

The Great Gesture (Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 3:1, 16)

The Greatness of the Cross pt. 4
Pastor Tim Peck

THE BIG IDEA

The cross is the great gesture that demonstrates the extent of God's love. Without the cross, we'd be ignorant of God's love. God's love calls us to love others with God's kind of love.

OPENING

- Describe an example of a great gesture of love that you've witnessed, read about, or heard about.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Read Romans 5:6-8. How is the death of Jesus different than someone dying for a good person?
- In my message, I talked about the limitations of working from the "bottom up" to extrapolate about God's love. Working from the "bottom up" starts with our human loves and then works up from there to imagine God's love as a perfected version of human love. What are the limitations of this approach? How do Romans 5:6-8 point out these limits?
- According to Bible scholar Leon Morris, "*The cross...gives us a new understanding of love. The New Testament writers saw everything in its light, finding their ideas about love revolutionized by what the cross meant.*"¹ Discuss this quote with your group.

¹Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible* (Eerdmans Publishing, 1981), p. 71.

- Read John 13:34, and 15:12-17. Why does Jesus link his love for us with our love for others? How does Jesus' love for us help us know how to love other people?
- The view of the cross I discussed Sunday is sometimes called the "Moral Influence" view, and it is associated with an eleventh century French Christian thinker named Peter Abelard. Abelard believed that the cross was a public demonstration that motivates us to trust Jesus for salvation. How does the cross invite us to trust in God?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Under what circumstances are you most tempted to doubt God's love for you?
- What's one way you can demonstrate God's kind of love to someone else this week? Consider the following ideas:
 - Send someone a note to tell them that you care.
 - Buy someone groceries.
 - Offer to buy a homeless person lunch.
 - Babysit someone's kids so they can have a night out.
 - Volunteer to serve in some way at Glenkirk.
 - Apologize to someone.
 - Send someone a book that's been meaningful to you.

PRAYER REQUESTS