

A Word from Pastor Chuck

CALVARY CHAPEL DISTINCTIVES



THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35

Without love, all the gifts of the Spirit are meaningless. **“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal”** (1 Corinthians 13:1). There are those who place a heavy emphasis on speaking in tongues and who look to that gift as the primary evidence of the infilling or baptism of the Spirit. But if those same people don’t have love, speaking in tongues is no more meaningful than a clanging cymbal.

Likewise, all our doctrinal orthodoxy and understanding of Scripture is of no value without love. Though I understand great mysteries—the sovereignty of God or the responsibility of man—if I don’t have love, my understanding is worthless. If I’m just getting in people’s faces to make them see my side, my doctrinal purity profits nothing. It’s all worthless without love.

God’s supreme desire for us is that we experience His love and then share it with others. Jesus said, **“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another”** (John 13:34). That’s a big order. He then said, **“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that**

seek to be understanding and compassionate, seeing people in and through Jesus Christ.

I’ve found that the key to compassion is understanding. Ezekiel once said, **“I sat where they sat”** (Ezekiel 3:15). I believe that is a very good thing to try, at least in your own mind. Put yourself in the other man’s shoes. We usually see things only from our side; try and look at the situation from his side.

For years, I spent my vacations directing youth camps. They were the most glorious times I could have ever hoped for. But inevitably there would be those irritable little guys who would stand up when I said, “Sit down,” or who would sit down if I said, “Stand up.” There were always a few rebellious ones. Their counselors would come to me and say, “Chuck, you had better move this kid to another counselor because I won’t be responsible for what I do to him.”

“Send him to me,” I’d say. So they’d grab the kid by the nape of the neck, march him in, and say, “This is the one I was telling you about.” I’d sit down with him, give him a smile, buy him a soda or candy bar, and begin to show interest in him.

This love needs to be demonstrated by our actions, attitudes, and life. May everyone see the love of Christ manifested in us.

loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him ...” (John 14:21). John said, **“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”** (1 John 4:20). John then questions, **“How dwelleth the love of God in him?”** (1 John 3:17).

In his first epistle, John speaks quite a bit about keeping God’s commandments. But what is the commandment that we have heard of Him?—love one another.

As we minister to a fellowship, whether it’s a small home Bible study or a church of ten thousand, we need to make certain that one of our major themes is love. This love needs to be demonstrated by our actions, attitudes, and life. May everyone see the love of Christ manifested in us. As Paul said to Timothy, **“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”** (1 Timothy 4:12). Constantly

As we talked, I would discover that dad’s gone, mom works in a bar, and there’s a different man over every night. Mom isn’t interested in this poor kid, and he doesn’t seem to have a chance. He has built a wall of resentment against the world and doesn’t dare let anybody get close to him. He has to protect himself. I understood why he reacted the way he did and would explain it to the boy’s counselor. Quite often, the counselor would make this little guy his helper, keep him close, and show him loads of attention. It’s amazing the changes that compassion can make in just a week’s time.

In any church, there will be certain people in the congregation who irritate you, but you need to have understanding. Get to know them. If you seek to understand them, and as you have compassion, you can truly minister to them. Look to Jesus, who was “moved with compassion,” when He saw the needs of the people. ☞

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (John 15:8–9).

In the next issue, we will continue our look at the distinctives of Calvary Chapel by considering striking the balance. All verses above are quoted from the King James Version.