

Grace Group Notes

Love One Another

Sometime around the end of our study of 1 John, I heard a message from Chip Ingram entitled "A New Commandment for a New Community". In that study he asked the question "How seriously do you take Jesus?". He presented scripture to make the point that "taking Jesus seriously means taking His Word seriously".

This question began to be played over and over in my mind, "Do I take Jesus / His Word seriously'. It was so easy for me to look around at other Christians and click my tongue and think how disappointed God must be with their Christian walk. Then the Spirit began to convict me concerning my own walk. I argued with the Spirit with the same words Peter used when the Lord restored Him after the resurrection – "Lord, what about Him?" (referring to John). Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."

Miles J. Stanford in "The Green Letters", "Without a bitter experience of their own inadequacy and poverty they are quite unfitted to bear the burden of spiritual ministry. It takes a man who has discovered something of the measures of his own weakness to be patient with the foibles of others. Such a man also has a first-hand knowledge of the loving care of the Chief Shepherd, and His ability to heal one who has come humbly to trust in Him and Him alone. Therefore he does not easily despair of others, but looks beyond sinfulness, willfulness, and stupidity, to the might of unchanging love. The Lord Jesus does not give the charge, 'Be a shepherd to My lambs ... to My sheep,' on hearing Peter's self-confident affirmation of undying loyalty, but He gives it after he has utterly failed to keep his vows and has wept bitterly in the streets of Jerusalem."

Yes, there must be deep, thorough, and long preparation if there is to be reality-if our life is to be Christ-centered, our work controlled by the Holy Spirit, and our service glorifying to God. Sooner or later the Holy Spirit begins to make us aware of our basic difference between self and Christ."

Look again at these commands on loving others: 1 John 3:10-11, 1 John 3:14, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 4:11-12, 1 John 4:20-21.

Discuss how the Christian can demonstrate that he takes these commands seriously? (Hint: Galatians 2:20)

Sunday's message ended with the question, "Why is it important that we take Jesus' words seriously to love one another" as it relates to the three areas mentioned.

INDIVIDUAL

CHIP INGRAM "Jesus was saying to His disciples, I will not be there in My physical presence. You need eyes to look into; you need an arm around your shoulder; you need, at times, to be rebuked like I did Peter on more than a few occasions. You're going to need a physical body where the Christ in them can give you need. Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

THE CHURCH

"The Church God Blesses" by Jim Cymbala, - "We who consider ourselves serious believers in Christ have to face this obvious question: Will we settle for the status quo in our own church situations, or will we reach out for what God can supernaturally do? The Lord is eager to make spiritual changes among us and shower us with his blessings. He wants us—his people—to experience the greatness of his power and the depth of his love in a new way. All he needs from us is a listening ear and a heart that believes that with God all things are possible."

1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

THE WORLD

John 13: 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

(Matthew 25:45) "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'