



What Kind of Church is This? A Church that Loves

Forest Park Church

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1

1 cor 13:1

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned,[a] but have not love, I gain nothing.

2

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

I know the word "love" is overworked.

- I'm not talking about sugary Hollywood type of love.
- I'm not talking about the bleeding heart tolerance of anything that comes along which is often substituted for love.
- I'm talking about biblical love, the kind of love that requires no return for the individual who is loved,

You know the bible said, that “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son*”, it doesn't say that He gave His only begotten son because we loved Him back. He gave His son because of His love for us. His love for us came before our love for Him. 1 Corinthians 13 is all about love, 1 John is all about love.

We talk about love often, don't we? But exactly what is love?

- Love is not always easy, but is sometimes tough?
- Love requires discipline.
- Love is not just passing out platitudes and saying everything is alright.

- Sometimes love requires that we run the risk of alienating those we love by warning them that they're heading in the wrong direction.
- Sometimes we have to tell people about the dangers which lie ahead.

Love is a mighty weapon.

When Christ's church begins to teach truth, proclaim truth and proclaim it with genuine love, the world will begin to sit up and take notice.

A Church that:

I. LOVES GOD

Matthew 22:37-40

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6 Things churches sometimes love more than God

- 1.) Doctrines
- 2.) Worship styles
- 3.) Denominational ties
- 4.) Change

Change is a two-sided idol. On one side is the group who responds to change the same way they respond to a curse word, mouth covered in disbelief. Change is evil. It's accommodating to culture, and to this group culture is the enemy of God. These churches would rather die in their bubble than change a program, ministry, or philosophy.

But there's another side to this coin. It's the group who believes change is essential. This group changes for the sake of change, not for the sake of reaching their neighbor. I have witnessed this personally. A church decides to become progressive for the sake of being progressive. Or conservative for the sake of being conservative. Every action is a response to another church, not a response to Jesus. This is also idolatry.

5.) Leaders

When we elevate a human being, whether a preacher or a school teacher, at or above God, the inevitable result is destruction. When people abandon their faith

after discovering their pastor's moral failure, that's an unhealthy devotion to a human being. When people place unfair (god-like) expectations on pastors, and pastors feel they must cover their imperfections, that's unhealthy.

10 6.) Programs

The church doesn't need programs to thrive. Many (not all) churches create programs that never impact people. Rather than an on-ramp for a deeper relationship with God, programs become a frustrating roadblock to God.

A celebrated Japanese statesman once said, "We do not worship our emperor, we love him utterly. The commander before Port Arthur one day called for volunteers to cut the barbed wire entanglements. 'You will never come back,' he said. 'Nor can you carry a gun. You will take your place and cut one or two wires and fall dead. Another will take your place and cut one or two wires more. But you will know that upon your dead bodies the armies of your emperor will march to victory.'" Whole regiments volunteered for these 'sure death' parties. If your Christians loved your God as we love our emperor, they would have long since taken the world for Him."

11 A Church that: II. LOVES TRUTH

12 **John 14:15**
"If you love me, keep my commands."

13 **John 14:21** *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*

So what exactly is the keeping of the commandments of Christ?

- It means SEEKING them. How can we know them unless we find out. The only way to find out is by seeking them. 1 Chronicles 28:8 says *"Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the*

Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.”

- It means seeking ALL of the commandments. This is a life long occupation. **1 Chronicles 28:8** says “...observe and seek out all the commandments...”
- It means OBEYING them. Not only to seek and find out all the commandments, but also doing them. **James 1: 22** says “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*”
- It means obeying them PROMPTLY. In **Psalm 119:60** it says “*I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.*”
- Finally it means, DELIGHTING in obeying God. **Psalm 112:1** says “*Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments!*”
- We need to have a heart to seek the commandments of God, to relish them and to obey them. Deuteronomy 5:29 says “Oh they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!”

Speaking the truth in love is not as much about having a gentle demeanor as it is about the way truth and love go hand-in-hand.

- Because we love one another, we must speak the truth.
- Because we know the truth, we must be people characterized by love (John 13:34–35; 15:1–17).
- Jesus “came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).
- As His followers who are being conformed to His image (Romans 8:29), we should also be characterized by grace and truth.

A Church that:

14 III. LOVES OTHERS

15 **John 13:34**

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

16 **1 John 4:7-11**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

In his book Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less."

1 Conclusion:

John 13:35

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."