

SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 02.11.25

PREACHER: PS NATHAN BEAN

The Church as Body and Bride - The Most Excellent Way of Love

BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

BEING [HEART], THINKING [MIND] & DOING [BODY]

[A PERSONAL REFLECTION]

Conviction of a Disciple:

A disciple grows in covenant love — choosing maturity over preference, unity over division, and authenticity over glossy pretence — so that the Church reflects Christ's self-giving love to the world.

OVERVIEW

The Church is both the body and the bride of Christ. As his body, we must stay connected and contributing; as his bride we are called to covenant commitment rather than consumer choice. Love — agape — is the most excellent way, the high mountain of discipleship that leads us from childish self-concern to mature Christ-likeness.

ACTION

Q1. Where are you tempted to treat the Church like a consumer rather than a covenant partner?

Q2. What does choosing “the most excellent way of love” look like in your daily relationships?

Q3. How can you help our church become known for authentic, face-to-face love rather than religious noise?

THOUGHT

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13, Ephesians 5:25-27, Acts 9:4-5

The Church was never meant to be a marketplace of preference, but a community of covenant of love. Scripture calls her both the Body and the Bride of Christ—two images that bind us to one another and to him in mutual belonging. A body cannot flourish when its parts compete rather than working as an integrated whole. Just as a marriage cannot thrive on self-serving convenience and comfort, neither can the Church.

Paul's words to Corinth cut through the polish: "I will show you the most excellent way." (1 Cor 12:31) It's not a catchy slogan. The way of love is a path of descent - into a life of humility and service. Each act of patience, each refusal to keep score, each moment of kindness is a step deeper. The path is slow and risky because it asks us to let go of self-importance, to forgive when we're wounded, to remain when we're frustrated, to believe again when trust feels thin. Yet this is how the Bride becomes radiant—cleansed, healed, and holy in his love.

Paul reminds us that gifts, miracles, eloquence, and knowledge mean nothing without love. The real miracle is a community of hearts that are being transformed. It is possible to have impressive ministry and still miss the point. Love is the litmus test that cuts through the noise of clanging cymbals. Love is the sound of Christ resounding through his people.

To choose love is to choose to grow up. Infants cry to get their way; the mature surrender it for the sake of others. The child says, "Serve me." The disciple says, "Let me serve." Love is a new way to live—from the center of Christ's heart rather than the edges of our preferences.

This is the most excellent way: to keep surrendering in love to one another, until the Body becomes a unified song of love sung back to God.

DISCUSSION

[A GROUP REFLECTION]

- 1) What does it look like for our church to live with “marriage-level” commitment to one another?
- 2) How do we keep love central when differences or frustrations arise?
- 3) Where do you sense the Spirit inviting you to maturity in love right now?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

You are the Head and the Bridegroom of your Church. Teach us to love as you love—patiently, and kindly. Grow us from preference to covenant, from noise to harmony, from immaturity to the fullness of your love. May we walk this deepening path together until your beauty is seen in us.

Amen.