Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“Remain in my love” (John 15:9).

Acts 15:7-21; *Jn 15:9-11*

There are times in every relationship when people get discouraged and think of walking away. Every marriage or close friendship, if it is real, will face crises on the

way to deeper love.

Most love stories begin with a couple facing each other, enthralled by the beauty they see in their perfect partner. This time of bonding is the honeymoon of their friendship and commitment. But the relationship is meant to grow toward a second threshold of finding shared purpose, often in parenting and vocation. Rather than gazing at each other, they stand side by side facing the world and its challenges.

Jesus asked a great deal of his disciples when he invited them to accompany him on the difficult journey through the cross to new life. Most of them had their doubts and fears, but they endured the hard times to enter the challenge of the Gospel. They stood with Jesus, not as someone to gaze at but to follow and imitate as a model. They grew as a community of purpose by being on the road with him, learning, struggling and working for the Kingdom of God he was announcing. His love for them was constant, but he also challenged them to stay the course and endure the hardships.

At every turn, Jesus' message was the same: "Remain in my love." He knew them by name, knew their strengths and weaknesses. In the end, even their failures became teachable moments that strengthened their trust in him. By the time Jesus departed this earth, they were ready to do what he had done – preach and demonstrate God's unconditional love and mercy for sinners.

Jesus accomplished his mission by loving his disciples as the Father had loved him. Remaining in this love was the source of their ability to expand the Gospel into the world.

This is his message to us: "Remain in my love." Especially when the road is long and hard, don't give up. Jerusalem is just up ahead. Beyond that is the whole world, and on the horizon see the Beloved Community where your joy will be complete.