

I Love You, Lord
Romans 5:1-8; Psalm 116

How many of you truly profess to love the Lord? Let me see a show of hands.

Over the last several weeks I have focused quite a bit on how much God loves us. So much so, that God gave Jesus Christ to die for our sins, overcoming death, being raised to new life, and giving all who believe in God the promise of life eternal and everlasting. But today I want us to focus on our love for God.

When we truly love someone, or something, we readily talk about the object of our love. Think about what you truly love – your heroes, your sports teams, your school, your husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, children or grandchildren. Often we have pictures of them in our wallets, or in brag books, or more currently we have our albums on our phones and iPads that are always with us, ready in a moment to share with anyone who will listen as we share how much we love...

However, among all those pictures, I would wager there are few that allow you to share the story of your love for your Lord and Savior. Oh, perhaps there are some that could, if you tried, but that may not have been the reason for their existence.

Today, gave the young disciples “Flat” Jesus to take with them this summer and to take pictures wherever they went showing where they have been with Jesus. These pictures are ways for us to be reminded that just as God loves us, we love God and must display that love for others to see. Our behavior is a reflection of what we truly believe. If we truly believe that Jesus Christ is with us at all times and in all places, then we must behave in that manner.

Some friends from a church I served several years ago have been on vacation this week. Three sons, their families and the grandparents, each with their own travel campers spend a week together at the coast each year. This year Flat Jesus has been with them, as they have cooked supper, as they have gathered together for evening devotions, as the seven children gathered for their annual picture, Jesus was there. Each of these pictures rare posted on FB and people, from around the US, has commented about the presence of Jesus on their vacation! That is a fun way that Jesus is with us.

On a Sunday morning in January 2006, five young men attacked and threatened to kill a Protestant church leader in Turkey. Kamel Kiroklu, twentyfold-nine, had just left his church when he was ambushed and beaten so severely that he lost consciousness twice. "They were trying to force me to deny Jesus," Kiroglu said. "But each time they asked me to deny Jesus and become a Muslim, I said, 'Jesus is Lord.' The more they beat me." One of the attackers pulled a knife and threatened to kill Kiroglu if he did not deny his Christian faith and return to Islam. Kiroglu refused. After the incident, he said, "I am praising God – not because he saved me from death, but because he helped me not to deny him in the shadow of death."

I love you, Lord. Because when things get rough, you are with me. I love you, Lord.
Because when things are great, you are there. I love you, Lord. Because you first loved me
and I want the world to know.