

**Epiphany 6**  
**“Love Like Jesus”**  
**Romans 12:9-13**

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

Everyone is known for something! Everyone has a reputation! I have an easy quiz for you. With each of these pictures, what is their reputation? First...



Best ever? Tom Brady. I’ve not been a fan, but I can’t argue with 5 super bowl rings and that incredible comeback!

How about this place?



Ted Drewes in St. Louis. They are known for Concretes. My favorite was peach macadamia nut. Been a long time.

And now the easiest one...



Lamberts is known for their throwed rolls. When I first moved here, we took everyone who came to visit to Lamberts. We need to get back!

We all have a reputation of some kind or the other. We are all known by something. Let me ask you a question. How do people know that we are Christians? What should be our reputation as followers of Jesus?

The Bible tells us. It is found in John 13:35. **(PUT UP SLIDE)**

I want us all to read this verse in unison. **“By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.” The Christian’s reputation must be a reputation of love. (TITLE SLIDE UNTIL THE END...)**

When we think of the “love chapter” in the Bible, we think of 1 Corinthians 13... Love is patient. Love is kind. Many of us had that read at our wedding. But there is another Love Chapter, and that Romans 12. This morning we are going to see that Romans 12 gives us **5 specific pictures of how to love like Jesus loves.**

So let’s started. **The first thing that Romans 12 says how to love like Jesus: You cling to what is good. In good times and in times of challenge, you cling to what is good. ST. Paul knew this is not always easy.**

That’s because every relationship, every friendship, every marriage, every family, has good times, and every relationship, every friendship, marriage, family has dull times.

I’ve told you before I am a movie person. I love movies. I remember seeing the original Star Wars in the theater. I came out and said that was the best movie I had seen to that point in my short life. Well recently, my kids went to see “Rogue One”.. the latest Stars Wars movie. They came home and said, “Dad, it was just OK. It was really dull at the beginning.” After I heard that I didn’t want to go. Who wants to see a dull movie? But I MIGHT GO and endure the dull parts until the light sabers come out and the battle begins.

Every relationship has some dull periods. You know, like when you’re balancing job demands with family, or if you’re part of the “sandwich generation” taking care of kids and parents, money issues. Life gets tricky. Couples can drift apart.

Every marriage counselor, and also the Bible, will say have a date night. In order to have friends you have to be a friend. It reminds you why you loved that person in the first place. Bible says, **“Cling to the good, it helps carry you through those struggle points.”**

**What does love look like? Romans 12 says “Be devoted to one another in love.”** Key word: devoted. Do we have any devoted golfers in our congregation? (Or substitute hunter... or substitute foodies...)

Even if you are a devoted golfer... does that mean you've never hit a bad shot? (By the way, if you say you've never hit a bad shot, I want to meet with you after worship for some personal confession and absolution.) Even devoted golfers have a bad round. Even devoted hunters don't get a deer some years. Foodies burn dinner.

Being devoted means you stick it out. For better, for worse. Someone used this phrase: *our emotion should follow our devotion*. In other words, don't let emotion make life-changing decisions. Let your devotion to God, your spouse, your friend, your children ... let your devotion take the lead. Not emotion.

I know this is a tender topic. There are rough times. Friendships sometimes just bust apart. Marriage is hard work. This encouragement means that there is always hope. When we struggle through the night, joy will come in the morning.

**How do you love like Jesus? Romans 12 says “Be Faithful in Prayer.”** How many of you have a prayer list? If you don't please start one. Especially if you're my age, you forget unless you write it down. Use your phone. Note pad, your contact list. Set an alarm to remind you to pray. When you are praying for someone, God changes that relationship. If you have a conflict with someone at work, pray for that person. It

will change your relationship. Maybe not perfect, but it change. We need more prayer warriors in our congregation.

**Fourth, how do we love like Jesus? Romans 12 says “Share with those in need.”** Love leads to generosity. With our time and attention. When you love, you want to give of yourself.

What’s the first Bible verse you ever learned? Probably John 3:16. **“For God so loved the world that He GAVE... He gave His only Son.”** When we love, we want to give. In giving, we reflect the greatest Gift and that is Jesus Christ. That God loved you led to His giving Jesus into death for you. For your sins. .

**What would you rather do? Put your kid in time-out, or give your child a Christmas present? Both are love. Both necessary. We like to give to those we love.**

We have to be careful though. If we have a loved one battling an addiction, there is something called co-dependency. We have to be careful to give in such a way that we are NOT ENABLING a problem to continue. But love is demonstrated.

**Fifth, to love like Jesus means we bless those who persecute us. Bless and do not curse.** That does not come naturally. But it is the way of Christ.

Experiment. Think of the person you love the most in the world. The very most.

Have they ever hurt your feelings?

Have they ever made a mistake?

Have they ever said something that was not fully true about you?

Have they ever messed up?

And yet, they are still the person you love the most in the world. Do you know what that says about love? Love is not about what you do. Love is about GRACE. We use that word in Church, and GRACE means “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.” You have

received forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and so much because Jesus died and rose again.

Think about Jesus. When Jesus was arrested and sentenced to die, His enemies were happy. He would soon be out of their hair. The threat we be gone. Their political future secure.

When hung on the cross, people hurled insults at him. One of the thieves on the cross next to him said, **“If you are the Son of God, save yourself, and save us too.”** And Jesus, **“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”**

He was carrying the sins of the world, your sin, my sin, and their sin. And they mocked him. This is the man who raised people from the dead, and Jesus could have destroyed them in a word. Instead, Jesus says, “Father, forgive them...”

And Jesus said that you CAN do that too. **“Everyone will know that you are my disciple if you love one another.” Love is the reputation of those who follow Him. And even when we are not loving, Jesus loves us anyway.**

**A Challenge this week:**

1. Choose someone to love.
2. Decide what this love will look like. How are you going to demonstrate love
3. Pray for the difference this act of love will make.

It **does** make a difference.

You know, when Jesus was on that cross, do you remember what happened next? One of the thieves on the cross had been listening, to Jesus, to His words of love and forgiveness. He caught a glimpse of who Jesus is and why Jesus came. And he

said, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus said, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

That love of our Savior introduced ETERNITY into the life of one dying for his crime. Pray that your love this week will make a difference in someone's life.