



CELL GUIDE 2016

Theme	Building Relationships Beyond Self
Topic	Family: Loving Beyond Self
Speaker	Ps Andrew Tan
Date	14 th and 15 th May

Message Summary

Spiritual Objective: Love One Another

The speaker reminds us of Jesus' command for us to love one another in John 13:34-35. It is not a suggestion or a hope for us to act in such a way, but is something that Christ requires of us. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13:34-35)

The love that Christ suggests is not just a feeling or emotion, but a practical choice and action to give up our own rights in favour of others.

Expectation, Example, Expression and Evidence of Love

1. Expectation to Love – A new commandment I give to you.

Jesus isn't just suggesting or hoping that his disciples will listen and love, he makes it clear that it is a command and not an option. This is not new to the disciples. Jesus spoke of loving their neighbour on many occasions, such as when he spoke about the great commandment in Matthew 22:37-40.

We too need to be reminded that loving one another isn't optional. We know love is essential in our relationship to Christ, and yet many times we allow anger and bitterness to hinder our love for one another. As 1 John 4:20 reminds us, we cannot be right with God, nor say/sing that we love Him, if we do not love people or our family members.

The Lord's command is not that we LIKE one another. Liking a person is rooted in our emotions. The love which Jesus speaks of is not an emotion but an action. Christian love is not something the Lord wants us to just FEEL for others, but rather something he wants us to DO for one another. The words that Paul uses to describe love in 1 Corinthians 13 are specifically verbs, action words.

2. Example of Love – that you love one another, as I have loved you

1 Corinthians 13 defines God's gift of Himself in Jesus Christ; every description there is true of Christ's love for us. In contrast, all of us would fail to reach that perfect picture of what love truly is. This is to be expected as the love being described is love that has its source in God, and it becomes obvious that we're defining a lifestyle that is beyond our human reach. It is impossible to love like Christ, unless we abide in Christ and ask Him to live His supernatural love in and through us.

Just as a magnet is able to bestow its unique properties to an unremarkable piece of iron, Christ is likewise able to bestow His unique ability to love others to unremarkable human beings like us, as long as we abide in Him. Just as iron only retains metallic properties when it is close to a magnet, we will only retain Christ-like properties when we are continuously close to Christ. Apart from Him, we remain ordinary unremarkable human beings. Apart from Him, we can do nothing.

When we have experienced the love of Christ and we remain in HIM, HE will grant us the strength to love others and to live out our love for others, starting with those closest to us, our family.



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3. Expression of love

We cannot become a loving person, apart from a loving and vibrant relationship with God, because our love for people has limitation and boundaries. This is what Paul expressed in Colossians 3:12-17, exhorting Christians to do everything in love, while reminding them to do it all in the name of Jesus.

Paul then goes on, in Colossians 3:18-21, to give specific instructions on how to express love to those closest to us. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

Parents, children, husbands and wives, please do not misinterpret these verses carnally. We are called to obey God in fulfilling these commandments, not to demand these of others. If we see this verses and think only of what we can get out of it from the other person, then we have missed the point. These verses have absolutely nothing to do with control, power, what I like, or what I want. So let us take a closer look at how to love beyond self.

a) Wives submit to your own husband

The word submission has been misused and abused in our culture. Most think of "slave" or "doormat" when the word is used. Our culture views submission as a weaker person allowing a stronger person to use them--a person of lesser value giving up his rights to someone of greater value. This is not what the Bible means when referring to submission.

Submission is a voluntary wholehearted response. A wife chooses to follow her husband's leadership. Slaves, on the other hand, choose nothing as their decisions are chosen by their master. When a woman submits to her husband, she is actually submitting to the Lord. It is an act of worship and love for her Saviour, not as a weakened slave. If your husband loves you as Christ loves the Church and he always puts your interest before his or anyone else, submission is not a challenge.

b) Husbands, love your wives

The husband's command is very clear. Love your wives. 1 Corinthians 11 tells us that the husband is the head of the wife, Christ is the head of the man and God is the head of Christ. But it doesn't say take authority, rule over or order her around. It just says love her.

As husbands, a man's leadership at home is built on the idea of servant leadership in Matthew 20:26-28. Just as it is not difficult for a wife to submit once she knows that the husband loves her, it is not difficult for a husband to love a wife who fully submits to him and his leadership in the family.

What a wonderful picture of marriage it would be where the wife submits and the husband loves, where both are constantly placing the interests of the other before their own. What a wonderful picture of Christ's love for us, and a wonderful example for the children in that family to learn and experience what a love relationship looks like.

c) Fathers, do not provoke your children

While most translations use the word, "Fathers", it should be clear that this command relates to both parents. We provoke our children when we place unrealistic expectations on them. For example, when we abuse them, neglect them or punish them harshly, unjustly or inconsistently.



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Our primary job as a parent is not to make sure our kid gets on the right sports team or school, or has a “successful” and “happy” life. Our primary job, by both implicit example and explicit instruction, is to point our child to Jesus in everything we do. Share GOD intimately with your children. Use every ordinary thing that happens in every ordinary day to point them to GOD.

d) Children obey your parents

Regardless of our stage in life, all of us have earthly parents. How do we fare in this commandment? Besides the call to obedience, Deuteronomy 5:16 also reminds us that we are to honour our parents.

Honour is the attitude behind the act of obedience. Mere obedience without the proper attitude is simply hypocrisy. In a practical sense, honour means that we respect them, and honour means that we support and care for them when they are no longer able to care for themselves.

4. The Evidence through Love - By this all will know that you are My disciples

All this we do just as the Lord commanded, so that the world will know that we are Christ’s disciples. It does us no good to recite doctrine in our hearts and not show love! Often, we are so busy and burdened taking care of our own needs that we fail to consider the needs of others. Our colleagues, our relatives, our children are looking for someone to show them how to “do” family. What messages do our lives show to them about the transformative power of Christ’s love for us? We must love one another one another in the family, so the world, the people around us and our children can experience that love and recognize the source of our love. There is no greater way to reveal Jesus to a world that needs Him than by loving as He loved.

Is there enough evidence of Christ’s love in our lives for the world to notice? As those who know us examine our lives, do they see the love of Christ in us? Are we impacting the unsaved by living out the love of Christ in our family before them? Are we discipling our next generation through the way in which we love each other in the family?

Conclusion

Love is a very practical thing. To what extent are we manifesting it toward those in more difficult circumstances than ourselves, or to those who have failed and sinned? Are we content simply to point out their faults and criticize and say hard, unkind things? Or do we love them enough to go to them in the Spirit of Christ and seek to recover them to Himself?

We live in a difficult day. Many marriage and families are breaking down. Many out there are struggling through difficult circumstances and hurts from the pain they bear. Are we loving our family as we should? Because this world needs the love of Christ and the world is watching how we love one another in the family. Is there someone that you need to say “I Love You” or “Sorry” to? Is there someone in the family that you need to reach out to because they have been misunderstood or neglected?

Yes, His standard is high, but remember that His power to help is even higher. This is why He invites us to come to his table, to have fellowship with Him, to be near Him. He invites us to come near enough to his love that it becomes a part of us and enables us to show it and share it with the world.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."



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In order to love as Christ loves, one must have experienced the love of Christ in salvation. Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? Have you repented of sin and confessed your need for salvation? If not, would you like to come to the Lord today?

Questions

1) What are your motivations when you show love to or bless someone?

(Fill In Answer Here)

2) Amongst the different relationships mentioned (husband and wives, parents and children), in which aspect do you personally find the hardest to express love and why is this so? What hope can you glean from the Word of God to love them?

(Fill In Answer Here)

3) The love God calls us to is a practical love. In light of what you have learnt, how can you practically invest in the lives of your family members? What is one thing you need to change with regards to loving your family?

(Fill In Answer Here)