

A Community Marked by Love - 1 Peter 4:7-11

Small Group Notes

The Soul Needs... to love and be loved

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11 - The **end** of all things is **near**. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. ⁸ Above all, **love** each other **deeply**, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer **hospitality** to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each one should use whatever **gift** he has received to **serve others**, faithfully **administering God's grace** in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it 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.

- What did you think about the 'hand clapping experiment' in the service? Why does that work? When have you seen similar things in society?
- Why does the church being a healthy community matter?
- Healthy community can't be forced. All we can do is play our part and pray for it.

Read 1 Peter 4:7 - The **end** of all things is **near**. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

- What were the Christians in 1 Peter going through? (see Acts 7:59 – 8:3, and Peter 1:1)

The churches Peter was writing to lived with an awareness that Jesus could come back at any time (see 2 Peter 2:8-9).

- How does that awareness help in times of persecution or pain? How can we have that awareness more?
- Why is community especially important for a persecuted church?
- What does it mean for them to be 'exiles'? Does this apply to us as well?
- In this text is the challenge for what we should be like together... but what we are like together needs to start with us individually.

Marked by love

Read - 1 Peter 4:8 - Above all, **love** each other **deeply**, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Vs. 8- 'deeply' refers to the quality of our love (not superficial, but deeply)
We are getting worse at deeply connecting with others. Here is something that Matt Woodley has written about this:

“According to a 2006 study, our circle of close friends is getting smaller. Over the past twenty years, the number of people we can discuss "matters important to us" dropped nearly a third, from a mean of 2.94 to 2.08. The number of people who said they had no one to talk to about important matters more than doubled, to nearly 25 percent.

A 2012 New York Times article added that this scarcity of close friends has especially impacted mid-lifers. During midlife it's harder to meet the three conditions required for making new friends—proximity; repeated connections; and a setting that encourages people to let their guard down and confide in each other. The article went on to state: In your 30s and 40s, plenty of new people enter your life, through work, children's play dates and, of course, Facebook. But actual close friends—the kind you make in college, the kind you call in a crisis—those are in shorter supply.”

For many of us we lose the ability to love and be loved as a way of protecting ourselves.

As C.S. Lewis wrote in the Four Loves- "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to be sure of keeping your heart intact you must give your heart to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully around with hobbies and little luxuries, avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safely in the casket of your selfishness. And in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will not change, it will not be broken. It will become unbreakable, impenetrable and irredeemable. The only place outside of heaven where you can be perfectly safe from the dangers of love is hell."
How do we find healing if our hearts have become closed off to others?

Two things are part of what this love looks like... 1. Hospitality, 2. How we serve each other

Marked by hospitality- love as hospitality

Read 1 Peter 4:9 - Offer **hospitality** to one another without grumbling.

- What might 'hospitality' look like in different setting?

- Can you still show hospitality without a home, or as a child?
- Have you ever seen someone that was really good as hospitality?

Vs. 9- 'without grumbling'

- Why, do you think, is it important that hospitality be 'without grumbling'?

Marked by serving each other with spiritual gifts – love as service

Read 1 Peter 4:10a - Each one should use whatever **gift** he has received to **serve others...**

- How, do you think, you might have been gifted to serve others?
- Why does God give spiritual gifts at all?

Lastly, don't miss God's part in this...

Read 1 Peter 4:10b - ...faithfully **administering God's grace** in its various forms.

Vs. 11- we get 2 examples

Read 1 Peter 4:11 - If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it 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.

Those that speak... speak as though speaking the words of God.

Those that serve... do so with the strength that God provides.

When you love others... enabled by God... you are showing them the love of God.

In the end God gets all the glory.

Love deeply, show hospitality, serve others

empowered by God... that we might see God at work among us... this is an important path to becoming the community God wants us to be.