

THAT'S FROM THE BIBLE



Sermon 2 – John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this...”

1. Has war directly or indirectly impacted your family? If so, in what way/s?
2. What insights have you gained from Mark or Chris’ talk? Did the talk raise questions for you?
3. Why do you think John 15:13 is so often applied to those who have given themselves in war?
4. Do you think many people today would link the use of that verse to the Bible or to Jesus’ sacrifice?

Mark and Chris made two points. First, that this action was:

Love outpoured

5. Jesus is giving his disciples some final instructions. What point is Jesus making as he says that he is the vine and we are the branches? What are the implications from that illustration for us?
6. *How* are we to remain attached to Jesus? See v10
7. What is the primary command he is asking us to keep? (v12 and see also John 13:34-35).

I’m sure you can see the connection: that if we are to love one another “**as he has loved us**”, then the ‘greater love’ verse (v13), sets out to show us just *how* he has loved us!

8. Some say he laid down his life as a demonstration of his love, or as an example of love. How does this fail to do justice to the witness of the whole Bible?
9. Why is the notion of ‘sacrifice’ important to understand in relation to Jesus’ death?

Mark and Chris’ second point was that Jesus’ love in the laying down of his life is really:

Love defined

10. What are some of the issues with a the typical Hollywood notion of ‘love’?
11. What does love for others look like if it is as he has loved us?
12. What are some of the beautiful ways you see love like this alive and well at our church?
13. What are the challenges of love like this? What typically stops or hinders us from such love?
14. What will help us overcome some of those challenges?

Pray that we might more fully grasp that nature of Jesus’ greater love for us.

Give thanks that God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son to be the sacrifice for our sins.

Give thanks for the beautiful and numerous ways such love is seen in the life of our church.

Pray that we will continue to work out in practical terms, what it means to love as he has loved us.

Date: 11 November 2018
Services: 730, 930 P and 930 T (via Chris)
Series: That's from the Bible!?
Passage: John 15:13
Title: Greater love has no one than this

Outline

1. Love outpoured
2. Love defined

INTRODUCTION

At 11 am on 11 November 1918 the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years' continuous warfare.

The allied armies had driven the German invaders back, having inflicted heavy defeats upon them over the preceding four months.

In November, the Germans called for an armistice (suspension of fighting) in order to secure a peace settlement. They accepted the allied terms of unconditional surrender.

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month attained a special significance in the post-war years.

The moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war.

This first modern world conflict had brought about the mobilisation of over 70 million people. The total number of deaths includes from 9 to 11 million **military** personnel – many with unmarked graves.

The **civilian** death toll was about 8 million, including about 6 million due to war-related famine and disease.

After the end of the **Second** World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name to **Remembrance Day** - a day which would commemorate *all* war dead.

And of course the Bible verse which is most often read at such remembrance ceremonies?

John 15:13 *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

It is perfectly understandable that this verse is used to refer to the many many people who gave of themselves for the sake of others...

For example – the story of **LT George Meysey HAMMOND**, who enlisted as a soldier in the 28 Bn, AIF on 25 February 1915.

HAMMOND was wounded in the leg during battle at Poziérés in 1915 and then permanently lost the use of his left arm in Flers in 1916, where as a SGT he was awarded the Military Medal for his actions.

Refusing medical advice, he returned to his unit and was commissioned as a LT and given the role as Bn Intelligence officer.

He was awarded the Military Cross for his actions at Westhoek in September 1917, where he went forward with the Brigade Advance Party as the Intelligence Officer, conducted deep reconnaissance and managed, single-handedly, to capture 20 prisoners.

On the night of 10/11 June 1918, during operations near the village of ALBERT, south of MORLANCOURT, HAMMOND again set an example for his men and cleverly led them across NO MAN'S LAND.

Being the first across NO MAN'S LAND, HAMMOND jumped into an enemy trench and 20 enemy soldiers surrendered to him.

On 14 June 1918, while returning from an inspection of one of his outposts, he was wounded and subsequently died.

Greater love has no one than this... to lay down one's life for one's friends...

Or this one – a story from WWII – of Ordinary Seam Teddy Sheehan – only 18 – who on Nov 30, 1942, in Betano Bay, East Timor, his ship - the HMAS Armidale - was struck by Japanese aerial torpedoes, and quickly began to sink...

The captain ordered 'abandon ship' ... and Japanese air crews began attacking survivors in the water.

Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheehan, scrambled back to the 20mm Oerlikon canon before it sank, strapped himself in and began shooting...

He must have known he was about to sacrifice himself in an attempt to save some of his fellow sailors...

He shot down one Japanese aircraft... was himself hit by the gunfire of an attacking zero, but maintained his fire...

...and even though water was lapping around his feet... kept up his attack against the enemy...

Finally, water closed over Sheehan and his gun as HMAS Armidale sank beneath him; his heroism, his ordeal – his life now over.

Although no VC has ever been awarded to an Australian sailor, one of the RAN's Collins Class submarines has been named Sheehan after this young hero, who gave his life trying to save the lives of others.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. //

And yet friends, we only **know** such notion of love and self-sacrifice, because of the **supreme** example of that we have in the Lord Jesus.

As the same writer wrote in 1 John 4:19 – *we love; because he first loved us...*

And just prior to that - *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* (1 John 4:10)

So – unusually today – we are going to focus in on just one verse – John 15:13 – and see if we can understand what Jesus is saying – and the implications for us...

For the words – *greater love has no one than this* – came from Jesus himself – who then exemplified them in his own unique sacrifice for the sins of the world!!

So – this is where we are heading this morning: in the laying down of Jesus' life, we see

1. **Love outpoured**
2. **Love defined**

• So **first**:

1. LOVE OUTPOURED

- In the context of the passage in John 15, Jesus is speaking to his disciples, just hours before his death
- They are in a room above a house; they've celebrated the Passover meal - although we're not told that in **John's** gospel – but we know from Matthew, Mark and Luke
- Jesus is giving his disciples some final instructions... and a few verses following this verse, he wants his disciples to know two important things –
 - (1) that if they're serious about following him they can expect trouble... the world will hate them; and
 - (2) they will be comforted and empowered as his own Spirit – the Holy Spirit – takes up residence within them
- But in **this** part – he's talking about the nature of the relationship he will have them...
- As close as a branch is to a vine...
- As just as a branch is sustained and fed and supported and experiences growth and produces fruit by remaining attached to the branch... so will Jesus' disciples be sustained and fed and supported and experience growth and produce fruit by remaining attached to him...
- Well that makes perfect sense doesn't it?

- Disciples of Jesus must stay attached to Jesus – the old word was ‘abide’ in Jesus - if they want to keep going with Jesus...
- If they become detached... if you **don't** stay attached – then what happens? You **die!** You're starved. You shrivel up. There's no prospect of fruit. Only good for throwing away into the green bin!
- OK – well you might be wondering “what happened to our verse ‘greater love has no one than this’...”?
- So let me show you the connection.
- **How** DO you remain attached to Jesus?
- Jesus said – v10 – have a look with me - *if you keep my commands you will remain in my love*
- Keep my commands?? **What** commands...?? v12 – have a look – just one main one! - *my command is this - love each other AS I LOVED YOU*
- And what's that standard of love?? – **HOW** has he loved us?
- v15 – *greater love has no than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends*
- See the connection?
- **Remain** in me by **doing what I say**
- **What** am I telling you to do?
- **Love one another**
- **What** does that love look like?
- It looks like laying **down your life for others!**
-**just** as he was about to do for **them!! //**

- So let's remind ourselves what his laying down his life for us actually meant...?
- Let's be clear – in a **deep** and **profound outpouring** of **God's love** for the **world**, **Jesus** gave his **life** as a **sacrifice** for our **sin!** ///
- we are moved by stories of sacrifice aren't we – like the ones we explored as we began this morning.
- And we need to become aware of how sacrifice works as a theme in all of the Bible and finally brings us to the cross.
- there are many, many sacrifices in the Old Testament.
- It is almost as if sacrifice is hardwired into early humankind, both in **pagan** circles and in **believing** circles.
- So, as early as in Genesis 4 (vv3–5), there are sacrifices being offered by Cain and Abel
- Then once the law of Moses is given, there are many sacrifices that are required...
- The **dominant** sacrifice? The sacrifice for **sin!**
- A believer would symbolically place their hand on the animal – transferring their sin to the beast who was killed in their place...
- And very **powerfully** – **all** those sacrifices point us to **Jesus'** sacrifice... the **ultimate** sacrifice!
- And by the blood spilt on our behalf, we are rescued from **death and destruction./**
- John the Baptist points to Jesus and says – *Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*
- The blood of Christ, the cross of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the death of Christ are all referring to the same thing; that is: **Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.** //
- we were alienated from God and stood under God's righteous judgment.

- And Jesus' death both **cancelled** our sin and **dealt** with God's rightful **anger**.
- And **that** sacrifice, unlike the sacrifices of the Old Testament, was **once for all**.
- Jesus cried, just before he died, "It is **finished**" (John 19:30).
- There is no more sacrifice for sin, Hebrews insists (Hebrews 10:26).
- End of story. Sin dealt with. Removed. Slate wiped clean. Your conviction **quashed**. You're declared "not guilty".
- Yes: *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*
- Love **outpoured**.
- Let's look **second**:

2. LOVE DEFINED

- ..because Jesus makes it clear that his love – his sacrificial love – the laying down of his life – is the **standard** of love... you may even go so far as to say – it is the very **definition** of love
- Have a look with me again at 12 – *My command is this: Love each other AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.* Then our verse immediately follows *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*
- How are we to love each other? – as he has loved us... //
- I'm so tired of the way our TV and movies portray love!
- "I just fell in love"
- "you can't help who you love"
- "we just fell out of love – that's why we divorced"
- Friends such a view of love is a **travesty!**
- It's as if love is some powerful force out there – and sometimes it just comes down mysteriously and falls on two people – opposite sex or same sex – who can say – and boom – you're in love...!
- ...as if it's all completely out of your control... you've played no part – or have very little to do with it...
- And then **just** as mysteriously if the 'love force' feels like it, it will **remove itself** – and **boom** – **just** as suddenly – you wake up and you're now **OUT** of love... **nothing** to do with you – **completely outside your control!!**
- What **nonsense!** – and how **dangerous**... and how **convenient** when you want a divorce – to shift the blame to some mysterious 3rd party – "we just fell out of love".
- No friends... you want to know what love is?
- It's laying down your life for someone else
- That's the **ultimate** in putting someone else's needs before your own.
- And it has **very** little to do with feelings...
- Did Jesus **feel** like laying down his life for you?
- No
- He **wrestled** with God in the **garden**... "Lord if there's any other way we can do this" – (by which he mean deal with mankind's sin) – "can we do it that way??" //
- ...nevertheless he prayed – *not my will, but yours be done*
- ...and so he laid down his life for us.
- And here is the clear command of Jesus – to love **LIKE THAT!** To love "as I have loved you"

- Am **I** loving like that?
- Are **you** loving like that?
- Every day – laying down our lives in the service of **others**?
- Not **literally** of course...
- But laying down our **selfishness**, our **preoccupation** with **self**;
- laying down our **rights**;
- laying down the necessity for **everything** to go our **way**!
- Laying **down** – or **spending** – our **energy** to be **kind and helpful and generous and thoughtful...**
- Doing **whatever** it **takes** to put the **needs** of others before **ourselves...** no matter the **cost** or the **inconvenience....** ///
- Brothers and sisters – I want to say today – that I see that love happening among us **all the time...!**
- I've been both encouraged and put to **shame** at times by the way people put themselves out for others...!
- For the past 6 weeks, people from our congregation have driven Wayne Thompson from Peregian to **Brisbane** every week day for his medical treatment AND Cassie Campion to **Kawana** for hers!
- All the time here I see the love of our **children's volunteers** for our **children...**
- Those who give their time in **setting up** and **packing up** for church...
- In preparing for and leading our **connect groups...**
- The ministry of **hospitality** – where people will be here long after I've gone – cleaning up after morning tea
- Or those who give themselves to **property** matters or work place health and safety matters – a 2 hour meeting during the week...!
- On and on it **goes...** plus so much more that happens **privately** and **personally** between people and for people outside our church about which I know **nothing...**
- I'm so **thankful** to be **surrounded** by people for whom this **IS** their standard of love... who **every day** are laying down their lives in the **service** of **Jesus** and **others...**
- Thank you!! Thank you for your example to me!!
- And if this is **NOT** you at this present time...
- What is **stopping** you?
- It may be because you have not yet embraced Jesus' love for you!
- It may be because you're struggling **personally** just to get through each day because of issues of **anxiety** or **depression** and **illness...** and it's hard to love **others...** when it's hard just to get out of **bed...** I **get** that.. and I'm sure the **Lord** gets that!! Don't add **guilt** to your woes! //
- But there may be some who are not loving like this... because **you're** just too **important...** you **figure** too much...
- The mark of humility is not that you think **less** of **yourself** – but that you think of **yourself less often!!!**
- As we take time to remember in a few moments, those who have given their lives in **war** – both those who **died** – and those who lived **injured** and **scarred** --- may it be that we take time to examine our **own hearts** and **lives...**
- And then modelled on **Jesus'** love – may we love with **HIS** love... after his **pattern** of love...
- *For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son... For greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends..... **This is my command... love each other, as I have loved you...***