

**Intro: Living in the LIGHT!**

**What is wrong with our culture?**

- **The news these past few weeks has reminded us – this world is in darkness!**
- Iryna Zarutka (explain – senseless), kids killed in multiple school shootings, Russia launched a drone attack on Ukraine, hostages are still held in Israel, and lives continue to be lost, Nepal protests resulted in 19 Gen Z'ers being killed, Indonesia protests got violent, and people died, Afghanistan earthquake killed over 2000 ppl, flooding in India killed hundreds, Charlie Kirk...
- **Indoctrination of kids & youth!** THE REASON KIRK ministered on university campuses! He was going into some of the ideologically dark places in the West and proclaiming LIGHT, TRUTH & SALVATION IN CHRIST!
- **Abortion – LGBTQ ideology – casual sex – pornography – wokeness – white is racist - partying**
- **MARXISM** – which has divided people into categories of oppressors and the oppressed

**WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT ALL THIS EVIL, SIN & SUFFERING IN THE WORLD? (glad you asked!)**

**Today's Sermon: The Way of LOVE**

**How do we fix what is broken? VOTE LIBERAL? VOTE CONSERVATIVE? LEFT? RIGHT?**

- **A HEALTHY CHURCH IS AT THE FOUNDATION OF A HEALTHY SOCIETY.**

**A. From a Cruise Ship → to a Battleship Church**

- This is CRITICAL – if we respond like the rest of the world, what good is that?
- **Romans 12:21 (ESV)** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**The Church has to get out of her comfort, entertainment, and hiding zone – and STEP INTO THE LIGHT.**

**Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

**A battleship church does NOT:** wage war with **threats, violence, or politics!** We don't fight against people – we fight against systems of thought that enslave people, deception, harmful ideologies, and we fight against spiritual forces that seek to steal, kill and destroy.

- **A battleship church is one that embraces her call** –Love God with their ENTIRE LIVES, Love people, even your enemies! We FIGHT FOR PEOPLE – not against them!
- **Battleship** – requires ALL HANDS ON DECK! Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4 SAY THE SAME! Ministry can't be left with a couple of people. E.g. each 1, reach 1
- **Galatians 5:13–14 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- **1 John** – and the **IMPORTANCE of WALKING IN THE LIGHT.**
- **1 John emphasizes both the NATURE of Salvation & the NATURE of what our PURPOSE IS NOW!**
- **Last week: Healthy TREES produce GOOD FRUIT! We are talking now about the NATURE of the FRUIT ALL of us are supposed to bear!**

**B. 1 John 2 –The Way of LOVE – the Old/New Command**

## What does GOOD FRUIT LOOK LIKE? OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS.

**1 John 3:23 (ESV)** <sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

➔ COMMANDMENT: BELIEVE in Jesus & LOVE OTHERS

**1 John 2:7–27 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

- **Levitical law stressed love for one's neighbour.** It was broadly agreed upon that these two commandments were the most important.
- **Mosaic Law The 10 Commandments can be categorized into the loving God and loving people.**
- **Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- **Jesus - Matthew 22:36–40 (ESV)** <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

**1 John 2:8** At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

- New because we have SEEN Jesus. The fullness of God manifested in FLESH.
- New because Jesus’ ATONING SACRIFICE – our sins have been FORGIVEN.
- New because PENTECOST – We have been given the Holy Spirit – REBORN, brought to LIFE, given a NEW heart, NEW desires, and the ABILITY to OBEY!
  - YES – as Paul states in Rom 7 – in this life we still have to fight the FLESH nature. We still SIN. BUT the way to FIGHT THIS IS TO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT.
  - **1 John 4:13 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. (The SPIRIT causes us to BEAR FRUIT)
- **We have been called to a higher standard of living.**
- **Our Calling & Purpose - Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- **John 13:34–35 (ESV)** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (EXPLAIN)

### C. Four Principles of Loving Others (which is a chief way we Love God!)

**1 John 2:9-11** Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

- The MEASURE through which we know we are WALKING IN THE LIGHT? LOVING PEOPLE.
- Conversely, we are told to HATE is tantamount to walking in DARKNESS – SCARY.

**1 John 4:20–21 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- We CANNOT love God who we do not see – if we are not able to love PEOPLE whom we can see!  
**Powerful and provocative statement!** (LET IT SINK IN!!! 😊 )
- The centrality of LOVE being the FRUIT that ALL Christians bear that IDENTIFIES THEM is unescapable in Scripture.

#### **FIRST: Love flows from Abiding in Christ**

- **1 John 4:16 (ESV)**16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- Show me someone who cannot forgive, struggles with hate, responds with anger, and lacks remorse or regret.... And I will show you someone who is struggling to ABIDE IN CHRIST.
- **John 15:4–5 (ESV)**4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
- **TOO MANY CHRISTIANS DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE.**
- **You will NOT bear fruit apart from the vine.** (PERIOD) (EXTRA PERIOD)
- **For example, addiction to pornography,**
- **STEPS:** The Way – Abide in Christ (app), SMALL GROUP, PRAY for strength and STEP OUT IN FAITH. Set your alarm! Force yourself out of bed. E.g. Gardeners that FORCE themselves to weed, bear WAY MORE FRUIT in their gardens!

#### **SECOND: Sin causes LOVE to grow COLD**

- **Matthew 24:9–12 (ESV)**9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.
- **Steps: Set Free, Small Group, Path to Freedom**

#### **THIRD: Love your enemies – treat ALL people with dignity & respect**

- **Matthew 5:21–24 (ESV)**21 You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
- **Mark 11:25 (ESV)** <sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”
- **Matthew 5:44 (ESV)**<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

#### **STEPS to dealing with Loving your enemies (hard to love ppl):**

1. FORGIVE – by focusing on what JESUS did, not the other person.
2. PRAY – daily for those whom you disagree with. BEFORE you post.
3. ACTION Are you actively loving family? Coworkers/classmates? Enemies?

#### **FOURTH: Love SPEAKS Truth – cannot be separated**

- **Ephesians 4:15–16 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
- **Ephesians 4:25–26 (ESV)** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
- **If you separate TRUTH from LOVE – you no longer have LOVE. You have CULTURE LOVE.**
- **James 5:19-20 (ESV)** <sup>19</sup> My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, <sup>20</sup> let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
  - LOVE – speaks the TRUTH and brings people out of the DARKNESS!
- **For example:** IF I knew you were about to drink poison and I SAID NOTHING – would that be LOVE? NO!
  - **How is it loving when we HAVE the MESSAGE of LIFE** – we know the CONSEQUENCES of SIN and we stay SILENT?
  - **I wonder if this is the CHIEF WAY WE HATE OUR BROTHER** – by STAYING SILENT.
- **2 Corinthians 10:4–5 (ESV)** *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*
- “Don’t shove your religion down my throat” LISTEN – WE ARE FED A LIES EVERY DAY – You don’t fight LIES with SILENCE. You fight them with SPIRITUAL WEAPONS OF PRAYER & TRUTH!
- **STEPS: 1) Share your faith, 2) What is good that you can promote? 3) What is missing that you can contribute? 4) What is evil that you can stop? 4) What is broken that we can restore?**

**Charlie Kirk committed his life to following Jesus** – in the private and the public sphere! It cost him his LIFE. When he started on University campuses, there were crowds of students who booed him and hated his message. He persevered! And by the end? There were thousands of Gen Z who were showing up! But they were changing! Barna reports Gen Z is on the verge of a revival – did Charlie cause this? No JESUS DID. But Charlie has been instrumental in the age demographic!

Now in death? He has gone from 2 million followers to 10 million. His message is circulating around the globe!

**Message:** Jesus saves, faith is the most important choice you make, Bible over beer, truth over comfort, all people created in God’s image, use WORDS – God’s Word – and LOVE – NOT FISTS – to FIGHT FOR THE LOST AROUND YOU!

**Revelation 12:11 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.