

A Debt of Love

Mission Statement

Our mission statement consist of three parts ...

Encounter God, Love People, Share Life

We decided to take the first month of each quarter in 2015 and focus on one part.

January- Encounter God, April- Love People.

Review our mission statement (INSERT) ...

Encounter God ... our Identity
pursuing His presence

Love People ... our Culture
calling out the best in others

Share Life ... our Purpose
displaying His goodness

This month we want to focus on Love People.

Our statement for Loving People ...

**Honor celebrates who people are
without stumbling over who they are not.**

Bill Johnson

Our Bible verse for Loving People ...

**Col 3:14 Put on love, which is the perfect
bond of unity.**

Introduction

This topic- is a challenge to most of us- it is an area that I have not always done well in.

As we look into- scriptures may they challenge each of us in our walk w/Lord in this area.

We might ask ourselves several of questions:

>what does it mean to love people?

>why should I love people?

>what is- foundation of my love for people?

Love speaks of who God is and is the foundation of God's Kingdom (justice, holiness) ...

1 Jn 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

God loves people so much that He wants every person to know Him/live with Him forever.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Demonstrate- to show the existence or truth of something by giving proof or evidence.

God has given us evidence of His love for us.

One of the four pillars of truth we have talked about in the past- everyone significant to God.

The whole Gospel story- from OT to NT, leading up to- birth/life/death/resurrection of Jesus is the story of God's love for mankind.

The concept of love, unfortunately, has taken on many shapes in our culture today.

Since- sexual revolution of the 60s love has been perverted/looks little like- 1 Jn 4.16, Rom 5.8.

Love is not a word that you and I get to define- it is defined, demonstrated, and demanded, by God's actions towards mankind.

Jesus says it this way ...

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

How do we love one another? As Christ loved us- this becomes our NEW standard of love.

Love is no longer based on how we feel, what we think is right/wrong or fair/unfair.

There is no structure on the face of the earth that should understand God's love better- church.

The church has a responsibility to demonstrate the love of God to the world in which we live.

As I mentioned earlier- even if we lose the culture war- the mission of the church does not stop.

The world wants us out of the public square but they cannot stop us from demonstrating the love of Christ in our words/attitudes/actions.

The world may not want us speaking truth in the public arena- they can make laws against it- but they cannot stop us from caring for others and living out the gospel.

Gal 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Opportunity- fixed or specific period of time.

How much more should we show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Love! A gift we give to others?

Is love a gift we give to others or a favor we show towards others?

Mat 18:21-35

Let me suggest that this parable redefines the typical way men have looked at loving others.

A couple of weeks ago- morning prayer- P Tony had some insights He felt God was giving him considering the idea of loving others.

Of course everything shared in a public prayer meeting becomes public domain- I stole- idea.

Rom 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

Rom 13:8 (NLT) Owe nothing to anyone- except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

Rom 13:8 (NIV84) Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Here is what Mat 18/Rom 13.8 is saying ...

We owe God an incredible debt of love we can never pay back.

How can we not love others?

We do not give love, like we are doing someone a favor, we owe them love because of our indebtedness to Christ.

Another difficult verse ...

Mat 5.43-48

God is asking us to love those who are unloving to us- because of our debt to Jesus Christ.

Raising love from a gift or a favor I am offering to someone, to a debt that I owe to the Lord, greatly changes how we deal w/offense.

We owe our brothers/sisters/world- a debt of love.

Conclusion

We are to be spiritual contributors not only spiritual consumers.

The church does not exist for us.

We are the church and we exist for the world.

The world will only know that we are the Lord's disciples by our love for one another.

I have seen- pretty trivial offenses taken up in the church- compared w/death of- Son of God.

Challenge

1 Peter 4:8, 10

⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Fervent- strained, stretched- stretch yourself to cover others w/same love you received.

¹⁰As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Everyone has received a “special gift” from God. This week make a concerted effort to be a good steward of God’s grace and serve another person with love.

This could be forgiveness, a kind act, a complement, card expressing appreciation.

Addendum

Psalm 19:14 (NASB95)

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

Ephesians 4:29 (NASB95)

²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.