

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION (1 John 4:7-12 and Matthew 5:43-48)

1. "Love Others" is the second Core Value of our Core Values that shape our mission as a church. Last week, we looked at "Love God" as the first and foundational truth - how does "Love Others" flow out of our love for God first and foremost?
Can you think of a situation where you've experienced God's love through the love of another person?
What about a time when you were better able to love somebody in a situation because of your love for God?
2. We looked at two different foci regarding how we are to love others: *loving one another* & *loving all others*.
Why is it important to distinguish between these two different categories instead of just broadly stating "Love Others"?
What does *loving one another* (in the Body of Christ) accomplish that is distinct from *loving all others*?
And why is it so important for us to actively strive toward *loving all others* and not JUST the Church?
Does our love for one another look different than our love for all others? If so, how specifically?
3. In 1 John 4:7-12 & John 13:34-35, (among other places) we see the command given to love one another.
According to the biblical text, what does it say about us (and our God) if we love one another?
On the other-hand, what does it reveal about us (and our God) if we DON'T love one another?
How do we demonstrably love one another well?
What can we do if we're struggling with a particular brother or sister in Christ?
How can we react to any conflict in the Church in a way that brings glory to our God?
4. How are you doing, personally, at loving Christ's Church well?
Is there anybody that you're currently at odds with who's a part of the Body of Christ?
Are you willing to humbly approach them and have a difficult conversation in order to pursue reconciliation?
If so, I'd encourage you to prayerfully approach the person(s) soon.
If not, I'd encourage you to pray that the Lord would give you a deeper love for the person(s), and the opportunity and boldness to speak up when He calls you to do so.
How can you better prepare to respond if a brother or sister approaches you in a similar manner (lovingly confronts you)?
How does our reaction to the person(s) reveal our heart toward them and toward the Lord's Church?
5. It's hard enough to love one another well, but our Lord's commands don't end there!
What does it actually look like to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us?
Also, in reality - who is our enemy? (Ephesians 6:11-12 might help)
In light of this passage, loving our enemies & praying for our persecutors distinguishes us from all others:
Do we love those we perceive to be our enemies & do we pray for those who insult & persecute us?

****Think about the people you struggle most to love, and pray for the Lord to work in their lives AND in your heart TOWARD them!!**

6. Below are the "So What?" statements from the end of the sermon.

Do any of these particularly encourage, convict, challenge, you, and if so, how?

1. Our Love for others comes from loving God first!
2. Loving others as Jesus does comes at a cost!
3. Loving one another shows that we are Christ's!
4. We must love all others, not just those we like!
5. Real love reflects the character of our God!