



COVENANT CHURCH

Essentials

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Sunday July 5, 2020

Main Idea – Diversity in the Church is an asset through which God reveals Himself. When society divides, the Church unites – and brings others to faith - through love.

A time to reset and refocus

- Tough times can bring out the best in you.
- Difficult things give you the opportunity to briefly pause and to ask yourself, “What is most important?” It might be that your ultimate answer will help you refocus some priorities.
- One thing that never changes is that Jesus is the head of the church. With Jesus as the head, Covenant Church works to help believers know God, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference.

Embrace love as you balance emotions and rationale

- When society is in chaos, take the time necessary for your emotions and your rational thinking to come into balance.
- Keep your heart right with God. Do not let Satan’s ideas into your heart.
- At the appropriate time, engage in difficult conversations with love as your standard. Love is the filter through which everything else must pass.
- Habit #5 in Stephen Covey’s book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is: “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”
- Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “I have decided to stick to love . . . Hate is too great a burden to bear.”
- Repentance and forgiveness will often follow during this process.

Focus on what unites us

- The Christian Church is made up of a great diversity of people. Their common faith in Jesus as Savior is what brings diverse believers together in one place with one heart.
- The Bible teaches us to keep it simple:
 - **Micah 6:8** – He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but *to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?* (NKJV)

- **Matthew 22:35-40** – Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “*‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’* This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: *‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (NKJV)

What God values

- God loves it when His Church remains united during difficult times.
- Satan can use ignorance, isolation, and the lack of a teachable mindset in the congregation to divide a church.
- Satan will attempt to use temporary things to create permanent divisions.
- One of Jesus’ most fervent prayers was that His followers would become one, just as Jesus and the Father are one.
- **John 17:20-23** – “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (NKJV)
- Unity in the Body of Christ reflects God’s nature, and is proof to others that He sent us and is revealing Himself through the Church.

Reflective Questions for Essentials

1. It is normal to have an immediate, emotional response to something that happens. How might the quotes of Stephen Covey and Martin Luther King, Jr. (above) help you balance emotions and rationale?
2. How do the words of the Old Testament prophet Micah and Jesus (above) tell you to balance emotions and rationale?
3. Right now, enter a one-hour timeslot into your daily planner where you will read the entirety of Jesus’ prayer in John 17 and reflect on the importance of unity in the Body of Christ.