

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God, as we turn to your Word for us,
may the Spirit of God rest upon us.
Help us to be steadfast in our hearing, in our speaking,
in our believing, and in our living. Amen.

Scripture

Luke 6:12-19

12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: 14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, 18 who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, 19 and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Meditation

Dear Friends,

Jesus was compelled by three great loves and we see them all in this passage.

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Luke 6:12 shows his first great love—his love for his Father. Here we see Jesus spending time on the side of mountain in prayer. This was a regular pattern for Jesus. Not only did he have the regular practice of going to the synagogue on the Sabbath day to spend time with his Father and God's people, we see him often pulling himself away from everything, the busyness, the push and pull of people with their demands and needs to take time in prayer with his Father. He knew the demands would be there when he came back. He knew there was so much he could be doing. Yet Jesus takes time to pray to His Father. This is his habit and it shows how strong and how important Jesus considered his relationship to God. He spent the whole night being in that relationship of love he had with his Father. He spent the whole night getting direction, affirmation, and resting in God's love.

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This is the upward pattern of his love.

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In Luke 6:13-16, we see his second great love—his love of his disciples. Here we see Jesus come down the mountain and call his twelve disciples. These are the ones he is going to invest his life into. These are the ones who he will spend most of his time with. He is going to eat with them, walk with them, sail with them, work with them. They will experience a profound sense of community with him. He will teach them what it means to live in love. That was especially

hard when you had a tax collector like Matthew in the same group as Simon the Zealot. One came from collaborating with the occupying Roman Empire, and the other came from a movement committed to violently forcing the Roman Empire out. Two more opposite people you could not find, and there was everyone in between. Yet, it was to them that Jesus explained his parables. It was them he allowed to witness the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and his suffering in the garden. He admonished them, commissioned them, empowered them, nurtured them, believed in them, loved them. He imparted his life to them. Jesus was moulding these twelve into a new community who learned the new values of his kingdom. Jesus prepared these disciples for the day he would leave the world. It would then be up to them to preach the gospel and establish the church.

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That's the inward pattern of his love. This inward relationship—living in love with one another—is the only identifying mark Jesus said Christians were to have. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35).

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In Luke 6:17-19 we see Jesus's third great love—his love of the world. Jesus went out to be with the sick and the lost, to heal their diseases and teach them about God. Jesus came to this world because he loved the world. Sin had affected this world in hurtful ways, leaving people diseased, harassed, and misdirected. It had left them with systems that would keep them that way. Jesus went out to address these things head on. This is why he came. He has good news for everyone. Sin has affected us all, but he has come to bring salvation. He has come to restore a broken relationship between humans and God. He did not reserve his message for good, synagogue-attending Jews. He spoke it to the world. The Kingdom of God is near. The Kingdom of God is for you. Believe in me and you will have abundant life, wholeness, peace and real joy. I will show you how to live. I will be your saviour from sin.

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That's the outward pattern of his love.

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So Jesus had a pattern of Up with his Father, In with his spiritual family, and Out to a broken world with good news. These three loves compelled him in his life.

If this is true of Jesus, what do you think this means for those who follow him?

Those who follow him also follow that pattern: Up in prayer and worship, In toward fellowship, care and discipleship, and Out with good news for neighbours, community and world. We get that.

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This mission for our church is "Growing in relationship with God, each other, and our community."

It follows this pattern: we grow upward in our relationship with God, and we grow inward with our relationship with each other, and we grow outward in our relationship with our community. These three loves compel us just as they compelled Jesus.

On this Mission Sunday, we remember that we who follow Jesus are called to follow his pattern. Today we celebrate how our love for our community compels us to act outward toward the world in loving ways. We live the good news of Jesus and his love in front of the person in the cubicle next to us at work, to the neighbour who needs a hand, to the person who needs food in these tough times. When the Spirit leads us, we tell our faith story of Jesus and his love and how it has impacted us and we invite them to join us. God is using us to reveal to the world the way of this kingdom. Today we claim that it is our purpose individually and our ministry as a church together to bring the good news of Jesus to the hurts and darkness of this world. So pay attention as you hear stories of outreach and listen to what God might be calling you to join or start doing.

Christ's love compels us to follow him in mission.

AMEN