

Good Friday devotional * Galatians 2:20
April 2, 2021 * Langford Community Church* Graham Gladstone

'The shoe game'

Who is the most likely to prepare a candlelit dinner?
Who is the mostly likely to suggest a long walk on the beach?
Who is the most reliable at taking out the trash?
Who is the most likely to make the bed?
Who is the most likely to make the other breakfast in bed?
Who is the best listener?
Who is the most affectionate in public?
Who is the most likely to send a love note?
Who is the better doctor when the other one is sick?

Who is most in need of a new pair of shoes?

Now you're probably wondering – why on earth did we just do that? This is Good Friday. What did that have to do with Good Friday? Good question.

Think back over that list – those are all expressions of love.

Who is the most reliable at taking out the trash?
Who is the most likely to make the bed?
Who is the best listener?

Those are all ways that people show their love for others.

And that's what Good Friday is all about – Jesus demonstrating just how deeply He cares for you and for me. Galatians 2:20 – a verse that Martin Luther said to think long and hard on – says 'The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me.' The Son of God loves YOU and gave Himself for YOU.

That's what we're about to see in the Scripture readings that tell the story of Jesus' passion. This is not simply the suffering and death of an honest man; this is the Son of God laying down His life to show just how deeply He is committed to you.

Keep that in mind as we're reading this story – every step of the way, this is Jesus showing the extent of His love for you. Let's pray as we begin.

Read Luke 22-23.

The Son of God loved you and gave Himself for you. That's what this is all about. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what you've done; Jesus' death here on Good Friday was for you. There's no sin too grand, no sinner too awful; we have all wandered from God but He has sent His Son to lay down His life to bring us back.

Jesus said: "There is no greater love than this - to lay down one's life for His friends" (John 15:13), but I would argue that He took it one step further. Jesus didn't just lay down His life for His friends; He laid down His life for His enemies; for people who ignored and opposed Him. While we were still SINNERS Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).ⁱ Imagine that depths of love it took to give it all up to win us back when we wanted nothing to do with Him. And yet that's exactly what Jesus did. He laid down His life for us while we were sinners; now that He has offered us redemption, imagine how great is His love for us. The Son of God loves you and gave Himself for you.

I hope that you have experienced that love for yourself. I hope that when you hear Him say - 'This is my body, which is for you' – you understand it was truly given for you. And I hope that when you hear Him say - 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood' – you will understand that He is committing to love You to the very end.

And I hope that you will live in light of it. It would be pretty bad if Steph took out the trash all the time and Dan said nothing about it and just kind of lived aloof from it all; love calls for a response of love.

Jesus calls us to life for Him, since He laid down His life for us.

Galatians 2:20 is actually more than what I've said so far and I think it captures the kind of response that God's love calls us to. Walter Hansen paraphrases it like this:

I no longer live as an egocentric person in obedience to all my selfish passions and desires, for Christ is now at the center of my life. Now I live in obedience to him, for he loved me and gave himself for me.ⁱⁱ

As we approach the Table, let me say this - If you have chosen to live by faith in the Son of God, then you are welcome here. And if you haven't yet, come. There is a place set for you. Jesus knows your secrets, your regrets, your past – good and bad – and even so, He chose to stand in your place, to give you a new start. Let your heart respond to His love and come.

There's actually a song by a band called the Sidewalk Prophets that captures this idea really well – let's spend some time before the Lord as we hear this song and then come to the Table together.

Numbers 6:24-26

New International Version

24 ““The Lord bless you

and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace.””

ⁱ 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Roman 5:8 NIV).

ⁱⁱ Walter Hansen, *Galatians*, (IVP NT Commentary) on Galatians 2:20.