

Lent

WEEK SIX: SACRIFICIAL LOVE

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

John 15:12-17

Jesus taught this on the night he was betrayed, having revealed what his disciples would soon know all too well. Their master, their friend, was going away. As with every time God brings us through a season of growth, this meant pain for them first. But after the season of pain, something better. Better in two ways: He would give his Holy Spirit to transform us from the inside, and he would build his church, where we find love.

We know our marching orders: Go everywhere, make disciples. What is a disciple? A friend of Jesus. How do we know we are his friends? We do what he commands us. What does he command us? “Love one another *as I have loved you.*” And how does he love us? He laid down his life.

But we ask, “Why should I love people who are different than me, people who hurt me, people who offend me? Why should I love when it’s costly?” Love is hard, but the reason is simple: He laid down his life for you and made you his friend.

If you were only saved from God’s wrath, that would be enough. If you were only allowed to be his servant, that would be more than you could ever deserve. But he doesn’t just call you saved, and he doesn’t just call you a servant; he calls you his friend. What will you do with that sacred title? Love one another in the name of your Lord, your friend, Jesus.