



For Christ's Love Compels Us

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

December is the month when we remember the birth of our Lord Jesus, who, "being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8).

Today, as we celebrate, let us not be caught up with Christmas activities and forget our Lord Jesus, who is the very reason for this festive season. Let us meditate on the depth and richness of God's love. In I John 4:9-10, it says *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* In Romans 5:5, we are reminded that *God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

In Ephesians 3:14-21, we read that Paul prayed fervently for the believers at Ephesus. *So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that*

you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. (Ephesians 3:17-18)

Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus that they may have intuition and understanding to experience the unfathomable richness of God's love. Paul emphasized building a close relationship with Jesus Christ. He used the terms "being rooted" and "established" to demonstrate the close relationship of Christ with His believer. Roots are important for the growth of plants. If there are problems in the root system, the plants will not grow properly. The deeper the root is, the more secure the plant will become to withstand wind and storms. Similarly, we need to build a deep relationship with Christ and be connected to His love.

Paul also emphasized "being established", or having a strong foundation. All sturdy buildings need strong foundations; otherwise, they may topple over: the taller the building, the deeper the foundations.

Paul used these two symbols to exemplify the importance of building a deep relationship with Christ. Building a deeper relationship with Him allows us to understand God's love and motivate us to reciprocate His love, resulting in the ability to love others, and the strength to serve and participate in building up the church. Love is the motivator behind all these actions.

The Bible says it is Christ's love that motivates us to serve; therefore serving God is not out of compulsion, but as a response to God's love. Christ's love encourages us to love one another. The Bible says, we love, because God first loved us. Jesus said, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:34-35)

Praise God, He has granted our church a clear vision: to be a worshipping, growing and loving community that reflects the beauty of Jesus Christ to transform our community and the world. This vision reminds us to

become a loving community. This is God's will, because God is love; and it is also the central theme behind our Lord's new commandment. Paul was praying for the Ephesus church to ask God to help them understand Christ's love, so that they would be willing to respond and actively participate in loving one another.

We often encounter difficulties in loving others, because we do not have a strong motivator. For example, if we are late for work, our boss will warn us, threatening to dismiss us if we are late again. This warning is a great motivator, pushing us to be punctual.

We must return to God to strive for a deeper understanding of His love in order to be motivated to love. When we actively seek to understand the depth of His love, we will have the motivation to love God and others. I hope that through meditation, action and fellowship, we can experience Christ's love. Let us learn to pray like Paul on this matter.

Christ's love is the foundation of the church. As we experience more of Christ's love, our church can expand and grow, because this is the foundation for revealing Christ to others. Through our love for one another and the continuous growth of the church, God will be glorified in the church.

The main purpose in Paul's prayer is that God can be glorified: *To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.* Ephesians 3:21

**Blessings,
Pastor Ivan Leung**



They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Chorus 1
And they'll know we are Christians
By our love by our love
Yes they'll know we are Christians
By our love

Verse 1
We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity
May one day be restored

Verse 2
We will walk with each other
We will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other
We will walk hand in hand
And together we'll spread the news
That God is in our land

Verse 3
We will work with each other
We will work side by side
We will work with each other
We will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity
And save each man's pride

Verse 4
All praise to the Father
From whom all things come
And all praise to
Christ Jesus His only Son
And all praise to
The Spirit who makes us one