



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

May 18, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

5th Sunday of Easter

First Lesson: [Acts 11:1-18](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 144b CW

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [John 13:31-35](#)

BECAUSE HE LIVES **We Live Lives of Lavish Love** **LIVING IN CHRISTIAN LOVE**

1. See love in a ____ way, not a ____ way.
2. ____ love makes all the ____.
3. See ____ as ____ see them.
4. ____ love makes us ____.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

This is love, not that we love God but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Amen.

There are a few new voices in the world and media that are really starting to do some good explanations about Christianity. One of these voices is a guy named Wesley Huff. He has a lot of degrees in studying the history of the Bible and defending and giving the background and explaining things very well. He is going on a lot of podcasts that are pretty popular and sharing about Christianity. We don't agree about everything with his theology, but he has some amazing things to share and to give confidence in the Bible.

One of the clips I just saw of him recently was where he was sharing a story of a panel of different wise people. They'll have this at a college and other places where they will have a Christian and people of different faiths and then someone who is an atheist. This one had three people—a Christian, a Muslim and an atheist. The question that was posed was what creates a good society? If you were to think about that, how would you create a good society? What would you do? He said that the atheist and the Muslim agreed. They said, "We have to create more laws. We have to get the right laws and really enact them and get all the laws out there for people." Do you know what the Christian said? "It's not about more laws. It's about people getting to understand the

love of Jesus and then loving others. Laws can only do so much. What really changes people is love, and especially the love of Jesus. And then to love others and want to care for them."

I think this is really at the heart of our message today. Not only is this good for society—we see that the love we have from God and love for others does something amazing there, but it makes all the difference. We'll talk about that. What does it mean for us and our spiritual life and our souls and our peace to understand God's love for us? We're going to look at what it means for **living in Christian love**. That has the two sides—to look at Christ's love and then what it means for us to live in reaction to that love and loving others.

When we look at our text, as we introduce it, we know that this is Maundy Thursday. That's actually what "Maundy" means—looking back to these words, "a new command." Here we see the first word says ***"When he was gone..."*** Judas had left. But the thing that just had preceded this was Jesus' washing the feet of the disciples. He had already shown love to them, but then He switches things even more to talk about what was going to happen—that He is going to love them to the full—but He then starts talking about the Son of Man being glorified and that God is glorified in Him.

What is pretty fascinating to think about is what is all going to happen and what He is talking about in being glorified. This really helps us understand, when He is going to talk about love, what it's all about. As He is going to be glorified, it's going to look nothing like glorification or honor to us. It is going to start out by Him being betrayed, arrested, beaten, mocked, and put on a cross. When you look at glory, this has nothing to do with glory. He is not glorifying Himself in the worldly ways but He is sacrificing Himself and showing true love by putting everyone else first. This is really the love that He wants His disciples to understand, but He can't really explain it to them yet because they don't understand. He says a few passages later, ***"Where I am going, you cannot come."*** You cannot do what I'm going to do and you don't really fully understand the extent of my love until you see it."

So, then as He says, ***"A new command..."*** We know that the Bible talks all the time about "love God" and "love others," so it's not a new thing in that way, but the extent, the amazing thing that Jesus does for us is a new thing. So we want to **see love in a new way, not a selfish way**. That's really where we first have to understand what God's love is, this sacrificing love.

When we think about love, when people in our world today go into marriage, it's more about "What do I get out of this," or even "When I try to love other people, I'm only going to love the people (the friends or the co-workers or the people in the world) who can give something back to me. I'm not going to love my enemies. I'm not going to love these other people who are mean to me because that does me no good. In fact, it might hurt me. Or for me to sacrifice, that doesn't seem like love. That just seems

foolish!" That's then when we look to [1 Corinthians 13](#). I think this passage is quite fascinating because we always read this at weddings. This is such a famous wedding passage—to read about love. But whenever we read that at a wedding, when we read about what love is and you maybe look back to your relationships, your friendships, your marriages, and then you hear these words: ***⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*** Is that how you love others? When you look at those things, are you like "Oh yes! Check, check, check, check." When we speak about it in a marriage, we often say we have to see Jesus in this because you are not going to do all of this.

Paul really wrote this section of Scripture not to be read at weddings all the time but to be read in this setting and to understand what it means for people to live together as brothers and sisters in the faith in this world, but how do Christians interact with one another. As pretty as these verses are, there is a lot of Law in it because we know if you put your name in there, you fall short. It's pretty devastating, especially keep no record of wrongs, patience; pick your word. Each of us probably struggle with a different one. So if we want to see where we need to understand love in a new way and not a selfish way, it's because we are not good at this.

So we have to see where we can understand true love and the best love is from Christ's love. This is where we see Christ and where He says He is going to glorify God and He is going to be glorified by dying on a cross. Notice He says, ***"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*** What really changes everything is this—***Christ's love makes all the difference.*** We can see these words of [1 Corinthians 13](#) being fulfilled in Jesus. He does not keep a record of wrongs. If He kept a record of wrongs, would He have gone to the cross to die for the sins of the world? If He wasn't patient with His disciples, if He didn't have this amazing love, not only to glorify His Father, but then to show that love for you and for me. It's not a feeling. It's not an emotion. That's all we talk about so often with love, how we feel or "I don't feel in love anymore," but it's done in action—the selfless action of Christ that redeems us, that washes away every sin and that breaks down the barrier between us and God because our sins are there. Our sins are in us and they make it so that we cannot love in the right way. So we need Christ to forgive us and wash away those sins. That makes all the difference for us.

As we do that, notice what He says. ***"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*** Again, we have to ask how good we are at doing those things—to love one another in the way that Jesus loves us. I think a helpful way to see that or to put it into practice is to see how Jesus loves us. Maybe if I can ***see others as Jesus sees them,*** then I might be able to show them a little bit more love. How does Jesus see us? How does God see us? We are no longer ones who are steeped in sin but

those who are redeemed by Christ. He doesn't look at the outer ways or what things we can give to Him. Again, when we think about love, we think about what we can get out of it. Does God need anything from us? But Jesus sacrificed Himself and gave everything for us. But now God sees us through Christ, His redeemed children, loved, with value and purpose to go and share that love. Each and every one of us, every soul is valuable, and He wants us to be with Him. It doesn't matter the language, the clothes, all the differences we have that separate us. He wants us to love one another as He has loved us. We can only do that if we have that love of Christ because we need that ability to do it. On our own, we cannot. Even the world will say "You don't have to. Love those people near you. Only the people that are good to you are the ones who deserve it." But no! Love even your enemies.

But think about it even more, sometimes the people that we struggle to love and really care for are not just the enemies but the people closest to us. Here it says, ***"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*** One thing to look at is yes, we know how Christ's love changes everything. It makes a huge difference and helps us see each other differently. But there is also truth that ***Christian love makes us different***. People will then look at us differently when we can love others in this way. It starts in the church and in our families, to have this patience and love and compassion with one another. But is that often what happens? We just said, often the people that are closest to us are the ones that we hurt or that we struggle to forgive or we have these petty differences and grievances that we cannot get over. You can probably think about a friend or a family member, and you're probably thinking about it right now, or extend it into the church and think *this person said that* or *this person did that* or *the church made this decision* or *they did this*, and you hold onto that grievance and never forgive. Is that showing the love of Jesus? Are we any different than the rest of the world?

These are words I shared at our last Unifying for Ministry meeting, coming from ***Colossians 3***. It says these words, which I think are such a beautiful reflection of what it means to be a Christian and put God's love into action and how it is different.

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Notice it's almost a match to what it talks about love is going to look like, but what the motivation is, what empowers us to do this is forgiveness. You've been loved and forgiven, greater than you can ever imagine. We can give that love and forgiveness to others. My favorite part on this is: ***Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.***

I don't know if you have a grievance in your heart. It might be something very severe. It might be something very painful that someone did against you. They might have done

it purposely. They might not even know that they did it. But what often hurts my heart is when Christians are divided and they can't forgive each other and they can't show this love because then we are not any different. It's kind of a joke to think that we're not going to have grievances between family members and church members and others in the world because we are sinful people and they are going to do sinful things, I'm going to do sinful things, but we're forgiven. The heart of the work that we want to do is to show the love of Jesus, to show that forgiveness, to get people to know that they are loved, and when we can't love one another, it hurts that message. But when we can love one another, when people can go to the cross and say "I am forgiven. I am loved. I see how Jesus has glorified the Father by giving His life up for me," it changes everything.

I'll still continue to push this book, Unoffendable, because I believe it is all about this idea. We still have a few copies of it and you can get the audio or buy it, but the whole point of the book is that you are so loved and forgiven by Jesus. All the things that upset us, all the things that divide us, when you understand Christ's love, you can show that love and forgiveness to others. But understand that we are not [1 Corinthians 13](#). We fall short. We will fall short of forgiving others and we ask God to help us to forgive those grievances, but the important part to understand also is that you are forgiven when you've fallen short.

We are not going to love like Jesus does. We will fall short. Christ's love makes all the difference. That's the thing we have to understand. "I am forgiven. I am loved." And I know there are struggles and hardships of forgiving and loving others. You're forgiven. Christ has loved us. The key to all of this is ***"Love one another. As I have loved you..."*** Hold onto that love of Christ. As you take hold of that Gospel, it makes a difference in culture, in church, in our community, and in your family. But go back over and over to that forgiveness and love of Jesus that makes all the difference. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.