

Daniel Waldschmidt – May 1st, 2016 – Confirmation

Last week after dinner I was watching wheel of fortune. It's kind of become what we watch after dinner. This guy solved the final puzzle and won \$100,000. Confetti fell from the sky. And his mom and his sister came running out and they had a big, joyful group hug. You could hear the mom saying over and over again "I'm so happy for you!" Even Pat and Vana joined in the joyful group hug.

And it occurred to me, that's a nice way to think of the Trinity. Picture the Trinity as one joyful group hug. The Father loves the Son. The Father finds great joy in the Son. The Son loves the Father and finds great joy in the Father. And the Spirit finds takes great joy in the Father and the Son.

And the Father, the Son and the Spirit wanted to share this love and this joy, they wanted to get someone else in on the joyful group hug and that's why God created you. God created you to bring you into the group hug. The Father, the Son, and Spirit want to pull you up into their love. That's what Jesus says: **"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you."** **"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."** God made you to join the circle of love of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

But the sad thing is that so many times we are not content to be part of the circle of love. So many times we want to be the center of the circle. We want everything to revolve around us. And that takes joy away both from us and from those whom we pull into our orbit. But Jesus brings us back into his orbit. He brings us back into his circle of love.

He says, **"No one has greater love and this, that he give up his life for *his friends*."** Jesus said these words to his disciples the same night that he instituted the Lord's Supper. On the eve of his death, he gathered his friends around in a circle of love and shared with them the Lord's Supper. Jesus was going to die the next day, and Jesus is a very poor man. He has nothing to leave behind for his friends and so he leaves them himself. He says, "Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you." "Take and drink, this is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." If you ever doubt that Jesus loves you, come to the Lord's Supper and see that Jesus gives you himself. Jesus gave his life once on the cross for you and now in a miraculous he gives you his very body and blood together with the bread and wine.

Christ is yours and you are his in a circle of love. You are friends. Friends share things. Sometimes friends exchange gifts. You and Jesus exchanged something. Jesus took your sin on himself and in exchange Jesus gave you his perfect holiness and righteousness. You sure got the better end of that deal! But that's how much Jesus loves you. He takes all of your bad and gives you all of his good.

Christ is yours and you are his in a circle of love. But if you are in Christ and I also am in Christ and we are all in Christ then we are in a circle of Christian love not only with Christ but also with one another. That's why Jesus says, **"This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you. ... This is my command: love each other."** Christians were not made to be solitary creatures. Christians were made to love other Christians. A Christian is made after the image of God and what did we say about God? The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. That's what the Bible means when it says that God is love. In his very essence God is love because the Father loves the Son and the Holy Spirit loves the Father. God exists in this relationship of love. A Christian needs to find another Christian to love. It's hardwired into him because it is in the nature of God to love. A Christian needs to find another Christian to love and this is a big reason why it is important for a Christian to join a Christian congregation. And

you confirmands are becoming communicant members of this congregation. A Christian wants to join a congregation because here are Christians for me to love.

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love.” Jesus says at the end of the lesson, **“Whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”** You know what I ask the Father? I ask the Father that you all would remain in Christ. So that you would be part of the big joyful group hug in heaven. The point of being a pastor is to see you through from conversion all the way along until heaven. And on your journey we help keep you connected to Jesus by giving you more Jesus. We’ll give you Jesus in our sermons. We’ll give you Jesus in counseling. We’ll give you Jesus someday when you have the pre-marriage classes. You got a long way to go until you make it into the Promised Land. But we are going to keep giving you the true bread which came down from heaven: Jesus Christ. And I am confident that God who has begun a good work in you, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. We want to keep you connected to Jesus because we have in mind that day, when confetti will fall from the sky and there will be a great joyful celebration in heaven. Amen.