



Five Marks of Methodism

New Series Starting 15 January 2023

Week 5: 12 February 2023

We Love Others

Daily Devotions



MONDAY – We Love Others



1 John 4: 20: *Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.*

This final week, entitled “We love others” of our series “The Five Marks of Methodism” is more than just the culmination of a series; it offers the fulfilment of all the previous marks of a Methodist.

None of the prior marks matter if they do not in some way share the love of God with others. All of our efforts to grow closer to Jesus are not just for our own benefit but also for the benefit of those

around us. Loving others is, in fact, the culmination of a life faithfully lived.

As Christians we talk a lot about love. In fact, one of the underpinnings of our religious beliefs is that “God is love”. All five Marks of a Methodist are an attempt to faithfully respond to this foundational creed that this love is real and available for every one of us at every moment of our lives.

As Steve Harper puts it in his book on these 5 Marks of a Methodist, the first four marks are intended to nourish us in order to help us to love others in Jesus’ name. These four marks help fill us up with God’s love so that we can be poured out in love for others.

Reflection: What do I need to do in my life to become a better demonstration of God’s unbounded love to others?



Prayer: I give thanks for my friends, for connection and laughter, for comfort and strength, for encouragement and unity, for forgiveness and grace and for the celebration and joy of our walk together with You. AMEN

TUESDAY – Overwhelmed by the Complexity of Life?



Matthew 22: 37-38 (NIV) *Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself”.*

Do you ever find yourself overwhelmed by the complexity of life?

Life can be tremendously confusing and often isn't as straightforward or simple as we would wish it to be.

And sometimes, our own faith can lead to even more confusion. I mean, how many of us have ever read a confusing passage of scripture and thought to ourselves: “What on earth does that even mean?”

Perhaps, it's due to this dislike for confusion and complexity that the above passage of scripture is always so meaningful. Here, Jesus is asked about the most

important commandment in the Bible, and He gives a very simple and memorable answer which can be boiled down to “Love God and love people.”

Let's not believe that it is as simple as it is made to sound, there is a lot to learn about what loving God and loving people really looks like. But we do need to appreciate how, in this complex world, Jesus simplifies matters and lets us know what God wants us to aim for in how we live and who we are as His people.

Reflection: Do you struggle with the idea that we are to love God with our complete selves? Do you hold back anything from Him?



Prayer: God, my Father, may I love You in all things and above all things, as all that is good comes from Your Hand. Fill my mind with thoughts of Your love, so that I may grow in Your wisdom and enjoy Your peace. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Demonstrating God’s Love to Others (Part 1)



John 13: 34-35 *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”*

Every single person we meet is loved by God and is someone Jesus died for. Keeping this in mind, it is a sobering thought to realize that everyone we encounter throughout the day – strangers, acquaintances, friends, family – should experience God’s love through us.

So how exactly do we go about the daunting task of fulfilling God’s command to love one another? Over the next two days we will look at five simple practical suggestions that could help us in sharing and showing God’s love to others:

Firstly, we can show God’s Love by Listening: It is necessary to truly listen to people. Listen to understand and allow

people to speak their minds without interruption or judgement. People will feel valued (and loved!) when they are heard and understood.

Secondly, we can show God’s love with Generosity: Can you think of a time in your life when someone showed you such generosity that you still today think, “Wow, I can’t believe they did that for me.” We should not only be generous with our money, but also with our time and talents. When we love someone, we give to them.

Reflection: Who needs to be a recipient of my generosity, either by helping them out with a practical need or even just by spending some quality time together?



Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank you for all who help us in difficult times. Help us to use our gifts wisely, and to willingly sacrifice our time and talents so that we can serve You more fully in the world. AMEN

THURSDAY – Demonstrating God’s Love to Others (Part 2)



Romans 13: 8 (NIV): *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*

Yesterday we looked at “listening to” and “being generous” as two practical ways of developing our abilities for the demonstration of God’s love to one another. Here are three more.

Thirdly, we can show God’s love by encouraging: Everyone we meet is carrying some kind of burden. How can we help to lift such burdens? It can be as simple as words of encouragement. When we encourage another, we are making their spirits strong. We are strengthening their hope, their faith, and their resolve to keep going.

Fourthly, we can show God’s love with acts of kindness: Showing kindness means thinking about the other person more than you think about yourself. Acts of kindness don’t have to be huge,

but they should be thoughtful. Being thoughtful and kind communicates to the other person that you value their needs above your own.

And fifth, we can show God’s love by praying for others: Pray for people! Pray for them in your own time with God but, also pray for people when you’re with them. One of the easiest ways to show love and concern is to pray with someone right then and there. I can’t really think of any greater way of showing concern for another than by asking the question, “How can I pray for you?”

Reflection: Whom do you know that really needs God’s love for them to be manifested through you?



Prayer: Almighty Father, I give thanks today for all the friendships in my life. We are not meant to live alone and so I am so grateful to You for the people who walk alongside me, supporting me, loving me, and encouraging me. AMEN

FRIDAY – Love Your Enemies



Luke 6: 27 (NIV): *“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...”*

The current social and political climate here at home is such that there is a lot of anxiety, tension, and sometimes even hostility, with people often behaving badly towards one another. In these trying and often confusing times we need to ask ourselves the question “Is my faith in Jesus Christ reflected in the way I interact with others regarding what is going on in our nation today?”

The story of the “woman at the well” (**John 4: 4-30**) is well-known and a favourite at children’s church. In stories like these, Jesus teaches us a lot about how we should treat others. The children learn that God loved the world so much that He gave His son Jesus. Jesus in turn, gave His life for all people so that we could be friends with God again. Jesus

showed this when He was friendly with the woman at the well. Though everyone else was surprised that Jesus would be a friend to her, Jesus was eager to help her understand that God still loved her. Maybe it’s a lesson like this that can help us treat one another with love.

I am certain that the various viewpoints on our current situation are equally held in our church. Although we don’t always agree on the way forward, may the Holy Spirit strengthen us to treat one another with grace and love. We can do this. It’s whom we are called to be.

Reflection: How do we as Christians interact with each other in a climate of discontent and anxiety?



Prayer: Father, please watch over my friends, keep them safe, comfort them through these hard times. Might they rest in Your peace and find restoration in Your care. AMEN