Reflections on what God spoke through our Bro Boon Tiong @ Asiawide on 23rd April 2017

**爱- 更重要的方法**

保罗写信给哥林多教会时讲到了一个更重要的方法——爱，没有爱，那些我们所看重的，比如：恩赐（说方言，先知讲道），知识，信心，献祭；都不会讨神的喜悦，对我们也没有益处，我们所做的在神面前都是徒然的。保罗对爱的描述是 – “爱是恒久忍耐，又有恩慈；爱是不嫉妒；爱是不自夸，不张狂，不做害羞的事，不求自己的益处，不轻易发怒，不计算人的恶。不喜欢不义，只喜欢真理；凡事包容，凡事相信，凡事盼望，凡事忍耐。爱是永不止息。”（哥林多前书13:4-8，和合本）

爱是一系列的行动，而不是感觉，不是情绪。此外，舍己是这些行动最基本的特征。举例来说：

* “爱是恒久忍耐” – 我们向满足自己的需求死，选择等候（神）、选择积极的满足别人的需求；
* “爱是不嫉妒“ – 我们向嫉妒或超过别人的欲望死；
* “爱是不自夸”- 我们向要别人关注我们的成功的渴望死.
* "爱是不张狂" – 我们向彰显自己的欲望死；
* "不求自己的益处" – 我们向自己所喜悦的死.
* “不计算人的恶”- 我们向自己怀恨在心或报复的欲望死；
* “凡事包容，凡事相信，凡事盼望，凡事忍耐” – 我们向逃避因顺服而吃苦的渴望死；

爱是我们跟随主的方法。耶稣教导我们“你要尽心、尽性、尽意爱主你的神。这是诫命中的第一，且是最大的。其次也相仿，就是要爱人如己。这两条诫命是律法和先知一切道理的总纲”马太福音[22:35](https://www.evernote.com/shard/s1/sh/99a62cc8-a31b-4b2f-9eea-50dd1752dfde/true)-40‬，和合本 ‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

爱是基督徒被呼召的记号，也是基督的见证。“我赐给你们一条新命令，乃是叫你们彼此相爱；我怎样爱你们，你们也要怎样相爱。你们若有彼此相爱的心，众人因此就认出你们是我的门徒了。”约翰福音‬ [13:34](https://www.evernote.com/shard/s1/sh/99a62cc8-a31b-4b2f-9eea-50dd1752dfde/true)-35‬ 和合本‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

爱是结出圣灵的果子的关键（比如说，“圣灵所结的果子，就是仁爱、喜乐、和平、忍耐、恩慈、良善、信实、温柔、节制”加拉太书 5:22-23和合本）。上世纪一位很有恩慈的牧师巴恩豪斯讲到爱时这样说：

* “爱是关键。喜乐是爱的旋律；和平是爱的居所；忍耐是爱的持久；恩慈是爱的真谛；良善是爱的性格；信实是爱的习惯；温柔是爱的自我遗忘；节制是爱的绳索”

哥林多前书13章不是我们要完成的关于爱的检查清单，这些行动是圣灵在我们生活中掌权的彰显。“但命令的总归就是爱；这爱是从清洁的心和无亏的良心，无伪的信心生出来的。

” (提摩太前书 1:5 和合本)什么是清洁的良心呢？委伯斯这样写到：看别人是再基督里是完全的 。如果我和弟兄姊妹有矛盾，我要意识到矛盾的根源在于我，而不是别人或我们所处的环境 ；矛盾是因为我没有向自己死。 “你们中间的争战斗殴是从哪里来的呢？不是从你们百体中战斗之私欲来的吗？你们贪恋，还是得不着；你们杀害嫉妒，又斗殴争战，也不能得。你们得不着，是因为你们不求。你们求也得不着，是因为你们妄求，要浪费在你们的宴乐中。“

(雅各书 4:1-3 和合本)‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

每一个教会都应把爱作为核心的价值。哥林多教会不可能没有爱这个观念，因为哥林多教会是一个活着的教会，领受了神的诸般恩惠（哥林多前书1:4） “我常为你们感谢我的　神，因　神在基督耶稣里所赐给你们的恩惠.”； “又因你们在他里面凡事富足，口才、知识都全备” (哥林多前书1：5) ； “你们在恩赐上没有一样不及人的”并且是“正如我为基督作的见证，在你们心里得以坚固” (哥林多前书 1：6). 但是他们对爱的理解还是产生了偏差，他们开始分裂，他们的爱局限于那些像他们一样的人。

**Loving as He loved**

God's love transcends all human understanding and imagination of what love is. It is a love for the unworthy, coming from our Lord with absolutely no regard for who the recipient is. ““You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” Matthew‬ [5:43](https://www.evernote.com/shard/s1/sh/99a62cc8-a31b-4b2f-9eea-50dd1752dfde/true)-44‬ NIV‬‬. ‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

If we do not have this kind of love, all the things we do are of no eternal value. How then? The Holy Spirit fills us with His love, and we are then able to follow Christ this way.

* “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins**. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”1 John‬ 4:7-11‬ NIV‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬
* “We love because he first loved us.” 1 John‬ [4:19](https://www.evernote.com/shard/s1/sh/99a62cc8-a31b-4b2f-9eea-50dd1752dfde/true)‬ NIV‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

It is impossible for me to love others in the way that God requires, but we are first recipients of this love from God. It is also not that I love God, but God loved me and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for my sin. He died for me. As my atoning sacrifice, I was also crucified with Him. That is the only way I can love like Him - that I die to myself. The love Paul has for the church is only possible because he considers himself crucified with Christ. ‬‬‬ “Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible... I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” 1 Corinthians‬ [9:19,23](https://www.evernote.com/shard/s1/sh/99a62cc8-a31b-4b2f-9eea-50dd1752dfde/true)‬ NIV. ‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

Note that Paul did not say that this love would make you feel very good. This is the world's misunderstanding of love. We often end up with having this good feeling as the mission. We gather like-minded people so that there's harmony, so that unity is easy. This is not the way we ought to look at love. The church at Corinth was filled with tension, and Paul seeks to teach them a love that has a capacity to absorb these differences and disagreements and still have a deep unity and love in Christ.

1 Cor 13 is like dynamite. When it is applied to our life and our life in church, it reveals our failures and weaknesses. Even if we are outwardly strong, these verses force us to reflect on our true inner state. When we who are so different, so diverse come together and experience a unity under Him - Isn't it a demonstration of God's love?

May we take Paul’s word to heart - “Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Ephesians‬ 5:1-2‬ NIV‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬ and prove that indeed ‘love is the more excellent way’.‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬