

Spiritual Gifts?

Week Two

The Binding Ingredient

"Love, rightly understood and rightly applied, is the ingredient that binds our gifts together and makes for a unified whole, but love misunderstood is disastrous."

Ephesians 4:2-3

"with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

1 Corinthians 13:8

"Love never fails; but if prophecies, they will be done away; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be done away..."

1 Corinthians 13:13

"But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love."

III. How this has affected the church

Common questions for "evaluating" churches:

- Do they make me feel comfortable?
- Do I feel exhilarated, especially in "worship?"
- Do I feel accepted or judged?
- Will they let me express myself?
- What programs do they have that minister to me/my family?
- Does the preaching engage me?
- Are there others like me, who I can relate to?

Matthew 16:25 from the Message

"...Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself?"

"Why did [God] bother to go to all the trouble of creating a universe for us?"

Because he is a God of love."

Rick Warren

Ways that these attitudes inhibit self-sacrifice:

- I can't participate in that because...
- I can't be there for you because...
- I can't serve because...
- I can't give because...

But what is Love?

II. How our culture views love

1. Love as a force

"Love, not romance... enriches life and has the potential to make us happy."

Oprah Winfrey Website

"Love is not wanting to go anywhere without her. Love is not caring what other people think about the two of you. Love is when you feel depressed and sickly when you're not with her. You feel like your life has no meaning or purpose without her." Urban Dictionary

2. Love as a feeling

Feminised Love: "...women are spirited and independent, able to melt the hearts of men originally indifferent or even hostile to them.

Anthony Giddens

"Are our feelings profound enough to support a long-term involvement?"

2. Love never fails...it abides

3. Love and self-expression

You love me if...

- You let me be me
- You encourage/help me to become my best self
- You don't judge me
- I can be "real" with you

"It's not about being who everyone else wants you to be, it's about being yourself and finding someone who loves every bit of it."

4. Love as idolatry

Our "true love" relationships are ultimate!

Spouse Children Family

I. Love as the binding agent

1. Love defines our treatment of others

- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Tolerance