

Spiritual Gifts: *Love*

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Spiritual Gift of Love

If only we could all believe as these children do that “Yes, Jesus loves me.” The simplicity of Christ – the core of the gospel – is that Jesus loves us.

As most of you know, for several months we have been presenting a series on spiritual gifts. Today, as introduction to this year’s Passion Play, I would like to say a few words about the spiritual gift of love.

1st Corinthians chapter 13 *describes* love. John 3:16 *demonstrates* it.

The spiritual gift of love – a gift given to us by God, the very God who gave His own Son for us – that spiritual gift is *sacrificial*. Sacrificial love.

The story of the cross is a story about the love of God for us. It is about carrying the cross, bearing one another’s burdens, loving as Jesus’ loves.

Jesus – my Lord, my Brother – loved me to death: *His* death.

My Jesus, my Savior – *He* suffered the agony described by Peter in last week’s sermon. Jesus did this for me. Jesus died. For me. Jesus loved me and forgave me, even though it was *I* who hammered the nails and pierced His side.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Unconditionally. Eternally. Just as He loves each one of you.

That love of Jesus, that security in Christ, is the foundation of my life. My compass. My plumb line.

My Father in heaven is a perfect and perfectly loving Father. He gave me Jesus – His death for me, His life in me. I know that He hears me and He answers me. I know that He loves me. The one thing I know for certain is this: God loves me. That truth is the *basis* for my faith, the *reason* for my praise, the *motivation* for my prayers.

We inhabit the love of God. He places in our hearts the spiritual gift of love, which is sacrificial. That spiritual gift loves as Jesus loves.

This year’s Passion Play will be performed in two parts. Act I will begin in a few minutes. Then Buzz Marvel will give his sermon. Afterwards, we will present Act II.

As we present our Passion Play, let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus.

Communion

We here today are witnesses in faith to Jesus’ sacrifice. In a few minutes we will break bread with our Lord and Savior. Before we do, I would like to ask if there is anyone who wants to become part of the

body of Christ. I won't ask you to stand up or come forward, but after services please see Buzz Marvel. And, as we pray this prayer, please give your heart to the Lord.

Please join me in prayer. Dear Jesus, we believe in You. We know that You are God, that You were born as a Child to die on the cross for our sins. You endured the cross of shame in order to share with us Your glory. Now, as the risen Christ, You offer to live in us forever. You give us Your love and Your forgiveness.

We repent of all of our sins and confess our faith in You. We are assured that You will always be with us.

Please bless this bread and wine – symbols of Your sacrifice – a reminder that You died for us and that You now live in us. Make Your home in our hearts. Transform us into Your image.

Jesus, we thank You. Thank You. Thank You. And all the people of God said “Amen.”

Instructions.

As usual, we'll start from the back row, come down the center aisle, and return around the sides.

Before we begin, I'd like to say this. Here is a statue of Jesus which I inherited from my parents. I hope that none of you are offended by this statute. But I thought that it might help, as we take communion, to visualize taking the bread and the wine from Jesus' own hands. Jesus is the one who gave Himself for us and He is the one who offers us His body and blood.

Let us share the rest of our lives with Jesus.