
His Love is our Uniform

John was an avid fan of sports. Specifically, he loved playing football with his friends in the local park as a child. Most would agree that he was a great wide receiver! One day, when he went to the park, there were a few new kids with their group. John was happy to have these kids play with them and they separated into teams.

The game was close. It was almost time to go home, and they were down by less than a touchdown. If they scored, the game would be over, and they would win!! The play started and John had the ball. His receivers were running routes and he saw his friend Jack wide open on the left. John threw the ball to Jack, and to his great surprise after catching the ball, Jack ran the opposite direction and scored a touchdown for the opposing team! John had confused who his teammates were.

The lesson above is that uniforms can be important. By uniforms we mean, how we know who is on our side and who is not. This is true in football, it's true in life, and it's true in our walks with God. But how can we possibly know who is "on our side" and who is not?

There are many different ideas to answer this question depending on whom you ask. Some people will say that anyone who says "they follow Jesus" would be on the same side. Some answer the question by looking at how people dress or checking their attendance record for church on Sundays. These ideas may be what people say, but what does Jesus say?

Jesus told us that by our love toward one another would define us as Christians in John 13:34-35. Further, we shall be known by loving each other the way that Jesus loved us. The uniform of a Christian is simply that we love one another like God loves us.

And how did God love? God loved us enough to come to earth so that we could have everlasting life (John 3:16). He loved us enough to go through the pain, suffering and death of the cross to show us His love. He loved us enough to offer salvation and eternal life to us.

This love is our uniform. It is how we should walk daily with God and when we do this, God will follow with all the rest of the promises in the Lord's Prayer. He will be our Provider, our Guidance, our Forgiver, our Lord and Savior. It all comes back to His great love!

Questions:

1. What has God done for you personally that has shown you that He loves you?
2. What does God loving you say about God's Providence in your life?
3. How can we show God's love in our lives through our actions towards other people?

Possible Hinderances to Answered Prayers

Pastor Ehi taught on loving Jesus with all our heart. This includes coming before him and talking to him with that kind of love. Further, Jesus is the Author, and He is our Creator. When we come before God, we're coming before our Father. And he's teaching us how to talk to our Father.

When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, he replied with what's written in Matthew 6: 9-13, what we know as The Lord's Prayer. But the Lord's prayer isn't something to be memorized and recited every day. What Jesus gave his disciples, and ultimately to us, was a guideline for bringing genuine, effectual, prayer before our Heavenly Father. Pastor Ehi's message this week focused on versus 11 and 12, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors" (ESV). He emphasized that at first, we should acknowledge the greatness, the holiness, of our father. To desire the coming of his kingdom, our victory. And very importantly, that aside from all else, it's His Will that we seek above all.

Next, every day we have individual, unique, and new needs. It's important that we kneel before him every day and communicate our needs. We shouldn't hold back or feel ashamed or scared. For when we acknowledge His greatness, we're showing our understanding of his ability to meet our needs. He is willing to meet our request, and it is His desire to do so. Our intention is accepting Him as number one in our lives. Without whom we would have nothing. It was also stated how it's important that we keep the order of the steps. What God desires more than anything is our love. And we should show Him that love above all else, before anything else. And when we come before Him with our needs, we must also acknowledge our shortcomings.

We need to ask for forgiveness. And to receive forgiveness, we must be willing to forgive anybody who may have wronged us. Evil should not be repaid with evil, and when we refuse to forgive anyone who may have done wrong to us that's essentially what we're doing. If we can't forgive those who have wronged us, why should the Lord forgive our sins and the wrongs we've committed against Him? One of the most essential aspects of being a Christian is being able to forgive. Using a story from his youth, he was riding with a friend who had a leak in his gas tank. He alluded to an individual driving in front of them and how they threw the remains of a lit cigarette out their window. As a result, the driver of the car with the gas leak made a comment, "how dare that person throw a lit cigarette out his window, it could blow the car up!" Pastor Ehi's response to the driver was "no, how dare you drive with a hole in your tank. The cigarettes are not the problem; rather, it's you that's the problem." And using this demonstration Pastor Ehi emphasized how sin isn't the problem. It's the condition of our hearts and our capability to forgive.

When it comes to an effectual prayer, there are definite roadblocks to our prayers being answered. Willful sin, unrepentant of, unconfessed, and unforgiveness are possibly the two easiest, perhaps most simple, ways for our prayers to not be met.

Personal Take Aways from the Sermon
Submitted by Church Members