Grace Group Study Guide

 Greater **>** Week 10

Colossians 2:2

Perhaps the most difficult task this week was identifying a direction to take for our grace groups. Paul writes concerning such important things related to the church, that it is often difficult to pick one for a more in-depth study. As Saturday morning arrived, and I still hadn’t even begun to write this, I began reading back over my sermon notes when my eyes settled upon the phrase “knit together with love.” Immediately, my head began to fill with illustrations. First, I went to the drawer in our kitchen where we keep the pot-holders. We’ve got a couple in there that were given to us and they were knitted together. I held them up, tugged on them a bit and thought to myself, “That’s pretty sturdy, but if I tried to use it to tow a truck, it *might* not hold.”

Then my mind shifted towards rope. The more the strands, the stronger it is, right? I’ve seen some pretty thick rope pull some pretty large things in my life. My Navy people know what I’m talking about… But then I started thinking a little more about the picture of knitting something together. What we are really talking about in that phrase is joining two things together. You saw me do a little illustration on Sunday with a weld, and the strength that comes from welding together two pieces of steel. That’s an excellent example of what Paul is talking about here. Christ is the weld; He himself is what binds the believers together into a cohesive unit.

A couple of weeks ago, during intercessory prayer, David Clifton talked about laminin. Laminins are protein molecules that help to bind other proteins and cells together. Laminin proteins are an integral part of the structural scaffolding in almost every tissue of an organism. Laminin is vital for the maintenance and survival of tissues. The neat thing about laminin is that it is often presented in pictures in the shape of a cross – that really puts a great visual on something we saw in chapter 1 of Colossians where we read that “In Christ, all things hold together.”

But what about the body of believers? Well, just as laminin is vital in holding our physical bodies together, Christ is instrumental…no, **indispensable**, in holding our spiritual body (the church) together. Unity produced by Christ's love is the basis of the strength of the church. When we take our eyes off of Jesus, we are at great risk for disunity to creep in. At that moment, you're going to start being separated from the rest of the body.

**Discuss- What does unity look like in a church? How about evidences of disunity? Read John 17:11, and share your thoughts on this verse.**

In that connection, I began thinking about what little I know about welding. I’d seen some pieces of steel that had been welded together in the back of dad’s truck, and it made me think of something that he’d once said – “the weld is stronger than the two pieces of steel that have been joined.” Isn’t that a wonderful truth to behold? If the body is a bunch of pieces of steel that are all welded together by Christ and His love for us, then we as pieces of steel are going to fail before the weld of His love (which not only will not, but cannot fail). The divine "atmosphere" in which this divine "knitting" takes place is love (agape). Sometimes we attempt to "knit" folks together in groups, which by itself is not bad, but here Paul gives us a clue as to what can make a group really "stick together" -- the "weld" of God's supernatural love in Christ Jesus.

Agape love does not depend on the world’s criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world’s demand that a lover feel positive toward the beloved. This is not agape love, but is a love based on impulse. Impulsive love characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason, “I can’t help it. I fell in love with another person!” Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God’s decisive love, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration- “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love (agape) for one another (Jn 13:35).”

My desire for Grace Community Church is the same as Paul’s desire for the Colossian church, the Laodicean church and ALL the churches – that you would be knit together in love. Knowing that the love of God in Christ Jesus (the weld) will never fail, F.B. Meyer gives some great insight into how we work along with Him to prevent ourselves from failing as well:

“*Wherever there is true love, there must be giving, and giving to the point of sacrifice. Love is not satisfied with giving trinkets; it must give at the cost of sacrifice: it must give blood, life, all. And it was so with the love of God. "He so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son." "Christ also loved and gave Himself up, an offering and a sacrifice to God." (Ep 5:2-note) We are to imitate God's love in Christ. The love that gives, that counts no cost too great, and, in sacrificing itself for others, offers all to God, and does all for His sake. Such was the love of Jesus--sweet to God, as the scent of fields of new-mown grass in June; and this must be our model. Not to those who love us, but who hate; not to those who are pleasant and agreeable, but who repel; not because our natural feelings are excited, but because we will to minister, even to the point of the cross, must our love go out. And every time we thus sacrifice ourselves to another for the sake of the love of God, we enter into some of the meaning of the sacrifice of Calvary, and there is wafted up to God the odor of a sweet smell*.”

**Discuss- How do we implement this modeling?**

**(Hint-Christ in you-Colossians 1:27)**

Is our local body fused together as a body, absolutely knit (welded) together by the love of the Lord Jesus Christ or are there factions, divisions and things that separate us? Where did those come from? Paul knows how dangerous this principle is. Once you let error get into the church, you had better look out. There is nothing but DIVISION from that point on until the problem is addressed. It is only Christ and His love that unites, knits or welds the body of Christ. When we each individually keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we will be supernaturally protected from disunity. Let us press on, brothers and sisters, toward this goal.