

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

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John 13:34-35

1. Today we are going to focus on the fifth of six defining statements Jesus made related to being a fully developed and mature follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. My first thought was to title this message, "The Missing Ingredient."
3. Tertullian (160-230 AD), a greatly used man of God in North Africa, imagined pagans looking at Christians and saying, "Look how they love one another."
4. What Tertullian imagined should be reality, but, in reality, it rarely is.
5. We should not be surprised because Paul declared that as we approach the end of the Church Age things will not be as God intended them to be.

a. 2 Timothy 3:1-8

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 **For men will be lovers of self**, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 **unloving**, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**, 5 **holding to a form of godliness**, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

2 Timothy 4:1-5

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, **they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires**, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6. If things were as God intended them to be things would be radically different in the lives of those who refer to themselves as Christians.

1. They would love Jesus supremely.
 2. They would follow Him fully.
 3. They would trust Him totally.
 4. They would abide in His Word.
 5. They would have a radical, sacrificial love for their brothers and sisters in Christ.
7. They would not be numbered with those who:
1. Are lovers of self.

2. Are unloving.
3. Are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
4. Are Christians in name only.

“Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.”

5. Are always being exposed to the Word but making no real progress.
6. Are controlled by their own selfish desires.

NOTE: Most people today choose their church and their level of involvement based on what they want; not on what God wants and what others need them to be.

8. The passage before us provides its own outline.

I. A new commandment I give to you.

- A. The Law required that people love their neighbors as they love themselves.
- B. This form of love is referred to as brotherly love.
- C. The Jews tended to apply this law in a narrow sense, but Jesus broadened its application in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-37)

II. That you love one another, even as I have loved you.

- A. In the context here Jesus is focusing on the love that should be manifested within the Body of Christ, the Church, both universal and local.
- B. We are to love one another sacrificially, in the same way Jesus loved us. (1 John 3:16)
“We know (define) love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”
- C. Those who manifest Christ’s love toward their brothers and sister in Christ can be confident that they are in Christ. (1 John 3:14)
“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.”
- D. John went on to challenge his readers with these words. (1 John 3:18)
“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

III. “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have (My) love for one another.

- A. A local church should be an island of selfless love in a sea of sin and selfishness.
- B. Our love for one another should be so evident that even outsiders will recognize it and come to realize that Jesus Christ is the author of it.
- C. How can a church call itself a Body of Christ if the love of Christ is not an evident reality, both internally and externally?

APPLICATION

1. Jesus repeated Himself in John 15:12-14 when He said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you."
2. May this church reflect what God intended every body of believers to be.
3. It is essential that we sacrificially love one another in the midst of the world’s animosity.