

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION - 1.22.13

"JESUS LOVES HIS CHURCH" - EKKLESIA

SCRIPTURE - 1 JOHN 3:14-18

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."

BIG IDEA

The Apostle John was keenly aware of the love of Jesus. John walked with Jesus, was taught by Jesus, stood near the cross while Jesus' was crucified for sin, and was an eyewitness to Jesus' resurrection for salvation. The word that John uses for *love* is the greek verb *Agape*, which means, "Seeking the good of someone else, no matter the cost." John is showing us that Jesus seeks his church's good no matter the cost, and that we should love his church in the same way. John points us to 4 distinct things about Jesus' love for his church in 1 John 3:14-18, **(1)** Jesus' love lives in his church. **(2)** Hate lives in those that are still dead in sin. Hating the brothers (the church), whether actively or passively, is murder. **(3)** Jesus loves his church and showed it most evidently on the cross, dying for their sin so that, through trusting in Jesus, they may be forgiven, made righteous, and adopted into God's family. Finally, **(4)** Jesus' church loves each other like Jesus has loved them, selflessly and practically.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q.1 Was there anything from *Sunday's sermon* or the *big idea* that was new to you or had an affect on you? Did you hear anything that raised more questions in your mind?

Q.2 What stood out to you in *1 JOHN 3:14-18* and why?

In Sunday's sermon, Pastor Brett pointed this out: "We need to understand that *hate* does not simply mean an active will to destroy those in the church. There are plenty of ways that we may be *passively hating* the church. Here are a few examples. We can be passively hating the church by:

- **Not being active & regularly participating with Jesus' church** (Hebrews 10:25)
- **Not bearing one another's burdens** (Galatians 6:2)
- **Not helping others grow in Christ through the Bible** (Colossians 3:16) **The purpose of personal Bible study is not only a personal issue. We as Christians study the word so that we might feed on it and have something to feed other's with.*
- **Not speaking the truth in love** (Eph 4:15) **Some go too far, yes. But most don't go far enough.*
- **Not rejoicing with those who rejoice or mourning with those who mourn** (Romans 12:15)
- **Not giving of finances regularly, sacrificially, and joyfully to fuel the mission of the church and love all in the church** (2 Corinthians 8-9)

***NOTE:** These ways that we may be "passively hating the church" are highlighted to help those in *Christ* see that if we're not being active in love, we are probably being passive in hate. These are not *all* an indication of being lost- although they very well may be- These are listed to help you think through what loving Jesus' church looks in real life, with hopes of the Holy Spirit convicting you of specific sins and therefore giving you the desire to repent from that sin and be obedient to

Jesus. Jesus tells us what we are about as his church- namely, love. I (Pastor Brett) say these things for your growth in love for Jesus and love for his church.

Q.3 In what way(s) do you need to repent from *passively hating* the church? **Pray for each other in light of the answers to question 3.*

Q.4 Turn and read **Ephesians 1:4-5**, then discuss the joy that we have knowing that Jesus loved his church before the foundation of the world. **Pray and thank God that though there was nothing good in us, he set out, before the foundation of the world, to redeem his church from their sin, and to bless them with a loving relationship with him.*

Q.5 Turn and read **Romans 5:6-10**, then discuss the joy that we have trusting that Jesus loved his church by dying in place, on the cross, to pay for our sin, so that we might be reconciled to God. **Pray and thank God that we be adopted into his family, because Jesus paid the price of our rebellion.*

Q.6 Turn and read **Romans 8:34-37**, then discuss the joy that we have knowing that Jesus is loving us right now as he is keeping us believing, giving us strength, and maintaining our relationship with God the Father. **Pray and thank God that He is loving us right now.*

Q.7 Turn and read **Philippians 1:6**, then discuss the joy that we have knowing that Jesus will love us to the end; knowing that he will bring us to completion one day. **Pray and thank God that He will love us until the end and bring us to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EKKLESIA COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

We have opened up the door for people to become Covenant Members of Ekklesia Muskogee. We invite you to get a copy of the [Ekklesia Membership Covenant](#) and the [Ekklesia Doctrinal Statement](#), read and pray over them, then arrange a meeting with a Pastor to discuss, pray, and sign the Covenant together.

LOVE MUSKOGEE BIG GIVE DAY

We are inviting each of you to take the month of January to do a little New Year purging. Go through your home and find all those things you don't *need*. Then, because Jesus loves us, let's love others by donating those items to the Love Muskogee Storehouse. We promise that we can and will find people that do *need* those items. Out of the grace you've been given, we invite you to give graciously in love.

Items we are accepting:

- any and all clothing and shoes
- non-perishable food items
- kitchen items
- any and all unused toiletry items
- blankets and towels
- baby items (diapers, wipes, formula, bottles, etc..)
- children's toys/books

LOVE MUSKOGEE UPDATE AND PRAISE REPORT

First, thank you to our Facebook friends who have shared the stories of their friends and family in need. Since joining Facebook on December 5 we have had the amazing opportunity of helping three local families and some of those families multiple times.

Second, and also because of our Facebook site and the generous giving of our neighbors, we are beginning to stock up the storehouse. Already, we have truckloads of materials to pick up and we are still 3 weeks from the *Big Give Day* (Sunday, February 3rd). Thanks everyone and keep your donations coming because we promise to put everything to use for the Kingdom of God!

The Love Muskogee Storehouse is coming along quite well. We can say confidently that within the next few months we will be ready to serve our city exclusively from it. Over the weekend a gigantic donation of clothing was made, a great big thanks to that family and their generosity.