4/14/2019 Message – Love Power

 Eternal God, Your word reveals Your heart, quiet every voice within us but your own. Speak to us through the suffering and death of Christ Jesus that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, we may receive grace to show Christ’s love through our lives given to your service. Amen.

 This was Sunday of the week that Jesus would be crucified, and the Passover festival was about to begin. Jews came to Jerusalem from all over the Roman world during this week-long celebration to remember the great exodus from Egypt.

 Many in the crowds had heard of or seen Jesus and were hoping He would come to the Temple. Jesus did come, not as a warring king on a horse or in a chariot, but as a gentle and peaceable king on a donkey’s colt, just as Zechariah 9: 9 had prophesied.

 *Zechariah 9: 9 Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet He is humble, riding on a donkey - riding on a donkey’s colt.*

 Jesus knew that those who would **hear** Him teach at the Temple, that would pay attention with open hearts and minds, would return to their homes throughout the world and announce the coming of the Messiah.

 The people lined the road, praising God, waving palm branches, and throwing their cloaks in front of the colt as it passed before them.

 The crowd correctly saw Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecies, but they did not understand where Jesus’ kingship would lead Him.

 To announce that He was indeed the Messiah, Jesus chose a time when all Israel would be gathered at Jerusalem, a place where huge crowds could see Him, and a way of proclaiming His mission that was unmistakable. The people went wild. They were sure their liberation was at hand.

 The people who were praising God for giving them a King had the wrong idea about Jesus. They expected Him to be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory; thus, they were deaf to the words of their prophets and blind to Jesus’ real mission.

 When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes, many people turned against Him. This same crowd cried out “Crucify him!” when Jesus stood on trial only a few days later.

 Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is recorded in all 4 gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each one compliments the other and each one shows a detail to put this event in order for us to see the last days of Christ Jesus before the ultimate plan of God is complete in the Cross.

 Luke's account reveals the sorrowful heart of Jesus and His great love for the people of God. The prophecy that follows depicts the destruction of Jerusalem, because the Jews did not recognize when God visited them.

 Luke 19: 41 – 44 *41 But as He came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, He began to* ***WEEP****. 42 “How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes.*

 *43 Before long, your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. 44 They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you.”*

 The Greek word used here for Weep translates to sob or wail aloud.

 The Jews had refused God’s offer of salvation in Christ Jesus when they were visited by God himself, and soon their nation would suffer.

 Jesus' heart was broken because of their blindness and unbelief.

 Today's message is about the Love Power that directed the events of Christ Jesus' Triumphal Entry and the following week.

 *John 3: 16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."*

 In 1 John 4: 8 + 16 we find a description of God as love, *8 But anyone who does not love does not know God****, for God is love.*** *16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in His love****. God is love****, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.*

 God is Love and when we love we are most like Him. God's Love Power is in us.

 The Scripture in 1 Corinthians 13 reveals the nature and character of God, being created in the image of God these are the same characteristics we are to reflect.

 *1 Corinthians 13: 4 – 7 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

 This love power is directed outward toward others, not inward toward ourselves. It is completely selfless and sacrificial and goes against our natural inclinations.

 It is impossible for us to have and share this love power unless God helps us set aside our own natural desires so that we can love without **expecting anything in return**. The more we become like Christ, the more love we will show to others.

 Let's look at 1 Corinthians 13: 4 – 7 exchanging the word love with the name God.

 *God is patient/longsuffering.*

 How has God been patient with you?

 I gave my life to Christ at church camp when I was 17, a long time ago. After some time, He called me into full time pastoral ministry, but I always had an excuse, why would He want me with all my life baggage, I have too many other things in my life, family, children, grandchildren, and so on. Wasn't it enough to serve Him in the church as a lay person?

 Well, His plan didn't change and as my relationship with Jesus deepened, I learned that He wants only the best for me, so I surrendered a second time and never looked back.

 He never forced me or gave me an ultimatum, He loved and cared for me in my rebellion. He never abandoned me, He pursued me, and was right there to encourage and support me in my obedience.

 I can't tell you how many times I got impatient with God when He didn't seem to understand the need for getting something done now. When in truth God was teaching me, preparing me for a greater blessing than I could imagine.

 Look at the patience God showed the Israelites throughout the Old Testament. His attempts to get them to repent and come back to Him, sometimes looked like trying to herd cats.

 The ancient preacher John Chrysostom said the term used for patience and longsuffering reveals a man who is wronged, and who easily has the power to avenge himself, but will not do it out of love and mercy.

 *God is kind*

 When we have and show God’s love, it will be seen in simple acts of kindness. Paul wrote in *Ephesians 4: 31 - 32 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

 *God does not* envy

 Envy is one of the least productive and most damaging of all sinful characteristics. It accomplishes nothing, except to hurt. As seen in Genesis 4: 3 – 8 envy murdered Abel, and Genesis 37: 11 envy enslaved Joseph. In Matthew 27: 18 is written, envy put Jesus on the cross.

 *God is not boastful, proud, or rude*

 God in action works anonymously. Being boastful, proud, or rude is to be arrogant and self-focused. God is outwardly focused wanting the best for all those who love Him. As Paul wrote in *Philippians 2:3 Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*

 *God does not demand its own way. He is not irritable and keeps no record of being wronged. 6 He does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.*

 God could force us to do His will, to follow His plan, He could get frustrated/angry, keep track of all our sins, and rejoice in our pain and anguish.

 Instead He chooses to encourage us and draw us to Him with compassion and as it says in

 *Psalm 103: 11 - 12 11 For His unfailing love toward those who fear Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. 12 He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*

 God always stands on truth, because He is pure and good like truth.

 *God never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures all things through every circumstance.*

 We might have hoped Paul had chosen any phrase but this! **All things** cover's a lot of stuff! We can all bear some things, we can all believe some things, we can all hope some things, and we can all endure some things for a while.

 The love power of God's doesn’t give up, it remains faithful, believing, and hoping. It destroys enemies by turning them into friends.

 Paul encouraged people by sharing his own experience and told it like it is. *Philippians 4: 12 – 13 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

 We just looked at the 1 Corinthians from chapter 13 exchanging the word love with the name of God. Please stand and join me in reading that same passage exchanging the word love your name.

….. is patient and kind.

….. is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude.

….. does not demand its own way.

….. is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

….. does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

….. never gives up

….. never loses faith,

….. is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance.

 As we journey through this week with Jesus, please remember that by way of laying down His life, Jesus took the most horrible, and painful way of dying to show mankind how much He loved them.