**Love to Live By**

**The Word**

Read together John 14:15-27

**The Big Idea**

Jesus calls us into a life of deep love and obedience to him, and he has given us the Holy Spirit as an abiding personal presence to enable us to live more deeply into a life of love.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What struck you most from Sunday’s message?

2. Consider this idea that our own goodness can become an inhibitor of love or a substitute for love. What questions does that raise for you, and where do you see that playing out in the church or your own life?

3. Consider the Hebrew word “Ahavah” which means something like “love in action.” As you consider the idea of love in action, where might God be prompting you to love (him or others) more deeply at this time?

4. On Sunday the Holy Spirit was describe less as a power and more as a person. How would you describe your relationship with the person of the Holy Spirit in this season of your life (e.g. distant, passionate, strained, confused, comforting, etc.)?

**Sermon Outline**

I. The Shema (Dt 6:4-5)

A. “Hear”

It is a taking in and internalizing of the information that is being spoken not just acknowledging that something has been said. Listening and hearing adjust the posture of our heart through openness and humility toward receiving what is being said.

B. “Love” the Lord your God

1. The Hebrew word for love here is Ahavah.

2. Ahava is love in action: there’s a dynamic relationship between loving and acting on that love with obedience, and that that obedience is what opens up our hearts to hear God.

C. The abundant life (Dt 11:13-21)

1. Ahavah love is a way for Israel not only to survive but to thrive

2. So the key to life abundant is to listen to God and love Him.

D. Disobedience to the Shema

But many didn’t listen to God, and many didn’t love Him. So the abundant life that was offered to them succumbed to the hardness of their hearts.

 E. The promise of a new covenant

1. But there is a spark of light and hope in Ezekiel 36:26-27

2. Ezekiel prophesies of a time when we will be moved to obey God’s decrees by way of God’s Spirit that will be in us.

II. Jesus’ final gathering with His disciples

A. Similar to Moses’ words in Deuteronomy: both were given at the end of their time with the people wishing to convey that which was most important.

B. The theme of love

1. Jesus concretely demonstrates his love for them (foot washing and communion)

2. Jesus reminds them of the primacy of love (see John 14:15-27)

a. Notice Jesus doesn’t actually command love here, he is simply saying that if we love him it will show.

b. Consider also the image of the vine and branches in John 15 where fruit is just a natural result of that connection.

 3. Our challenges with love

a. Sometimes we seek to systematize love rather than simply entering in on a journey of deep love

b. Sometimes our own goodness is an inhibitor or substitute for real love. Consider Pete’s story in Mexico of being awakened to the fact that his goodness was an inhibitor to deeper love and the passionate love of Jesus for him was the thing that then sparked more passionately love for Jesus in return.

 C. The Holy Spirit

1. Jesus brings Holy Spirit into the text here in relation to loving and obeying Him because He is letting us know that he is not leaving us helpless, hopeless and defenseless against our own human tendencies and frailties. He has given us another like himself who lives IN US

2. We need to stop seeing Holy Spirit as a thing or a power. He is the third person of the Trinity and we can talk to Him just as we talk with the Father and Jesus

3. His love draws us out of our stuff, out of our self-life and into His peace and His power to move beyond passive Christianity and into life abundant. Beyond the “good enough” and into passionate love that reminds us of what we’ve been saved from and what we have been saved into.

4. Being reminded that His love didn’t just save us, it saves us every day.