

Love One Another

Talk about Putty Putman being here on June 2nd

Today, we're going to talk about loving one another the way Jesus taught how we should love one another.

My wife was involved in several mission trips prior to us getting married, she's always had a heart for missions, but then we got married and with a growing family her mission trips came to a halt..

She would always say to me, "You need to go on a mission trip it'll change your life." But, I was content staying here in the good ol US of A!!

Well, in a few weeks I will be going to Brazil for the third time!

Tell story about praying for sick man, laying in a hammock in 100 degree temperatures and how this man's condition changed your outlook on living conditions outside the US..

This really opened my eyes to some of the living conditions around the world compared to how we have it here in the United States.

I can see why people want to come to the United States!

Not only do Kim and I feel called to minister to those here in our community, but we also feel an urge to share the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

So, what exactly does that look like?

Well, a lot of the "ends of the earth" are now seeking a better place to live right here in America.

It's clear that the landscape of this nation is changing, and I for one plan to embrace this!

People come to this country to seek better living conditions and a better way of life...It's the American dream!

If you work hard you can achieve whatever it is you set out to do.

America was built on immigrants looking for a better life!

My wife's great grandparents came to America from Lebanon, many of them could not speak English and nobody wanted to teach them!

She grew up in a Lebanese culture with large family gatherings, where honor and respect is a big part of the culture.

We have several people in our church who have moved to America and are living the American dream...Fiona Beri recently became a US citizen, Rowena Siglos moved her from the Philippines and is a successful business owner.

We have many different countries represented here at VCC, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Italy, Liberia, Caribbean Islands, China and I'm sure there's more...

By doing some reading about this country's history of immigration from the late 1790's to the present, there have been those who are adamantly opposed to immigrants entering the country as well as those who welcome immigrants with opened arms...

So, what we're currently experiencing as far as the polarization of this topic is nothing new...

And I wonder much has the media and politicians blurred our thoughts on this?

Just so we're clear on something. I do believe in secure borders. I believe in abiding by the laws of the land, but I also believe that we have an opportunity to see a move of God with those who are new to this country...And who knows, maybe a move like we've never seen before!

The reason I believe in this opportunity is because we all have something in common...

We are all created by God, equal in His eyes and a beautiful creation.

We as believers have the opportunity to share the love God has for His creation...

You see, before Jesus ascended into heaven He told his disciples (**Matthew 28**) "to teach everyone everything I have taught you."

Jesus meant for everyone who follows Him to share the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the love He has for mankind!

One of the things He taught was how to love others...And I think it goes as far as loving others no matter how different we may think they are.

Let's take a look at how Jesus expresses this...

READ John 13:34, 35

Jesus tells us to love one another...*three times He says this!*

This is the kind of love that makes people feel welcome!!

The kind of love Jesus shows is the kind of love that puts others first...

"To love one another as I have loved you" can be a challenge.

With all the different people groups represented in America how well are we able to "love one another" in the same way Jesus loves us?

Or, has our political lens become blurred with our biblical lens?

Let's take a look at how the early church did it...

READ Acts 2:46, 47

Look how it all gets started:

Attending church (In the temple) daily...In our case, once a week.

Breaking bread from house to house and eating with gladness and simplicity of heart...

Think about this...They hung out with each other in different homes, having a good time and keeping things simple.

I picture people inviting their friends and neighbors who don't know Jesus over when everyone is coming to their house that day...

By doing this, and praising God, they found favor with all people,

AND people were putting their faith in Jesus and joining the church!!!

This is what life with Jesus looks like.

This is what changes people's lives...It creates encounters with God...It builds lifelong friendships!

As human beings this is the kind of fellowship we crave...We need each other to get through life.

There is power in knowing Jesus and He is the only one who can break down barriers and bring a sense of belonging.

In Closing:

There are 59 "one another" verses in the Bible...

(John 13) Love one another; (Romans 15) Accept one another; (Gal. 5) Serve one another; (Gal. 6) Bear one another's burdens; (1 Thess.4)

Comfort one another; (Heb. 3) Encourage one another; (Romans 12) Honor one another; (Eph.4) Be kind to one another

Is God trying to tell us something about how we are to treat other people?

I think it means loving others is important to God!!

This kind of love breaks down divisions between people.

And it means that all of us must move beyond our personal preferences and engage those we see as different than us...

It's risky, and it may take us out of our comfort zone...

But, if we love others the way Jesus loves us...

We will see people the way Jesus sees them and we will have the same compassion for them that He has for us!!

Putting God first, enjoying the company of other people, keeping life simple and praising God will bring favor with others...

And most importantly, it will draw others into the kingdom of God!!!

Amen!