

Happy, Holy Week and Happy Wednesday. My name is Jeremy Woltz. I am the Young Adults and the Small Groups Pastor at West End Assembly of God and it's my honor and privilege today to be able to open the Word of God and to spend a few moments reflecting on some scripture with you on this Wednesday of Holy Week. Now we're going to jump in to John chapter 15. And I'm going to read to you from verse 9 to verse 17. And this moment comes when Jesus just hours away from being betrayed by one of his best friends takes a few moments to sit down with his disciples and to give them one of the last, as well as, most important teachings he has to offer. This is what he says, picking up in verse nine, "As the father has loved me, so have I loved you, now remain in my love.

If you will obey my commands, you will remain in my love just as I have obeyed 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, that he should lay down his life for his 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 I appointed you to go and to bear fruit. Fruit that will last. Then the father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

This is my command. Love each other." I love this passage. This is like I said before, one of the last moments that Jesus has in his physical humanly form to teach his disciples. And when I say disciples, yeah, I mean the men in the room looking at him right here in this historical moment, but I also mean you and I also mean me. This is one of the last things on his earthly ministry that Jesus had to teach all of us as if to say that this was one of the most important things that we must remember. And repeatedly here, Jesus says, if you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you are my friend. That statement means that what Jesus is saying here is for us to be in relationship with him, true relationship with the savior of all.

It requires us to be obedient to his command. I think many of us as Christians, if you've been a Christian for a long time, we get so caught up in what that means. We make it complicated. We think about all the right things we have to do and all the wrong things we have to avoid and we begin to strive so hard and spend so much of our time trying to be loved by God. And the truth is that when we waste our time trying to be loved by God, we are wasting our time because we're already loved. He already loves us. He proves it by giving his life for us on that cross. But we spend so much of our time so much striving after being loved by God. When the truth is that we should strive after loving others for God. See what Jesus says, here is to obey his command so that we might remain in his love. And we don't have to wonder what that means.

Because twice, twice, and his last moments when he's teaching his disciples what matters most, Jesus says this, this is my command. Love each other as I have loved you. And again, later he says, this is my command. Love each other. If you truly want to remain in the love of God, if you truly want to be in relationship with Jesus Christ, here's what you have to do. Love other people. It sounds so simple, but we make it so complicated and the truth is simply this, love others the way Jesus has loved you. Yeah, he gave up his life for you on a cross and that's a high calling and maybe maybe you can't do that right now for the other people in your life. But, I actually think it's not just death on a cross that Jesus is talking about here. I think one of the things he's saying is for you personally, love others the way that Jesus loved you, yourself.

Now look at my life. I remember growing up, I sought my value and the opinion of others every day I thought I was only as valuable as the as the value other people would give me. I sought my value in the acceptance of others. And then one day I came to understand that Jesus loves me enough that he told me my value isn't dependent on somebody else's acceptance of who I am. My value is innate. It's inherent in who I am because I am a son of God. Jesus loved me by giving me value. No matter what happened to me, no matter the mistakes I would make. And no matter whether or not other people liked me, Jesus loved me by giving me value. So the way I love other people is whenever I sit before you, one of my best goals, one of the biggest things I strive to do is to help you understand that you have value.

You are a person of value, not because of what you do, not because of the life you choose to live. You have value because you are as much a son or a daughter of God as I am. I want to love you as Jesus loved me. And Jesus loved me by giving me value. Now I want that to be your challenge, not just today, not just for Holy Week. I want that to be your challenge for the rest of your life. How did Jesus love you? What was it for you personally that Jesus did for you that nobody else could do? If you answer that question then you know for the rest of your life how you need to love other people. If you want to remain in relationship with Jesus, if you want to be friends with God, there's only one thing you have to do. Love others the way Jesus loved you.

May God bless you. Have a wonderful Wednesday and have a great rest of your Holy Week.