

“I wish I knew then what I know now.” Maybe this is something the teenager says to himself after the consequences of his immature decision catch up to him. Maybe this is something you say when you look back on a financial decision that cost you. Maybe this is something you would say when you look back at a difficult time. You didn’t know how it was going to work out but somehow it did and if you only knew how at the time, it would have saved you a ton of unnecessary stress.

Maybe this is something the disciples thought to themselves after Jesus rose from the dead. When it became clear that Jesus would die by crucifixion, they hid in a locked room because they thought they were next. But then Easter happened, and it became clear that all their fear and anxiety was all for nothing. Jesus was going to rise from the dead whether they were afraid or not. When Jesus rose from the dead, their reality didn’t change, but their perception of reality did change.

Because When you look at past events through the lens of current reality, it changes the way you interpret those past events. For example, through the perspective of Jesus risen from the dead, the disciples, you, and I can look at everything Jesus did and said with complete trust and confidence that whatever he said before he rose from the dead is perfect and true.

You see how that new perspective played out for the disciples. They saw the risen Jesus and they went from being afraid for their lives in a locked room to boldly proclaiming Jesus even after they were jailed for it, even after they were threatened with death, even after some of them did die. You don’t go from hiding like an animal hides in a hole in the ground to proclaiming the resurrection to the point of death, unless of course, something happened to change your perspective on reality. And something did happen, Jesus rose from the dead and they saw him with their own eyes.

The thing is, Jesus told them that he would rise from the dead multiple times, but they didn’t understand that his words were true until he rose from the dead. So also, Jesus tells you some things about love that are pretty difficult to understand. He tells you to love one another selflessly. That is radical and hard to grasp because when you love someone as Jesus loved you, it’s going to cost you. And if you really love someone like Jesus loved you, you might even lose your life for it.

If Jesus never rose from the dead, then we could dismiss this command altogether because it makes no sense. Still, because Jesus did rise from the dead, we now view his radical statements about love through the perspective of the resurrection. If Jesus rose from the dead, then selfless love is the better way. Today we will listen to the apostle John with the resurrection in mind to see that not only is selfless love the better way, but it is precisely through selfless love that Jesus was glorified.

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When you think about how you might see God's glory, you might imagine white light from the clouds, an amazing miracle, or some grand display of power. But that's not the way Jesus was glorified. He was glorified when nobody was watching through selfless, humble love. You don't have to look any farther than the upper room the night before Jesus died to see this surprising way in which Jesus was glorified. Judas left the upper room to betray Jesus. Jesus didn't see this as a threat to his reputation or get upset; he didn't call Judas out or try to prevent it all from happening. Instead, John wrote, "**When [Judas] left, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man is glorified.'**" Really? Judas leaving was sealing Jesus' fate by setting the plan of his crucifixion in motion. Jesus knew this, and yet he said this would be glorifying?

Jesus could call people spitting on him, mocking him, and ultimately crucifying him glorifying because Jesus knew what the disciples wished they knew. He was looking at everything that was about to happen from the perspective of the resurrection. This didn't mean that betrayal would be easy. It didn't mean that his death would be any less painful. It simply meant that his resurrection perspective allowed him to know ahead of time that he would be glorified when people who spit on him mocked him and ultimately would kill him. By becoming a nobody, crucified like a criminal on the cross, he was glorified.

Really? Can we really say that Jesus, God himself, is glorified when he loses his breath on a cross and dies? It's surely not how you and I picture the almighty God of the universe? We don't look at people who are destined to die a painful death and say, "Aha, look at him he made it! He is glorified." That's why Jesus told his disciples, "**My children, Where I am going, you cannot come.**" Because we could never even imagine letting ourselves go to such a low place and become nothing for the very people who hurt us, betray and want nothing to do with us, especially if we want to be glorified.

We do the opposite; the natural way we glorify ourselves is to make other people smaller than us. It is easy for you to talk behind a co-worker's back to make yourself look better. When someone makes an honest mistake, it's easy for me to hold it over their head to make them feel guilty because we like the feeling of power. It's easy for you to ignore the needs of others because you're too busy thinking about what makes you comfortable.

But the main problem is not so much that we glorify ourselves at the expense of other people. It's that we act as if we don't know that Easter happened. The sad part is that this is how people live when they don't know the love of the risen Jesus. When you and I glorify ourselves at the expense of others, we live in direct opposition to the reality that Jesus created when he rose from the dead. We want all the glory of Easter without any of the humble Good Friday sacrifice.

Jesus did not take any shortcuts to glory. He didn't look out for his well-being. He let himself be killed. He didn't lift himself up as someone who was better, although he could have because he was the Son of God. He let others do it for him when they lifted him up on the cross that they nailed him to. He allowed all of that to happen because he was thinking not of how it would end for him but how it would end for you. At his lowest point on the cross, Jesus was glorified

for you because he loves you and the empty tomb proves it. This is what the disciples wish they knew. And it's what you know right now. Because Jesus was glorified, you are too.

This perspective changes things. You don't have to make yourself look better in front of your relatives. You don't have to posture or pretend you're someone you're not. There's no need to lift yourself up ahead of others. Jesus has glorified you before your Father in heaven, and at the end of the day, that's the only thing that really matters.

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It didn't seem like it at the time, but the selfless love of Jesus on Friday would glorify him and you in ways that the disciples could never have imagined. That's what the reality of Easter does. It changes the way we view what Jesus says. Easter allows us to see that Jesus spoke with divine perspective when he said, **"A new command I give you: Love one another."**

Before we think about what it means to truly love one another, I want to know why Jesus calls this a new command. Thousands of years earlier, God commanded his people to "Love your neighbor as yourself." So, what is so new about this command?

Here's how it's new. It is not natural to love people who don't appreciate you, to forgive someone even if they don't say sorry, or to love someone who doesn't deserve it. But this is a command to see take betrayal, insults, or hatred and turn them into opportunities to love. That is new in the sense that this is so unique and fresh when you compare it to the way people operate in this world. And it's only possible because Jesus loved you.

"Okay," you might be thinking to yourself, "That sounds really nice, but you don't know the people I work with. You don't know how disrespectful my kids can be. You don't know how my parent, or my ex-spouse left me all alone. And what if I'm just not really a loving person?" Notice that Jesus did not say, "love with everything you've got." Or "Just do your best, and hopefully, that's enough. No, Jesus said to love **"as I have loved you."**

If it were up to you and me, we would run out of love in minutes because people are not always lovable. Even the sweetest, most patient grandma will reach her limit when people take advantage of her or disrespect her again and again. Eventually, she would say enough is enough. Everyone has a breaking point—everyone except Jesus. Jesus did not break. He did not love you when he felt like it or when it was convenient for him; he loved you when you didn't deserve it, when it was difficult and when it cost him greatly.

But Jesus' love is more than an example; it is your strength. The only way to really love as Jesus loved is to be loved by him first. So, when you love your demanding boss, your family member addicted to substances, people who are out to get you, you are living proof that you have been loved by Jesus first. This love is unique, fresh, and new because it is the love of Christ.

Not only that, Jesus said, **“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”** When your coworkers see you love them when they don’t deserve it, they see the love of Jesus. When your children see how you are patient with your spouse, they see the love of Jesus. When people see how you love even when it costs you, you proclaim the reality of Easter through your words and actions because this kind of unconditional love is only possible if Jesus rose from the dead.

There was a church leader/father named Tertullian. He knew how powerful this unique Christian love is. He lived in a time when Christians could be killed for professing their faith in Jesus. Yet even amid this extreme pressure, they didn’t turn on each other or look out for themselves. They loved one another just as Jesus loved them.

Tertullian wrote to the Roman authorities who wanted to kill Christians saying, “look how they love each other.” He said this because he knew even back then that the love that Christians had was not normal. Because the love of Christ is not normal. The church exploded throughout the Roman empire, even during a time when Christians couldn’t worship without the fear of death. But even in this dire situation, Tertullian could still say, “look how they love each other.” Because when it looks like the Christians are being crushed, or losing out, or their selfless love is costing them, that is precisely the moment in which God glorifies his people. You don’t have to look any farther than the cross to see that is how God operates. On the cross, Jesus was crushed, yet God glorified him, and he glorified you.

You won’t look back and wish you knew this. God made it abundantly clear that selfless love is the better way by raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus was glorified through his selfless love. You are glorified through his selfless love. And this perspective on reality changes things. It changes the way you view other people. It changed the way God looked at you. You are glorified. The empty tomb proves it.