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SESSION 2 | Love the Lost

I. INTRODUCTION

“Perhaps that strikes you as a rather silly distinction. As I internalized it though, I was overcome with conviction. I had been using fear as an excuse when love was my problem. It wasn’t even that complicated, I realized. If I love someone enough, I will overcome my fear and share Christ with them. But if I don’t, I won’t.” Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith*, 42

II. GOD’S LOVE DRIVES OUT FEAR

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4.18-19)

A. THE **MANIFESTATION** OF LOVE:

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” (4.9)

B. THE **SOURCE** OF LOVE:

“...not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (4:10; cf. John 3:16)

C. THE **IMPLICATIONS** OF LOVE:

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (4:11)

D. THE BIBLICAL **ORDER** OF LOVES:

In love, God sent Christ into this world to rescue us from sin and wrath. By grace, we now love God and his people and Christ's mission to the lost.

III. LOVE EXPRESSED IN FRIENDSHIP

A. REMEMBER THE GOSPEL AND RECOMMIT TO OUR GOSPEL

- Stay (and grow more) amazed at Jesus and his gospel
- We want to remain gospel-centered as individuals. Let's make it our daily aim to stay amazed at Jesus. To preach the gospel to ourselves, that we may be unapologetically passionate about Christ and him crucified.
- Stay (and grow more) committed to the life and mission of our local church.

B. THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT YOUR FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-CHRISTIANS

- "Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." (I Thess. 2.7-8)
- "The apostle was emphatic that his team's ministry in Thessalonica wasn't some hit-and-run gospel invasion. They were happy to stay, to form friendships, to invest their lives in the lives of others. Are we?" Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith*, 44

1. How can I begin to love by sharing my life with non-christians?

a. Go meet non-christians

b. Step into their world like Jesus did

- Start to more intentionally ask them questions: About their weekend, their lives, their interests.
- If they're a co-worker, ask if they'd want to grab a coffee sometime. Keep it to 30 minutes. Have the longer game in view. Let them be attracted to Christ through you.

- If they're a neighbor, show hospitality. Invite them for dessert or a meal.

“Those who live out radically ordinary hospitality see their homes not as theirs at all but as God’s gift to use for the furtherance of his kingdom. They open doors; they seek out the underprivileged. They know the gospel comes with a house key”. Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a Housekey*, 11

“When radically ordinary hospitality is lived out, members of God’s household are told that they are not alone in their struggles or their joys. Radically ordinary hospitality is accompanied suffering...This is what radically ordinary hospitality accomplishes in the Lord’s grace. It meets people as strangers and makes them neighbors; it meets neighbors and makes them family.” Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a Housekey*, 13

c. Connect them with your Christian friends

- Church
- A CG dinner party
- A Louisville event
- Biblical counseling in SGCL

d. In and through all of this, be praying

2. Two ditches

“The first ditch is ignoring “friendship evangelism” altogether, which can lead to treating people as projects. We’re probably most susceptible to this when initiating gospel conversations with strangers. What might it look like?” Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith*, 44-45

- Being a poor listener
- Being argumentative

“The Purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” (Prov. 20:5)

“Engage the person with attentive questions, praying for sensitivity and wisdom, and then take the time to carefully listen.” Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith*, 52

- Rushing too quickly to the gospel
- Not caring enough to remember their name

“Jesus never did this. He never treated a person as a burden, a mere means to an end.” (45)

- “It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare....There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” —C.S. Lewis

“The second ditch is practicing “friendship evangelism” indefinitely, which can lead to idolizing relational comfort...It’s dangerously easy to build relationships with nonbelievers in the name of gospel witness...without ever getting around to gospel witness.” Matt Smethurst, *Before You Share Your Faith*, 46

IV. CONCLUSION

If as a church we are loving non-Christians by befriending them, praying for them, and sharing our lives and gospel-hope, we will (by grace!) see people come to know the joy and life found only in Jesus.