

Sermon series: New Years 2019
Sermon title: Belong by loving.
Scripture: John 13:1-5,12-17
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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As we look to a new year we are rehashing our church vision. Our church vision is quite simple. We want to be people who **BEHOLD** GOD, **BELONG** to one another deeply and we want to **BE SENT** as his witnesses both locally and globally.

As we talked last week about Beholding God by being beavers for the Bible, I hope that you have already started munching away at the scriptures. It's not too late. It's never too late to start feasting on God's word.

Today, I want to encourage us to go deeper with one another in 2019. We want to Belong to our local church in a deep way. How do we Belong to one another deeply?

We '**BELONG by loving: by bending down: by bending low...and loving like Jesus did.**

Let's pray.

John 13:1-5,12-17

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world

to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. **2** During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, **4** rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. **5** Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? **13** You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. **16** Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. **17** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

What is the setting of John 13?

- Passover has arrived
- Jesus & his disciples are likely in Jerusalem.
- His 'hour has come' to depart out of this world to the Father.
- It's time for the cross.
- Everyone is present. Everyone. Peter, James, John....even Judas.

- At some point during the Passover— a dispute arises about who's the greatest!

Luke 22:24-27

24 A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. **25** And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. **26** But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. **27** For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

Do you get the picture of what's going on here?

- Jesus is getting ready to be whipped.
- It's going to hurt badly.
- He's going to be nailed by long sharp spikes to a tree and humiliated pretty soon.
- They're going to spit in his face. They're going to blindfold him and punch him and mock him.
- One of the closest people to him for the last 3 years is going to sell him. And a friend is going to deny he even knows him.
- He is going to endure the wrath of the Father.
- **& his friends are arguing about which one of them is the greatest.**

So, let that frame the scene for you as you read **John 13:1**.

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

The main point of this whole passage is:
The love of Jesus Christ.

*In this moment, we mustn't think of this *only* as an example for us, though it is.

At this point it is just raw love. He really loved them. It is Jesus demonstrating his love for them in an amazing way. His is a deep, humble, selfless love.

Firstly, I want us to see the.....

I. THE DEMONSTRATION OF CHRIST'S' LOVE

- Middle Eastern roads were dirty and dusty.
- People wore bare feet or some kind of sandal.
- People's feet were probably not manicured but hard, calloused and crusty feet.
- Washing feet was slave labor. The task was so menial that it was reserved for non-Jewish slaves.
- It would have been unthinkable for a Rabbi to wash people's feet. Would the HKUST president clean the bathrooms daily? Does Xi Jinping volunteer at the landfill?
- Unthinkable humble love. Overwhelming love. And this is GOD. The creator of the universe.

Peter's response shows how unthinkable this is. And they never got over it.

Jesus bends low. He goes down to demonstrate his love. He is the highest person in the room and yet he takes the towel of a slave and does the dirtiest and lowest job.

In fact, the foot washing is Jesus acting out his whole ministry of redemption.

PHILIPPIANS 2 will help us understand this better.

Philippians 2

Left heaven
Christ emptied himself
Took on flesh
Form of a servant
Washed them in his blood
Washed us on the cross

John 13

Rose from supper
Laid aside his outer garments
Took a towel
Humbled himself as a slave
Washed their feet
Washed a traitor and betrayers

Jesus is demonstrating the full extent of his love by washing their feet and giving a picture of how he will wash their sins away the next day.

As **D.A. Carson** points out; foot washing and the cross are *'simultaneously an act of God by which people are cleansed and an example to imitate.'*

So, Christ was demonstrating his love but also giving us....

II. AN EXAMPLE FOR US TO IMITATE

John 13:12-17 [read]

- Jesus is not saying that they should actually take up foot washing as a practice or biblical ordinance. Some say this. No other place in scripture or command to do

it, except 1 Timothy 5:10 which is about widows and it is describing hospitality.

- Jesus is commanding us to LOVE ONE ANOTHER in this kind of 'bending low' way. In fact, love one another...is mentioned all over the New Testament.

John 15:12

John 15:17

Romans 13:8

1 Thessalonians 4:9

1 Peter 3:8

1 Peter 4:8

6x in John's epistles.

Jesus commands them and us to love one another *just as* he loved us. We see this in **John 13:34**

We don't need to ask ourselves this morning if we love one another but we should ask ourselves if we love one another *just as* Christ loved us! Cause that is what he said. That's why it's a new commandment. People understood they were supposed to 'love thy neighbor as they loved themselves'. But this....this...is new: loving each other *just as* he loved us.

What would it look like if we all loved each other this way?

What if we Belonged to one another this way?

What if we bent down and served one another?

Belonged to the church by loving?

How do we learn to love this way?

Easy for me to say, “We should do this?”

BUT HOW? What’s the key to unlocking this kind of love: this kind of belonging?

I think a key is in John 13 verses 3-4.

- Jesus...knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands....
- Jesus...knowing that he had come from God...
- Jesus...knowing that he was going back to God...
..ROSE FROM SUPPER.

Here is my thesis: (mostly developed from analyzing my own reasons for not dying to self and giving of myself to love others)

***We cannot love one another or belong to one another or go low....unless we know who we are.**

1. Settle who you are!
2. Remember where you came from!
3. Remember where you are going!

- **We need to settle who we are.** Many are living in self-protection mode, self-fulfillment mode, self-promotion mode. Many of us are still trying to establish our identity: make a name for ourselves: trying to prove ourselves. We haven’t fully bought into our identity as a follower of Christ.

You see, we will never really love others or be able to go down...never really belong deeply to one another if we don't settle who we are.

Who are you? If someone asks you that question, what's the first thing that comes into your mind?

Can you imagine what it would be like to be Jesus Christ?

He knew exactly who he was! Nothing to protect. Nothing to hide. Even if no one believed in him, he knew who he was. And so..he "*rose from supper.*"

Show me a person who can go down for others and I'll show you a person who knows who they are. Show me a person who can't go down and love others: can't belong deeply to others...and I'll show you a person who has something to hide and something to protect.

We need to settle who we are and we need to remember....

- **Where we came from:** We were under God's wrath, his enemies, dead in sin, dirty and rebellious. Now... forgiven, friend of God, clean, God's family, citizens of the kingdom. "*He who is forgiven much loves much. He who is forgiven little, loves little.*"

You see, if we don't know how much we've been forgiven of: where we've come from,...we will never really love one another. We will feel like everyone else is rotten and mean and annoying and we are righteous. They'll be no love: not the bending down kind of love.

We need to settle who we are. We need to know where we came from and we need to know.....

- **Where we are going?**

Have you ever noticed that right in between chapters 13 and 15, where Jesus mentions that believers are to love one another, that he sandwiches in between those chapters a talk on heaven?

John 14:1-3 says, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Christian, oh how blessed you are! You have a new identity in Christ. You have been set from from slavery to sin and brought near to God. You have a glorious future awaiting for you in heaven.

As strange as it may sound, I believe that is the key to loving one another as Christ loved us. His love and his grace frees us up to love. His sacrifice and his example free us up to go low, to bend down.

And we can only **Belong** to one another deeply as we love one another. We belong by loving like Jesus loved.

Why are you holding back your love from this church?
Why are you doing that? What are you protecting?
What keeps you on the fringe?

Why won't you go deep with us: let people get to know you?

What would it look like for you to bend down and love this church? How might you give yourself in 2019 to love one another just as Christ loved you?

Who you are? Have you settled that in Christ? Settle it my friend and you'll be happy and blessed and freed to love others as Christ loved.

BENEDICTION

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.