



The Expansive Love of Christ - Pastor Greg

In recent weeks we have been looking at 'love', God's and ours. Paul in Ephesians 3 prays that the church would grasp how wide, long, high, and deep is the love of Christ (v18).

How wide? His love is expansive embracing all people. Jesus regularly challenged His followers to cross the limits of their own comfort zones to embrace people who were not in their normal circles of acceptance and acquaintance (His encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4) traversed cultural, gender, religious, and social boundaries). Who will we show Christ's love to? A prayer! Open wide our hearts Lord? Expand our hearts? Help us to be bigger hearted people? Help us to daily cross our own set limits of whom and how we will love?

How long? Jesus went the full distance for me. To what lengths will we go to show the love of Christ? How many times must we forgive, 70 times or 70 times 7? Go a mile or 2? Christ's love takes us further in our expression of love. Jesus came along way to embrace me: across the Universe; across the planet so to speak; through hardship and great suffering; along Calvary road; up Golgotha's hill; up to the cross! And while I was there with hammer raised ready to drive in the nails, His heart was still reaching for me!

How deep? He touches the deepest levels of my heart, melting away any hardness, confronting any selfish pride. He takes out the stony heart and puts in a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19). He touches the deepest motivations of my life. Paul said 'the love of Christ compels me' (2 Corinthians 5:14). He draws me into an intimate and loving and deeper walk with God. This deeper level love is counter culture challenging superficiality and drawing people into a life of agape love, the unconditional, God kind of love. Also, some people may think they have sunk too low, but God's love will go to the depths of human sin. No one is beyond His reach!

How high? Have you ever said of someone, 'They are full of themselves' referring to their self-centred, self-exalting attitude? I think this high love helps us to get over ourselves, from our self obsession and releases us to live for 'the other' this higher love takes us lower. 'Loose your life and you will find it' (Matthew 10:39), Jesus said.

new life

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It's interesting that the people we have admired the most throughout history are those who have made the greatest sacrifices for others. Nelson Mandela, Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jnr. We hold them in high regard. Their sacrifice is considered a higher kind of love! Jesus' love is a high love. He left the majesty of heaven, the highest place, lowered himself, and became a servant. He gave himself to public humiliation, making the greatest of all sacrifices, the supreme expression of God's love. He has done this for you and me!

If you are reading this, but have not thought before about this expansive love of Christ, then can I pray that you will be able to grasp it, understand it, and respond to it? Jesus arms are outstretched to you. He crossed all boundaries to get to you, to show you His love. Can I encourage you to surrender to His love, ask him to open your heart and mind to his love, and respond to his loving call upon your life? (Visit the Why Jesus? tab on our website).

'For God so loved the World that he gave His only Son, so that whoever would believe on Him should not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16).