



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	How we are to respond in love during troubled times	SPEAKER	Ps Low Kok Guan
THEME	Kingdom Quest	DATE	22 & 23 Feb 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Earthquakes, a locust plague and the COVID-19 virus – these recent affairs can cause us to question where God’s love is. What is love and how does it look like in troubled times? Teaching from John 13:34-35, Ps Kok Guan gave us three facts about God’s love and three ways believers should respond to it.

THREE RESPONSES TO LOVE

I. LOVE IS A COMMAND AND OUR FIRST RESPONSE SHOULD BE TO OBEY

In John 13:34a, Jesus says “a new commandment I give to you.” The word ‘new’ in Greek has two meanings: (1) to describe something completely unheard of and (2) to describe something familiar but seen from a new perspective. While the command to love is not new, Jesus is calling us to love in a *new way* through the verses before and after this command.

First, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet – an act only performed by the lowliest of slaves. It is not something a rabbi would typically do for his disciples. Second, Jesus gave His life on the Cross.

II. LOVE IS A GIFT AND OUR SECOND RESPONSE SHOULD BE TO RECEIVE IT

In John 13:34b, Jesus instructed His disciples to love one another “just as I have loved you.” There may be times when we find it difficult to fully believe God’s love, especially in troubled and uncertain times. The disciples were also troubled during uncertain times (John 14:1). After all, Jesus had just told them that one amongst them would betray Him (John 13:21), He would be leaving them (John 13:33), and Peter would deny Jesus (John 13:38).

However, it is in troubled times that we should trust and grow in our experience with God. Jesus encouraged His disciples in John 14:1 to “believe in God; believe also in Me.” When we believe and receive God’s love, it drives out fear. We see that in the stories of Moses and David. Moses trusted God when he was caught between the red sea and the relentless Egyptian army. David trusted God when he was face-to-face with Goliath the giant. By trusting

God, Moses and David acted courageously and also learnt that God is always in control. Later in their ministries, Scripture tells us that the disciples have also learnt to trust God in times of need (1 Peter 5:7, 1 John 4:18, Matthew 13:22-23). Similarly, the question remains: What are you troubled with? What have you learned about God in troubled times?

III. LOVE IS EVIDENCE AND OUR THIRD RESPONSE SHOULD BE TO SHARE.

Knowledge alone is not enough (John 13:35); Love should be shared. A Roman Emperor, Hadrian, sent a spy to understand the early Christians. Seeing the early Christians in action, the spy returned with a comment: "Behold, how they loved one another." If a spy was sent to today's church, would our actions elicit the same comment?

When we share God's love with others, we glorify God. In John 13:31-32 alone, the words "glorify" and "glorified" appeared five times. Even Jesus, the Son of God, sought to obey and finish what God has called Him to do and to bring God glory (John 17:4). What more should we disciples also seek to do the same?

CONCLUSION

In troubled times like these, believers should be the light in the world by showing love. Not only is it a command from Jesus, love is also God's gift to us. As we ourselves trust God in difficult times, we too receive and experience more of God. After we have received God's love, we can then share it and bring glory to God.

QUESTIONS

1. What is God's love to you? Share a time when you personally experienced God's love for yourself.

2. What are the present troubles you are facing? What handles from the sermon can you use to help you trust in God during this troubled time?

3. How can you share God's love and encourage others especially in times like this? Share specific actions you want to take or people to reach out to.