

Starting Point for tonights message: see point V (page 6)

## Introduction:

- Distinguishing Marks have been used throughout all of history. They are used to cause people to stand out...for good or bad.
- I want to talk about an incredible distinguishing mark that believers are supposed to carry at all times. This mark will let everyone know that you are His followers: that mark...is the way you love one another.
- Last Wednesday I introduced this message to us. We began looking at the number of 'one another' passages in the NT. We started with Jesus 'new' command to love one another and how this would be a distinguishing mark of the followers/disciples of Christ.
- There are 59 clear references to one another. Its main understanding is to share something mutually or reciprocally. The easiest way to illustrate this word is the human body.

## I. It All Begins Here - Love One Another

- A. *"A new commandment I give to 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 13:34-35, ESV)
  1. It was Mother Teresa who said, "God is writing his LOVE letter to the world in this way, through works of LOVE."
  2. I also believe that this is one of the most famous of the 'one another' statements found in God's word. Jesus said it was a new commandment that he was giving to us... "love one another."
  3. Do note: this is a command and not a suggestion.
- B. What made it new?
  1. *"The content of the commandment is given very simply: "Love one another." Jesus is not speaking here, necessarily, of love to all people but of love within the community of believers (it "is presented as the marching order for the newly gathering messianic community," Carson). This is how my followers are different.*
  2. Love itself is not a new commandment, but an old one (Lev. 19:18). *"The new thing appears to be the mutual affection that Christians have for one another on account of Christ's great love for them."*
  3. *A community has been created on the basis of Jesus' work for us, and there is a new relationship within that community. "The commandment to love was not new, for 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Lev. 19:18) was part of the Mosaic Law. But the motive is new; to love our neighbor because Christ has loved us. We have only to read the 'most excellent way' of love set forth in 1 Cor. 13 to see how new the commandment had become new by having this motive added."* Morris, L. (1995). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 562). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
  4. So how did Christ love? That would be the way to love others.

- a) When the world sees the church doing this with one another they will see the distinguishing mark of love.
- C. The distinguishing mark of Christs followers, His disciples, was this: that they loved one another.
  - 1. In a world that is dark and void of life, love shines like a beacon!
  - 2. In our current culture if you want to stand out love well.
  - 3. If there is an institution on the earth that should stand out well it is the church by they we love one another, care for one another, help one another.

## II. It Continues With One Hundred 'One Others' in the NT.

- A. The greek word for 'one another' is ἀλλήλων. (Alayloan).
  - 1. It's used 100 times in 94 New Testament verses. There are 59 clear references to one another. Its main understanding is to share something mutually or reciprocally. The easiest way to illustrate this word is the human body.
  - 2. IE. My body shares something in common...me. All the parts of my body make up me. And for me to be healthy all the members of my body must get along, work together and mutually share one another's strengths and cover for one another's weaknesses.
  - 3. Ie. My feet are really good at walking (a strength) but they are not good at picking things up (weakness). Therefore they need the hands ( which are good at picking things up) but not good at walking well. As long as they work together life is good!
  - 4. 47 of those 100 uses give instructions to the church, and 60% of those instructions come from the apostle Paul.
- B. These 'one another verses, "refer specifically to a set of exhortations or instructions on how one believer ought to behave in relation to another." Robert Sang; 4 Themes in the Another statements of the NT. "They provide instruction on how to act or not act towards each other." ibid.
  - 1. They are specifically given to build and strengthen relationship.
  - 2. You might even say the 'one another' sayings exist as encouragement to us to stake ourselves up to one another. Remember the word encouragement means to draw strength from another. Ie. Like a weak plant tied to a stake.
- C. Basic "one another" categories. These four categories, if done well, will help the church to 'stick together' / get-along / and shine with the love of God!
  - 1. Love - We will start here because this is the New command Jesus gave in Jn 13;34-35.
  - 2. Secondly, is the group of 'one others' that have to do with unity and the putting down of things that divide or separate us.
  - 3. Third, are the 'one others' that reference humility or considering others better

than yourself; being a servant.

4. Fourth are the 'one anothers' that build up, encourage and strengthen.

### III. Love One Another

- A. Jesus imprinted this upon the hearts of His disciples. Our text for the night: *"A new commandment I give to 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 13:34-35, ESV)
  1. Peter got it and taught it! *"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."* (1 Peter 4:8, ESV)
  2. Paul got it and taught it. *"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."* (Romans 12:10, ESV)
  3. Most of the 'one another' scriptures have to do with two greek words for love.
    - a) Agape - which has to do with an unconditional love. If we do this one well you will be including almost all 'one anothers' within it. Ie. Like Jesus making two command that fulfill all the law and prophets.
    - b) *στοργή* - Storge - which has to do with family love...parent to child/brother to sister/etc.
    - c) Love one another is really a main heading with numerous different expressions of how that love is carried out in community. Ie. Gary Chapman has a book entitle The Five Love Languages. All five are expressions of love that define what that looks like.
    - d) If we are doing all the one anothers well we will be loving well!
- B. Jesus in His small group teaches: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:12-13, ESV) It is self giving, an attitude of the heart and not just actions. To lay your life down for another is a big expression of love.
  1. *"These things I command you, so that you will love one another."* (John 15:17, ESV)
  2. Paul *"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."* (Romans 13:8, ESV)
  3. Paul was directing us to increase and abound in love for one another, for this is the culture of the Kingdom of God. *"and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,"* (1 Thessalonians 3:12, ESV)
  4. Love is what God teaches us! The Holy Spirit brings sweet conviction to us so that we learn to do this well. Ie. Home is the best testing ground! Must be important because Paul is saying it more than once. *"Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,"* (1 Thessalonians 4:9, ESV)
  5. To love one another well it has to be from the heart. And if we keep our hearts

pure our love will be powerful. *"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,"* (1 Peter 1:22, ESV)

6. John lays it out straight and puts it in our face. *"For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."* (1 John 3:11, ESV) It was the message that Jesus taught, it is the message that we taught, there is no other way if we are Kingdom of God people.
7. *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."* (1 John 4:7, ESV) *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* (1 John 4:11, ESV)
8. Gal 5:13 through love serve one another.
9. Eph 4:2 bear with / put up with / tolerate one another in love.
10. Ro 12:10 be devoted to one another.
11. 1 Peter 5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

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#### IV. The Battle For Unity

- A. This is the largest section of one another statements. There are basically four categories:
  1. Dealing with fractured relationships.
  2. How to prevent or avoid fractured relationships.
  3. How to strengthen community.
  4. Unity is huge to the life of the local church. It takes work on everyone's part to do this.
- B. Actions to take to live in harmony and keep unity.
  1. Mark 9:50: Be at peace with one another. Jesus compare this to salt...peace is the flavor of our lives!
    - a) Erine – a state of well-being or wholeness.
    - b) It's OT counterpart is 'shalom' and it has to do with relationship, not just the absence of war and distress like the Greeks understood peace to be.
    - c) Peace is like salt it is to flavor our lives.
  2. Don't grumble among one another. *"Jesus answered them, Do not grumble among yourselves."* (John 6:43, ESV)
    - a) To be dissatisfied or to experience disappointed hopes.
    - b) murmuring as is Aaron and Miriam complaining against Moses
    - c) The Jews reject Jesus because He does not measure up to their expectations. This is what often happens in the body Christ when others do not measure up to our expectations. Jesus is saying, "Don't do that."
  3. Live in harmony with one another. Ro. 12:16; 15:5. This harmony speaks of being of the same mind. Ie. We are supposed to walk in love, this is what Jesus wants. It

is having this same mind.

- a) Harmony - to have the same mind as Christ for this new community called the church/the community of believers.
  - b) With this kind of mind believers reject another message.
  - c) Though we may sound different, when we come together with the same heart and mind of Christ we make 'beautiful music' together.
  - d) Are you seeing the creation of unity as we give ourselves to these 'one another' scriptures.
4. Accept/receive one another. *"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."* (Romans 15:7, ESV) This means that in love we have to rid ourselves of that which divides us so that we are able to receive one another in love.
- a) To welcome is to 'receive.'
  - b) With the preposition of 'pros' before 'lambano' the distinguished meaning is - to take to ones self."
  - c) God has received us therefore we are to receive one another!
5. Don't bite and devour one another, or destroy one another. *"But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another."* (Galatians 5:15, ESV)
- a) Bite - To cause pain to one another.
  - b) Devour - to eat completely to consume until nothing remains.
  - c) Do not do this to one another.
6. Don't envy one another. *"Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."* (Galatians 5:26, ESV)
- a) Conceited comes from a word meaning 'empty.' The use of words that are not accurate as in a boast.
  - b) The result or purpose of such boasting is to get people provoked to the point of anger or sinning in their anger.
  - c) The empty words cause jealousy to rise in other.
  - d) Paul is saying don't do that, as it does not bring the community together.
7. Be gentle and patiently tolerate one another. *"with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,"* (Ephesians 4:2, ESV)
- a) The purpose of verse 2 is verse 3—the obtaining of unity.
  - b) The best way to get there is the pathway of humility. Considering others better, stronger, above you.
  - c) Gentleness is from a word used to describe the taming of an animal. The wild instinctive nature is tamed.
  - d) Patience - means to graciously restrain.
  - e) Bearing with - holding one another up in love.

- f) All of these are for the maintaining of unity in the Spirit resulting in peace.
- 8. Be kind and forgiving to one another. Eph 4:2
- 9. Bear with and forgive each other. Col 3:13
  - a) As Christ has forgiven you forgive one another.
  - b) Matthew 18, the parable of the unforgiving servant.
  - c) Forgiveness is key to unity in the body of Christ.
- 10. Seek good for one another, and don't repay evil for evil (1 Thes 5:15)
- 11. Don't speak evil / complain against one another (James 4:11)
- 12. Confess sins to one another (James 5:16)
  - a) admit your sins
  - b) that you may be healed

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## V. Humility - Jesus example

- A. *"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."* (John 13:14-15, ESV)
- B. Humility is one of the greatest expressions of love.
  - 1. Think about it! It is what Jesus does in John 13:1 ...He showed them the full extent of His love...He washed their feet. The Master and Lord...Creator, bowed to wash the created's feet.
  - 2. Phil 2:5-ff. Jesus humbles himself. He does this as an expression of His love for us...the undeserving, the vile, those living in darkness...for us.
  - 3. Listen and see if you can discern humility in 1 Cor 13: *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."* (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, ESV) When we read this we see humility as a product or characteristic of love.
  - 4. Because He loved, He humbled himself.
    - a) He humbled himself and became a man.
    - b) He humbled himself to death on a cross.
  - 5. Think of the times in the Gospels where Jesus said, "I can do nothing on my own." That is humility!
- C. Humility and one another.
  - 1. Gal 5:13 - through love serve one another.
  - 2. *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."* (Philippians 2:3, ESV)
  - 3. Honor others *"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."* (Romans 12:10, ESV)

4. Wash one another's feet Jn 13:14 This was a job for servants for the most part.
5. Be clothed with humility. *"Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another,"* (1 Peter 5:5)."
6. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble". Be clothed with humility. (1 Peter 5:5, ESV) This is not a 'one another' scripture but it talks of grace to be humble!
7. Submit to one another. *"submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."* (Ephesians 5:21, ESV)

## VI. Encourage one another.

- A. *"Therefore encourage one another with these words."* (1 Thessalonians 4:18, ESV)
  1. Parakaleo – derivative of paraklete – comforter.
  2. Again, the picture is a plant being tied to a stake. In the time of wind, the plant draws strength from the stake.
  3. When we encourage one another we draw strength from each other.
- B. Teach and admonish each other. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom..."* (Colossians 3:16, ESV)
  1. Novo - to direct one's mind to. To impart understanding—not just to the intellect, but to the heart and disposition of a person. To admonish, warn, remind, correct. *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,"* (2 Timothy 3:16, ESV)
  2. Use the word to change your thinking or to direct one's mind to one another and to the building up of one another. Another derivative of the word has to do with repentance.
- C. Heb 10:25 exhort one another. Also Heb 3:13 The word parakaleo - is used once again. But the understanding here is of calling to one another for the purpose of getting one's attention so that there is movement towards each other.
- D. 1 Thes 5:11 - Edify one another. Same word as used in 4:18 above letter A.
  1. In light of dark difficulties we need to encourage each other.
  2. Build one another up.

## Conclusion:

- These lists are not exhaustive. But they give us plenty to grow upon.
- What distinguishing mark will you carry as a believer in Christ?