



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC A New Commandment

SPEAKER DSP Edric Sng

THEME Vision Series: The New Normal

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

John 13:34-35 tells us about a new commandment given to us – which is to “love one another; just as I have loved you”. DSP Edric highlights that this commandment is not only a directive for Christians on how to live, but it is also for others to witness the glory of God.

However, while the perception of us as Christians is out of our hands, we need to ask ourselves if non-Christians around us see God’s love in action through our behaviour. DSP Edric shared statistics and examples that paint a less than perfect perception of Christians by non-Christians around us. He goes on to share four key points from John 13 to help us follow Jesus’ example in loving others, just as He loved us.

4 KEY LESSONS FROM JOHN 13

1) With a love that endures

John 13:1 tells us that Jesus loved his disciples “to the end”. Even as the time for his death drew near and with the heavy knowledge that one of his disciples would betray him, Jesus still loved his people unconditionally. His example of enduring love shows us a love that overcomes adversity and lasts. Proverbs 17:17 and 1 Corinthians 13:7 describe the kind of love that models God’s love to those around us, and what we should aspire towards.

In today’s context, this love could be shown by loving where it is crucial and not only when it is convenient. This means that we show transformational love, and not something that is touch-and-go. This could be journeying with someone known to be difficult, keeping in touch with a friend or loved one out of genuine care and concern, even when they don’t seem to reciprocate.

2) With a love that is meek

In John 13:3-9, Jesus humbled himself to wash his disciples’ feet and explained to a very reluctant Peter that “unless I wash you, you have no part with me”. Through his example, Jesus demonstrated what meekness looked like. It is a love that equalises all men before the eyes of God. Matthew 5:5 and 23:11 exalt the meek and servant-leadership.

We need to exhibit this posture of meekness in the way we carry ourselves and interact with people, regardless of social-economic status. We are all sinners and are saved only by God’s grace.

This means we need to have true humility and not “taught humility”. True humility refers to a desire to do the right thing, and not to be right just to win.

3) With a love in action

After washing his disciples’ feet in John 13:12-17, Jesus then instructed them to do the same for one another. It is not enough to understand God’s love or talk about God’s love, we need to put this love in action. In John 3:16-18, we are told to love not with words or speech, but with actions and in truth.

What this means for us is that love needs to be a verb, not a noun – something we choose to *do* (active) and not just *have* (passive). The focus needs to be on what we can give or do for others, and not what we can get from them. Love has to be lived out, and not something we simply read or know about.

3) With a love that hates division

John 13:2,21 tells us that Jesus was “troubled in spirit” before his crucifixion and DSP Edric suggested that one of the possible reasons was that Jesus was broken hearted about Judas’ betrayal. In Proverbs 6:19, we are told that (an abomination to the Lord is...) one who sows discord among brethren. The destructiveness of division is further exemplified in Matthew 3:24-25.

As a church we should be grieved by division and not marked by it. Theology should not divide us – there is room to agree to disagree within basic doctrinal alignment. Good theology calls us to love without condemnation, comparison, competition or offence. We are bonded by a spiritual and fundamental love – Love is fundamental to our faith.

CONCLUSION

Loving one another is a commandment and a gift – Everything from God is a good gift, including this commandment that will bring us blessings if done. When we demonstrate God’s love, we are living out the Gospel of Reconciliation, showing people what God did to bridge the gap between heaven and hell for all man. Let love in action be our witness for the world. “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.” 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

QUESTIONS

1. In what way(s) have we loved one another as God has loved us? Share about any area you are personally interested/invested in? e.g. Neighbourhood evangelism, missions, volunteer work, workplace ministry etc.

Leader's notes – This allows members to share about how God's love is demonstrated in concrete ways. Encourage members that all actions, no matter how small, are important in building people's perception of the church. Prompt members to share about how they think they can do more or do better in growing what they are currently doing (e.g. If someone is a regular volunteer, would they consider recruiting more volunteers from their oikos or take up a leadership role? etc.)

2. Out of the four key lessons we learnt from Jesus' example, which one do you struggle with the most / want to work on and why?

Leader's notes – This is a reflection question for members to identify areas of weakness, discuss why they think they fall short in that area and share how the cell can support them in prayer. Members who have overcome similar struggles could also share what helped them.

3. What are three things you can do to demonstrate God's love more? This could also be related to the areas of interest or improvement you mentioned above, or a something you've been meaning to do for someone in your social circle/network.

Leader's notes – The key point of this message is to take action and this question helps members to take the first steps. Have members group or pair up to be accountable for one another's action steps. This is not compulsory, but you may encourage members to set actions that have a measurable outcome and timeline if they need a more structured approach or don't know where to start (e.g. Step 1 – Contact an old friend by Wednesday to see how he/she is doing. Step 2 – Sign up for volunteering with a non-profit. Step 3 – Help a neighbour with spring cleaning for CNY).