

Sermon Discussion Guide:

Love as the Distinguishing Mark of the Church

Sunday, March 21, 2021

Scripture: **John 13:15, 34-35**

OVERVIEW

As Jesus is about to have a final meal with His disciples in the upper room, He knew that He would soon leave this world and go to the Father. Jesus was entering a crucible where He would certainly be pushed to His limits. Yet, before departing from His disciples, He gave **an example** and **a command**. First, Jesus demonstrated what a servant should look like, as He humbly washed His disciples' feet. Then, He said, "by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." At some point in our lives, all of us will face a crucible—a time when we are under intense pressure and pushed to our limits. **As you pass through the crucible of life, hold on to Jesus and each other for safety.**

CORROBORATING TEXTS

Philippians 2:5-8; Ephesians 5:1-2; Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 1:22-23; John 17:24

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you faced a serious crucible in the past where you felt tested and pushed to your limits? If so, what did you hold onto to help you get through it? Are you facing a crucible currently? If so, in what ways can Jesus, and your church family, help you get through it?
2. Jesus gave His disciples a tangible example of humility by washing their feet. In what specific ways is God calling you to serve others, either in your family, church, or workplace?
3. In Ephesians 5:2, Paul encouraged the church to "walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." In what new ways can our church practice walking in love as it seeks to minister to those within (and outside) our church community?
4. In Ephesians 5:25, Paul encouraged husbands to "love your wives as Christ loved the church." As husbands, how are you demonstrating Jesus' example of servant-leadership to your wives? In what new ways can you practice walking in love to your wives?
5. Read 1 Peter 1:22-23 and discuss what Peter means when he said "you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable." *[Peter is contrasting temporary earthly life with eternal life, and human birth with supernatural birth; our future resurrection glory is always connected with our regeneration by the Holy Spirit.]*
6. What are four applications to help us exemplify the model of Jesus? *[Remember the goal of Christlikeness; in the crucible, stay together; pursue love; don't forsake the assembly.]*