

Sunday 7th March 2021 10 am

Love is not self-seeking Is you love genuine?

See service sheet online at www.knbc.org

Welcome

Opening Scripture Luke
 Hymn: MP 77 Christ triumphant
 Reading: Isaiah 53
 Prayer: Adoration and Praise
 Communion prep Ex 15:2 - 16:3 Assembly belonging to – 15:13
 Communion
 Notices pray World watch list, letters, CT greetings
 Main reading: Genesis 13, 1 Cor 13:4-8a
 Hymn MP 162 From heaven you came
 Sermon: Is you love genuine? Love is not self-seeking
 Hymn: MP 166 Give me sight of Saviour

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.The audio file is [21_03_07.mp3](#).*Welcome and pray* ("Lord help my love be genuine love")

Many well-known cosmetic companies give out 'freebies' or samples – I know that because a good number come Vanessa's way! Yes, they are free. However, x2 they would like you to give some feedback, to fill out a survey or even better to start buying the product proper. It comes under the heading of what companies call 'loss leaders'. It is a commercial decision chosen because it works, because it ultimately achieves the goal – which is? Gleaning valued marketing information or more sales – usually both. It is simply 'give to get'. That is their bottom line motive, company profit.

The problem is that so often our relationships with each other can be riddled with this same - 'give to get' - approach.

1a

You give someone something, say some attention because you want them to give you some attention back. The motive is self.

An old Solicitor friend confessed that he used to approach conversations always with the thought of how it would benefit him. The motive was self.

Today we look at **Love**. In 1 Cor. 13:5 **Love is not self-seeking** x2

God commands us all to love each other – that is to seek the best for them. To be self-seeking is not love, - love is not self-seeking.

It is easy to give; time, interest, attention etc., as a means to get. It can be done without even thinking, it comes naturally. It is a ruse, pretense, it is not loving but hateful. Someone speaks about their experience, and my thoughts immediately jump to my own experience. I just have to tell them. It rarely helps them, it pulls the attention towards self. The result is that you are not 'giving', or loving at all. *The difference is in my motive.*

Years ago the company I worked for dabbled in a philosophy known as

■ Taguchi. This assesses what actually goes to the customer when you sell a product. Do you pass on value or are you giving them a liability? Are you imparting a quality product or something that will go wrong and need attention? Have you sold them a lemon, is it what was known as a Friday afternoon car? Or a product they could be always pleased with?

This is true for every interaction - I was given an inkjet printer. The person who gave it to me was obviously pleased to do so. It turned out to be quite old, not that good, and it had no ink with it. Now what do I do with it?

The truth is she was not thinking of what I needed but just getting rid of it for a new one. There was - behind the pleasantries – no love.

I have done just the same – and so have you. The world does it all the time.

■ Many items are left outside the BCM shop. On Friday Warwick was saying how a mowing machine was left, someone wanted to buy it then discovered the motor had been removed.

It is the way many around work - and how easy it is to follow its their way

God made us, and calls us to love one another, and that is to be other centered in my motive. That is love. So check your motive x2

■ Like those Kellogg's Corn Flakes packets there is something to cut out.

"Check my motive" on Bulletin, put it in you Bible, on the dash, fridge. Motive, motor on car, driving force - Am I other-seeking or self-seeking?

1b

We start at the Church at Corinth, then look to Christ and seek Change. x2

Corinth

As we work through this list of Love in 1 Cor. 13; **Love is patient, love is kind, it is not rude** etc. a good question to ask is how Paul arrived at such a list? Are these just arbitrary characteristics pulled together? No, Paul had good reason to choose these words. He chose them carefully and with the church he was writing to very much in mind. *What would he say to us?*

So today this is not a string of anecdotes, but real problems in the church between those called to love each other.

The best literal rendering might be **L does not seek its own things, YLT , does not insist upon its rights, nor seek to aggrandize herself. Love does not insist on its own way, L does not pursue selfish advantage, L is not selfish, it takes no thought for itself;** or as the Message puts it love **Isn't always "me first,"**

All the way through Paul's letter to the church at Corinth he had to address this problem. Ch. 1. again ch.3. People were thinking of others from the starting point of themselves. They had become followers of men "**I follow Paul, I follow Peter, I follow Apollos**". It gratified them to look to individuals.

"I like to listen to him, he has helped me more, he is" It wasn't just a bit of 'cooing' when so-and-so was speaking, they had such a worldly spirit it was causing splits and parties to be formed in the church. That is what happens who you treat people differently on the basis of appeal. Division is usually caused by people putting themselves before others. James says **if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as law-breakers.** Jas 2:9

So Paul says "**love is not self-seeking**". And reminds them: **what after all is Apollos, and what is Paul, only servants.** Servants of the word, it is God's word, He is behind it, He is the source of any true benefit from it.

This attitude of looking at everyone in a worldly way surfaced in how the church saw the Apostles. Paul has to devote much of his second letter to reason against this attitude. No, the mark of a servant of Christ is humility and service, not gifting and pomp. **To miss this - is to miss everything.**

In chapter 6 we see those who professed faith in Christ were taking each other to court, using the force of the secular law - to get their own way.

Like that solicitor friend I mentioned they had a 'me' centered, self-centered mentality. It was me/them. win/lose – and I want to win!

They were acting unlovingly for their motive was self - they didn't want to be done out of anything. - **The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.**" 1Co 6:7-8

What is your first thought when something happens? How will it affect me?

- Someone at BCM loves ventilation and even when it is cold opens doors/windows. Immediately I think uww' then I think what is best for all
- When Ana comes in and put the lights on, I prefer it dimmer – but better for all to have light
- Years ago we had some who said we should have green top milk others said blue top. I said those in the blue camp chose G and vice ve, it is easy

What is the point of the fight? Are you defending a high principle or is it simply selfish pride? **Check my motive Am I other-seeking or self-seeking?**

It requires training - and discipline - not to think of me first - but others first.

Just picking out the most obvious examples: we see this lack of love towards each other in ch. 8; there they are eating and drinking whatever they wanted without considering its effect on others. No concern, no thought.

- Like drinking when there are those around who have been alcoholic.

You may well be allowed to but if it doesn't help someone else don't do it! To do so is unloving - Paul had to say **knowledge puffs up - but love builds up.** I.e. make sure our knowledge of our liberty in Christ is miss-used!

Why am I doing it? - for them or me? time to **Check my motive, is it**

Something similar was happening at the Lord's supper "**When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else.**" 1Co 11:20,21. The result of this selfishness, ignoring God's way; is to cause division.

- Will you wait for others? Adjust your speed even to fit theirs? *Father*

Then in ch. 12 Paul speaking of the body of believers says how dismissive they were of each other. They think and even say "**I don't need you**" "God Paul says **has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.**" 1Co 12:24-25

Equality is not a biblical principle; fairness is x2. However, it is mentioned in a couple of places: One is to do with giving to the needy that there might

be 'equality'. Secondly within the Body of Christ that each one have 'equal concern for each other'. In the Body passage Paul has to lay it out in no uncertain terms. Those who professed to follow Christ were climbing all over each making themselves indistinguishable from the world around that the Lord had called them out of.

How are you in this area? How are we all? Do you give more attention to those you like? to those who interest you more, make you laugh, find stimulating to talk to, easy to get along with - over those who are harder work, those you have less in common with?

■ Are you willing to give time? ... or do you prefer to talk than to listen? Or are you employing any other method to control the conversation?

All this wrong dealing with each other is driven by a selfish motive. It is not love. Love wants the best for the other, it has equal concern for every other.

The world loves its own. We in the Body of Christ are to model heaven where every relationship is perfect. Hence the importance of communion.

We see something similar in ch. 14 they were trumpeting their gifts and conveniently forgetting that these gifts are given – as God determines- for the good of others.

And at the end of the letter ch. 16 Paul has to command them to accept others into their midst without looking down on them. So the church again and again failed to love one another. God saw it – God sees it.

Check my motive - Am I other-seeking or self-seeking?

The passage we read in Genesis highlights this problem along with the person whose life is ruined by it, namely Lot.

Lot

The flocks of Abraham and Lot had become so large there was not enough grazing in the land for both. So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarrelling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.

That was the problem, how would you approach it? Abraham said: **Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.**" In other words "you choose" x2 See if you can work out what is going on in Lot's mind: **Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the**

3a

LORD, like the land of Egypt, (lush and fertile). So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out towards the east. Easy choice eh?!

So Lot chose for himself x2

He saw what was the best land for him to graze his flock – but instead of giving it to Abraham, and seeking the best for him the loving way - he chose the unloving way, he was self-seeking, he **chose for himself**.

Not only was Lot's lack of love for his fellow man, even his own brother, grievous to God but there were terrible consequences. **Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.**" Ge 13:8-13

Lot is not just near Sodom soon he's in Sodom, and it is not long before he is part of the fabric of society at Sodom. He marries, has children and when judgment comes his wife and son's in law perish.

✚ He had chosen for himself, he had chosen foolishly, it was the wrong choice, which lead him down the wrong path -> finally God's discipline.

Choosing for me not only hurts others but always x2 angers God, for it is to fail to be as I was made to be. Selfishness is always an utter enemy of Love.

Love never desires nor seeks its own praise, or honour, or profit, or pleasure.

It is the purpose of the man here on earth to do good to others. Love to others will prompt to that, and that alone. There is not a drop of selfishness in true love. It seeks the welfare of others, and of all others. This is what we see in Christ. Do you want to see how it should be? Look at Jesus Christ.

Christ

Christ was never self-seeking, Jesus is the great example of self-less-ness.

His life is the one right life, how life is to be. He always did what his father wanted **The one who sent me is with me; I always do what pleases him.**" Joh 8:29

Not only what he did, but what he said: **The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.** Joh 14:10 Jesus never wrestled the initiative but loved his father and loved his people.

Speaking to his father he says: **I gave them the words you gave me** Joh 17:8

While the world around applaud those who stand for themselves, promote themselves, are full of themselves, But Jesus brings it back to why you and I are made – that is for each other. I was not made to serve me - but you.

3b

✚ Godhead love. As image bearers you and I are to act out that same love.

Jesus presents to us the great paradox **Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.** Lu 17:33

You cannot find true purpose in yourself. Jesus said **“He who speaks on his own does so to gain honour for himself, but he who works for the honour of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.”** Joh 7:18

Jesus came to serve, to submit his will to his fathers will. Jesus, the Lord of Glory humbled himself even to death on a cross. A terrible punishment reserved for the worst of criminals.

When he pleaded with the father to take this cup from me it was **not my will but your will be done** x2

He let nothing get in the way of doing exactly what the father wanted, **I have come to do your will** he said.

It was this strong will that lead him to the cross, the suffering, the mocking, the humiliation, the beatings, the cruel nails and the excruciating pain.

It was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer - that he might be the sin bearer. On the cross he carried away my guilt. **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** Ro 5:8

How unlike Christ I really am!

Change, Do you want to change? (The Gospel challenge and appeal)

What we are looking at this morning about selfishness shows perhaps more than any other way just how sinful I am. Selfishness is like a cancer that needs severe treatment to try and stop it killing me. I am like that, - and you are like that. My continued failure to love God and to love my neighbour means I am a failed human being. I have no right to anything from God. A God of justice should x2 bring me to everlasting punishment. The place is ready.

But in Christ God is merciful, In Christ he has made a way, to not only be merciful but bring grace, peace, forgiveness and love

Yes I am to love God and my neighbor as Christ did. **Love is not self-seeking**, but how very far I am from having *love in my heart for my neighbour*. Naturally prone to have love and care for myself, and aim at my own advantage. The truth is I rush headlong into it.

“I’m a loving person” I hear someone say, yes you are, but because we are all corrupted to the core your love is a distorted love, you no longer love God and reflect His glory, your love is turned inward towards self.

✚ Do you live in a hall of mirrors? You can’t see others only yourself?

■ Rob’s mother in Cornwall, controlling, not attractive but ugly

There’s the choice: **“To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life.” But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.** Ro 2:7,8

How can I change this unless the Lord intervenes? “Lord help me, change my heart, put real love there for you, and for others”

✚ No man is heaven bound who lives for himself alone; or who makes it his main business to promote his own happiness and salvation.

✚ No man is a follower of Christ who does not deny himself; or no one who is not willing to sacrifice: his own comfort, time, wealth, and ease, to advance the welfare of his fellow man.

Will you seek Christ who can **pour out his love into your hearts by his Spirit**” Ro 5:5 Christ can change the heart,

Oh how I need this. I need this, you need this. The sign that the gospel has come is that I now do what pleases Him and what is best for others.

■ Years ago I used to spend my time messing around with cars, and enjoyed the engines and especially changing / replacing them

This is what Christ does, he gives a person a new heart, like a motor transplant. Now I have a new motivation, a new motive, a different motive.

✚ Zacchaeus, Levi the tax collector, - has Christ done that for you/in you?

Now I am no longer a taker – but a giver. I can love God and my fellow man, - that is with Christ I do not seek my own things: but I seek the things of God, - and what will make most for his honour and glory; - and the things of Christ and the spread of his Gospel, - and the enlargement of his kingdom; - and also the things of others seeking the best for their temporal and spiritual welfare. – *that, that is genuine love!*

✚ Is you love genuine? i.e not self-seeking but other seeking?

END