

Week 9: The Power to Love

Key Verses:

John 15:9-13

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Ephesians 4:32

³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you..

Luke 6:32-33

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

From the Book:

"You don't have it naturally within you to love as Jesus loved. You have it supernaturally within you! But you need to act on it, despite not always 'feeling it'. And that commitment to act on it – to intentionally and sacrificially reach out in love toward others – must, in turn, come from a deep understanding of God's love for you. Only when you appreciate how fully you have been forgiven and how deeply you are now loved by God, will your feeble heart be moved with the compassion of Jesus to share that same love with others." [Page 102]

From Liz's Message:

The power to love others does not come from within us, but from Jesus in us. Liz described a number of people and contexts that she found difficult to show Jesus' love towards:

- Loving your neighbour.
- Loving the Church.
- Loving difficult people.
- Loving people who are different to us.
- Loving your enemies.

Reflect:

- Have there been times in your life when your experience of God's love has run a little dry and you have consequently found it difficult to love others? And in contrast, have there been times when you have been 'bursting' with God's love that you just couldn't help but share it with others?
- Read Ephesians 3:14-21. How does this passage describe God's love for us? Why is Paul so keen for the Ephesian Christians to understand the depth of God's love for them? Notice the references in verses 16, 18 and 19 to being empowered or filled. What does this imply about our ability to love as Jesus loves? What is the promise of verse 20 and how should this encourage us as we seek to love as Jesus loved?
- Read Galatians 5:22-23. What are the "fruit of the Spirit" mentioned in these verses, and how do they relate to love? Why are they called the fruit of the Spirit? Why is love mentioned first? Can you share a personal experience when the Holy Spirit's presence in your life resulted in the manifestation of one of these fruits?
- Read John 14:15-17. What does Jesus promise regarding the Holy Spirit in these verses? How does the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit impact our ability to love others as God loves us?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-18. What is the compulsion that is referred to in verse 14? Where does it come from? How does verse 17 help us understand the Christian's ability to love as Jesus loved?
- Liz challenged us to consider if there was someone (or lots of people) that we are struggling to love in our lives right now. After reading these verses above, what might you do to show love towards them? Pray for that person, and for your ability to love to them.

Pray:

Pray for a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit's empowering and filling in your own life. Pray that you might have a deeper appreciation of God's love and a deeper personal experience of his love so that you will have an overwhelming desire to pass it on to others.