

INTRO

- Have you ever been on the receiving end of someone's sacrificial kindness and generosity? Describe how it made you feel.

READ

1 John 3:11-18

REFLECT & RESPOND

John continues to give us clear ways to examine the authenticity of our faith.

EXHORTATION TO LOVE

Love is *the* Christian virtue and to be the distinguishing mark of the followers of Jesus.

Read John 13:34-35.

Qu: Why do you think both John & Jesus emphasize the importance of loving one another in the context of the church?

EXAMPLE OF LOVE

"We should not be like Cain...". (v12)

Cain's story is closer to your story than you may think. In Mark 7:20-23, Jesus clearly tells us our heart is the seedbed for all evil, whether acts like murder, or thoughts like racism and pride. Sin is a failure to love God and others well because our heart/love is *incurvatus in se*—"curved inward on self".

Qu: "Follow your heart" is a popular way to live life. Based on Cain's story and Jesus' words in Mk 7, how should we view our hearts?

The command to love one another is impossible in our own strength and human love. So, how are we to do it?

ESSENCE OF LOVE

Read v16. The essence of love is self-sacrifice. We are first to receive this kind of love for ourselves from God, and then "we ought to" do the same for our brothers and sisters.

Qu: what's the connection between Christ's love for you and your love for others?

EVIDENCE OF LOVE

To paraphrase v17-18, talk is cheap. Here's the love test:

THE LOVE TEST:

The evidence of an authentic faith at work in our lives is that we start to love others like Jesus: sacrificially and selflessly.

Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular. So, here's how to love another well:

- *Are you aware of another's need?*
- *Are you in a position to meet their need?*
- *Are you willing to meet their need?*
- *Do it!*

"We cannot all do great things. But we can do small things with great love." — Mother Teresa

(The need may be practical or financial, or emotional and social. E.g. what about the lament, anger and injustice many persons of colour are experiencing right now — how could you show love & support?)

As a group, prayerfully consider identifying an individual or family whose need you can meet. This is just one example. Feel free to come up with other creative ideas to love another the way Christ has loved you.

PRAY

- Pray that each one would receive afresh Christ's self-sacrificial love for them.
- Pray for the group to express sacrificial love towards those with need right now.