

Jesus Is Love the Way Love Is

Luke 9:51-56

Every day in June, the most popular wedding month of the year, about 13,000 American couples will say "I do," committing to a lifelong relationship that both hope will be full of friendship, of joy, and of love. Yet, many relationships fracture. Psychologist John Gottman began asking the question, "**Why?**" He set up a "The Love Lab" with his colleague Robert Levenson at the University of Washington and began to test newlyweds and discovered the answer that the Bible's given for centuries. Marriages are either "masters" or "disasters" based on couples either "turning toward" or "turning away" at critical moments. 33% in *disaster* marriages turn away from a spouse; 87% in *master* marriages turn toward a spouse. It seems that whatever else love in relationship is, it involves turning toward a need with firm determination.

In our text there is a phrase used of Jesus: "He was determined to go toward Jerusalem" (v. 51). "He was traveling toward Jerusalem" (v. 52). The KJV puts it like this "He steadfastly set his face toward Jerusalem." Jerusalem is the place Jesus went to die for me (Lk. 9:44). "Greater love has no man than this" (Jn. 15:13).

- A. **Real love** is seen in Jesus going to die for me.
"God demonstrates His love for me in that while I was still a sinner, He died for me" (Rom. 5:8).
- B. When I am filled with an understanding of His love, **I overflow with love**.
Whatever it is that is inside of you is that which comes out of you when squeezed. "I want to know this love that surpasses knowledge—so I can be filled with the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).
- C. Be most concerned with knowing Christ's love for you, for **He is your true Love**.
In a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 50, the Messiah says, "**I have set my face like a flint**" (50:7).

1. Christ's love for me is **intentional** – "**I have set** my face like a flint"

Our text says twice that Jesus "determined" to go to Jerusalem; He steadfastly set his face toward the city.

Remember, when you think of Jesus' resolution to die, He had a human nature like ours. He shrunk back from pain like we do. He had a mother and brothers and sisters like we do. He had special places in the mountains he spent. To turn his back on all this and determine to receive vicious whippings, beatings, and cruel mocking at crucifixion was not easy. That's love. True love never happens by "falling" into it; true love is intentional. "*Greater love has no one than this; to lay down His life for His friends*" (John 15:13).

2. Christ's love for me is **unconditional** – "I have set **My face** like a flint"

In our text we see that Jesus sends a few disciples up to a Samaritan village. The Samaritans were "half-breeds," despised by the Jews. In 722 B.C. the ten northern tribes were captured by the Assyrians, and the women and children left behind were forced to intermarry with pagan men whom the Assyrians brought into northern Israel. Their children and descendants were the "Samaritans" who picked up some of the pagan customs of their fathers. The Samaritans wanted "nothing" to do with Jesus; and the disciples wanted to bring judgment on them ("fire from heaven"); but Jesus corrected them and spoke of His duty. Real love will think of what is best for the person being loved; never what is best for the one who is loving.

3. Christ's love for me is **sacrificial** – "I have set My face **like a flint**"

Jesus says in Luke 9:56 – "The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." It's very difficult to realize that intentional, unconditional love can often be painful. For warmth and comfort to

come a flint must be struck hard and often. This is exactly what happened to Jesus. Are you ready to love?