



SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

April 19, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

GREATER LOVE

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 15:13

READ John 15:9-17

Just days before Holy Week, when Christians around the world remember Jesus' sacrifice and celebrate His resurrection, a terrorist stormed into a supermarket in southwest France opening fire and killing two. After negotiation, the terrorist released all but one hostage, whom he turned into a human shield. Knowing the danger, police officer Arnaud Beltrame did the unthinkable: he volunteered to take the woman's place. The perpetrator released her, but in the ensuing scuffle Beltrame was injured and later died.

A minister who knew the police officer attributed his heroism to his faith in Jesus, pointing to His words in John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." Those were the words Christ spoke to His disciples after their last meal together. He told His friends to "Love each other as I have loved you" (v. 12) and that the greatest love is to lay down one's life for another (v. 13). This is exactly what Jesus did the next day, when He went to the cross to save us from our sin—as only He could.

We may never be called to follow the heroism of this officer. But as we remain in God's love, we can serve others sacrificially, laying down our own plans and desires as we seek to share the story of His great love.

By Amy Boucher Pye

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear Jesus, You died to give me life everlasting. May I live with gratitude for this gift and share it with those You put in my path. Amen.

How do you react to stories such as that of Arnaud Beltrame? How can you serve someone sacrificially today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Two important themes in John 15 are remaining in Jesus and friendship with Jesus. Twice, Christ instructs us to "remain in [His] love" (vv. 9-10) "to continue in a personal, enduring, and endearing intimate relationship with Him. To remain in Jesus' love is to "remain faithful to [His] teachings" (8:31 nlt) and obey His commands (15:10).

Jesus contrasted servants and friends (v. 15) to show the new level of intimacy that believers now have with Him. He proved this friendship by laying down His life for us (v. 13). Because Abraham was privileged to be called a "friend" of God (2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23), God revealed His plans to him (Genesis 18:17). He also spoke to Moses "as one speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:11). Jesus likewise tells us "Everything that [He] learned from [His] Father" (John 15:15) because we are His friends. – By **K. T. Sim**

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