

Loving Community

1 John 3:1a; 1 Peter 4:7-13

INTRODUCTION

We will love one another deeply (and have fun doing it!).

Church, by the end of our time today my hope is that we will feel just incredibly GRATEFUL for God's love for us in making us His children, CHALLENGED to love one another deeply because we are His children, and EXCITED to have fun doing it.

Grateful for God's Love (1 John 3:1a)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!... Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 3:1a; 4:11)

What is your relationship to the church right now?

- God has not called us to love sporadically, but daily (Hebrews 3 and 10).
- God has not called us to love casually, but deeply (1 Peter 4)

Challenged to Love Deeply (1 Peter 4:7-11)

⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.

Forgive Again and Again (8)

⁸Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Related passage: Colossians 3:12-15a

Be Hospitable Without Grumbling (9)

⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Serve Faithfully and Filled with the Spirit (10-11)

¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Rejoicing No Matter What (1 Peter 4:12-13)

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Persecution can strengthen the church in its own way, but so can a season of peace (Acts 9:31). As you know, we are in a season of peace. How may we strengthen ourselves in the Lord in this season?

According to Acts 9:31b:

- Living in the fear of the Lord
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Doing it unity together

AND... we want to “Have Fun Doing It”

As we have sought the Lord in prayer and much discussion, the elders have felt led to intentionally promote the value of having fun together in this season of peace. Put another way, we want to intentionally strengthen our “rejoicing muscles” together.

Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion

1. What stirs in your heart when you “stop and stare” at the Gospel truth that you were once an enemy of God, but now you are His child?
2. What is the theological foundation that supports the command that we should love one another deeply?
3. According to Peter (1 Peter 4:7-11), what does that look like?
4. Why is the value of having fun together in this thing called life so important?