

How do we love those who do not love God yet?

- **Definition Church**
- **Definition Church exist to help people Be with Jesus, Become like Jesus, and to Do what Jesus did.**
- **We see redemptive potential in every moment**
- **We do whatever it takes to fulfill our God given potential**
- **We do what's right because it is what love requires**

Last week Pastor Jonathan did an amazing job of talking about our third core value. If we are going to change our world, we have to love people, we have to be more concerned about a person's spiritual condition than their political position. Today we are so busy choosing sides when we should be choosing people. We seem to be more concerned about being right than being righteous. The world out there, those people that drive us crazy sometimes, Jesus is crazy about them, Jesus loved being with them, and Jesus died for them. They are not the enemy, they are the goal. They are our future family. Remember, Jesus did not wait until we got our act together before he loved us.

Romans 5:8, "God demonstrated his love for us in this, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

That means Jesus loved people despite their political persuasion, whether they wore a mask or not, regardless of their race, no matter where they were from or if they had money or not. I am not saying those issues are not important. I am not saying Jesus did not have an opinion about the moral, political, and social issues of His day because of course he did. What I am saying is, Jesus loved people who disagreed with Him about these issues. Jesus understood this, a person's lifestyle, opinions, moral choices, peer groups, attitude are all a reflection of the heart. Trying to change a person's behavior or opinions without addressing their heart is basically a waste of time. Therefore, Jesus never got distracted by what was happening in Rome. Jesus was building a greater kingdom. Jesus knew if a person would follow Him, everything else would fall into place. This is why we have renamed, why we have a new mission, and why we have new core values. We are convinced, if we can help people, "**Be with Jesus, Become like Jesus, and Do what Jesus did**" we can change our world. We are also convinced, if we fail to do this talking about politics is a waste of time. Politics are the effect, our spiritual condition is the cause.

Tuesday paper: Murders, Mall violence, Covid-19 financial fallout, Opioid epidemic. We already have laws in place for this stuff. We do not need another law we need revival in America.

This is why I refuse to allow the platform to be highjacked by anyone's political agenda. I know some of you think I should say more or less about a lot of issues but what I am trying to do is help people follow Jesus. Only the church can do that. If you want to fix something in our culture go fix it. Maybe God wants to use you to fix it but we cannot highjack God's church for our agenda. The agenda here is to lift up Jesus and help people learn to follow Him and that is the greatest contribution we can make in our city.

After my last sermon a friend and church member asked me a good question. He asked, "You said we have to love people if we were going to fulfill our mission. How do we do that? What exactly does that mean?"

Pastor Jonathan, taught us three principals:

1. Start with the Bible. What does the Bible say about this issue or situation?
2. Consider others better than yourself. Humility
3. Show Grace in every moment. Grace
4. The only way we can understand love, is to know God, for God is love!

This is so important. Therefore, before we move on, I want to say it another way. When I look back on my life the people who have had the most profound impact on me. The people who literally changed my life. They did four things:

1. **They liked me.**
2. **They stuck with me.**
3. **They encouraged me.**
4. **They challenged me.**

1. They liked me.

Or at least they acted like it.

When I decided in 8th grade to go to church my life was a wreck. I was a poor student, I was drinking, I was looking for an excuse to get in a fight with someone, and was just kind of obnoxious. I was the kind of kid the average youth pastor would love to hate. My youth pastor just embraced me. He was a good athlete, a grown man and showed me know mercy. He beat me in basketball, football, ping-pong, and would even wrestle with me to show me I was not as tough as I thought. Looking back, here is what I understand. He liked me, before God changed me. Do you like people who are not like you, do not agree with you, or do not go to church? Jesus did!

Matthew 9:9-12, But wait a minute. Someone has got to fix these people! If I act like I like them they are going to keep on being stupid and messing up our country. Not if you teach them to be with Jesus, Become like Jesus, then they will do what Jesus did. Jesus will fix them.

One of the challenges every church in America faces, especially during a pandemic is teaching people to give.

- The average evangelical Christian, those are the Christians who claim to believe the Bible, gives 2.5% of their income to the church. During the great depression they gave 3.3% of their income.
- At Daystar 100 families, give 80% of all the income.
- In America, the more you make, the less you give.

There is already a law in place. God says give a tithe, the first 10% of your income to the local church. The NT teaches grace giving which is giving above and beyond 10% motivated by the grace we have received. If God's law does not motivate Christians to give at least 10% of their income, what do we do? I can get angry and throw a temper tantrum on stage. I have actually done that a couple times in my 20 years and pushed people away from church.

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus knew, if they spend time with me, they will become generous, like me. The law cannot do that. Jesus liked being with them and that relationship produced change.

: One of my favorite people in the world left his wife a couple years ago, without good reason, and is now living with a woman who he is not married to but I love him. He is a great friend. I do not like how he has handled some stuff in his life but I like him and I believe our relationship is having a positive impact on his relationship with Jesus. He knows what the Bible says and He knows what I believe, the question is does he know I love him?

2. They stuck with me.

Do you want to know every church member's greatest fear, every pastor's greatest fear? Rejection. If people find out I am not perfect, I will be judged and rejected by the people I love. This is why most people are not willing to be vulnerable and transparent in church. This hiding keeps us from changing.

How should we respond to someone's imperfection?

- We cannot cover it up. John 4, woman at the Well
- We cannot attack them. John 8, woman caught in adultery
- We cannot walk away. John 21, Do you love me

Jesus sticks with us!

: Jim Snyder- Jim loved me. He did not cover it up. He did not attack me. He did not walk away. He loved me.

Galatians 6:1, 2 Timothy 2:13, He is faithful. **Matthew 28:20**

: Do you know who loves me more than anyone in this world. The people who have blown it and I stuck with them. Parents, you want to know how to win over your kids. When they blow it, stick with them. We cannot give up on imperfect people. We are all imperfect.

3. They encouraged me.

When Jesus met the disciples, He saw something they could not see. Jesus was able to see beyond their problems and speak to their potential.

Dr. Bennett- You are strong. There is something inside you that I do not see in most men. You are going to be a great pastor. He told me he loved me. He was always hugging on me and would even grab my face and kiss me on the cheek. He always acted impressed by the latest thing the church accomplished. He always acted impressed by my latest sermon. He would ask people, "Do you know when Allen is going to preach His best sermon?" Next Sunday! When I met Dr. Bennett, I was not sure if I would ever be in the ministry again but Dr. Bennett believed I would and his faith built my faith!

Matthew 4:19, Jesus believed!

Encourage someone today. See what is good and speak to it. When you see their potential, tell them.

4. They challenged me.

Looking back, there was always someone in my life, pushing me to reach for more. Pushing me in sports, pushing me in school, pushing me in marriage, and then ministry. People loved me enough to push me to be the best version of myself.

Football Coach- FCA, you can do it.

Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Go!

How many of you are into the enneagram? I'm an 8. An 8 is the challenger. This means I am always going to be challenging you to be your best. In America it is so easy to settle for paying the bills, and watching TV each night. We were created for so much more! I so grateful people loved me enough to push me!

How do we love people: We like them, we stick with them, we encourage them, and we challenge them?

Where does this love come from? Luke 7:36-48