

LOVE LIKE HIS

“Real romance is really sacrifice”

– Ann Voskamp

THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 13

The marriage liturgy speaks of holy matrimony as “a pledge of pure and endless love”. Marrying couples do not commit to cherishing one another for as long as it’s convenient, or for as long as they both feel like it. Rather, in Christian marriage couples choose to love one another in the way that God loves: unconditionally. That’s why the vows recognize that there will be rough times as well as joyful ones: “for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health” (BCP p. 566).

This sort of love can seem like an alien phenomenon in our world. Many of us have lived through experiences of being unloved, betrayed and rejected. The messages we receive in the media often tell us that we must be better versions of ourselves if we are ever to be worthy of love. But God’s love breaks through all of this and tells us that even in the midst of our sin, he loved us enough to die (Romans 5:8), and that nothing can separate us from his love (Romans 8:38-39). In other words, he knows us and he still loves us, and that’s never going to change.

Believers can walk through life in the knowledge that they are loved by God in this amazing way. Christian marriage is a reflection of this love, a living testimony not only within the relationship of husband and wife, but also outwardly to all those who witness the character of their love. The challenge for believers, whether married or not, is to love others in a way that bears witness to the pure and endless love of God.

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The famous “love” passage that we’re about to look at comes from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Paul wasn’t writing about marriage here, instead he was offering correction to a very dysfunctional church. But since dysfunction is a part of the fallen human condition, this passage is filled with application for all of us in each of our relationships, perhaps especially in those that we find most challenging.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER).)

The collect for Palm Sunday focuses on the tender love of God for us, demonstrated in Jesus’ humility and sacrifice. Spend some time reflecting on the character of God’s love and asking him to help you to love others (especially those closest to you) in this way. Close your time with this collect:

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (THE COLLECT FOR PALM SUNDAY, BCP PAGE 150)

LOVE LIKE HIS

1 CORINTHIANS 13: **THE CHARACTER OF LOVE**

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.