew was the brother of Peter, and a son of Jonas. He lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum and was a fisherman before Jesus called him.
- Bartholomew Nathanael, son of Talmai, lived in Cana of Galilee. A number of scholars believe that he was the only one of the 12 disciples who came from royal blood, or noble birth. His name means Son of Tolmai or Talmai (2 Samuel 3:3). Talmai was king of Geshur whose daughter, Maacah, was the wife of David, mother of Absalom.
- James, the Lesser or Younger, son of Alpheus, or Cleophas and Mary, lived in Galilee. He was the brother of the Apostle Jude.
- Judas Iscariot, the traitor, was the son of Simon who lived in Kerioth of Judah. He betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and afterwards hanged himself (Matthew 26:14,16).
- Jude, Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, son of Alpheus or Cleophas and Mary. He was a brother of James the Younger. He was one of the very little-known Apostles and lived in Galilee. By character he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People.
- Matthew, or Levi, son of Alpheus, lived in Capernaum. He was a tax collector.
- Philip came from Bethsaida, the town from which Peter and Andrew came (John 1:44). The likelihood is that he, too, was a fisherman.
- Simon, the Zealot, one of the little-known followers called the Canaanite, lived in Galilee. The New Testament gives us practically nothing on him personally except that it says he was a Zealot. The Zealots were fanatical Jewish Nationalists who had heroic disregard for the suffering involved and the struggle for what they regarded as the purity of their faith. The Zealots were crazed with hatred for the Romans. It was this hate for Rome that destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Josephus says the Zealots were reckless persons, zealous in good practices and extravagant and reckless in the worst kind of actions.
- Thomas Didymus lived in Galilee. Tradition says he labored in Parthia, Persia, and India, suffering martyrdom near Madras, at Mt. St. Thomas, India.

## How did the 12 disciples die?

1. Andrew = Crucified on an X-shaped cross
2. Bartholomew or Nathanael = Flayed alive with knives
3. James the elder = First apostle martyred
4. James the lesser = Sawn in pieces
5. John = Died of natural causes on the isle of Patmos
6. Judas Iscariot = Hung himself

7. Jude or Thaddeus = Killed with arrows
8. Matthew or Levi = Martyred in Ethiopia
9. Peter = Crucified upside-down on a cross
10. Philip = Died by hanging
11. Simon the Zealot = Died a martyrs death
12. Thomas = Killed with a spear

#### Passages:

- James 4:1-10 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions/pleasures are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. <sup>4</sup> You adulterous people (adulteresses)! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? <sup>6</sup> But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

#### Quotes:

- "The more we recognize the depth of our own sin, the more we recognize the love of the Saviour; the more we appreciate the love of the Saviour, the higher his standard appears; the higher his standard appears, the more we recognize in our selfishness, our innate self-centredness, the depth of our own sin." – D.A. Carson, *John*, 484.
- "This commandment is *new*, not because it is intrinsically different from the law of love of the Old Testament. Nor is it new because of Jesus' redefining of 'neighbour' (Lk. 10:29-37), though that is certainly significant. The 'newness' lies rather in its being the law of the 'new covenant' which Jesus is to establish through his death, and which he has so recently proclaimed during the supper they have shared. The new covenant brings with it the new life in the Holy Spirit which will as never before enable the fulfilling of the law." – Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*, 206.