

Living the Seasons at Home

May 9, 2021 – *The Joy of Love*

Bible Readings for this Week

Acts 10:44–48 Psalm 98 Psalm 100 1 John 5:1–6 **John 15:9–17** the focus for this week

Read

John 15:9-17

or the story “A New Commandment” over the page from SeasonsFUSION.

Something to think about, talk about, or do

Jesus did not ask that we obey something arbitrary. Jesus set a wonderful example for us and tells us to simply... “abide in my love.” Jesus has been there before us, loving, serving...showing the way. We are called to do the same. To be in the world as Jesus was, a loving presence.

“...love one another.”

These are the words of Jesus to his followers; so simple, and yet not always so easy.

Write, blog, draw, Tweet, or post images about what love means to you.

Together this week

Reflect on and discuss: What does love mean to you? Where do you find joy? What does it mean that Jesus calls us friend? How can we pass along this loving friend-ship?.

Prayer

Generous God,

we are complete in you.

Please help us to be the best possible friends to those around us.

Amen.

A New Commandment

Based on John 15:9-17

This retelling of the story in John 15 is told from the perspective of the first disciples, as they began to understand something of the nature of Jesus' radical community of love.

To be honest with you, most of the time we were with Jesus, we were confused. So much of what he said was hard to understand, like half catching the melody of a song on the wind. You know it's a song, and you know that if you could just hear a little more of it you would recognize it and be able to sing along. That was us; constantly straining to hear and understand.

Usually, we'd talk together late at night or when Jesus wasn't around. And most conversations would begin, "What did he mean when he said...?" Or, "Was anyone else confused yesterday?"

For example, that time Jesus said, "I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father." When we found time to talk later, Pete started by joking that we had had a promotion. We all laughed, but Jamie said it was no joke. It really was a promotion. "But," someone else said, "Jesus has always called us his friends."

"And treated us that way too," someone else added.

Jamie said, "I know that. I think he was telling us that there was a change coming somehow. Like he was passing on the job to us in a new way..."

"Yeah," Pete said, picking up the theme. "That must be why he talked of loving each other as a commandment. I mean, he's always been on about us loving each other."

"And everyone else!" someone else laughed.

"But now it's a commandment," Pete continued. "A new one."

"Like one of the ten," Tom said.

"Number eleven?" someone laughed.

"No," Jamie said. "I think Jesus wants us to know that his commandment is at the heart of all the ten. It's the foundation. Without this one, nothing else matters; with this one, everything else is covered." There was silence for a while. Then someone said, "Do you mean that if we follow the love commandment, we don't have to worry about the others?" "No," said Jamie, "I think Jesus is saying that by concentrating on this one, we'll find that we are taking care of the others too."

"Much easier," someone said.

"Except for the bit about dying," Tom muttered.

"Yes," Pete said, "What did he mean about laying down your life for your friends?"

There was a longer silence. We all knew that Jesus had been talking more about death than we had remembered from the early days.

"We're going to be by ourselves soon, I think," said Tom, saying aloud what we were all starting to think. "That's why he is saying these things. That's why he wants us to know and remember the important things..."

"How can we love each other as much as he has loved us?" Pete said.

We all looked around at each other. It was as if we had just stopped being teenagers and become adults and realized that we now had to take responsibility. We were the ones. It was up to us.

"So, maybe it is a promotion then?" Tom said. No one laughed then.

Even then, we had no real idea about what was going to happen, what it would mean for us, how central Jesus' new commandment was going to become for us all.

I can tell you now, all these years later, that of all the wonderful things Jesus did and said, it is this one sentence that has kept me going; "Love one another as I have loved you."