

The POWER of Jesus' Love

John 15:9-17

[Jesus said] "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In 2006, a man named Ross McGinnis was serving as a soldier in the Army. He was sent to participate in a war in the country of Iraq, even though he was the youngest and smallest soldier in the group of soldiers he went on missions with.

One day, Ross was riding on a mission with four other soldiers in a big, armored truck. His job was to stick his head out of an opening at the top of the truck, watching for enemies. Suddenly, an enemy soldier threw a grenade through the opening and into the truck.

Ross McGinnis saw it happen and could have quickly jumped out of the truck, but if he had done that, everyone else in the truck would have died. Instead, he jumped into the truck and covered the grenade with his own body. He was killed, but everyone else survived.

That true story helps us to understand what Jesus is talking about here in our Bible reading when he says there's no greater love than when a man lays down his life to save his friends.

There are two very amazing things about what Jesus says here. The first amazing thing is that Jesus calls us his friends.

The Bible tells us that all people start as enemies of God. That means there was a time when we didn't want anything to do with Jesus. We ignored and disobeyed him and rebelled against him. We definitely didn't want to be friends with him.

And yet, Jesus wanted to be friends with us. That's the whole reason he came to this world. Jesus came to forgive us for all we did to hurt him. He came to make peace between us and God so we could be friends instead of enemies.

How did Jesus make peace? That leads us to the second amazing thing here. Jesus made peace between us and God; he forgave all our sins by laying down his life for us. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to die for us. He didn't jump on a grenade; he hung from a cross.

Whenever we think of Jesus dying on the cross, we can remember the power of Jesus' love for us. What a friend we have in Jesus!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How did Jesus show that he is your friend?
- Why did Jesus lay down his life and die on the cross?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- In what ways is Jesus an even better friend than any of our earthly friends?
- How can we thank Jesus for showing us such amazing love?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Would it be easier to sacrifice your life for a friend or an enemy? Why? What does that teach us about Jesus' sacrifice?
- God wants us, in view of Jesus' mercy, to lay down our lives as a living sacrifice. What does that mean? What does that look like in your life?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, you showed amazing love when you died on the cross to save us. Every day, remind us that you are our very best Friend. In your name, we ask this. Amen.