

A Loving Church II
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Last week we began by talking about all the different things people look for in a Church:

Activities for their kids. Cool stuff to do; a place to make friends. A place to worship. Some are looking for a place to serve. We know that God sets the members in the Body as it pleases Him. What we all should be looking for in a Church is a place where we can please the Lord. It takes basically two things to please the Lord.

One of those is **doctrinal truth**. Without this, you might as well be at the beach or on the lake or playing bingo somewhere.

As good as truth is, there is something more that we need to be pleasing to the Lord.

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even Christ*:

Second only to the preaching and teaching the truth of God's Word:

I. Love is the single greatest factor in building a Church that is pleasing to the Lord.

A. How important is loving each other?

1. **John 13:35** By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
2. Our love to each other is the true means by which we show the world that we are the real thing.
3. We can, however, be fooled; most of us have been at one time or another.

B. Our love must be real.

1. There is a big difference in someone who acts loving and someone who genuinely loves you.
2. People often act loving to get what they want.
3. When it's not the real thing, or when that which is desired is obtained; sooner or later the act wears off.

4. As we read last week from First Corinthians, love never fails; it is the greatest of all spiritual attributes.

II. Last week we learned (if you were paying attention) that genuine love comes as a result of a regenerated spirit.

A. We can preach and teach on what love truly is and how it works.

1. And we should!
2. Practice kindness.
3. Don't gossip.
4. Guard our words.
5. Say or do nothing that causes harm.
6. Practice longsuffering.
7. All who preach the Word will preach about love...because the Word of God is thick with it.

B. Yet, no amount of teaching will bring a lost person to genuinely love God's people.

1. **1 Peter 1:22-23**

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see *that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:*
23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

2. **1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

3. Conversely, everyone whose spirit is passed from death to life upon placing their trust in the Gospel; the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus for our sins...WILL come to love other believers.

III. The love that comes as a result of a regenerated spirit is but the beginning.

A. Jesus commanded we who have been born again to a level of love that, without Him, is completely impossible.

1. Yes, if you are saved, you have the foundation of genuine love for your brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. Yes, the love showed up the day you placed your trust in Jesus, but, like your faith which should grow daily, your love must grow as well.

3. The Lord's command to love is far beyond what we can do in and of ourselves.

B. The command is "love one another as I have loved you".

1. **John 13:34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

2. Wow, no one has ever loved me like Jesus loves me, and now He is commanding me to love you like He loves me!

3. I said, "Lord I don't think I can do that."

4. He said, "Without me you can't".

5. As a matter of fact:

John 15:5 ...without me ye can do nothing.

6. Obedience to this command is something we will be working on all our lives.

7. We would never be able to expound all the ways in which Jesus has loved us; the subject is virtually infinite.

IV. What does "As I have loved you" really mean? Here are just three examples for us to work on:

A. His Sacrificial love.

1. We know that Jesus literally sacrificed His life for us.

2. Surely Jesus doesn't expect that we do that for each other?

3. It does happen. I could give you emotionally stirring examples of heroes from battlefields and mission fields and other real situations where one believer literally gave his life for another.

4. **John 15:13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

5. **1 John 3:16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

6. This command is more practical than you might think; read the next verse.

7. **1 John 3:17** But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

8. Imagine a marriage where both the husband and the wife are far more interested in pleasing and serving their mate than in pleasing themselves; always placing the needs and desires of the other ahead of their own.

9. There really are marriages like that, albeit far too few.

10. Now imagine a Church like that.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

11. **Philippians 2:2-3**

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

3 *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

12. If Lighthouse Baptist Church is filled with genuine saved people, we could be a Church like that!

B. His unconditional love.

1. **John 10:27-30**

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

30 I and *my* Father are one.

2. **Romans 8:38-39**

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. **Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

4. **Hebrews 5:9** And being made perfect, he became the author of **eternal salvation** unto all them that obey him;

5. Jesus saves with an unconditional salvation because He loves us with an unconditional love.

6. I don't love you because you love me: some of you do and some of you don't...I love you because Jesus loves me.

C. His love for our Church.

1. **Ephesians 5:25** Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

2. Jesus loves this Church. Do you?

3. **Ephesians 5:29-30**

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

4. Jesus cherishes this Church.

5. Loving our Church is different than loving one another.

6. Loving our Church is how God has given us a tangible way in which to love Jesus; we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones!

7. I love Lighthouse Baptist Church!

8. Not every Church is the real thing, not every Church is truly the body of Christ: Lighthouse is!

9. There are members of this Church who have given their lives to this Church and, if need required, would lay down their lives for this Church.

10. I have also seen members discard this Church like some paper plate they no longer had a use for.

11. Do you love your Church?

Conclusion:

I love my Church and I love the people in it. My love for you is not based on you loving me back. I love you because Jesus loves me.

Maybe you could love us because Jesus loves you?

How much? (spread out your arms) This much!