

## RESET- WEEK 2- Rooted In Love

### << Scripture Reading >>

### Opening Conversation:

- New Normal:
  - This is a pivotal moment.
  - We cannot ignore it. We cannot close our eyes and hope it passes. We must be proactive.
  - **The decisions we make in this season have the power to shape our lives.**
  
- A common refrain that I hear repeatedly, and even one that I have said a time or two, has been, “I can’t wait to get back to normal.”
  - We established last weekend that normal wasn’t working. It isn’t working.
  - This season has proven to us that our normal, when faced with a global pandemic, falls apart, leaving us anxious and frightened.
  - Normal wasn’t healthy. Normal wasn’t sustainable.
  - **Don’t pine for normal when normal wasn’t working.**
  
- **What if we were given the chance to hit the reset button?**
  - What if, out of all of this, we found that we had an opportunity to change our normal, to find a new normal- a better normal?
  - What if God wanted us to not just go back, but to move forward?
  - **We were never meant to just let life happen to us.**

- God invites us to find a new life, a better life, one that sees us healthier, thriving, and in the center of his will.

- **The life that Jesus invites us to partake in begins at the roots**

- He invites us to root our lives in him.
- To find our nourishment in him.
- To find our life in him.
- To discover abundant life- not just full life.
- John 15 invites us to abide- not just remain- a day-by-day, even a moment by moment decision we make. It's an obedience that we engage in that creates room in our schedules for the giver and not just the gift.

- And to allow God to prune our lives so that we may produce lasting fruit

- **Jesus invites us to abide in him, to stay connected to the vine, and to allow him to remove all that keep us from abundance.**

- This is an act of surrender.
- It's an act of obedience.
- It's not being content to settle for the status quo, when God's best is available to us.

- Continuing series, called **Reset**, we build on the foundation that we set last Sunday, shifting from the question of what to the question of how.

- **If God is inviting us to abide in him, to root ourselves in him, and allow God to promote growth in us, where do we start? What does this look like?**

- Jesus anticipated this question, because in John 15- where we began this series, Jesus continued to unpack his invitation with a pivotal, central command, not just to this conversation, but in the central command to the entire Gospel of John- and many

would argue, the entire ministry and mission of the New Testament.

- John 15, starting in verse 9: ***“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”***
  - So far this may not seem revolutionary. Love God, obey him, stay rooted in him, and you’ll find joy. This isn’t new. But Jesus isn’t finished yet.
- Verse 12: ***“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you.***
  - This verse continued with the groundwork Jesus laid in John 13: ***“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”***
    - These commands are profound because every previous command to love was based on love for oneself: Love your neighbor as yourself.
    - Your love for yourself was the measure by which you were to love somebody else.
    - But Jesus flips the script. Your love for yourself was no longer the measure by which you were to love others.
    - Now it was different, now the tables are flipped.
    - Now Jesus said love as I loved.
      - Self-sacrificially
      - Self-giving
      - Humbling
      - Loving those who don’t deserve it

- Bearing their burdens- even when they're self-inflicted.
  - **Loving like Jesus looks like God dying on the cross for the people who nailed him there.**
- John 15 takes it a step further by making this type of self-sacrificial, life-giving love as the defining feature of those who know him and follow him:
    - *This is my commandment... You are my friends if you do what I command you.*
    - If you want to abide in Christ, if you to root your life in Jesus, he could have insisted on a lot of things:
      - He could have commanded piety.
      - He could have commanded strict adherence to a particular reading of the Scriptures.
      - He could have demanded correct theology.
      - He could have required anything that he chose. God has the power to ask whatever God wants.
        - And God chose love.
        - *You are my friends if you do what I command you...My commandment is that you love one another...*
        - **We love those who God loves and we love them the way God loves them.**
    - **Jesus said love for others is the not only the way that the world will know that you are his followers, but your commitment to love demonstrates to God that you are his disciple.**
- **The distinguishing mark of a follower of Jesus must be their capacity to love as Jesus loves.**
    - A cursory reading of the letters of the New Testament paints a picture that demonstrates the central command to love.
    - Look no further than John's first letter:

- 1 John 3:11, *“For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”*
- 1 John 3:14, *“We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death.”*
- 1 John 4:7-8, *“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”*
- 1 John 4:16, *“So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”*
- 1 John 4:21, *“<sup>21</sup> The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.”*
- But perhaps the most shocking statement of John in this letter comes in verse 12: *“No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”*
  - **Nobody has seen God, but the closest you will come to seeing God is when we love one another.**
  - John tells us that nothing demonstrates the true character of God, nor his presence in us, like our capacity to love.
  - **Being loved by God opens up our capacity to love others.**
- Paul echoes this sentiment in Galatians 5:14, *“For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*
- He does it again in Romans 13, *“Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law”*
  - The one thing that we owe to one another is our love-

love defined as laying down our own interests for the sake of the interests of others.

- **In the same that love fulfills all of the law, without love, it doesn't matter what other laws we fulfill.**
  - Love is not one in a long list of good things God calls us to do. **With love, even the most extravagant spiritual accomplishments become worthless.**
  
- Preamble of 1 Corinthians 13- easy to miss. We often skip to verse 4- "Love is patient, love is kind, etc."
  - But it's critical that we don't miss this. It's crucial that we don't overlook it.
  - ***"If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing."***
    - Paul lists some good things, even some incredible things, some are things we have never seen- I've never seen faith that literally moves mountains.
    - He lists the kinds of things that make headlines. People with all knowledge go on talk shows, get podcasts, plant successful churches, and are highly sought after to speak at conferences.
    - Christians are often impressed by these things. Eloquent speakers, powerful people, men and women who speak insightfully and prophetically, and those who do extreme things for the sake of the Kingdom are all given much applause in churches across the country.
    - And none of these are wrong. None of these are bad. These

are, in fact, good. I know of no pastor or Christian leader who would say otherwise.

- But...
- Paul says, ***“I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.”***
  - Without love, it doesn’t matter how generous you are, how holy you are, how pious you are, or how sacrificial you are.
  - Without love, at best you are loud and annoying.
  - You could be a literal spiritual superhero, but without love, your heroism is worthless.

- Too often, people can be incredibly hard to love. There are no doubt people in your life that you find it hard to tolerate, let alone love.

- People can be the worst. You don’t have to look too far right now to find somebody that is difficult. COVID-19 has turned many people into misanthropes (***“people who dislike humankind and avoids human society.”***)
- But the central theme of Scripture, at the very heart of all that God is calling us to do and all He is calling us to be, is love. **God’s call for us is to love the unlovable, to serve them, care for them, and be Jesus to them because God is never more evident than when we love the people who deserve it least.**
- Paul challenges his readers in Ephesians 5 to imitate God in everything that we do: ***“Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.”***
- Paul, in another letter- this time to the church in Rome- reminds them that ***“When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners... God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”*** (Romans 8:6,8)

- It can be hard to love people, but Jesus said that if you want to abide in me, if you want to follow me, if you want a relationship with me, you can't love me and me alone. Your covenant is not just between you and God. It's a covenant that forces you to look outward, to love all, even those who don't deserve it—especially those who don't deserve it.
  - **Christ is challenging us to re-evaluate how you see the people around you.** He is calling us to love indiscriminately, even the people who are the hardest to love.
  - When teaching during his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made some bold statements about our responsibility to love: *“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!”*
  - Jesus aims to transform our way of thinking. We who have been made new because of a relationship with God are called to live different lives. Jesus goes on to say, *“If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.”*
    - It's easy to get caught up in the terms like "enemy". You can even develop a bit of pride when you treat your enemies better than they deserve. When you start to weigh somebody else's actions against your own, you begin to slip away from the standard Jesus is setting in this passage.
    - Jesus isn't suggesting that you keep score and love anyways.
    - **Jesus invites us to instead see how he sees, to look at others the way he looks at us.**



- **Jesus knew the command to love was risky.**
  - It meant loving those who society rejects.
  - It meant caring for those who nobody else cares for.
  - It meant giving to those who could not repay.
  - It meant associating with those who would harm your reputation.
  - It meant sacrificing for those who did not and would not deserve it.
  - **And Jesus loved anyways...and calls us to love that way too.**
    - Jesus knew that the risk was worth the payoff.
  
- Jesus' love for us compelled him to lay down his life for us.
  - 1 John 4:10, ***"In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins."***
  - If love looks like Jesus laying down his life for those who didn't deserve it, for those who were enemies of God, even for the very ones who crucified him, then what does that mean for us?
  - **When we see people the way that Christ sees them, when "those" people are no longer "those" people, when we begin to see them as the ones for whom Christ willingly died, you will be compelled to see them differently too.**
  
- So the question for us this morning is: **Who in my life do I need to take a risk today to demonstrate the incredible, overwhelming, insurmountable love of God?**
  - Love is a risk. Love means risking your reputation. It might mean risking your comfort. When you love as Jesus loves, there is always an assumption of risk.
  - Jesus said that the old way of doing things was loving people who weren't risky: people who were like us, people who liked us, people who treated us well.
    - But he said that now everything was different.
    - **When Jesus hit the reset button, he gave a new model**

**for living, a new way of thinking, a new lens through which to see the people in our lives.**

- God may be bringing people to your mind right now that he wants you to reach out to.
  - And it may not bring happy thoughts to your mind.
    - That person may be somebody that rubs you the wrong way, love them anyways.
    - That person may be somebody who doesn't appreciate you, serve them anyways.
    - That person may be someone who will take your love for granted, show compassion to them anyways.
    - That person may get on your last nerve, sacrifice that last nerve for them anyways.

○ **Allow your love for them paint them a portrait of who God is:**

- 1 John 4:12, *“No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”*
- **Greg Boyd: The thing that more than anything else demonstrates the reality of the loving, triune God is that we embody the reality of the triune God in our relationships with one another and with the world. Nothing less than the credibility of the gospel, the reputation of God, and the salvation of people hangs on our fulfilling the commandment to love.**

#### **- Invite team**

- Our challenge for this week is to identify one person for whom I need to take a risk in order to demonstrate the love of God.
- I want to talk about reservations.
  - We've talked about the why's- why should we love like Jesus loves, but I would like to talk about our objections.
  - **SOUND OFF: When you think about your experience,**

**what have been your excuses or reasons for not showing love to somebody? What loopholes have you found to let you off the hook? How is Jesus closing those loopholes?**

- There will always be an excuse or a reason not to show love to somebody.
  - There will always be people who will back up those reasons.
  - If you look for loopholes you will find them (Kameron in youth group).
  - But Jesus says, no matter what excuses you may find, no matter how significant the loophole may be, choose love anyways.
- ***“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you.*”**
- This doesn’t mean way until you feel nice about people. It doesn’t rely on your warm, fuzzy feelings. It’s not about feelings at all. This love is a choice, it’s a decision to go against the grain, against the cultural expectation, and love anyways
    - C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, writes, ***“Do not waste time bothering whether you ‘love’ your neighbor; act as if you did... When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good in return, you will find yourself disliking him less.”***
      - Jesus calls us to love even those we dislike because when we love those who don’t deserve it, we best

exhibit the love of God.

- **Nothing demonstrates the power of God to a world who does not know him than our willingness to radically, self-sacrificially, counter-culturally love like Jesus loves.**
- Ephesians 5:1-2: *“Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.”*

- If you want to change your family, then choose love.
- If you want to change your schools, then choose love.
- If you want to change your community, then choose love.
- If you want to change your world, then choose love.

- **Radical, distinctive, worth-ascribing, self-sacrificing, Christlike redeeming love has the power to change everything.**
- Change everything for one person today and see how God will use it.