TOPIC: LOVE ON DISPLAY

It is of the highest importance that we build our lives upon the foundation of God's love.

KEY POINTS

- Building a strong, lasting structure demands a solid foundation. Jesus, speaking of Himself, said "… on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18 NKJV).
- Jesus Christ Himself is the rock, the unmovable substratum upon which the Church is built.
- The apostle Paul expands our understanding of the composition of the foundation built upon the rock: "… built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, [22] in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22 NKJV).
- As we learned in Sunday School, Jesus is God and God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Therefore, the cornerstone of the Church's foundation is love.
- And so, as part of the Church of Jesus Christ, the foundation of my Christian life must be love!
- If I am in the Church (this earthly body of Christ), everything I say and do must be based upon the foundation of love. If this is not the case, I am building my life on the wrong foundation.
- Jesus is the substratum and the cornerstone of the Church's foundation. We need to constantly grow and build on the 'Christ foundation', always striving to edify the Body of Christ *in love* (read 1 John 4:7-21).
- "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21] And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:20-21).
- Jesus taught His followers how love is acted out: "Judge not, that you be not judged. [2] For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. [3] And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? … [5]Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. [12] Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:1-5, 12 NKJV).
- And let us not forget His 'Last Supper' instruction to His disciples: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. [35] By this all will know that you are My disciples..." (John 13:34-35 NKJV).

KEY SCRIPTURES: Mark 12:28-31; 1 John 4:7-21; Matthew 7:1-5, 12; John 13:34-35; Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 12:9-10, 12:13; 13:8-10

- Matthew 18:15-17 NKJV provides another example of how God expects love to be demonstrated in our relationships: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' [17] And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.
- If this is not how we are living and acting, then we are Christians in name only, without substance or strength. We may look strong on the outside but be totally rotted or hollowed out on the inside.
- We need to examine our thoughts and actions to make an accurate assessment of where we stand in the "love" department.
- It is of the highest importance that we build our lives upon the foundation of God's love.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Review and discuss (from Sunday's message and your own thoughts) ways that we can assess whether or not our love is in action.
2. Have you ever been fooled, or seen someone else fooled, by the outer surface/facade of a person or building? Describe the situation.
3. How do you and/or others around you demonstrate love in everyday life?
4. Does love that is never seen by others fulfill our Christian mandate?
5. Read 1 John 4:7-21, focusing on verses such as 7-8, 16, 20-21. How does the presence of love, or a lack of love, affect our status in the kingdom of God?
6. "To correct all of our love failings we must: repent (turn away from our sins); confess and ask for forgiveness, to/from God *and* to/from ones we have wronged." Let's do it!

Prayer Time

Lord, help me to live a life that shows I understand, "the greatest of these is love."

L.G. ice-Breaker: Describe how you react to extended times in noise-filled environments. Do you thrive, or seek a solitude break?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS