

“What is the Greatest Example of Love You Have Ever Seen?”

I John 4:7-12

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July 8, 2001

Communion Sunday

What is the greatest example of love you have ever seen? Recently, I read an article about Corey and Millicent Bell who live in Round Rock, Texas. They have been married a short time and moved into a new home this spring.

Corey's mother, who lived in South Carolina, died on April 9, her fifty-first birthday. His father died six years ago when he was forty-four. Their deaths left Corey's eight siblings, ages 7-18 without parents.

You know what Corey and Millicent have done, don't you? They have moved those eight children to Texas and will raise them as their own. They will feed, clothe, shelter and educate them. That's a huge responsibility for a young couple. That's a great example of love, too.

On January, 13, 1982, a Boeing 737 jet left National Airport in Washington, D.C. Moments later it hit the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and crashed into the icy waters of the Potomac River. Six survivors clung to a broken piece of the plane. Coast Guard and Park Police worked to rescue these people. As they dropped a lifesaving ring from a helicopter, one of the men afloat caught the ring and gave it again and again to his companions. Five were rescued. By the time the ring was lowered for the sixth time, this hero was gone. The icy waters had claimed its victim and he perished, but not before making sure that all five of his companions had been saved. What an example of love!

A few years ago, my sister-in-law's sister was dying of a fatal kidney disease. Their mother died at the age of forty with the same problem. Without hesitation, my sister-in-law gave her sister one of her kidneys and today both are alive and well. What an act of love this was.

As good as these examples are, and I am sure you could add many others, they do not compare to the example John gives us in his epistle. In I John 4:10, John takes love to an even higher level.

**“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”**

It is one thing to volunteer your services to help someone or give your life to save a person. It is quite another to offer someone else, especially the one you love the most. There are many things I would be willing to do for which I would not offer the services of my children or mate. I am more protective of their lives and well being than I am my own. I believe you are, too.

However, John tells us that God sent His Son to die in our place. Now, that is love to the highest degree. I don't think there is another level.

“I would not give my son on his worst day to save you on your best day.” I can still hear an evangelist saying that at a meeting I attended years ago. “However, God gave His Son on his best day to save you on your worst day.” Those words haunt me to this day. What love!

**What should be our response to a love that holds nothing back?** First of all, we should be **humbled** that God loves us this much.

Secondly, we should **receive** His love and gift of salvation by opening our hearts to Him. We should welcome Him into our lives the same way those eight Bell children will open their hearts to Corey and Millicent.

We should **trust** Him and follow wherever He leads. If God loved us enough to send His son to die for us, then we should trust Him to love us enough to meet our needs and lead us in the right direction.

Recently, I heard Jimmy Carter say, “Jesus loved people in such a way that they could not control their commitment to Him.” It is true that the incarnation and atonement reveal an irresistible grace!

Finally, we should **share** His love. “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” I John 4:11.

Think about what response you should make today as we take the Lord’s Supper and remember both the One who died and the One who sent Him.