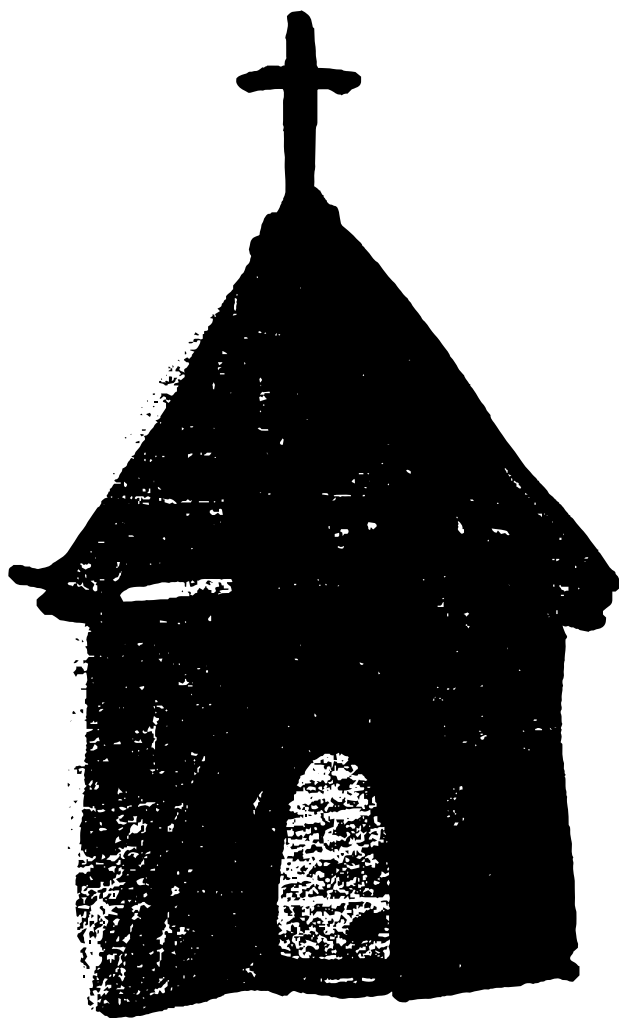


3 WEEKS

LOVE
AND THE





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SMALL GROUP STUDY

have love, I gain nothing."

Kicking it off:

If you could be known for one thing, what would you most want to be known for?

Big Idea:

Everything – Love = Nothing

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 12:31

"And now I will show you the most excellent way..."

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not

1 Corinthians 13:4b

"Love is patient, love is kind."

John 13:35

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Discussion:

1. Throughout the world, what do you think the Church is most known for?
2. Was love one of your top answers? Why or why not?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:31. Just prior to this passage, the apostle Paul is sharing with the church in Corinth about spiritual gifts- how to view them and how to use them. In essence, how to grow in your spiritual maturity. Then he turns the corner when he introduces what has become one of the most famous chapters in all of the Bible, the Love Chapter in 1 Corinthians 13. Discuss what Paul may have

meant when he lays down this transitional sentence.

4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. What point is Paul making in these introductory verses about the importance or significance of love?
5. In what ways has the church succeeded in producing, existing and profiting but failed in its mission to love?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4b-8. Each of these characteristics is a response. Discuss various situations when responding with these two characteristics demonstrates love.
7. In this week's message Pastor Jeff defined spiritual maturity as responding to a hurt like Jesus would. How does love respond to hurt? Receive hurt, return a hug. What are some of the most difficult scenarios that you've faced to be able respond in that way?
8. Read John 13:35. Based on these words of Jesus, what most makes us known as Jesus' disciples?
9. How can we as the church and as individuals live out Jesus' words?

return a hug, and post it where you can see it every day. Pray together to each do your utmost to live that out this week.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for Sunnybrook, that collectively, as we begin this journey to show our community that we love them and are for them, that we can demonstrate the love of Jesus in tangible ways.

Memory Verse:

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

Wrapping It Up:

Write down on a sticky note or 3x5 card the words receive hurt,



SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Share honestly how you typically respond to someone who is different from you.

Big Idea:

Love to community is like water to a garden, and comparison kills community.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13:4

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud."

1 Corinthians

12:18-27

"But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to

the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it."

Discussion:

1. Discuss how you did at last week's challenge to receive a hurt, return a hug. What successes did you have? What failures?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4.

Last week we talked about love being patient and kind; this week we address what destroys love: envy (jealousy), and boasting (arrogance). Pastor Jeff mentioned in this week's message that these are different sides of the comparison coin: jealousy, when you compare up, and arrogance, when you compare down. Discuss how these both kill community.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:18-27. How is Paul addressing in this passage the issues of comparison that the Corinthian church was dealing with?
4. The Corinthian church seemed to have an issue with understanding and celebrating the differentness in their community. As you look around at Sunnybrook, where do you see differentness in our community? How do you think we respond to that?
5. When we allow jealousy and arrogance to reign, it crowds out love. Share a time that you struggled with one or the other and it kept you from loving a person like Jesus loves them.
6. Discuss ways that you can

prevent yourself from playing the comparison game – whether it's the jealousy or arrogance side of the coin.

7. How might immersing yourself in today's Scriptures help?

Wrapping It Up:

Identify one person that you have struggled to love. You don't have to say their name out loud, but share together the feelings around that struggle and then pray for each other to be able to demonstrate love to the person you have each identified, accepting and celebrating their differentness.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our Night to Shine Drive Thru event this Friday – that all our guests would experience extravagant love.

Memory Verse:

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:27



SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

In what/where do most you fear failure?

Big Idea:

What does love do with failure?

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13:7

"It [love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Philippians 1:6

"...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Discussion:

1. In the past two weeks, we've answered these two questions:
 - 1) What does love do with hurt? Receive hurt and return a hug.

2) What does love do with differentness?

It doesn't compare up causing jealousy, or down causing arrogance, but celebrates diversity. This week's question is what does love do with failure? Share a time when you had an epic fail but still received love. What did that look and feel like?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:7. This passage contains the answer to today's question, "what does love do with failure?" For your discussion, take each response and share concrete ways you can live out that act in your own life. Be specific with examples of demonstrating love, not just in your own family, but for those with whom you have differences.

PROTECTS

Love keeps a lid on it, don't broadcast weakness of another

TRUSTS

Love gives a generous explanation, believes the best

HOPES

Love hopes in God to finish the work He's begun (Philippians 1:6)

PERSEVERES

Love stays

Wrapping It Up:

Choose one of these actions and commit this week to demonstrate love in all the failures that you observe or encounter, loving that person in return.

Prayer Focus:

Pray that we, as a church, which means each of us as individuals, will become known in our community for our love.

Memory Verse:

"It [love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

1 Corinthians 13:7

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?
Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



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