



KIAMA ANGLICAN  
CHURCHES

**“To glorify God, making Jesus known as we love and serve together”**

**Combined Services 20/8/23: Steve Stanis Senior Pastor**

**(Romans 12:9-21 / Psalm 97:1-12)**

A bias to my half Greekness comes into view with the word love. In English we have one word ... love.

In Greek there are four words:

- Agape (Baby/child love)
- Philadelphia/os (Friendship love)
- Eros (intimate love)
- Sagapo (Hugging affectionate love)

Are four words enough to encompass the complexity that is love? Love is not just a simple word; but an expansive response toward others that Jesus modelled. Everything Jesus did, He did in love.

Jesus entering the world changed our measure of love into ceaseless and endless love practiced in service.

We strive to emulate Jesus in our Mission: ***“To glorify God, making Jesus known as we love and serve together”***.

So, what are the principles and the practices our love as Christians at KAC are called to abide by?

### **1. Love is immeasurable... (Romans 12:9):**

In Romans 12:9, Paul speaks about love that has its foundation in sacrifice.

The sacrificial living Paul spoke of, in Romans 12:3-8 is thinking more of others and less of yourself and practicing this love among the body of believers using the gifts God supplies us.

This love, built upon sacrificial living, must be sincere.

Sincere love, to worldly ways of thinking, could sound weak, naive, lacking strength of conviction: - just plain nice.

The nature of sincere love is truth.

It is in this truth-filled love Paul brings together the total obligation sacrifice demands, with the gracious love that choice in faith allows.

Do you see how Paul is helping both the sacrificially-laden Jewish mind, and the grace-driven Gentile mind so that both groups can get a handle on the nature of God's love here?

Grace and sacrifice....

Paul speaks less of the relationship of love, and so much more about the character, the nature of love that God embodies and therefore demands from those whose love is found in Him.

Let nothing in the world distract this love, Paul urges.

Let nothing taint it, let nothing in all of creation separate you from the love of God, Paul told them in Romans 8:38-39. God's demand for our love to be sincere, deserves our full and undivided attention.

Where do we find the source of this attention for your love?

Paul reminds us that it starts with the renewing of your mind.

The nature of love which God intends, is not found in the pattern of this world.

The type of love that the patterns of the world recognise are self-seeking, goal-orientated, personally driven.

Rather, Paul reports in 12:1-2, "Your spiritual act of sacrificial worship is for your bodies to be transformed by the renewing of your mind...by this you can test the sincerity of your love against the approval of the good, pleasing and perfect will of God".

Sincere love accords with God's will for your life and its primacy comes from your mind. Right thinking will flow into our heart for the immeasurable source of right and sincere loving.

## **2. Hate what is evil, love what is good- glorifying God as we love... overcoming love (Romans 12:9, 21):**

It is nice to enjoy the 'happily ever after love' that desires the good in life.

In movies like: The Notebook, Sleepless in Seattle, Pretty Woman.... You know the ones that are sponsored by Kleenex. (*Ryan's movies at Prime Time focussed us on love recently!*)

The tension of love in our world however is that love in terms of the world can never ultimately achieve its own essence.... goodness!

Why? Because worldly love is a crucible.

It is like the melting pot of our lives as it captures our primary desire to love what is good; yet is countered by our failing to hate what is evil.

Paul captures this tension by comparing good God-honouring love with what love is not. The well-known list in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

The crucible for our love in all relationship is our internal battle to love others more than we love ourselves.

God modelled this love for us in Christ. His love is an overcoming love for our lives.

The Cross was God's victory overcoming evil, the crucible where for every life, the goodness of God's action in love, His perfected sincere love, has shown us the way of love.

Jesus' love is to be made powerful, and visible in us as we seek to overcome the evil around and within us, overcoming it with the goodness of a love that sincerely seeks after the heart of one another.

Pursue this love with all sincerity and without any worldly measure.

Therein the crucible of our lives is purified in the love for one another.

This is not a new teaching! But for some reason we seem to need to be told it again and again and again...

### **3. The other centred love serving the body of Christ (Rom. 12:10-16):**

Around 12 years ago the Church at KAC took on a great big action plan. We committed to build the CPC!

Today we celebrate 10 years since the opening. I think upon the devotion, honour, zeal, hope, patience, and prayer that faithfully undertook this labour of love that we celebrate, as the body of Christ today?

Where do we find these same action words to describe the building of the CPC? They are the same words Paul used to describe love within the body of Christ in Romans 12:10-12!

There is one over-arching practice that unites each of these.

It is simply this - service. Follow the servant practice of Jesus' love.

Our Mission statement both reminds us and seeks to reinforce in us our need to serve together in love.

"To glorify God making Jesus known, as we love and serve together".

We come together as a community of believers, expressing the gifts God has given us, to work together for the common unity we have in Christ!

It was Jesus who said of Himself, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).

Romans 12:10-12 sets the pattern for service based in love of one another.

The heart of our service: look to serve, seek out opportunities to serve- be *devoted* in this, *honour* one another in doing this, be *zealous* for this, put *hope* in this service, *patient* with one another in this, and always led *prayerfully* in this.

What truly matters in loving service is the attitude of the heart.

Romans 12:13-16 captures this heart as the empathy, the compassion of experiencing the love for one another, expressed through compelling action.

Give of yourself in every relationship with loving service in *harmony* with what God requires of you. Practice at all times and in all places *blessing those in need, those who are lonely, those who are rejoicing, those mourning, those of lesser position.*

Paul exhorts believers to love with actions that show no measure, preference or discrimination in the body of Christ. No compartments within your own lives, *hospitality* requires an open-heart.

Sincere and good love within the body of Christ is practiced this way of love. Love indelibly expressed through serving.

### **4. Love in service of one another (Romans 12:17-20):**

Paul's message is relentlessly consistent: we should not put ourselves in the place of God. Be humble, do not be haughty.

We are not God, so we shouldn't try to avenge ourselves; instead, we should get out of God's way.

Have peace with all people, Paul writes, if it's possible, and it isn't always totally possible; but as much as we can manage, be peaceful with other people, Christian or otherwise. We can control what we do, not what others do.

It's important to remember that Paul is writing to a church body. If we live humbly with one another, not arrogantly, and if we let God be God and recognise that He'll be the one to right all wrongs, our minds are renewed, and hearts again fill with love.

If we practice this love in the life of another, then we are overcoming evil with good, Paul says.

Using an Old Testament proverb in v20 Paul captures the impact of this in the dramatic (to us) expression of "heaping burning coals on their head".

He does this to explain that serving another in love is to be an agent of God's truth, the coals are a symbol of cleansing; anointing another in ways that go above and beyond the practices of love in the world.

**Conclusion: It is time to build God's Mission over the next ten years for God's glory!**

Romans 12:9-21 shows us we don't need to look any further when we are looking for how to love.

As the Holy Spirit transforms us in the image of Christ, may our lives become a living testimony of God's love and grace, drawing others to the One who first loved us.

Let's be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that our love can serve others by being sincere, selfless and seeking their good.

Be encouraged to serve with the love of a disciple whose heart overflows with thankfulness to God. Be persistent in prayer.

How do we do this here at KAC? Our vision urges us "We are prayerful, connecting and being transformed by Jesus."

I am excited for all God will do over the next 10 years, in our own lives, within our church family, within this building and as we serve others in our communities; as we share God's Kingdom.

I thank God for this building we are blessed with, and I thank God that we are His Church. Our work over the next 10 years is to continue to love and serve so that He will build His Kingdom, both within these walls and beyond.

Romans 12:12 urges us to practice within our love and service. "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer".

Amen!