

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunday December 21st, 2014

The warm anticipation of Christmas met with us this morning, as we continue to prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ in our hearts year after year. We humbly lit the candle of Love reminding us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, "Dear Father God, oh how we love You; your Love knows no limit and you are Love incarnate in your Son Jesus who was born in a manger to live a life of love, help us live as He lived, in Jesus Name Amen."

"God's laws are simple, they can be summed up into 2; Love God, Love others as yourself, (Mark 12:30-31). The family of God should feel warm, be inviting and loving. At Crossroads our desire is to Leave Others Valued Every day, and we feel that this is what Christmas is all about, it means loving others as God loves us, helping those in need, listening to them and giving of our time to them. We have lit 4 candles in anticipation of Christmas; Hope, Peace, Joy and today is Love, it is foundational to God's message towards us. Love is unselfish service unto others, a tribute to who God is, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love," 1John 4:7-8. The Biblical kind of love God shows is Agape love, an all-inclusive sacrificial perfect and unconditional love. That kind of love from a genuine heart comes from God which he showed us by sending His Son, it is manifested by action. Jesus once said, "The world will know you are mine by your love," so let us explore this wonderful love.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres," 1Corinthians 13:1-7. This scripture is widely recognized and has been used for many weddings, and it states 8 attributes that love is in contrast to 8 attributes it is not. There are 3 Basic concepts of love, How you deal with others, life and yourself. The beneficial attributes are Patience, Kindness, Humility, Truthfulness, Selflessness, Protectiveness, Trusting, Hope and Perseverance. The more we come close to Jesus the more we grow loving and forgiving towards others.

Patience means we are long tempered and tolerant showing self-restraint in face of provocation. Kindness is to show oneself useful in a non-selfish way without expecting anything in return. Humility is thinking of others more highly than our selves. Truthfulness is to be honest and genuine, and selflessness is giving without considering the cost to one self. Protectiveness seeks the wellbeing of others above our own and standing up for those who can't do it for themselves. Trusting means to give while reserving judgement; without doubting or have ulterior motives. Hope is encouragement and believing in the goodness of others because of the God we serve and finally perseverance is to never give up and never turning our backs on any one even if they fall short or we find it challenging.

In Romans 2:4, it tells us how God is kind and tolerant but often we seem amazed at the patience God has with others and we sometimes may become impatient with God when we rather should be humbled with the patience He showed us. The apostle Paul says it like this, "I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved," 1Corinthians 10:33.

Beloved this season and throughout the year let our goal be to love like Jesus, let us not adopt an unforgiving attitude. After all God did so love the world that He gave His One and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. That is what we celebrate at Christmas; we love others and forgive others as God did for us. We Hope in what God has done and will do, we have Peace because we know we can trust God, and Joy is ours for the taking when we focus on its source that is Jesus our Savior, but love which inspires all the good we do flows from the loving relationship we have with Him. So this Christmas if we only celebrate the Holiday and not Christ it is like receiving a gift, admiring the beautiful wrapping but never opening it up to enjoy the gift inside. The greatest Gift of Christmas is the Love of Jesus Christ! May you have a most love filled Christmas! Asherey Shalom!

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