



LOVE ONE ANOTHER; John 15:9-17

One very very hot day, Mary Magdalene and Simon Peter were sitting under a tree along the Sea of Galilee. Peter suggested they take off their shoes and go wading in the water. Mary thought that sounded like a great idea, and off went her sandals. She said, “When our feet get cooled by the water, our whole body will feel cooler.” The water cooled them down right away.

Peter reminded Mary of another day that was so hot that they sat right down in the water and listened to Jesus talk. The water went right through their clothes and cooled their skin. They had felt cool all over.

Jesus told them that he loved them the way God loved him. Jesus told them it was like sitting in that cool water. The water was all around them just as the love of God and Jesus is all around us. When we let God’s love be all over us, we feel strong and good just like the way we feel when we duck our entire body into the cool water on a hot day.

But then Peter asked Mary, “Does that mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us if we let God’s love be all over us?”

Mary answered, “No, Jesus didn’t mean that. Bad things—sad things—will happen to us when we let God’s love be all around us and over us. But when those things happen, we feel stronger. Even when we are hurting, we still feel God’s deep down inside us. Even when we are sad. Jesus called that ‘joy’.”

“That’s when Jesus started talking about the hard part,” said Peter.

“What hard part?” asked Mary.

“About loving each other, “ replied Peter. “Jesus told us to love all the other people we know.”

“Well, what’s so hard about that?” questioned Mary.

“There is this man, Paul, down the way from my house. I do not like him at all. He is mean and ugly and I hate him!” replied Peter.

Mary was very sad. After a minute she suggested that Peter duck down into the water and completely cover his head. While he was fully under water he should hold his breath and remember that God loved him and Paul.

So, Peter took a big breath and ducked under the water. And he remembered that God loved both him and Paul.

When Peter came up from the water Mary asked how he felt now. Peter told her that his entire person, inside and out felt cool, and that when he was under the water he remembered Jesus had said that he wanted to be Peter’s friend. Then he remembered that Jesus wanted to be Paul’s friend also.

Mary smiled and said, “So?”

Peter smiled back at Mary and said, “So I will try to love Paul also.”

Sometimes it is hard to love everyone around us. The mean boy at school. The older sister that picks on us. The younger brother that always gets in our stuff. Sometimes even Mom or Dad who remind us to clean our room or do our chores before we can go to the park with our friends.

But Jesus most definitely tells his disciples, “This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you.” No if’s and’s or but’s...love everyone. It is not always easy to do, but if God can love those people we have trouble with, then we most certainly must try to do the same also.