



Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. Matthew 24:12

In churches today the love of most grows cold. Even as the church sings of the love of Jesus, true faith dies out. Churches boast of their love and family atmosphere, but love inspired by the Holy Spirit died out years ago. Like the world, the church has rejected the true cross of Christ and, therefore, it has rejected how God works and defines love. As wickedness has increased in the church, the cross that truly crucifies a man or woman can no longer be recognized. While churches pay lip service to the message of the cross, they refuse to accept the work of the Holy Spirit that would crucify self. As a result, the selfless love of Jesus cannot manifest itself.

What we see in the church today is not love, but a thin veneer of polished flattery and token socializing. Indeed, such love is often less than what we would find in even a worldly club or organization. Like a club, each church simply attracts people of similar interests and tastes. We live in the terrible times God warned about. Paul did not

warn the church about wars, famines, or political problems in the last days. Rather, he declared that the terrible times would be this: men would be lovers of self in the name of Jesus.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. 2 Timothy 3:1-5

Instead of a selfless love by way of the crucified life, the church in the last days loves only if they receive something out of the deal. Ultimately everything comes back to themselves and they are quite simply, as Scripture points out, “lovers of themselves.” Instead of a church that despises the dollar, they are lovers of money. Instead of humility, ministries and churches boast, brag, and claim greatness in Jesus. And if someone dares to preach or live a message that crucifies self, not just in word but by the power of the Holy Spirit, that church will endure all manner of slander, abusiveness, and unholiness. Indeed, the very people that yell the loudest about the love of Christ, are the first to hate. Why? The reason is simple; the increase of wickedness causes the love of most to grow cold.

It should not surprise anyone who visits Sound Doctrine Church that our love for each other springs not from the human motivation that men conjure up, but from the cross of Christ. This love doesn't flow from Biblical principles or the goals set by man, but from the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit. Like crucifixion, it is a painful process but the fruit is a small taste of the love that will overflow in heaven (1 Peter 4:1-2). Learning to love at Sound Doctrine is a tough road, full of many bruises. Like Jesus, who was bruised so that we might be healed, the great joy and love at Sound Doctrine Church results from us being bruised with Christ.

Over the years, many people have felt attracted by the love they found here, only to leave later because they reject God's way of producing this true love. Most people want love, but not by way of the cross. For them the attraction of wickedness and the love of self is too great for them to hate their own lives.

The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. John 12:25

The Only Thing

The goal of faith is love and the only thing that matters in Jesus is faith expressing itself in love. Jesus was crucified so that a few might die to themselves and love God and men with a selfless love. This is true faith in Jesus.

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Galatians 5:6

The very first sermon God led me to preach when starting Sound Doctrine Church in Washington was entitled *The Most Important Sermon*. This lesson discussed the true love in Jesus Christ and why it is the only thing that matters. True love in Jesus is achieved only by carrying a cross daily and by holding to the truth. As 1 Timothy declares:

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

People in both the world and the church claim to love, but not based upon the truth. As Proverbs tells us, “Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?” Almost everyone desires a love based upon the lies in their hearts. People in the world believe the lie that lust is the same as love. People in the church believe that their socializing is love. Men rejoice in a love based upon falsehood. This allows them to remain in their sin, while Satan is all too eager to reassure them that they are saved and in God's love. One of the characteristics of love inspired by the Holy Spirit is that it rejoices with the truth

(1 Corinthians 13:6) even at the cost of church members (Acts 5). If our love is not based upon God's truth, then it is based on a lie. And if our love is based on a lie, our personal definitions of kindness, gentleness, and love are also lies, putting us in league with the Devil. If our love comes from impure motives and is tainted by what we want, then we are not filled with the Holy Spirit and are simply using God to get what our sin desires.

Many cannot stand the love at Sound Doctrine Church because it is empowered by the Holy Spirit with truth. The Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of Truth, seeks the truth in all acts of love in the church. If something, or someone, is impure (Ephesians 5:5) in their love for God and others, the Holy Spirit will seek it out and crucify it. Most people will not tolerate this crucifixion and leave embittered. Therefore, like the first church, individuals are afraid to join us.

No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Acts 5:13

This is one other way you know that churches are dead in their love for each other—no one is afraid to join them. Ask yourself a question, are people afraid to join your church because of the kind of love God works? Of course not! Your church has a false love that makes people feel comfortable and lures them into joining. However, when the cross is honestly present, when love from the Holy Spirit is evident, men will feel afraid to join—it is that simple. Many churches advertise that they are friendly and loving. However, they are not offering the love of heaven, but a deception from hell.

Sound Doctrine

A short tract cannot explain all the ways God works love in a church. It is enough to know that God teaches us how to love each other. Surrender to the cross and expect God to teach you how to love. He will teach you what true love looks like, how it acts, and that it comes only from Him. You will experience first how different it is from what

the world calls “love.”

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. 1 Thessalonians 4:9

The Holy Spirit works, guides, and empowers each member at Sound Doctrine to the degree we allow the cross of Christ to crucify us. Where our flesh and self refuses to die, love is stopped and hindered.

Let us give a couple of quick examples. The first church hated and despised money as Jesus commanded (Matthew 6:24). Because they surrendered to the truth and allowed the cross to crucify their flesh’s love for money, the first church had all things in common. God could work deep love in the first church, and now does so at Sound Doctrine Church, because we despise the dollar and give up our lives. We too have all things in common, claiming nothing to be our own. Though each person owns their own things, we know they are not ours alone. If you are not interested in this type of eternal love, then you will want to chose another church.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Acts 2:44-45

As we shall see in the following Scripture, if we allow the Holy Spirit to honestly shake up our lives, the fruit of love will be produced. Sound Doctrine Church did not lay down a rule that everyone must have all things in common. Indeed, Sound Doctrine Church does *not* own anyone’s property, as is often slanderously stated. Instead, each person surrenders everything to God, and the Holy Spirit works a love among us that has all things in common. So if you value your things and your life, spare yourself and others a lot of grief by not visiting or joining Sound Doctrine Church.

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was

his own, but they shared everything they had. Acts 4:31-32

Inward Matters

This, however, only refers to outward things. At Sound Doctrine Church we also love each other enough to give up our own opinions and way of thinking. Other people often shamelessly label this as “brainwashing” but, for us who know the power of the cross, it is simply the love of God at work in our minds and thoughts. Did you notice in the previous verse, one aspect of the love that God worked? It said, “All the believers were one in heart and mind.”

At Sound Doctrine Church we pour contempt on our opinions and hearts’ desires. We fight hard the fight of faith to allow God to crucify our minds. We loath our opinions and allow Him to crucify our thoughts—even our opinions about what we think the Bible says. We know too well that only a fool begins a sentence with, “I think the Bible means…”

A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions. Proverbs 18:2

The first Christians knew the power of the cross and therefore Paul could demand that the Corinthians be in perfect agreement.

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1 Corinthians 1:10

Make no mistake. Scripture demands that Christians not only agree in all things in Jesus, but even in the way they arrived at that unity and agreement. For it is never acceptable for two

Christians to just agree on a matter—they must also agree in *how* they came to the conclusion of a matter. You simply don’t find a love that produces this kind of unity in the church today, because men refuse to really give up their own opinions and doctrines. Rather than loving the truth, they love their lies. If you love your thoughts, even your thoughts about the Bible, then don’t join or visit Sound Doctrine Church. For you will find the love of heaven that will even crucify where your flesh holds correct doctrine.

At Sound Doctrine Church we love God and each other so much that we re- fuse to rely on our personal Bible studies as a means of gaining the truth. Instead, we love Jesus enough to go to the Holy Spirit and allow that Spirit to crucify our wisdom. We do not want to be like so many Bible colleges, churches, ministries, Bible thumpers, and pastors that diligently

study the Scriptures but refuse the cross of Christ that crucifies our understanding and application of those Scriptures. Such groups miss the love that flows from heaven—a love that surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:19).

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. John 5:39-40

In order for Jesus to give life to our Bible studies, we must allow Him to drive nails into our hands and feet. We too, by the Holy Spirit, must allow Him to place a crown of thorns upon our thoughts. We must permit our very hearts and lives to be taken. If you are not willing to allow this to happen concerning your understanding of the bible—indeed, in everything you think you understand—then you will not enjoy the love at Sound Doctrine Church. For the love here will work a perfect unity, and those of us who are

“mature” in the way of the cross will demand that you allow the cross to crucify all of your thoughts, plans, and life (Philippians 1:27). In this love, if anyone at Sound Doctrine thinks differently on a topic, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God will make clear the issue and powerfully bring us into perfect unity. But you have to be “mature” in the way of the cross. Unfortunately, few are even willing to take the first step of surrender unto maturity.

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Philippians 3:15

Growing In Love

A vast book could be written on the ways God expresses love at Sound Doctrine Church. However, it comes down to loving the way Jesus loved.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1 John 3:16

There is only one kind of love that comes from God and glorifies Him. It was exemplified in His Son, and only manifests in those who become like Jesus by laying down their very lives for each other. Christ laid down His life by way of the cross and Sound Doctrine Church, through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, will demand the same of you. If you desire a different kind of love than this—well, you have lots of other options where love has grown cold.

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