



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Love

Week of 9.30.2019

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. Galatians 5:6 ESV

Ice Breaker: Author Dr. Gary Chapman describes the 5 languages of love in his book *The Five Love Languages*. Which of the following is your primary way of feeling loved? Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service, and Physical Touch

Paul writes to the churches in Galatia, primarily in southern Galatia, about A.D. 49. (Modern-Day Turkey.) Judaizers believed they were saved by grace but still kept the law. The Judaizers taught that Gentile believers must obey the Jewish law in order to be saved. Paul calls Christians to faith and freedom in Christ.

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1 ESV)

- Randy talked about how false teachers claimed that Christ was not enough. Christ plus circumcision. Christ plus kosher food. They were adding to the Gospel. Randy said that whenever you add to the Gospel, you actually take away from the Gospel. Do you feel yourself thinking Christ plus_____? Why?

BIG IDEA: Cancer of legalism kills; the chemo of loving service gives life!

How do you define legalism? Most of us have encountered it at some place and at some time in our lives. i.e. home, school, Bible study, a church. Could you share an example and still honor the people and location?

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end....When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord,

and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example. That you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them... "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13: 1, 12-17, 34-35 ESV

Oftentimes, this scripture is used to teach servant leadership. As important as that quality is, the reason for serving is love. Randy made several LOVE IS... statements. Which one do you feel you need to focus on most at the present time? Why? If time allows, create a number 8 LOVE IS as a group.

1. LOVE IS willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving.
2. LOVE IS being willing to have your life complicated by the needs and struggles of others without impatience or anger.
3. LOVE IS actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward another while looking for ways to encourage and praise.
4. LOVE IS making a daily commitment to resist needless moments of conflict that come from pointing out and responding to minor offenses.
5. LOVE IS being lovingly honest and humbly approachable in times of misunderstanding.
6. LOVE IS being more committed to unity and understanding than you are to winning, accusing, or being right.
7. LOVE IS dying to self and living for others.

Irish missionary Amy Carmichael said "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." Dr. Gary Chapman, in his book *Love is a Verb*, described love as an action, not just a feeling. Little acts of kindness done in love can make all the difference.

"Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18 ESV)

Think of an example when you felt loved by the action of a friend, co-worker, neighbor, etc. this year. It might have been something small or random but perfectly timed. Would you be willing to share with your group?

Randy challenged us with the question: *who needs your love today though your life?* Pause for a moment to answer personally. Will you commit to put that love in action? Mother Theresa said, "Simple acts of love and prayer keep the light of Christ burning."

If you haven't memorized the 9-fold fruit of the spirit, would you make that your goal over the next few weeks?

Prayer: Lord God, Thank you for loving me with an everlasting love! Open my eyes to ways to love others unconditionally. May my family and friends, my neighbors, those I encounter in the community, know I'm a Christian by my love. In the name of Jesus. Amen