

Title: the beauty of church III – sacrificial love
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A loving church is a beautiful church.

A city set on a hill

Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ ***"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*** ¹⁵ *Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.* ¹⁶ ***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.***

- What is the purpose of the church?
- The church is like a greenhouse.

Missing Jesus completely

1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.* ² *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, **I am nothing.*** ³ *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, **it profits me nothing.***

- We value gifting. God values motive.
- We misunderstand the church, because we misunderstand Jesus.
- **Church is designed to help us build character.** The church helps us to serve, to give, to sacrifice and to learn to love people who are less than perfect.
- A loveless church? Insignificant in God's sight.
- **It is more than doing what is right.** It is doing right for the right reason.

The great commandment

John 13:34–35 (NKJV) ³⁴ *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* ³⁵ *By this all will know that you are My disciples, **if you have love for one another.***

- **Our goal:** to love one another sacrificially.
- **"As I have loved you"** – you have to experience the love of Christ to be able to love in the same way
- **The power of love? (Luke 7) It transforms.** It leads to extravagant giving of self and all we have.
- **"By this all will know"** - Jesus is saying that the credibility of His life and message in the eyes of unbelievers is dependent upon the way we as His followers relate with one another. Somehow their belief and our behaviour are connected.

Francis Schaeffer rightly said, "**Our relationship with each other** is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful – Christian community is the final apologetic."

Take the test

1 John 2:10–11 (NKJV) *"He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."*

****The test of Love:** If the overwhelming feeling in our hearts towards another brother or sister in Christ isn't love, then the darkness is already overwhelming us.

How do we step into the light?

- Give one another the benefit of the doubt.

- Step into another person's shoes.

Communion? A sacrificial body.

1 John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ ***By this we know love***, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

The body of Christ will be marked by being a sacrificial people.