



June 2022

Dear Friends,

When I was at theological collage, I engaged with some friends of mine in the *Lift speech challenge*. The idea is simple. If you're stuck in an lift with someone the challenge is to explain to them your faith in Jesus Christ in thirty seconds or less. I found this really hard if not impossible. How can I distill everything that has happened to me in my faith journey, why I still believe and I'm so devoted to church, and who I believe the three persons of God to be in thirty seconds.

As I think of this I'm reminded of Jesus' last supper with his disciples, as told in John's gospel chapter 13, but specifically verse 31 to 35. What we hear is a little like Jesus' lift speech. Although the disciples didn't fully grasp the importance of that night, Jesus certainly did. During that meal he teaches them about the importance of serving one another as he washes their feet. His actions speak louder than words. But then knowing he's out of time. Jesus doesn't tell anymore parables or stories or give them any convoluted metaphors. He keeps his words simple and direct. "*Love one another*," he tells them. "*Love one another as I have loved you.*" That is all he gives them.

God is love. Our call is to love as Jesus loved us. That's how others will know us to be Christians – through our love. The problem is this: though "*love one another*" sounds simple, perfect, and beautiful, loving one another is really hard work, frustrating, and sometimes seemingly impossible. Think about that one family member who is so difficult – the sibling who always tries to start a fight. Or that classmate or supposed friend who started a nasty rumour about you, the co-worker who took credit for your idea, or that friend who shared your confidence with someone else. *Jesus says we must love them too*. Or think about that person who constantly says offensive things, or that person you tried to help who was completely ungrateful, or that political leader that you cannot stand. *Jesus says we must love them too*.

Jesus didn't tell us to *love one another* because he knew loving one another would be easy. He told us to *love one another* because he knows that we can. He has seen each one of us do that simple, perfect, and beautiful act. Loving one another is at times the most wonderful, rewarding thing we do in this life, and at times it's one of the most challenging, difficult things we do. But we love because that is what Jesus taught us to do. Loving one another may not be a fancy lift speech. But loving one another might be much more powerful in the long run than any fancy words we can assemble to explain our faith – because Jesus' commandment is not so much about what we believe, but about how we live.

There is a prayer called the Daily Examin that many Christians follow. Every day we take a moment to remember where we have failed to show love, where we have excelled in showing love and ask God to help us to do better tomorrow. The moments of love will be small and sometimes seemingly inconsequential. But all those tiny moments add up to a lifetime of loving one another.

*Rev'd Nicki*