

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 5 Mar 2023

**Sermon Title** : Love is Not Rude

**Speaker** : Rev John Foo

**Text** : 1 Corinthians 13:5

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## **INTRODUCTION**

“Rude” according to the Oxford Dictionary is “being offensively impolite” or “bad-mannered”. We all know what being rude is. We have encountered rude people before and some of us have been rude to others as well. Hence, there is not much to say about “rude”. Today’s sermon is not going to be based on the dictionary definition of terms. We can take reference from the dictionary but let us look at why Paul would describe love using this statement, “Love is not rude”. What was he concerned with and what prompted him to describe it this way? 1 Corinthians has something to do with the Corinthians’ conduct and behaviour. How were the believers behaving towards one another? What kind of love were they showing one another? Was it a loving community?

## **The Corinthian Church**

At that time, the Corinthian church was located in the commercial city of Corinth which had a hodgepodge of people there – Greek, Persians, Syrians, Roman soldiers etc. Corinth then was well known for everything sinful and immoral. In the church, we can find Jewish Christians but majority of the believers were Gentiles who had converted from paganism. All these Gentile believers were not familiar with the Law of Moses. Hence sexual morality was very low on the scale and sanctity of marriage was not a big deal. Hospitality was almost non-existent and bickering about who was better and what was better was common in the church. This was why Paul had to write these letters to the Corinthians in the church that he founded and dearly loved. They were having serious issues and Paul had to write his letters to them to get them back on track.

In 1 Cor 1:7, we see that despite the sinful conduct and behaviour of the Corinthians, God had not deserted them. He had bestowed upon them every spiritual gift and was in their midst with the Holy Spirit. The importance of love had also been impressed upon them. Since it had already been made clear earlier on that all the spiritual gifts meant nothing if there was no love, was it necessary for Paul to subsequently dedicate this whole chapter to explain what love is about?

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## **The Right Kind of Love**

Generally, humans can love because we are made in God's image. We thus have the ability and propensity to love but love can mean different things to different people. Paul knew that with all the issues in the Corinthian church, only the right kind of love could bring them back to God.

Before delving into the right kind of love, how would we explain what love is? Most of us would fall back on feelings, the warm fuzzy feelings, using descriptors like affection, fondness, romance, and affairs of the heart. Some even say love just happens.

However, if we refer to the statement, "Love is not rude", by simply removing rude does not leave us with the right kind of love. By not being rude does not mean that we are automatically being loving. We can be unloving even though we may not be rude!

## **Agápē is Not Rude**

The love that Paul describes in 1 Cor 13:5 is a kind of love that is not rude. He says that the love that is not rude is love from above. We know that this love from above is from God according to 1 John 4:8, where John uses the Greek word "agape". Paul uses the same word "agape" in 1 Corinthians 13 on love. This means that Paul is actually saying that "Agape" is patient, "agape" is kind,....."agape" is not rude".

Not every love that humans express can be patient, kind, not envious, not boastful nor arrogant or not rude. Only the agape love from God can be all of these because it is of God, from God and with God. It is a sacrificial love that God has expressed in His son Jesus Christ that gives without expecting anything in return. It bears all things, endures all things and hopes all things. Agape is the love that does not allow rudeness to cut in at any time.

## **Why do we need agápē love?**

Some may think we have enough self-control not to be rude but without agape it will be love that is dependent on our conduct and behaviour. Rudeness operates in the domain of relationships and even though we may not be rude due to our self-control, we will not be able to love people genuinely.

To love people genuinely, we need agape love from God because:

- It is not produced naturally from our hearts.
- it is the love from God made available to all of us because it is the kind of love that resides with God, is of God and from God.
- It is God's love that has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rom 5:5) – not something we can work on alone.
- God's love for us, giving up His own son, enables us to love Him back – we love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

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- God's love shown by us in relating to one another would have no place for judgement or discrimination but will result in an inclusive community.

Without agape love from above, our church can become just another gathering of people, not a faith community. A community of believers has to be one that is filled with God's love shown by us to one another. Relating to one another with a love that bears all things, believes all things, endures all things and hopes all things. Not a love that judges others, shuns and ostracize or discriminate against others because they are different from us. It is a love that includes everyone and that has to be a love from God because we are a community of God.

## **We love because He first loved us**

We need to experience God's agape love for us before it can flow through us to others. We need to experience the overwhelming outpouring of God's love into our heart:

- A love that makes us feel safe and secure
- A love that gives us the deepest assurance of God's abiding presence with us and for us
- A love that says no matter what happens around you, "I am there for you".
- A love we can turn to and say we will stay in that love and enjoy that love.

When we experience this agape love from God, it will be obvious as it will show in how we love others with this agape love that has been poured into our heart.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let us remember God's agape love for us. If we have been distracted and had wrestled back control of our lives instead of letting God love us, be still and know that He is saying, "I am there for you!". Reclaim that first love from God so we can fulfil the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment by loving God back and then love others as the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment.

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## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2a. Ask for a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 13:5 aloud slowly.

2b. Consider your interactions with people after hearing this sermon. Have there been situations where you were not rude yet unloving? Why?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 3a. Agape is the love from God made available to all of us. What are some characteristics of agape love that differentiate it from other kinds of love?
- 3b. (i) How do you feel, knowing that agape is the kind of love that is not produced naturally from your heart?
- (ii) Are you experiencing God's agape love for you now?
- 4a. Without agape love from above, our church can become just another gathering of people, not a faith community. Why is this so?
- 4b. (i) What are some challenges you face in relating to others with God's agape love?
- (ii) What is one change you can make to help you overcome the above challenges?
- 4c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4b above in the following week(s), till your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your testimony on an occasion where you experienced God's agape love in your life.

OR

Give thanks to God for His agape love that makes you feel safe and secure and gives you the assurance of His presence whatever situation you may be in.

6. Take time to pray for each other and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and our church with the overflowing love that is with God, of God and from God. Seek the Holy Spirit's enablement to focus on loving God and sharing His love with one another.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Fill This Place – Red Rocks Worship [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSBwg3FH\\_54](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSBwg3FH_54)
2. The Love Of God – Traditional Hymn <https://youtu.be/Als5Paml-AM>
3. I Give You My Heart – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYvo0fQ8iZU>

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