

23T14c Love of Christ- Justice, Solidarity and Compassion

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table. I'm Kip your host for this series.

What does it mean to live a life centered on and around the "love of Christ?" We have been exploring this in our series "Love of Christ" based on a book by Adele Calhoun titled "*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*¹."

Let's pray.

Last time we talked about how we can embody the love of Christ by blessing others or encouragement, and caring for our world, God's beautiful creation.

Let's remember God is very clear, we are to love others in a way that embodies the love of Christ through our lives, actions and words. We have been discussing different aspects of this throughout this series,

1. Encouragement (blessing others)
2. Care of the Earth
3. Compassion
4. Speech (Control of the Tongue)
5. Forgiveness
6. Humility
7. Justice
8. Solidarity (in Jesus' Sufferings)
9. Stewardship
10. Honesty (Truth Telling)

Each of these are part of embodying the love of Christ to the world and this list is not complete. You might be able to come up with more.

Let's start this session with, "Justice".

"Grace only exists where someone is paying the price, not where error is overlooked." Udo Middleman

Our desire is to love others by seeking their good, protection, gain and fair treatment.

Next how do we define it? Justice seeks to help others through correcting and redressing wrongs. It treats others fairly and shows no favoritism.

Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. (Acts 10:34-35 NIV)

Hate evil and love what is good; turn your courts into true halls of justice. (Amos 5:15a NIV)

How do we put this into practice in our lives? It includes being responsible to God and others. It is being a good steward of what you've been given by God. That includes

¹ Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Transforming Resources). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

supporting just causes with time, action and financial support. Its treating others impartially and fairly. It's providing for the poor, needy and oppressed.

What is the evidence we are doing this? Our lives should show God's concern for the poor and oppressed by living sacrificially in order to bring justice and freedom to others.

"No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NLT)

What about, "Compassion".

Our desire to become the healing presence of Christ to others.

Next how do we define it? Compassion means feeling with and for others as well as extending mercy and help to them in extravagantly practical ways. Compassion is part and parcel of sharing in God's heart for an aching and wounded world.

Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" (Mark 1:41 NLT)

How do we put this into practice in our lives? It includes finding the opportunity and means to comfort, encourage and support those who struggle, suffer and are oppressed. It is seeking to heal wounds rather than simply react to the wounded. It is showing mercy rather than passing judgment. It is volunteering, visiting the sick and hospitalized. It is doing for others what they can not do for themselves.

What is the evidence we are doing this? Showing the compassion of Jesus whether or not it is received or recognized. It is becoming a source of comfort and encouragement to others. Showing God's heart to others by sharing your resources and time with others as God directs.

What about, "Solidarity". That is Solidarity in Jesus' Sufferings

"All new life comes out of the dark places, and hasn't it always been?" Ann Voskamp "We enter God's intimate sphere through the door formed by the wound in the side of God's word and Son." Hans Urs von Balthazar

Our desire is to be with Jesus in my pain and in his pain

Next how do we define it? We are in solidarity with Jesus' sufferings when we hold our pain and bear our burdens together with Jesus and his own sufferings for the world..

"I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Philippians 3:10 NIV)

How do we put this into practice in our lives? It includes connecting my trials to Jesus' own (temptations, hardships, betrayal, disappointment, conflict, etc.) It is imagining I am with Jesus in all things. It is meditating on how Jesus responded to conflict and hardship. It's helping those around us that are suffering.

What is the evidence we are doing this? Fellowship with Jesus in the midst of trials and compassion for those who are suffering. It's an ability to hold pain without bitterness and give forgiveness. It's patience in trials with a complete trust that Jesus will redeem all that is broken. And especially, it's not transmitting my pain back on other people.

I think I'll stop there for today.

Let's Pray.

Let me leave you with this. Desmond Tutu wrote in his book *God Has Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time*², sometimes *"you wanted to whisper in God's ear: 'God. We know You are in charge, but can't You make it a little more obvious.'" We often get impatient with God. We ask, "God don't you care." The answer is yes He does but He sees the big picture that we don't. Trust God and His bigger and Better plan.*

Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. If you liked the message, please share a link with a friend. You can contact me at kip@punla.org if you have comments or questions. So, until next time @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. God bless.

² Desmond Tutu, *"God Has Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time,"* Image (2005).