



Being Good News for Our Community - Spring 2017

Study 3 - Do Build Each Other Up

John 13:12-17 & 31-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

(sermons on Feb 5th)



Introduction

This series is about Being Good News for Our Community but these first few studies are about the sort of people we need to be – both as individuals and in relation to each other – if we are going to have a positive impact on the different communities of which we are part.

John 13:12-17 Wash One Another's Feet

Jesus had just washed his disciples' feet, as they were about to start the Passover meal that would turn out to be their Last Supper together before Jesus was arrested.

v.12 When he had finished washing their feet – in verses 1-11. Washing feet was the task of a domestic servant. Disciples of Jewish rabbis were expected to do small tasks to help their masters but were not expected to do anything as demeaning as washing their feet.

'The truly Christ-like leader is known by the ease and spontaneity with which he or she does the little, annoying, messy things – the things we always secretly hope someone else will do..' (Tom Wright)

1. Why was it so surprising that Jesus washed his disciples' feet? What was Jesus showing about what it meant for him to be 'Teacher' and 'Lord'? How did it point to his death?
2. What sort of tasks might be the equivalent of 'washing one another's feet', at a personal level, or in the everyday life of the church, or in our service to the community?
How can we do these things in a cheerful and loving way; how could we do them in the wrong way?
How can we encourage each other in these roles?

John 13:31-35 Love One Another

v.31 When he was gone – when Judas had left to betray Jesus (v.21, 30), although only Jesus knew that this is what Judas was going to do

v.31 Now is the Son of Man glorified – in John's Gospel the idea of Jesus being 'glorified' (being shown to be who he really is) is linked to his death on the Cross (see John 12:23-24, 27-28, 32-33). When Judas goes to betray him, he is setting in motion the course of events that will lead Jesus to the Cross.

v.32 The meaning of this verse is probably that God is being glorified in Jesus' death (because it shows God's love), and that God will then glorify Jesus by raising him from the dead, and this will happen very soon after his death.

v.33 I will be with you only a little longer – in body, on earth, but Jesus is about to explain to his disciples in chapters 14-16 that, through the Holy Spirit, he will be with them for ever.

v.34 A new command – the newness of this command is the quality of self-sacrificial love that Jesus will show on the Cross, and the new power of his Spirit to be able to carry out this command to love.

3. What was special about the love that Jesus showed in his life on earth, and in his death?
4. 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (v.35). How do people outside the church notice our relationships with one another? What impact can this make, either positive or negative?

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Love Is.....

The setting of this chapter in Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians is that Paul is teaching the Christians at Corinth that they need to be united, despite their different racial, religious, social and academic backgrounds; we looked at chapter 12 last week, with its emphasis on what we have in common and how we should use our different gifts to serve one another. There is a lot in chapter 13 but **verses 4 to 7** have most to say about how we 'build each other up'.

v.4 *patient – patient with people, persevering, never giving up on them*

v.4 *kind - generous*

v.5 *not easily angered – not easily provoked, slow to take offence, not touchy or moody*

v.7 *it always protects – covers over what is wrong, or keeps going, puts up with a lot*

5. In *verses 1 to 3* Paul describes how we might use our gifts in ways that do *not* build each other up.

How might we be like 'a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal' (v.1)?

How can we tell whether we are acting without love, even if we are doing 'spiritual' things?

6. What *positive* aspects of love in *verses 4-7* would we most like to show?

Can we think of specific examples of times when we have seen this sort of love in action?

7. What *negative* character traits in *verses 4-7* would we most like to avoid?

How can we help each other to stop doing those sorts of things, or developing those attitudes?

8. Share more examples of what 'love is...' (as in the cartoon).

Which of them could you do this week?

love is...



... the small things that make the big difference.