

引言 INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential tool in a relationship. Both parties have to be on the same page to get the right messages across. Obstacles exist if the two sides speak different languages. Once a young man was helping a pastor translate his sermon. The pastor spoke in Mandarin. The young man was born to a Chinese family in the U.S. English is his mother tongue. He did an effective job until he stumbled in one sentence. The minister said: “A man was dating a girl.” The interpreter rendered: “A man was talking love to a girl.” The Chinese audience burst in laughter. The pastor continued without missing a beat: “Talk alone will not win a woman’s heart.” He is right. Talking love is easy. Practicing love takes efforts, whether it is a love between opposite genders, family members or friends. Love is not only a feeling. Love must also come with actions. God does not only tell us His love. He shows it to us too. God is love, and so His children must be disciples of love. We must love God first, then love other believers. That is why the third line of the mission statement of FCBC says: we love one another humbly. That is based on the Bible passage we read earlier. Jesus said that when He was eating the Last Supper with His disciples. He was about to be arrested, and He would be nailed to the cross the next day. Among other final instructions, Jesus told the twelve men to love one another. Let us unpack these two verses and see how we can apply the truths to our lives.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 愛的命令 Mandate of Love

First, we learn that love is a mandate from Jesus. He told the disciples: **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.”** By mandate, it means it is not an option or a suggestion. It is not just an encouragement but it is also a duty. We need to admit that we do not like to be told what to do. We all have a nature of stubbornness and even rebellion. You see that by the way how some people drive. Rules must be enforced to be effective. You must arrive at school or at work by a certain time, because there is a penalty for not doing so. God gives us mandates for our good. Many Bible truths are actually written in the form of mandates. God requires us to treat others with kindness, to share the gospel with seeker friends and to offer money to support God’s work. God could have threatened us with punishment if we do not follow His words. But He motivates us with His love. Love is a stronger driving force than penalty and even reward. Just ask any young man in a dating relationship. They will do whatever their girlfriends ask for instantly. Likewise, we will obey God if we truly love Him. Jesus said to love one another is a “new” commandment. This mandate is actually not really new. It is from the Old Testament. Leviticus 19:18 says: **“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”** The Law gives concrete instructions about how to love others. The Israelites should take care of orphans, widows and foreigners. They should leave some crops in the field after harvest for poor people to pick their food. They should not deceive others by bearing false witness, twisting justice or using a different set of weights in the market. This is a new commandment because Jesus gave it a new dimension and a new dynamic. Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper that He used His blood

to make a new covenant with them. That covenant is not maintained by a set of rules. God sent the Holy Spirit to live in believers. The Holy Spirit changes us into a new person so that we are able to obey God. It is like installing new Apps on your phone. They direct your phone to do amazing things. Similarly, Jesus enables us to love others through the Holy Spirit. We must submit to the Holy Spirit and let Him re-program our mind. Then we will choose to love others. Otherwise, our love will be limited, selective and reluctant if we rely on ourselves. The problem is not that we are unable to love others. The problem is that we are unwilling to do so. We need to go back to the Lord, yield to Him and ask for strength. If we do that, then loving others will no longer be a burdensome mandate. Rather, it will be a natural reaction flowing with joy.

2. 愛的互動 Mutual Love

Love is a mandate. Jesus goes on and says that love must also be mutual. He told the disciples to “love one another.” There are many “one another” commands in the Bible. Those passages tell us some practical things to do if we love one another. One basic thing is to love one another through services. 1 Peter 4:8-10 say: **8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.** In the following context, Peter lists a few spiritual gifts. Believers can use those and other gifts to serve one other in the church. God gives each of us unique gifts when we become believers. You should discover your gifts and use them. Teaching and cleanup are more than services. They are ways to love others. You serve people with your hands and your heart. Peter says love toward one other can cover many sins. Here “cover” does not mean hiding as a way to condone sins. We can understand it as overcoming sins. For example, verse 9 mentions grumbling. Complaints can lead to distrust, conflict or slandering. Instead of harboring grudges, a loving person will overlook the offense. Paul puts it this way in Colossians 3:13-14 – **13 Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.** Conflict is a good test for our love in Christ. We will fight for our rights if we fall back to our sinful human nature. But if we put loving one another first, then it does not matter if I lose or you win. The more important thing is to preserve unity. In the Bible, forgiveness comes before an apology. Jesus asked the Father to forgive those who mistreated Him when He was still hanging on the cross. Jesus loved us when we were still sinners. Therefore, we follow Jesus’ example when we take the initiative to forgive others. That takes humility. You care about the relationship over your feeling of hurt. Paul says that such love binds everything together. Without this bond, a church will be like a movie theater. People come into a building on Sunday to watch a religious performance. They arrive alone and leave alone without any interaction with fellow believers. That is not a church! One thing the pandemic teaches us is that human relationship is essential. A Zoom meeting can never replace a gathering in a room. We can greet, talk, pray and worship when we sit down together. We need to intentionally show our love to one another when we come inside the building. You can say hi to someone you do not know that well. Introduce your name and your background. If you repeat the same thing every time you come here, our church will become a place filled with love.

3. 愛的典範 Model of Love

Love is a mandate from Jesus. Love among believers must be mutual. Jesus demonstrated love by setting Himself as a model. He told the disciples: “just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” His model of love motivates us to love others. Jesus loved the **unlovable**. He reached out to tax-collectors and other sinners the society despised. In doing so, Jesus forgave those the Jews considered **unforgivable**. He also extended compassion to the **unworthy**. Jesus welcomed the sick and the poor that people rejected. He even served those who were **ungrateful**. Jesus washed the feet of Judas, even though He knew Judas would betray Him. Eventually, Jesus died for all the **unbelievers**. Paul says in Romans 5:8 – **But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. Jesus died on the cross when we are rebellious and have no interest in the truth. Jesus loved us first and He loved us fully. We can summarize Jesus’ love in one word: sacrificial. He gave up everything to love us. Jesus gave up His **glory** when He came into the world. An immortal God became a mortal man. Jesus felt tired, hungry and afraid like we do. Jesus also gave up His **sovereignty**. He submitted to the Father’s will. He did not resort to His supernatural power on every occasion. Moreover, Jesus gave up His **dignity**. He ministered to people like a servant. He suffered much shame and pain, and died in the most gruesome way. That is the model Jesus set for us. John encourages us in 1 John 3:16-17 – **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?** John says we have to love fellow believers the way Jesus loved us. Before we are willing to lay down our life for others, are we willing to lay down our resources? It is unthinkable for not meeting the needs of brothers and sisters when we have the capacity to do so. What can we sacrifice for others? Besides material possession, we can think of time and money. In order to do that, we must know where the needs are. Therefore, love begins with caring. When you know someone in need, you can mobilize people to offer help. It may be food, time or a ride. Jesus freely loved people with no string attached. Our love is genuine when we expect nothing in return. No one owes anyone a favor. We all owe Jesus it to Jesus for His salvation grace. Jesus once said that the good work we do to the least of the brothers will be like doing to Him. We will love people generously if we keep that in mind. We treat people the best we can as if we were serving Jesus. The recipients do not have to worry that they have to return the credit. In the future, they can show kindness to some other people when opportunities come up. That is how love should flow in a faith community.

4. 愛的使者 Messengers of Love

A church should be filled with love. When we love one another, we become messengers of God’s love. Our action has a witnessing effect. Jesus told the disciples: “**By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.**” Here “all people” refer to non-believers. After Jesus went back to heaven, His disciples founded the first church. Outsiders learned something about this “new religion” by observing the life of Christians. Acts 2:45 records: **And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.** Believers loved one another by sharing what they had. This act of charity was important because at that time most people were poor. Some of them might be kicked out from their home and job when they became Christians. It was hard to convince people that God would provide for them when they were homeless and hungry. Verse 47 tells us the effect of such actions on the community: **praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.** Their token of love drew the

attention of people outside the church. As a result, new believers were added to the membership every day. It proves the saying: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Those believers became messengers of love by living out what the Lord taught them. The world tells us to mind our own business and seek the biggest benefits for ourselves. But deep down inside, people are looking for genuine love. They long for virtues like trust, acceptance, honesty and loyalty. Can they find those qualities in Christians? Unfortunately, the church has a bad reputation. Some non-believers see us as hypocrites and idealists. We do not practice what we teach and believe. They conclude that the Bible is a good but impractical moral book. A few bad news will also overshadow many good contributions. People focus on issues like conflict and distrust, scandal and lawsuit. They then wonder why they should become believers if they have better conducts than some Christians. Paul says our life is like a drama performed for the world to watch. We need to exercise love within these four walls before we can show our love to the outside world. Someone said a church should be an embassy of God's Kingdom. When gospel friends enter our church, they will be like stepping into a foreign country. They should see us operate by God's rules and not secular convention. Therefore, we must live differently. Once I went back to Hong Kong. I forgot that people drive on the other side of the road. A bus honked at me while approaching at full speed because I looked at the wrong direction. I quickly cross the street. Then I remembered that the city has a different set of traffic rules. Can non-believers sense a Christian culture in our church? Can they feel our love for one another and toward them? We are effective messengers of love if we show that even before we share with them the gospel. They will want what we have.

結論 CONCLUSION

Love is not only a feeling. Love must also come with actions. We should not only talk about love. We should live out love as well. We will truly treat people as brothers and sisters when we love one another. A church will not be just a building but it will become our home. Fellow believers are no longer strangers but family members. We will long to come here every Friday and Sunday because we can interact with each other through the programs. We will stop asking what we can get from here but ask what we can contribute to make this place better. Gospel friends will find God's love because a people of love is here. These are not an unreachable ideas, but it is a goal we must pursue.

引言 INTRODUCTION

溝通是人際關係中必要的工具。雙方必須有共同的認知才能傳達正確的信息。如果兩個人說不同的語言，就會產生障礙。有一次一個年輕人替一位牧師翻譯講道。牧師用普通話講。這個年輕人出生在美國的華人家庭，英文是他的母語。他翻譯得很流暢，直到他碰到釘子。那位傳道人說：「一個男孩和一個女孩在談戀愛。」然後翻譯員說：「一個男孩和一個女孩在討論愛這個課題。」華人的聽眾馬上大笑。牧師立刻接著說：「光是講是贏不了女人的心的。」他是對的。討論愛很容易，實踐愛需要付出努力，無論是異性之間的愛、家人之間的愛還是朋友之間的愛。愛不僅是一種感覺，愛必須帶有行動。神不僅告訴我們祂的愛，祂也向我們展示愛。神就是愛，所以祂的兒女必須是愛的門徒。我們必須先愛神，然後才能愛其他信徒。因此我們教會使命宣言的第三行說：我們要謙卑地彼此相愛。這句話是根據我們之前讀過的經文。耶穌在和門徒吃最後的晚餐時說了這句話。祂快要被捕，然後第二天被釘在十字架上。在其他最後的指示中，耶穌告訴祂的門徒要彼此相愛。讓我們解開這兩節經文，看看我們如何將真理應用到日常生活中。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 愛的命令 Mandate of Love

首先，我們學習到愛是耶穌的命令。祂告訴門徒：「我賜給你們一條新命令，乃是叫你們彼此相愛。」如果愛是個命令，那麼它就不是一個選擇或建議。這不只是一個鼓勵，乃是一種責任。我們需要承認，我們不喜歡別人告訴我們該做什麼。我們都有固執甚至叛逆的本性。你看一些人怎樣開車就知道這一點。但是規則必須執行才能有效。你要在指定的時間到達學校或辦公室，否則會受到處罰。神為了我們的好處給我們命令。許多聖經真理其實都是以命令的形式寫下來的。神要求我們以仁慈待人，向非信徒傳福音，奉獻金錢支持神的事工。神本來可以用懲罰來威脅我們，但祂選擇用愛激勵我們。愛比懲罰甚至獎勵更有效。任何在談戀愛的男士都會認同。他們會立即做女朋友要求的任何事情。同樣，如果我們真的愛神，我們就會順服祂。耶穌說彼此相愛是一條「新」的命令。這條命令其實一點也不新。它來自舊約。利未記 19:18 說：「不可報仇，也不可埋怨你本國的子民，卻要愛人如己。我是耶和華。」律法列出如何愛別人的具體例子。以色列人應該照顧孤兒、寡婦和寄居的人。收割

後，他們應該在田裡留下一些莊稼，讓窮人撿他們的食物。他們不應該作假見證、歪曲公義或在市場上使用不同的砝碼來欺騙人。這是一條新誡命，因為耶穌賦予它新的含義和新的動力。耶穌在最後的晚餐上告訴門徒，祂用自己的血與他們立了新約。這個盟約不是靠規則來維護的。神差遣聖靈住在信徒裡面。聖靈改變我們成為一個新人，使我們能夠順服神。這就像在你的手機上安裝新的應用程序。那些軟件使你的手機發揮利害的功能。同樣，耶穌讓聖靈幫助我們能夠去愛別人。我們必須順服聖靈，讓祂掌管我們的心，然後我們便會選擇去愛別人。否則，如果我們依靠自己，我們的愛將是有限的、選擇性的和勉強的。問題不在於我們不能愛別人，問題是我們不願意那樣做。我們需要回到主面前，順服祂並祈求力量。如果我們這樣做，那麼愛別人將不再是一項繁重的任務。相反，這將是一種充滿喜樂的自然反應。

2. 愛的互動 Mutual Love

愛是一個命令。耶穌繼續說，愛也必須是相互的。祂告訴門徒要「彼此相愛」。聖經中有許多「彼此」的命令。那些經文告訴我們一些彼此相愛的實際行動。最簡單的是，我們可以藉著彼此服事來相愛。彼得前書 4:8-10 說：**8 最要緊的是彼此切實相愛，因為愛能遮掩許多的罪。9 你們要互相款待，不發怨言。10 各人要照所得的恩賜彼此服事，作神百般恩賜的好管家。**在上下文中，彼得列出一些屬靈恩賜。信徒可以用不同的恩賜在教會中彼此服事。當我們成為信徒時，神賜給我們每個人獨特的恩賜。你應該發掘並發揮你的恩賜。教導或打掃衛生不只是服務，它們也是愛別人的表達方式。你用你的雙手和你的心為人們服務。彼得說彼此相愛可以遮掩許多罪。這裡的「遮掩」並不是指隱藏並妥協罪。我們可以理解為勝過罪。例如，第 9 節提到埋怨。埋怨可能導致不信任、衝突或毀謗。一個充滿愛的人不會懷恨在心，而是會寬恕別人的冒犯。保羅在歌羅西書 3:13-14 中這樣說：**13 倘若這人與那人有嫌隙，總要彼此包容，彼此饒恕；主怎樣饒恕了你們，你們也要怎樣饒恕人。14 在这一切之外，要存着愛心，愛心就是聯絡全德的。**衝突是對我們在基督裡的愛的一個很好的考驗。如果我們回到人的罪性，我們會爭取自己的權利。但如果我們把彼此相愛放在首位，那麼我輸你贏也無所謂。更重要的是維持合一。在聖經中，饒恕是先於道歉。耶穌請求天父原諒那些苦待祂的人，當時祂還掛在十字架上。當我們還是罪人的時候，耶穌就愛了我們。因此，當我們主動饒恕別人時，我們就是效法耶穌的榜樣。這需要謙卑。你最關心的是這份關係，而不是你受傷害的感覺。保羅說這樣的愛能夠將各樣事情連結在一起。沒有這種聯繫，教會就會像電影院一樣。星期天，人們進來觀看宗教表演。他們單獨來，單獨離開，與其他信徒沒有任何互動。那不是教會！疫情告訴我們一件事，就是人際關係非常重要。Zoom 會議永遠無法取代實體的聚會。當我們坐在一起時，我們可以

互相打招呼、交談、禱告和敬拜。當我們進入建築物時，我們需要特意地向別人表達愛。例如，你可以向不太熟悉的人打招呼，介紹你的名字和背景。如果你每次來的時候都重複同樣的事情，我們的教會就會成為一個充滿愛的地方。

3. 愛的典範 Model of Love

愛是耶穌的命令。信徒之間的愛必須是相互的。另外，耶穌為我們樹立了愛的典範。祂告訴門徒：「我怎樣愛你們，你們也要怎樣相愛。」耶穌愛的典範激勵我們去愛別人。耶穌愛不可愛的人。祂接近社會所看不起的稅吏和其他罪人。通過這樣做，耶穌寬恕了猶太人認為不可寬恕的人。祂還對不值得同情的人表示憐憫。耶穌歡迎被人們拒絕的病人和窮人。祂甚至服事那些忘恩負義的人。耶穌洗猶大的腳，儘管祂知道猶大會出賣祂。結果，耶穌為所有不相信的人而死。保羅在羅馬書 5:8 節中說：惟有基督在我們還作罪人的時候為我們死，神的愛就在此向我們顯明了。當我們仍然是背逆並且對真理不感興趣時，耶穌就死在十字架上了。耶穌先愛我們，並且完全愛我們。我們可以用一個詞語來概括耶穌的愛：犧牲。祂犧牲了一切來愛我們。耶穌來到世上時，就放棄了自己的榮耀。一位永遠存在的神變成了一個有限的人。耶穌像我們一樣感到疲倦、飢餓和害怕。耶穌也放棄了祂的主權。祂順服天父的旨意。祂並沒有在每一個場合都使用超自然能力。此外，耶穌放棄了祂的尊嚴。祂像僕人一樣服事人們。祂受盡羞辱和痛苦，以最殘酷的方式死去。這就是耶穌為我們樹立的典範。約翰在約翰一書 3:16-17 中鼓勵我們：16 主為我們捨命，我們從此就知道何為愛；我們也當為弟兄捨命。17 凡有世上財物的，看見弟兄窮乏，卻塞住憐恤的心，愛神的心怎能存在他裏面呢？約翰說我們必須像耶穌愛我們的那樣去愛其他信徒。在我們願意為別人捨命之前，我們捨得放下自己的資源嗎？當我們有能力但不去幫助弟兄姐妹的需要，這是說不過去的。我們可以為別人犧牲什麼？除了物質之外，還有時間和金錢。要做到這一點，我們必須知道誰有需要。因此，愛是從關懷開始的。當你知道有人有需要時，你可以動員其他人一起提供支援。可能是食物、時間或接送。耶穌甘願去愛人，沒有任何附加條件。當我們不期望回報時，我們的愛就是真誠的。沒有人欠別人的人情，我們都欠耶穌救贖的恩典。耶穌曾經說過，做在弟兄中最小一個人身上的善事，就是做在祂的身上。如果我們記住這一點，我們就會慷慨地愛人。我們盡能力幫助人，彷彿就在服事主。得到幫助的人不用擔心以後需要還債。將來，他們可以向其他人表達愛心。愛應該是以這種方式在信仰群體中流動。

4. 愛的使者 Messengers of Love

教會應該充滿愛。當我們彼此相愛時，我們就成為神之愛的使者。我們的行為具有見證的效果。耶穌對門徒說：「你們若有彼此相愛的心，眾人因此就認出你們是我的門徒了。」這裡的「眾人」是指非信徒。耶穌回到天堂後，祂的門徒建立了第一所教會。外面的人通過觀察基督徒的生活，對這個「新的宗教」有所了解。使徒行傳 2:45 記載：並且賣了田產、家業，照各人所需用的分給各人。信徒通過分享他們的財產來彼此相愛。這種善行很重要，因為當時大多數人都很窮。他們中間一些人在成為基督徒後可能會被趕出家門和解僱。向無家可歸和飢餓的人說神會供應他們是困難的。第 47 節說他們愛心的行動對社區的影響：讚美神，得眾民的喜愛。主將得救的人天天加給他們。他們的愛心引起了教會以外的人的注意。結果，每天都增加新的信徒。這就像一句話說：「人們不在乎你知道多少，直到他們知道你有多在乎。」這些信徒通過活出主的教導而成為愛的使者。世界告訴我們要管好自己的事，並要為自己爭取最大的利益。但在內心深處，人們正在尋找真愛。他們渴望信任、接納、誠實和忠誠等美德。他們能在基督徒身上找到這些素質嗎？很可惜，教會的名聲不好。一些非信徒認為我們是偽君子 and 理想主義者。我們沒有實行我們所教導和相信的。他們的結論是，聖經是一本很好但不切實際的道德教材。一些壞消息也會掩蓋許多好的貢獻。人們注意教會中的衝突和不信任、醜聞和訴訟。然後他們懷疑，如果他們的道德水平比某些基督徒還高，為什麼要成為信徒。保羅說我們的生活就像一台戲劇，供世人觀看。我們需要先在這四面牆之內操練愛，然後才能向外面的人表達愛。有人說教會像天國的大使館。當福音朋友進來時，他們就像踏進另一個國家。他們應該看到我們按照神的要求而不是世界的風俗做事。因此，我們必須以不同的方式生活。我有一次回香港時，忘了那裡的人是在另一邊開車。一輛公共汽車在全速衝過來的時候向我按喇叭，因為我在看別的方向。我馬上過馬路。然後我想起這個城市有一套不同的交通規則。同樣，非信徒能在我們的教會感受到基督徒文化嗎？他們能感受到我們對彼此和對他們的愛嗎？如果他們在聽到福音之前就體會到這一點，那麼我們就是有效的愛的使者。他們會渴望得到我們所擁有的救恩。

結論 CONCLUSION

愛不僅是一種感覺，愛必須帶有行動。我們不應該只談論愛，我們也必須活出愛。當我們彼此相愛時，我們就會把別人當作弟兄姐妹。教會將不只是一座建築物，它還成為我們的家。其他信徒不再是陌生人，而是家人。我們渴望每週五和周日來到這裡，為的是在聚會中與弟兄姐妹有交流。我們將不再問我們能從這裡得到什麼，而是問我們能做出什麼貢獻，使這個地方變得更美好。福音朋友會找到神的愛，因為這裡有一群充滿愛的人。這些不是無法達到的理想，而是我們必須追求的目標。