



TWCC Teaching Handout – “**LOVE in the Midst of Tension**”

Wednesday, February 26th, 2020

LOVE: THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD: Read 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 13 (NKJV)

- Last week we also learned the key _____ of the LOVE of God we are encouraged to cultivate and grow in.
- The **Spectrum of Love** has nine ingredients: (1) _____ - “Love suffers long” (2) _____ - “and is kind” (3) _____ - “Love does not envy” (4) _____ - “love does not parade itself, is not puffed up” (5) _____ - “does not behave rudely” (6) _____ - “does not seek its own” (7) **Good Temper** - “is not provoked” (8) **Guilelessness** - “thinks no evil” (9) – **Sincerity** – “does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.”
- We additionally discovered Love’s _____: 1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV) – “*And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”*”
- Again, loving others with the Love of God entails and includes: (1st) A **CHOICE** – because we are to love one another by faith and not feelings or emotions involved. (2nd) Showing **COMPASSION** - yielding to that intense eager yearning to do good to others, bless and benefit others. (3rd) Demonstrating unwavering **COMMITMENT** to others – which means a commitment to meet their needs. And (4th) - _____ - anticipating their needs and meeting them.
- **LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS TO BE DONE:** (1) UNCONDITIONALLY. (2) SACRIFICIALLY (3) PERSONALLY.

LOVE IN THE MIDST OF TENSION:

Philippians 1:9 - 11 (NKJV) – “*9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*”

- **AMPLIFIED Vs 9-** “*And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight [that your love may display itself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment]”*”
- **LOVE IS THE ESSENTIAL _____ OF A FOLLOWER OF JESUS.** A mature follower, a mature laborer and a mature leader will develop in the characteristics of 1 Corinthians 13 as we’ve been reading and reviewing. The First Fruit of _____ and growing in God-kind and quality of _____ is the big goal of our life of faithfulness and fruitfulness as a laborer and leader within the Church.
- Today, I suggest to you, that as we grow in our _____ WALK and _____ WALK and LIFESTYLE, we will that we’re also developing a _____ that’s full of both judgement and full of mercy.
- Philippians 1:9 (NKJV) – “*And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment*”

- **AMPLIFIED** - “And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight [that your love may display itself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment]”

IDENTIFYING TENSION

- Webster defines **TENSION** as: *inner striving, unrest, or imbalance often with physiological indication of emotion. A state of latent hostility or opposition between individuals or groups. The act or action of stretching or the condition or degree of being stretched to stiffness: Stress.*
- Let's briefly examine three common points that everyone confronts: (1) _____ TENSION; (2) TENSION FROM _____; (3) _____ TENSION
- **Relational tension.** No one lives or leads without interacting with other people, which includes interacting with other leaders. Tensions with others, including with other leaders, happen.
- **Tension from Turmoil.** Friends, Jesus acknowledged that there would be tension in our lives. That's why He told us in **Matthew 6:34 (NLT)** – “So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.” In other words, “Don't borrow problems from tomorrow.” Jesus knew we would face problems every day. He knew we would have to live with tension. **Read Ephesians 6:10 – 12**
- **Personal Tension.** In addition to tension from turmoil and relationships, each of us has our own issues.
 - People have issues. Laborers and Leaders have issues. I even have issues... 😊
 - There are over 300 leaders in the Bible and only 25% of them finished their lives in will of God for their life. They all had issues. I don't think any woke up and wanted to be a bad leader.
 - King Saul had ego issues. He had insecurity and pride issues. King David had moral issues. Elijah had emotional issues. Baalam had money issues. Moses had anger issues. Bottomline if you are going to live life as follower of CHRIST and lead others you will have to work through your issues. Everyone has issues; but the real question is what they do with those issues.
 - We all have things that we're dealing with, issues that trouble us or cause us to feel that we're not at our best. Typically, in our own lives, these personal tensions will ebb and flow, reaching a peak and then leveling off.
- **Exodus 2:11 – 12 (NLT)** – “¹¹ Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. ¹² After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand.”
- **Exodus 4:2 – 4 (NLT)** – “² Then the LORD asked him, “What is that in your hand?” “A shepherd's staff,” Moses replied. ³ “Throw it down on the ground,” the LORD told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back. ⁴ Then the LORD told him, “Reach out and grab its tail.” So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand.”
- Moses had 5 questions. Questions are the beginning of growth. Then God stopped his questions. And He asked Moses questions.
- Moses Staff (Rod) represented three key things that we should give to God:
 - (1) His _____. I'm a shepherd (Who you are).
 - (2) His _____. This is how I make my living. (What you have).
 - (3) His _____. This is how I manage my flocks. (What you do).
 - **IF WE DON'T GIVE OUR IDENTITY TO GOD, OUR INCOME TO GOD AND OUR INFLUENCE TO GOD, THE DEVIL WILL TAKE _____ OF IT!**
 - We should give these big three things in our lives to God in order for us to effectively be equipped and enabling to handle the TENSION in our living, loving and leadership scenarios.

BALANCING MERCY AND JUSTICE

- Working through the tension of balancing love with judgment presented in **Philippians 1:9** raises a number of questions. **How can we walk in love while executing judgment? How can we be both merciful and just? How can we be non-negotiable in the truth and yet be tolerant in love?**
- I suggest to you, that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, is saying here that our _____ must be combined with _____, which sounds like mixing oil and water.
- **James 2:13** tells us... “¹³ For **judgment** is without **mercy** to the one who has shown no **mercy**. **Mercy** triumphs over **judgment**.”
- **Hosea 12:6** says, “So you, by the help of your God, return; Observe **mercy** and **justice**. And wait on your God continually.”
- Loving, Living a life of Love, Laboring and Leadership means that we must constantly deal with _____. We don't get to choose one side or the others. **Justice** and **mercy** are the ultimate odd couple. Yet when balanced properly, they perfectly complement one another.

GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES FOR STRIKING A BALANCE

- **Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage:** Read 1 Corinthians 7:1 – 20 (This is a balance of mercy and judgment, in light of the New Testament Law of Love)
 - Dealing with Difficult Children (Christian Parenting): First of all parents, we must take great energy and effort to ensure that our children are inwardly healthy.
 - **Components of Inward Health:** If you or your children are unhealthy inwardly in your spirit, emotions, attitude and mindset, then you or they easily _____, you and they have a hard time _____, and you or they quickly _____ and _____ others.
 - (1) A sense of _____. (If this is missing, we feel *inferior*).
 - (2) A sense of _____. (If this is missing, we feel *insecure*).
 - (3) A sense of _____. (If this is missing, we feel *inadequate*).
 - (4) A sense of _____. (If this is missing, we feel *insignificant*).
 - Proverbs 22:6 – “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*”
 - **THE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OF OUR CHILDREN AND, LIKE ALL OF PARENTING, MUST BE INTENTIONAL. IT MUST BE DELIBERATE. TRAINING WILL NOT TAKE PLACE BY ACCIDENT.**
 - Our goal as parents is not merely to elicit immediate obedience and obtain instant results but to lay a firm foundation for the future: to train our children in the way they should go so that when they are old they will not turn from it but will walk in that way and pass it on to their own children.
 - Proverbs 22:15 - “*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*”
 - There are three (3) Hebrew Words translated “FOOL” in the book of Proverbs. These three (3) things you should look for and be aware of the ascertain if “foolishness” is bound in their heart:
 - **1st WORD** = *lax or careless habit of mind and body; to be perverse, silly*
 - **2nd WORD** = *means dense or stupid, manifesting itself in impiety [defilement, desecration, blasphemy, profane] and irreverence [no manners, rude, grossly disrespectful]*
 - **3rd WORD** = *refers to a vile [morally despicable, repulsive, foul, utterly bad: obnoxious, immoral, rotten, sinful, unethical, unrighteous, wicked, wrong] and vulgar [morally crude, offensive in language, profanely indecent] person*
- *Foolishness is bound up in the hearts of children. It takes a whole lot of exercising and implementing the LOVE of God to create and foster – (1) The ATOMSPHERE of Love; (2) Maintain the solid ATTITUDE of Love and keep consistent (3) ACTIVITY of Love and (4) APPLICATION of Love to enable successful Balanced Biblical Parenting. You need a healthy balance of MERCY and JUDGMENT to ensure your children or grandchildren don't grow up spiritually, emotionally, mentally and psychologically lopsided so to speak. Part of reason to do this is their natural immaturity. But foolishness that lingers in the heart after a child has passed into the teen years and adulthood is sure to cause trouble. We all have seen adults who, regardless of their chronological age, seem never to have grown up. In almost every circumstance, that fact causes ongoing problems for them and their families. A child left to himself will grow like a wild bush and eventually be out of control.*
- You may say, Pastor that is all well and good, but my children seem more like the gift from the devil versus the gift of God. I've got troubled teens, or I've got terrible toddlers, rebellious and disobedient children. What do I do? **LOVE BY _____ AND JUSTICE. BY LOVING TOUGH, BUT LOVE COMES FIRST.**
 - Often, the most common sources of conflict and difficulty with children are as follows:
 - Personality and relationship clashes – favorites, mannerism, likes and dislikes
 - Unspoken and unmet expectations – children aren't achieving as much as you wanted; picked the wrong friends; not making straight “A's” in school;
 - Insecurity and identity issues – social and financial status; relatives; etc.
 - Unresolved conflict from past wounds – harmful hurtful words exchanged; hatred; strife; relational schisms
 - Independent attitude and inflexible perspectives – stubbornness; rebellion; disrespect; disregard; dishonor; defiance and deliberate disobedience.
 - Bad Fruit comes from bad roots. The Heart is the Root of the Matter!
 - Unruly, Undisciplined, Unfaithful Child comes from an Unhealthy Heart!
 - James 4:8 NLT – “*Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.*” (Mercy then Justice / Judgment)
 - Psalms 51:10 NLT – “*Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.*”
 - Proverbs 4:23 NLT – “*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*”
 - 2 Corinthians 7:1 NLT – “*...let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our*

body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God."

- **KEY PARENTAL POINTS:**

- Hurting people and children naturally _____ people. As parents, we must never place our _____ health in the hands of someone else (even our children).
- It is possible for a well-meaning parent to sabotage himself/herself. He/She might win an argument, but ultimately he/she _____ more than he/she gains.
- Parents must practice **the Law of Connection**: Parents touch a _____ before they ask for a hand. **"Rules without relationship breed rebellion" "Relationships without rules brings destruction." Keep MERCY and JUSTICE/JUDGEMENT at a healthy balance!**
- The imposition of parental authority without caring and compassion for the child, may cause bondage and servitude; however, children can't wait to get out of that tyranny of oppression!

- **Five Options When Faced with Conflict:**

- #1 – I'll get _____! (*retaliation*)- Discipline, Correct, Train – DON'T PUNISH!
- #2 – I'll get _____! (*escape and avoidance*) – CHASTEN (DISCIPLINE) BECAUSE YOU LOVE!
- #3 – I'll give _____! (*surrender*) – Be longsuffering; LOVE is patient and kind!
- #4 – I'll go _____! (*compromise*) – Stay strong and stable during the emotional clash!
- #5 – I'll _____ with it! (*address the issue*)

- **Five Stages: How Paul Faced Conflict – Read Philemon**

- **1st STAGE:** _____ **STAGE** (v. 4 – 7) – Paul began by affirming Philemon, we must begin by focusing on positive qualities. Practice the 101% Principle; always open by focusing on the positive and what you have in common.
- **2nd STAGE:** _____ **STAGE** (v. 8 – 13) – Paul chose to compromise and appeal to Philemon rather than make demands. We must be willing to assume some responsibility for the conflict, if possible. As you bring up the issue in conflict, recognize the differences in motivation and temperament; meet halfway.
- **3rd STAGE:** _____ **STAGE** (v. 14) – Next, Paul communicates the decision in front of Philemon. In the same way, you must lay out the choice in front of both parties, as you understand it. Maintain their dignity, if possible. Take steps to sustain a loving relationship and friendship.
- **4th STAGE:** _____ **STAGE** (v. 15 – 20) – Paul then challenged Philemon to do what was right. You must commit yourself to the steps you will take, then extend a clear challenge and await a response. Settle the issue. Lay out good boundaries and parameters to keep the relationship healthy and holy.
- **5th STAGE:** _____ **STAGE** (v. 21 – 22) – Finally, Paul closed by expressing confidence that Philemon would take the high road. End by expressing sincere confidence in your adversary as a person. Let him know you trust him to do what's right and nothing will prevent you from loving him. Remember, it is more important to win a "soul" than to win an argument. ○ When a child under your parental care has clearly done wrong, the Bible calls us as parents to confront them on issues regarding sin, failure to keep a public commitment, a destructive attitude, harmful conversation, etc.