

**“A community with a message” – John 13:31-36**

**Note for leaders:** Through our community series we have looked at what a strong Christian community should look like and have looked at how we can live in this way – try and spend a large chunk of your evening in prayer and worship. Praying for each other, our church community but most importantly our city and the communities around us that do not know the love of Jesus. The message we have to share is powerful and transformative. The prayer points at the bottom of these notes should help get you started with this.

## Introduction

Over these past few weeks in our series on community we have looked at many different aspects of why community is important and how we should be living to grow a strong Christian community. We’ve been asking the question ‘What does it mean to be devoted to one another in community?’.

**To kick off:** What things are you certain of? Arriving at your intended destination? Water coming from the tap? That your favourite sports team will win the match? Does it change depending on the context? (scientific/emotional/faith?) What makes you more/less certain of the outcome?

## Digging In

On Sunday Chris took us through the passage in John 13 that we are about to read together, where Jesus is sharing his final words of instruction to his disciples, Judas has just left the room and Jesus addresses the remaining disciples.

**Read John 13:31-36 together (try reading it through twice out loud)**

- **Does anything stand out to you from this passage?**

Chris unpacked a number of key elements from this passage to encourage and spur us on in embracing this final instruction that Jesus gave his disciples.

1.) **Certainty** (V31)

We started off thinking about the idea of certainty – here Jesus was so certain of his destination that he speaks as if the glorifying has already happened - that the cross has already happened (even though it hasn’t happened yet! (Past tense when talking about being glorified ‘now’).

- **In the midst of our busy lives how can we live out an attitude of certainty that Jesus demonstrates here?**

We can celebrate the work that Jesus has done for us – Paul’s teaching is full of the cross – the cross and grave are empty! Jesus intercedes and represents us – we must glory in the cross – our greatest boast! Reminding one another of these truths builds our faith.

2.) **Glory** (V31-V32)

**This talk of glorifying can be confusing, and that’s ok!** - Jesus is indicating here that the cross and resurrection are interconnected – Jesus and God (in the trinity) glorify each other – Jesus is faithful and obedient in the cross (glorifying God) – God glorifies Jesus (in the resurrection) giving him the name above every name, seated in heaven.

- **Reflect for yourself, how is your life currently pointing to God? In the midst of challenges in life – how do we point to God right now?**
- **How can we be practically be pointing to God day to day in our life groups and communities?**

Chris mentioned these examples: Showing peace whilst in turmoil, Serving and caring for others, praying for those in authority whilst others may criticise, sharing our hope through loss and suffering. All of these things are ways we can point others to God.

Never forget we are Jesus *followers* – we can bring glory to God in any circumstance!

3.) **Preparation** (V33)

Jesus addresses the disciples with a term of endearment here – as he warns them that he will soon be departing. All of the talk of glory and heavenly things shifts.

- When we are faced with difficult theological principles and complicated bible passages – how can we

4.) **LOVE** (v34)

- **What makes this commandment ‘new’? Isn’t this already what the disciples and us should be doing? What is different about this instruction from Jesus?**

Jesus is giving the disciples the core principle that holds together everything that they have learnt from him. He is going away soon and this is an intimate encounter between Jesus and his closest friends. We see Jesus’s heart in this instruction.

This commandment is new in the **degree** of love we should show – Jesus is urging the disciples to reflect the love he is going to show on the cross.

- ***Does this change the way we view this instruction? What does loving one another deeply look like in life groups? What does this look like in our wider community?*** (if we are considering how our love reflects *Jesus's* love '*As I have loved you, so you must love one another*')

#### 5.) **Witness** (v35)

- ***What stands out from Jesus's statement here in v35?***
- ***How do the people around us look at us?*** This is a Litmus test of our faith and action (a test of how effective we are – how fiercely we love. The mark of the Christian!)
- ***How would this distinguish a Life Group from a secular small group/gathering?***

The challenge to us here is to love as a community just as Jesus loved - sacrificial, passionate and unconditional.

#### Growing together

Evangelism and community are not separate things that we do as Christians - Jesus said that it is by the way that we love one another that we will make him known to the world around us. Jesus's small group of disciples would go onto grow into the global Church that we are a part of today. We have the same instruction from Jesus – to love one another. This is what we are called to!

#### **Pray together as a group:**

- ***Praising and glorifying God, in thankfulness for the saving grace that is poured out freely and generously.***
- ***For us, that we would be all in – embracing this final instruction that Jesus gave – to love one another deeply. Pray that our love would move beyond what we say and think to what we do, as a witness of Jesus's love to those around us. That our lives and our community would continually point others to God.***
- ***For our local communities, that the love we show to those around us would demonstrate Jesus's passionate and sacrificial love and reflect just how vast Jesus's love is!***
- ***Pray that the message 'Jesus loves you like no other!' would be heard in Southampton, and wherever we go. That Jesus's love, mercy, and grace would be known far and wide in a powerful and transforming way.***