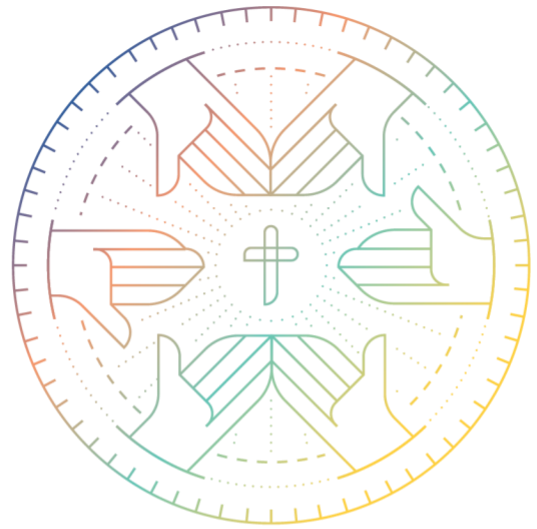


Group Life.

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ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

If you went into a comic book store, what's one comic book that you might walk out with?

OR

David said that we, the Church, should be characterized by one word: love. What's another word that you or others associate with the Church?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Read John 13:1-20, 34-35.

What most stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Can you tell when a church is characterized by love? What are the telltale signs? Can you tell when a person is characterized by love? Again, what are the telltale signs?

INTO THE WORD (20 MINUTES)

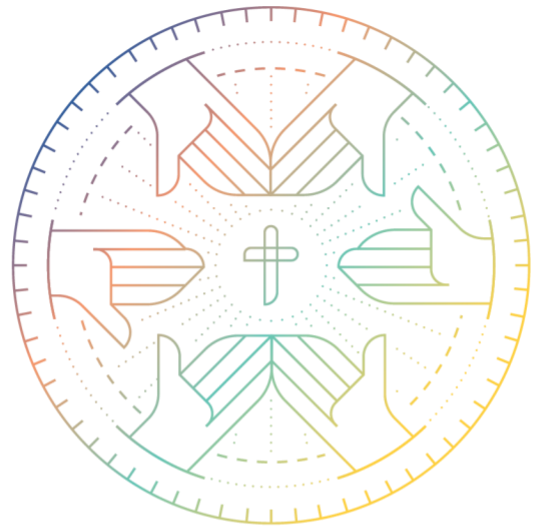
Read Galatians 5:14; Matthew 22:36-40; Romans 13:8-1. How important is it that love be the defining quality for Christ-followers? What other traits or characteristics do Christians sometimes mistakenly substitute for love?

Host Guidance: These passages we just read make it clear that the nature of God is love and the overriding purpose for all that God does and desires for us can be summarized by that one word: love. We often mistakenly hold to other things as our identity as Christians such as truth, discipline, sound doctrine, right-living, etc. and we forget that the purpose of all these things is love. If what we do and how we live does not point to love, we're missing the most important element of our faith.

How is love seen, felt or expressed in your small group?

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Reread John 13:12-17. The disciples missed an opportunity not only to serve Jesus but also each other. Discuss what was missing in the disciples that led to this missed opportunity. Imagine and share how this omission might have looked differently if the disciples had grasped what it really means to have a servant's heart of love.

Host Guidance: They hadn't understood yet how the life of a disciple of Jesus is a life of service. Humbly setting aside position, power or any other status in order to serve the needs of others is a defining quality of a disciple. How awesome would it have been if when they entered the room and sat down, Peter, the loud, self-assured fisherman would have grabbed a towel and started washing everyone's feet beginning with Jesus. What a great example that would have been!

Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 3:23-24. How do we understand the theological concept of salvation? Briefly share how you experienced salvation?

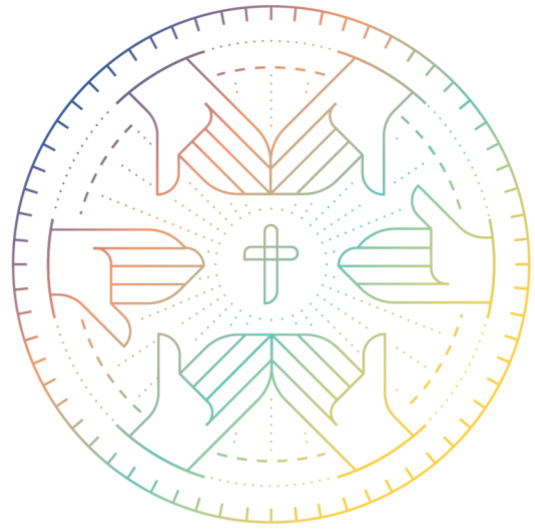
Host Guidance: Salvation is the initial experience by which a person is delivered from sin and its consequences and brought into a right relationship with God. It is a one-time event, marking the moment of a person's conversion or decision to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The belief in salvation is central to Christian doctrine and is based on the idea that all human beings are sinful and separated from God, but through faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death and resurrection, individuals can be redeemed and forgiven.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 5:23 and Romans 12:1-2. How do we understand the theological concept of sanctification? Briefly share how you experience sanctification?

Host Guidance: Sanctification is an ongoing process that occurs after a person's salvation. It involves the transformation of a believer's character and life, making them more Christ-like and holy. While salvation is a one-time event, sanctification is a continuous journey of growth and spiritual maturity. Sanctification is seen as the work of the Holy Spirit within the life of a believer, helping them to overcome sin and develop virtues like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The process of sanctification involves cooperating with God's grace, studying the Scriptures, prayer, and being actively involved in the Christian community.

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APPLICATION (15 MINUTES)

Host Guidance: Below are several separate application questions for your group to consider and discuss. Choose as many questions as you have time to discuss, but don't feel pressure to cover them all.

David said, "Imagine what it would be like if we could get on the good side of this." What did he mean by that? What would it look like to be on the right side of loving God and loving others? What would it look like to express our "super power" of love in our everyday lives?

Which of these ideas from the sermon do you find personally challenging?

- Love is expressed through serving.
- Love is the way Jesus loves you (...do to others...)
- Love is sacrificial and humble.
- Love doesn't make us better, it makes us more godly.
- If love doesn't work horizontally, it doesn't work vertically.
- Love is sometimes painful and difficult.

Think about how one word- love, summarizes the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20), the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), and Paul's teaching on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5). What comes to your mind when you think about that? Now, imagine in your mind what it would look like for you to embody love tomorrow in every moment of your day? What would your day look like? How would it be different? a game-changer?

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Our Savior and Lord Jesus, we see the love and humility that you modeled for us in washing the disciples' feet. You are always the best example for how we are to live and how we are to serve those around us. We want to be identified by love. We want to love people so well that they are drawn to You. We know that such a transformation of our hearts will require the work of the Holy Spirit through our salvation and our sanctification. Please begin that work in us every day and help us to see how beautiful life can be when love is our focus. May we love others as you have loved us. Amen.