

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 29 May 2022

Sermon Title : What It Takes

Speaker : Rev John Foo

Text : Romans 12:9-10

INTRODUCTION

What is a great church? Rather than knowing whether our church is great, we should be more interested in whether our church is real. What makes a church real is not about the physical building but what is contained within – you and me. Whether our church is real or not depends very much on whether we are real or not - being real to God, being real to ourselves and being real to one another in this gospel believing community. How do we regard the people in the church, do we see and regard the church community as part of our family?

What it takes to make our church real (Romans 12:9-10)

- The one thing that it will take for us to be real is that we love one another with genuine love.

It is very easy to talk about love – we declare God is love, we also declare that we love God and profess that Jesus loves us and died for us. Some may be experts on the topic of love and know the 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman namely, words of affirmation, acts of service, physical touch, quality time and gifts. Some may know the different kinds of love such as eros, philia, storge and agape love.

We may know all these but when it actually comes down to loving someone, we stumble, hesitate or struggle. Especially when that someone is unlovable, someone we do not care about or cannot stand, that we hate, bear a grudge against or is our enemy. We know we are called to love our enemies and treat them as our neighbours, but the focus of love today is not about the person we are called to love, but about the kind of love we are to have in our heart for others.

What kind of Love?

- Our love must be genuine (Romans 12:9) or real love

Do we have genuine love in our heart? The idea of love varies for different people and our love tends towards being sentimental, about feeling. What one calls love another may call infatuation or obsession.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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- Love must be without hypocrisy (some other versions of Romans 12:9)

We cannot pretend to love someone or say we love someone, when deep down we do not feel love at all towards that person.

World's way vs God's way of love

1. World's way of love: Most of us tend to follow the world's way of love. We love selectively, superficially, partially and conditionally.

Christians are supposed to love according to God's way. Jesus said love is important so that the world knows that we are His disciples:

2. God's way of love: - *Abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good.* (Romans 12:9) It explains what genuine love ought to be. For our love to be genuine, we must hate evil. We cannot bear with it. We must hate evil so much that we want to get rid of evil and do not want the evil to be around us.
 - On our personal front, we are to hate any forms of evil and sin that is in us.
 - On the community front, we are to address any forms of evil or sin that is present in the person we are showing love to. If we show love but ignore the evil and sin, our love will lose its depth and purity.
- If we only keep showing love, ignoring evil, wrong and sin, our love will weaken our condemnation of evil. Before we know it, we will find nothing wrong with the evil because all that matters is that we show love and focus on love. The evil and sinful part will not be important.
 - God loves us so much that He has to get rid of sin by sending His Son Jesus to die for us to remove our sin. God's way of love is to totally hate evil and He is calling us to this same kind of genuine love.

How do we live in God's way of love as a community?

Abhor what is evil (Romans 12:9)

- Whenever we see a sin, wrong and evil in a brother or sister in Christ, we cannot turn a blind eye. We have to deal with that sin, wrong or evil. We cannot assume that the brother or sister will manage to find his/her way out of it. It is the sin that we need to deal with, but we need to be gentle with the brother and sister. Otherwise we will destroy the person. The motivation is to restore the brother and sister. Be harsh with sin but gentle with the brother and sister.
- When we know that evil, sin and wrong is in us, we need to be open in the community, to our brothers and sisters, for them to assist us to get rid of the sin. We need our brothers and sisters to be gentle with us in dealing with the sin and restoring us.

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We will become more and more real as we show this genuine love towards one another.

“Abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good” has to be taken together. We need both to balance how we relate to each other. If we only hate evil, we will lean towards condemning the person. If we ignore the evil and hold fast to the good, we will only give license for the person to do evil.

Hold fast to what is good (Romans 12:9)

- When we hold fast to what is good, we will be dwelling with what is true, right, honourable and lovely. We will start to avoid what is wrong and start to see the good in others.

Show brotherly affection and honour (Roman 9:10)

- Brotherly affection is deeper than ordinary friendship. Jesus said we need to love each other in church with brotherly affection. The bond that we are called to share in Christ Jesus means that everyone in church is a brother or sister to us.
- When we show brotherly affection, it is genuine love that must be as intense as that in a family. You will watch out for that brother and sister and the love shown is deeper. You will stop him or her from the path of destruction.

Outdo one another in showing honour (Romans 12:10)

- God’s way of love is to show honour while the world’s way is to get honour for ourselves. God’s way is to think of others as more important than ourselves. A person will feel genuine love from us when we show honour and respect for the person.

How to show genuine love and honour

- Give a helping hand when needed.
- Go beyond “none of my business” – It is my business if the community is my brothers and sisters.

CONCLUSION

To be a real community, there must be genuine love for self and others. This can be seen through the way we honour and show respect for one another. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good must be taken together so as not to condemn or give license for sin but to restore with love. God desires us to be holy and holy people need to show genuine love. Let us pray that our church will become a real and genuine community that others can tell we are Christ’s disciples because we love in God’s way.

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour. (Romans 12:10)
 - a. What are some ways you can fulfill the above in your
 - (i) family
 - (ii) small group
 - (iii) church community
 - b. How can your small group come together and support you in 3a. above?

- 4a. What are some consequences if “*Abhor what is evil*” and “*hold fast to what is good*” are not taken together?
- 4b.
 - (i) What changes are needed for your small group and our church to become a real community; real to God, real to ourselves and real to one another?
 - (ii) What is one thing you or your group can do in the next week(s) till your next meeting, to bring about this change?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

5. Share your testimony on how you have experienced through God's grace and love, the ability and courage to be open in the faith community, to your brothers and sisters, for them to assist you to get rid of the sin you have in your life and restore you to God.

OR

Give thanks to God for calling us to the bond in Christ Jesus that makes everyone in church a brother or sister to us because we love each other with brotherly affection which is deeper than ordinary friendship.

6. With prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3a., 3b. and 4b. above, submitting to God your concerns, fears and challenges in having what it takes to be a part of a real community.

As a group, pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance, and spend some time to work out some steps on how a brother or sister (from your small group) who sins can be restored in love. Bring this before the Lord and commit to being open to corrections by your brothers and sisters in your small group, and also to correct those who sin in love, for restoration.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Here is Love – Matt Redman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTOP304FOG0>
2. Refiner's Fire – Brian Doerksen
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=OfH9j-TLg3U>
3. Resurrender – Hillsong https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deH_PPqqX38

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