



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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May 2, 2010  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
[1 Samuel 20:12-17](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [1 Samuel 20:12-17](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 145](#)  
Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [John 13:31-35](#)

### **“Love One Another” In Action**

Flows from the LORD  
Is from the will

A couple different times in the past week, we've been sitting in the room with the TV at home and we've turned to a show called "Yard Crashers" on DIY Network. It shows someone going and redoing someone's backyard or side yard or whatever yard. Some of it has been really fun to watch and kind of interesting. But there are a lot of times when I'm watching it when I'm kind of thinking to myself, "I'd like to see more clearly how they do that." It's only a half hour show, so they don't show you in detail how certain things are done. But certain things look so neat that it would be interesting to find out exactly how they did it. They tell you, going into or out of commercial breaks, that for detailed instructions and for video on how to do some of these things you can go to their website, but that would involve putting down the remote and getting up out of the chair, so it's not likely that is going to happen.

But if you want to learn to do some of that stuff, just seeing before and after pictures doesn't really help you, right? If you want to learn to do it, you have to either have someone work with you and guide you by the hand and show you how to do it, or you have to watch someone do it and then try to put it into practice.

I suppose you could say the words from [1 Samuel 20](#) that I just read to you are kind of God's instructional video for "love one another," like Jesus said on Maundy Thursday shortly before he was betrayed. Over and over he beat that drum "love one another," "love one another," "love one another," "as I have loved you, so you must love one another." If you wonder what kind of love we are talking about; are we talking about the kind of love like we say "I love ice cream?" Not really. We aren't talking about shallow sentimentalism or "I really enjoy" or "I really like" when we are told to love one another.

You see that as you consider the life of Jonathan and David. That's what we get to examine today and then think about how we can put that to practice in our lives. Love one another just doesn't flow from anywhere. It flows from the Lord. And it's not just an emotion. It's not like when we talk about falling into love. It's not like a big hole in the ground that we didn't see and we tripped and fell into it. Love one another is an act of the will, and that's what we see in these words of our God today.

Remember the story of Jonathan and David? Do you remember who Jonathan was? Jonathan was the son of Saul, the king of Israel. If you remember, at the time that we

are reading here in [1 Samuel 20](#), David had already been anointed to be the next king by Samuel. He hadn't become the next king yet. In fact, things had moved pretty quickly from [1 Samuel 16](#), where David gave Goliath a really short haircut, and moved forward now to where David had become a general in Saul's army. David was blessed by the LORD in all he did as the next LORD's anointed. He was really loved by the people. When the Israelites defeated the Philistines, when Goliath got his head cut off by David, when they came back into Jerusalem, a lot of the people gathered together. We are told that the women were singing a song. The refrain of the song Saul thought at first was kind of cool when he heard it, until he heard the words. They were singing "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands."

Saul kind of had an ego, and this idea that they were saying Saul thousands, David ten thousands, that just didn't fit in well with his ego. We are told that already then he became jealous of David, but the people loved him and the LORD blessed him and it was obvious. So he made him the commander of over a thousand soldiers, and the LORD blessed that. David won victories. David also served Saul as a musician playing for him because by this time the LORD had left Saul because Saul had turned away from the LORD. We are told that an evil spirit would come upon him and one time it said he was prophesying from this evil spirit, speaking the words that this evil spirit gave him to speak, not God's Word. He got real upset with David and threw a spear at him over the dinner table. He did it twice. Already once before these words Jonathan had gone and interceded with his father and said, "Look at what David's done for you. Has he ever done anything to threaten you or harm you? He served you faithfully. God has blessed him and brought these victories to us and you're attacking him. This isn't right. You shouldn't be doing this." His father, admonished by his son said, "You're right. I have done wrong. I swear by the LORD I will never do anything like this again." But the evil spirit and the jealousy just kept festering and Saul got real upset with his son, Jonathan, because Jonathan was such a good friend with David. He said to him in effect, "What are you doing? Don't you know that if this guy keeps growing in popularity, you won't get the throne? You won't get to be the king after I am gone. The throne will leave our family and go to David's family. Why in the world would you keep helping him?" At one point he gets so angry he throws a spear at his own son.

Then right before the words of what I just read to you, it happened again. Saul got so upset with David that he threw a spear at him and tried to kill him. The spear stuck in the wall in the room where they were, and David fled. He went back to his wife, Michal, who was Saul's youngest daughter. She said, "You can't hide here because this is where dad will come. He's going to kill you. You have to get out of here." So she puts a household god of her father in the bed, puts goat's hair there, and when they come, she tries to convince him that it's David and he's sick and to just leave him alone because he's okay. Then Saul goes off on his daughter because she was protecting David.

So David went to Jonathan and told him all of these things. Jonathan said, "It can't be because my father doesn't do anything without telling me and he hasn't told me this." Then you have the words that we just read.

Think about this for a minute. Humanly speaking, this love that Jonathan has for David is absolutely amazing. He is helping the one that he believes will be the next king. By all rights, Jonathan should be the next king. When you help someone even though it might hurt your own self interest, that's the kind of love that God talks about, isn't it? Put the interest of others ahead of your own and love them, even at whatever cost it might be to you. There was a cost that Jonathan could pay because his dad wasn't exactly stable when it came to David. He is going to put himself on the line and talk to his father again and then let David know. This isn't going to dad and saying, "What are we having for dinner next week?" This is taking his life into his hands.

Some have said "Why? Why would he love David that much?" Some modern Bible "commentators" say it's because David and Jonathan were homosexual lovers and that's why they loved each other so much. I don't know how you get that. It's just that we don't understand the word "love" so well in our society today that we immediately go in wrong directions. This is a love that doesn't flow from that, so you say, "Where does it come from?" They look at the text and say, "It can't be anything else. It must be that." Take a look at the two paragraphs I read to you. I think it's right there...why he could love David like this. Six times he uses the name "the LORD," doesn't he? Just like when Jesus said, "Love one another" and you could keep hearing that like a steady drumbeat, can't you just look at it and see the word "LORD" over and over and over. It's the name by which God chose to reveal himself to Moses when he said, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love" ([Exodus 34:6](#)). Showing mercy to thousands of them and forgiving their sins and iniquities. He loved the LORD. His faith in the LORD led him to trust that if the LORD said David is going to be the next king, then David is going to be the next king. His love for the LORD led him to put David's interest ahead of his own.

That's the power of our God. The power of our God leads us to do what our sinful nature just doesn't want to do. Our sinful nature doesn't want to love anyone more than ourselves unless it's just a temporary thing so we can get something out of that person so that we really just are loving ourselves. Love that comes from our God puts the interest of the other person ahead of ourselves at any cost to ourselves. Your interests are more important than my interests and I'm going to love you like God has loved me...that's love as Scripture speaks of it.

That's not just a shallow sentimentalism. We use the word so lazily. We say we love our spouse and we love ice cream. How can you use the same word for those two feelings? It's just not right, is it? But we do that. Then we don't quite grasp the depth of what God is talking about.

Think about it...did God so love the world like you might so love ice cream? No. God so loved the world, the world that was sinners, the world that hated him by their very nature. By the way that we are born in this world, we hate God, we are his enemies and yet he so loved us. He didn't like us...he loved us so he sent his one and only Son. He put our interest ahead of his own. He lived in our place. He died in our place. He took our sins away. He loved us with a love that is eternal, everlasting and a power

unlike nothing in this world. When that love touches us and it brings that new self to existence in us, the part of us that loves our God, it gives us the ability and the power and the strength to do things we could never do on our own. Beyond that, it gives us the desire to want to do these things. To do it, not out of the shallowness like we talk about love, but to do it out of the depth of who we are and what we are. We are changed by God. We love God and that means now we love the souls that Christ has died for and we view those souls not as something to exploit or something to take advantage of or someone to harm with our words. We don't view them as that. We view them now as someone that we love and we want to help, comfort, and encourage in whatever way our God places in front of us so that we can do it.

The challenge to that is that you and I still have a sinful nature. The challenge to that is that we don't want to. There's a part of us, and at times it's a pretty large part, that doesn't want to love like God loves. There's a part of us that wants to attack and wants to compete. It wants us to attack personally when someone disagrees with a position that we take. It's an ongoing struggle that we fight every day of our lives as Christians...to love as we have been loved.

That's why when the Lord touches our hearts and as we stay close to him, it's the only place where we can find the power to love the way we have been loved. It's the only place where we can say "It's not all about me. It's about how I can serve you without expectation of return or benefit or even thanks at times." But just love because that is now what we are as Christians.

You and I don't love that way all the time. You and I fail regularly and repeatedly. That's why it's so amazing to know that God so loved us. Our God knows that we'll fail. That's why he gives us the water and the Word, the wine and the wafer and the Word, and the Word repeatedly over and over so that we can be assured that in spite of our failures, he took them all away. He loves us. He wants us to grow in our faith so that we love one another.

We see what it looks like here with Jonathan. We see what it looks like when we consider Christ. By God's grace, you and I have the opportunity to see what it looks like as we love one another out of our love for Christ.