

May 10, 2015  
Sermon for 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
St. Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
John 15:9-17

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

John 15:9–17 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Grace, mercy, and peace from the one who touches our lives, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The school playground is the last place you want to be if you're the smallest, the weakest, or the least agile. Team captains don't think too much about a kid's feelings when picking teams. They want the fastest, the strongest, and the most skilled. They want the players who are most likely to give them victory. The weak only get to play because you have to fill all the positions. As far as the athletic kids are concerned, it's an unfortunate necessity. Because the PE coach said everyone had to play, so you take James and I guess I'll take Dan.

Thanks be to God that the Lord's Church doesn't operate like a playground, at least it shouldn't, but sometimes we find ourselves back on the playground as groups within the church find clicks and unofficial alliances. Sure, we want new members of our group, but maybe...maybe we don't really want to ask the single mom or the unemployed dad.

But in the true church on earth, where Jesus is in charge, it's different. Jesus doesn't pick us because we're wiser, stronger, richer, or smarter than others. Jesus chooses us because He loves us. That love has its origin in Jesus Himself being loved.

And its His intention is that we, whom He loves, will love others. We are loved and in Love, Jesus Has Chosen Us to Abide in His Love.

Jesus says three things in the first verse of our text:

1. "As the Father has loved me,
2. So have I loved you.

### 3. Abide in my love.” Okay?

Loved (*pause*), in love (*pause*), Jesus has (*three*) chosen us to abide in His love.”

Loved: From eternity, Jesus has been *loved* by the Father

*“As the Father has loved Me,”* v 9a

This is really the foundation for all things. What really comes before the Father’s love?

It is of the essence of the Trinity. Before there were any created beings to love, the Father was already loving the Son, always!

This is how John, in last week’s Epistle, could say, *“God is love”* (1 Jn 4:8). It was the basis for creation that God, who is love, could have more precious ones to love, even though He knew that we would betray that love, yet, in an act of love beyond our, the Father still created us...still loves us.

This relationship, the Father loving the Son, continued throughout Jesus’ mission to earth. At both Jesus’ Baptism and transfiguration (Mt 3:17; 17:5), the Father called Jesus His beloved Son, saying: *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”*, further telling us to: *“Listen to Him”*.

So often we see Jesus speaking to His Father as the beloved Child (Jn 11:41–42; 12:28; 17:1). Calling Him endearingly, not Yahweh or Adonai, but Father.

As Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion, He uses the Aramiac word *Abba*, the warm, loving, trusting word for father.

The Father even loved the Son when He had to abandon Him on the cross (Mt 27:46).

In love: Jesus has chosen us *in love*.

*“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you,” v 9).*

Yet despite that love, we did not choose Jesus (v 16a).

As sinners, we do not have the will or the ability to choose Jesus.

Because of our sinful nature, our natural inclination is to run from Jesus and all that He desires to accomplish in and with us. We chase after our favorite sin, following the prince of this world, our natural father, the devil. It seems like so much more fun. I get what I want today. I get to play where and how I want!

I don't need the rules and ways of God. I want to have fun now! Much like a child can't wait to get older. We are never 4 or 5, but we are 4 and a half. Longing to get that much closer to freedom! Old enough to get your driver's license. Old enough to get out of the house, old enough to drink, to party, to college, old enough to REALLY get into trouble.

And it's not too long before we realize that maybe our parents weren't so dumb and old fashioned. Today we celebrate Mother's Day. How many of us, have felt the love of our mother, even after we turned from her, sometimes even cursing her? But then, when we come home, sometimes with our tails between our legs, we find that even though she may be disappointed, she still loves us and will do everything to help us recover and grow.

Not everyone is blessed with a mother that fills that role. It may be a loving aunt, grandmother or even an adopted or foster mother. Even if you didn't have a "mother" in your life, know that the love of Jesus love for you is even greater than that!

And Jesus loves us in the same way the Father loves Him. Unconditionally and completely!

Now Jesus was never a rebellious teen or a party animal at college, but Just as the Father has loved Jesus, so has He eternally loved us, even though we turned our backs on Him, even though we betrayed His Son, sometimes as completely as Judas did.

Jesus makes that love visible when He *“lays down his life for his friends”* v.13. And in doing so, Jesus has won our salvation on the cross. There He took our sin into Himself, Paid for it, forgave it, all of it, and emptied it of its power.

Jesus’ love led Him to choose us to be His friends (vv 14–16b). Yes, you have been chosen!

Captains on the playground may pick their friends, but usually only if they can hit or throw or catch. They don’t pick teammates who aren’t already their friends unless they bring speed or skills to the table.

Jesus chose us who were by nature His enemies and declared us to be His friends—and at the cost of his own life.

That was a choosing in love!

Jesus has chosen us to abide in His love: Jesus has chosen us *to abide in His love* by loving others

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love,” (v 9). Jesus says that abiding in His love means keeping His commandments, and His commandment is that we love one another (vv 10, 12, 17).

Unlike the Father's love for Jesus and Jesus' love for us, our love for others falls short.

We're naturally more like the typical playground captain—looking at people for what they can do for us. Even mothers may fall short. On Father's Day, I all too often end up fussing at the fathers because I am all too aware of my failings as a father, but mothers too find themselves falling short. They may try to live through their children, try to run their lives, even after they are married, sometimes not even supporting them in their marriage., etc. It's not because a mother doesn't love, but it's because they love imperfectly.

Even though Jesus commands us to love one another, our strongest impulse is often to give in to hate and anger.

But in Christ's love, we receive the things the loving Father knows to be good for us. Most importantly the gift of the Holy Spirit whereby we believe that Jesus, by His death and resurrection, has made us part of His Father's household in holy Baptism.

We will live in the Father's love forever. When we receive such love—forgiveness of sins, eternal life—love for our neighbor flows freely.

True love for neighbor always has its origin in Good Friday. If Jesus has died for the sins of the world, for all mankind, how can we not love our neighbor, whom Jesus shed His blood for, just as He did for you.

And having been chosen in love by the beloved Son of the Father, we do abide in His love by loving our neighbor.

“Loved (*pause*),  
in love (*pause*),  
Jesus has chosen us to abide in his love.”

Before the foundations of the world, the Son of God was loved by the Father.

And so loved, also before the foundations of the world, the Son loved us—  
so much that He chose us to be His own and to abide in His Father’s love.

That meant giving His life for us.

That’s love!

And so loved, we love our spouses, our children, our friends, our enemies,  
the folks we’ve never met.

We abide in Jesus’ love!

Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and  
minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the glory*