

1 DNA 5 Love others (culture)

Culture – is what do we feel like as a community? And we are looking at another cultural value. The other side of coin to loving God is to love your neighbour as you love yourself. One statement with two separate parts. Must follow on to look at loving our neighbour. First question What does that look like ? Who is our neighbour? Parable of good Samaritan lawyer who asks who is my neighbour ? is ultimately a question of whose neighbour can I become. Love others is to love our neighbour it is loving the person right in front of me – not just the person who lives next door. Everybody in and out of the church. Everyone is are neighbour who we come into contact with..

What does it mean to really love our neighbour? 1 Corinthians v13 – Paul writes about love.

1.1 Way of love

- **I will show you a more excellent way** – Paul lists all the things that seem impressive and yet all of these are lesser than love. Love is supreme over all things. Aside from pursuit and love of God – our love for other people is the thing we should run after – it is a the fruit of loving God with our all. We cannot but love others. If we love God John says we cannot but love others.
- Corinthian church were gifts crazy – **it can be crazy prizing some gifts over love** – if you speak in tongues for hours but of you do not have love then you are clanging gong. An empty sound. If I have prophetic powers and all faith – sounds amazing and something we aspire towards this but Paul says it is worthless if you do not love.
- **What are we following and yearning after** – is it all gift based and external – yes gifts are good but the manifestation of love is more important
- **Why is love so important ?** Paul says love never ends, all the others pass away – context of spiritual gifts and manifestation of the spirt these are temporary - but the church will carry on and love will continue. The gifts are secondary but love is primary
- V4-7 lovely list read at weddings -very provoking list because if you **replace word love with your own name** and see how far you can get – like Geoff is patient ... oops already don't match up to this. Geoff is not arrogant ... rejoice in the truth . Bears all things, believes the best in people all the time. Put your own name instead of love not just a pretty list this is an incredible standard of love that Paul is setting up for the church.
- **To pursue this kind of love is incredibly costly** – love is costly sets its own agenda about others needs not juts lists of my own needs – identifies right ways to raise an issue. Love is courageous
- Paul starts – **Love is patient** why start with this? Love and patience means putting someone else's need above our own need – when you are impatient this invariably means that someone is stopping you doing what you want to do. Lay aside own agenda and desire and put the needs and desire of others before others. If you are impatient with people you are self loving.
- **Love bears all things endures all things** –There is no limit here. For Paul there is no end to bearing with one another not with limits. Believe the best in someone – we can sometimes receive a message and read a tone in there that doesn't exist
- How can we summarise it – **loving others require relational commitment and relational sacrifice.** It requires something from us- it relies on commitment that doesn't just happen by accident. Living in tents and not in castles. BEAUTIFUL PICTURE of us living in tents facing inwards, all living for one another – thin canvas that separates us not thick walls of a castle. Boundaries can exist – boundaries between people of God is not new testament language. Just thin boundaries – here we can use family language – not that of an extended family more of an intimate family.

1.2 Witness of Love

- **Why does this matter ?** Why should we be a people that love in this way? The impact of this type of love to the world is immense. John 13.34 A new commandment I give you to love one another... by this all people will know that you are my disciples. John 17.22 Glory given to them that they may be one ...I in them, perfectly one so that the world knows that you have sent me. If you love in this way as a reflection of my love for you – that will shine brightly in the world around you. How does our love for one another look different to the way the world loves ? Does our love look different?
- There are many **examples of how we as a church love each other** – we are a church that loves one another through hospitality, prayer request, service shopping. Well done for the way that you love one another - yet is there room for us to grow in this ? Can we ask the Lord to do something amazing with us – we must understand that there is more. We are more like an extended family if we only see each other now and then – you don't really know what is going on with an extended family – in the church any great distance between us is not necessary. We are called to **relational intimacy** and **proximity**.
- **Francis Chan Letter to church** – when are we going to spend our energy seeking this love? – when are we going to earnestly meet one another's needs ...unity doesn't come easily ...think how much effort it takes for a family to keep together. Easy to talk about unity – we must count the cost and decide whether we will commit. There is a challenge there – are we willing to pay the cost for that kind of love ? We can hear that and say - I don't want that, I am comfortable being separate – I like my thick walls, but this is what the bible says is the norm.
- **We Can be frightened I will get hurt** – but if we all commit to this there is such blessing in this type of family intimacy. We might think maybe I do want to be part of this. We all fall short even if we aspire to this How do we do it ? It requires the power of the Holy Spirit. It's not natural it requires a work of God.

1.3 Wonder of love

- **When we replace love with our name we fall short** – but if you replace the word love with Jesus's name it still works fine. Jesus is patient. Jesus is with us. He is not resentful he shows us grace upon grace and removes all of our transgressions from us.
- **We can grow this love by following his example** – John 13.14-15 if I then wash your feet – wash one another's feet – I have given you an example. V34 just as I have loved you - you are to love one another.
- **We are to love others the same way as Jesus** - but this means we need to know how much Jesus loves us if we are to walk in this every day.
- **What does Jesus love for us really mean** – we can point to the cross and this is true – but end of Cor 13 Paul brings in an insight – We now we see in a mirror dimly ...even as I have been fully known. One way to understand – is to realise that you are fully known – which means that we are fully loved. Those close to us are people who know us – when people listen to us – we feel loved and known by this. Paul says we are fully known by God – you in all of your uniqueness and frailties and emotions and darkest days – when you feel no one gets you – the God of the universe fully knows you. That language of knowing is an emblem of intimacy. In Psalm 139 it says there is no where I can go -such knowledge is too wonderful to me.
- **How does being known by God matter** – only when you are fully secure and fully loved by God will you risk loving others – because your identity is secure. When you rest and love out of that place of being known it brings you a beautiful sense of security

As we pursue a biblical understanding of love – let's rest in that place of being known and loved – and as we are loved and known by God let our love for others be out of the overflow of this – even though it is messy – love requires us to forgive one another -it can be messy – messy but glorious – beautiful and appeals to the world like nothing else does. Get love working - be a mess be broken but still be love