

It's true; I'm that annoying mom. Even my four and seven-year-olds know it. I can't help but kiss, cuddle, and obnoxiously tell my girls that I love them. Not a day goes by that I don't express my crazy love for them in some way, no matter what. Not because I'm this amazing mom, but simply because, to quote Cat Stevens, I "can't keep it in." When my oldest sweetly reads to her little sister, I tell her I love her. When my oldest sneakily manipulates her little sister into doing what she wants, I sternly correct her and then tell her I love her. When my youngest makes me laugh hysterically, I tell her that I love her. When my youngest is in her third time out for the day and working on a fourth, I take a deep breath, keep disciplining, and then I tell her I love her no matter what. I will do this until the day I die. I don't care if they roll their eyes; I don't care if it gets old. I don't care if it becomes routine because I know that they will learn that in all situations, no matter what, I love them. They need to hear it everyday day, when they care and it warms their hearts and when they could care less.

It is no different with our students. They need the message of Christ crucified all the time, no matter what. We all need the constant reminder of Christ's love for us. We are a Good Friday, Easter people. We are the ones that left Jesus in His time of need, but He loves us. We are the deceivers who betrayed our Savior which led Him to the cross, but He loves us. We are the disciples desperately trying to figure it all out, and He loves us. We are the forgiven, messed up people of God, and He loves us. We are even the people who turn the focus into what we can do for God, forgetting how often we fail in the law, who desperately need the gospel promise of God's grace. This message is not always flashy or even exciting. Hebrews 9: 11 – 15 says that Christ did not make a sacrifice like the high priests, but rather:

"He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining^[b] eternal redemption. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,^[c] so that we may serve the living God!

¹⁵For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."

My girls need my constant annoying, "I love you" and embarrassing hugs and kisses to be reminded every day of my love for them. Praise God that even when we forget this message and forget to remind each other of this message, He delivers this to us in His Word and Sacrament. Praise God for His tangible "I love you" that He brings us today in those means of grace because of the ultimate "I love you" through His blood, death, and resurrection.

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