

Today I want to speak about something that is beneath the surface. We all understand what is beneath the surface. It means that some things are not obvious at the first glance. You've got to apply some tests in order to discern what is within. For example, in our school system, we conduct lots of exams and tests. Why? Because teachers and MOE want to know how good you are academically. So they can't know by looking at you. Some of you look very clever and intelligent, but you may not so good academically. On the other hand, some may look very blur, but they are very good academically. The only way to really tell is to subject you to some tests.

How about your physical fitness? Some of us look fit and trim, but you're not that fit. On the other hand, you may be overweight, like I was when I was a younger boy, but I could run very fast. How do you know? Well, again, you put him through tests. And in Singapore, you have the NAPFA test and you have the IPPT test. Suppose today you're a young lady. You're married and 'er you are nauseous, you've missed your period, your menses and you're wondering if you are pregnant. What do you do? Look here? (Pastor gestures at tummy). Nothing would tell. I mean it's too early and the only way you could tell is again do some tests. Let me say one more thing. Maybe today, you're not feeling well and you want to know what kind of illness you are struggling from. Speaking to the doctor may help, but the doctor may order some tests, either blood tests or x-rays, but all that is necessary to show up what is inside. My point is this: how do you know if you are person who has a living relationship with the God of Heavens? How do you know if you are someone who has God living in you? How do you know you are a Christian, someone who's been changed by Jesus? How do you know? It's not easy to see on the surface, isn't it? Because God didn't say: the moment you believe in Jesus, my son, I'll give you a chop on your head, "saved by grace". No. Neither is it true that there is a halo right above you. You you you, none of you have it. You may pretend to have one, but you don't. You don't have wings on your back, so how can I tell if you are a Christian? How can I tell if you have a living relationship with God by looking at you? You can't. So, we then, come up with tests. We've tests to see if a person is a Christian or not. And one of the tests we apply, I think, erroneously, is by 'em maybe the Bible they carry. When you come to church, do you carry a big, fat Bible? If you do, likely you may be a Christian. If you don't, well, may not tell. Some of us tell by looking at the accessories, maybe it's a

necklace with a cross, a bracelet that says “All for Jesus”, a T-shirt that says “I’m born again”. I don’t know, it may be the things you wear, or for some of us, it may be in our names. Oh your name is Hezekiah Jeremiah Isaiah. I see, you're likely to be a Christian, very good name, elaborate and long, but we all understand these are not good tests at all, isn't it? Name doesn't quite tell a lot. My name is gold source or source of gold, but it’s not very accurate, in Chinese, that is. I don't carry a Bible today. It’s in my hand phone. I don’t wear any necklaces, I don’t have any bracelet. So looking at these things, they may not accurately tell you whether you are Christian or not, or whether you have a good relationship with Jesus or not. So what is a good test?

I believe as you come to the Bible, it offers you good, objective markers to see if there is something real inside of you, if God is truly within your heart. And Jesus himself gave us this test, so it must be an accurate one. It must be a good one, if Jesus Himself says so. Our Lord said,

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13 verse 35, so He's saying here: how do people tell you’re a Christian? By what is written on your forehead, by the necklace you wear, by the clothes you wear? No, He says: this is the way you tell, this is the test you apply - when you have love for one another. My question to you today is, and I will keep asking you this: is there the evidence of love in you? And I’m going to ask all of us, is there the evidence of love in this church collectively? Because this is such an important test. He doesn't tell us, He doesn’t say: it's by your knowledge, or it's by the number of ministries you’re in. It's by this: do you have love for one another? His disciple, John the apostle, when he wrote the letter, also said something like that. He said in 1 John chapter 3,

“We know that we have passed out of death into life.”

Before we even go to the second half, I love this description of what it means to be a Christian. A child of God, who has a living faith in Jesus, is someone who has passed out of death into life. Wow! Tremendous! Christianity is not just a ritual or a form. It is a life-changing relationship. I was dead in my sin. I couldn't respond to God. I couldn't know God. I had no relationship with Him. I was dead, but when I came to Jesus, I passed out of death into life and now I'm in the light. Now I know God. Now I've a relationship with Him. What is life? Life is having a relationship with God and His son, Jesus. This is what a Christian is. But how do you know if you are Christian? Again, because we love the brothers. How do you know? How do you tell this is a test? Do you have love, one for another? Question again to you: do you have love, born out of your life?

How do you know you came to church this morning? We don't worship in the building that looks like a church at all. This could be any business seminar. This could be any normal talk of the world. How do you know this is the church of Jesus Christ? I suggest to you, you need to apply the same principle, the same test. We know we are the church of God if we have love for one another. It reminds me of a video we did some 5 years ago. In 2008, some of us gathered together to do a little video clip on comparing a church and a country club. What is a church supposed to be like and what is a country club supposed to be like? And I thought I'll show it to you today. Is GLCC a Christian church that manifests grace and love, or are we a country club that wants exclusivity? Let's look at this clip this morning together.

(Video clip shown of a hypothetical Gospel Light Christian Church that is filled with warm and gracious people until it became Good Luck Country Club that is filled with cold and ungracious people. )

Now there's question that I want to ask you today. As a people, are we a people of love? Can we really be Gospel Light Christian Church or are we more like good luck to you? That's why it's called Good Luck alright. Good luck to you means you survive on your own - Good Luck Country Club.

(Skit depicting newcomers looking for seats in the sanctuary and some members voluntarily giving up their seats for them.)

Well, we can...now let's give a round of applause to our team, alright? Now this is a little demonstration of, of course it's comical, it's exaggerated but what it takes to be a people of grace? And though people come in with different kinds of dressing, hairstyle, appearances, a Christian church does not despise nor discriminate, but we reach out to them, because we're not a country club, we are a Christian church. The question therefore is, is this church, and are you a people of love?

I find this question very penetrating and humbling to myself. The question I need to ask my life is: am I more loving as the years go by? It's easy for me as a pastor to hide behind the fact that I learn the Bible, I study the Bible. It's easy for me to hide behind the fact that I even teach the Bible and preach it every Sunday, and on the surface it looks like wow this must be a godly man, but if I were to strip away my title, strip away my ministry, strip away just the knowledge and ask myself this question: can people know I am a disciple of Jesus, because they see love? And I'm often found wanting. See that's the reality. We can hide behind all kinds of excuses: oh I have been to church 20 years, I must be a good Christian. Oh, pastor, you don't know I've been working so hard in the ministry, I must be a good guy. But this is the one question we need to ask ourselves: are we a people of love? I like what this pastor wrote and it was something very searching for me. He said,

“The litmus test of a man's walk with God is what goes on at home, and not when the microphone is strapped on. “

I'm strapped on with the microphone today, and for all intents and purposes look super godly. But the real litmus test is what goes on at home. It's my relationship with people and how I value them and how I treasure them, and how I love. Don't be confused between giftedness and godliness. A man can be very gifted in preaching, but he's not walking with God. And a man can be very intimate with God, have a great relationship with God, but is not gifted to preach. But the litmus test, acid test

for us is, are we loving people? Maybe today you're trying to disguise and run away from this question, but I want to bring you to this question: are you getting more and more loving as the years go by? Is there the evidence of the botanical growth or the fruit of the Spirit being blooming and blossoming in your life? Is there such an evidence?

I suspect that in your heart, you long for it. If you're child of God today, if you believe in Jesus, I believe, deep down in your heart you know this. You know that you ought to be more loving. You want to be more loving. You are frustrated at the days you burst out or explode at your wife or your husband. You are really frustrated that you're more, you're not more like Jesus. You're self-centered, you're proud and you're frustrated that the fruit of the Spirit is so small and you long for the day to be more like Him. In the next few weeks to come, I'd like us today to look at a series on love. And it's so important for us to grasp it because Paul says, even if you speak in the tongues of man and of angels, but you have not love, you are just a noisy gong or a clanging symbol.

Wow! I can preach every Sunday, and if I have not love I'm just making lots of noise. He goes on to say, even if you're gifted in many ways, you have prophetic powers, you understand all mysteries, you have all knowledge, you have all faith, that you can move mountains, but you have not love, he says, you are nothing, I am nothing. What is even more astonishing is what he says in verse 3 is, he says giftedness is not a substitute for love, but what say, what goes on in verse 3 is even more amazing to me, because he says: if I gave away all I have, that's something isn't it? Some of you have a lot and Paul says even if I give all that I have and deliver up my body to be burnt but have not love, I gain nothing. He's saying there's a kind of sacrificial, good living that is not born out of earth. Some of us are proud of the fact that you are a decent citizen of Singapore. You never commit any crimes, you don't steal, you don't cheat, you pay your taxes, you're honorable in your dealings with people. But Paul is saying even if you have good moral behavior, but you've not love, you gain nothing. There's a kind of good life, good living that is not born out of love, because it is self-centered still, because you want people to look at you with good light, in good light. You want people to see: oh, you're such a good, decent guy. It is still very selfish in its motivation and it is not love.

So in the next few weeks, I want to share with you what love really looks like. In Romans chapter 12 we've seen that one of the key effects of the Gospel embraced in human hearts is that it flows out in love. Now we got to know what it is like, isn't it? If the Gospel so transforms us that we become a person and a people of love, we got to know how it looks like, the look of love. And you know this is what you're here for. This is what I'm here for. I want to be a person of love. I want to be more like Jesus. I want to have the Spirit's grace prominent in me. I'm sick and tired of that old selfish life and if you're a child of God today, I know this is the yearning of your heart. So today let's embark on this journey.

What does love look like? Because this is the test we need to look at in our lives. Today I just like to touch on one verse, very simple verse. In fact, it doesn't need a lot of teaching, preaching on it because it's so straightforward. Paul says:

“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.” (Romans 12:13)

What's the look of love? Service. What's the look of love? Service. You will be focused on others. You'll be meeting people's needs. You're not self-absorbed. What is a good marker of a church that is healthy, growing in Jesus? Let me tell you this: when we are not self-absorbed. When we, like Jesus, are thinking of the lost, when we like Jesus are thinking of those who are yet outside the kingdom, because this is what it is. Love is outward focused. Paul says, when the Gospel floods your life, it will flow out in this. You will contribute to the needs of the saints, and you will seek to show hospitality. Let me unpack three little words in this verse to bring out its full essence and then we'll look into the applications.

The word “contribute” almost reminds us of Christmas Day, when you walk by Salvation Army collection can and you hear the ring and you take out a dollar or two and you put it into the box. That's a contribution. But it's not like this in the Greek. It's stronger than that. It's more forceful than that. The word “contribute” in the

Greek, some of you may be familiar, is the word “koinonia”, which means to fellowship, to be in partnership, to share. So Paul is saying, when you are a person of love, you will enter into the shoes of someone going through needs and necessity. You won't see yourself as someone detached, but you see yourself as someone who's attached. You see yourself in his shoes. You are participating in his needs. You are sharing in his difficulties. That's what it is. And it's only when you place yourself in their shoes then will you really contribute to their needs.

Now this is what is said in Hebrews chapter 13. “Remember those who are in prison”. We say why? “As though imprisoned with them, and those who're mistreated”. Why? “Since you also are in the body”. This is something amazing. This is something you may not be very conscious of. Most of the time I live my life, thinking of me, myself and I. That's a reality for your pastor here. (Pastor laughs). He's self-absorbed. The flesh is strong, but if the Gospel so permeates my life, then it changes the way I should think. If the Gospel so permeates my life, then I will know, because Jesus died for me. I'm now redeemed by his blood. I'm no more my own and now I am placed into a universal, mystical, invisible, in a sense, body of Christ. So you and I are no more disconnected people but you and I are all part of the same church which is the body of Christ. And when we are all members of the same body, one member, if one member suffers the others suffer.

How many of you here have gout? Don't raise your hand. It's very embarrassing. It means you ate too much. Maybe. Suppose you have gout and your big toe is really painful. Now, the big toe in pain causes the entire body to suffer. Your whole body suffers. You're uncomfortable. You walk with a limp. It changes the way you move. Everything is affected because one member suffers. And the Gospel is saying to you, when you are so conscious of the fact that Jesus is now your Savior and you're now part of His church, His body, you don't look at people and say: that's their problem. It's their problem. Too bad for you. I have my own life to live. I have my own problems to settle, good luck!

No. A Gospel-transformed person says his problem is my problem because we are together in the body of Christ. It's a radical way to live. That's what the Gospel does. It causes you to live in a radical new, brand-new way. So you participate in the needs

of others. And at the very same time, I'd like us also to look at the second word here. The word is hospitality. What is hospitality? We all understand that we are now in a hotel and a hotel is in the hospitality line, and the English word hospitality simply means helping someone feel at home even though they're not at home. Right? It's to help someone feel at home, even though they are not at home. But let me go to the Greek again. The beauty of studying the Bible is when you know the original meaning, the full meaning is so much richer. Therefore, none of the English translations are always able to do it. In the Greek hospitality is this word "philoxenia". Xi mi lai ei (hokkien words that mean "What is that?") you say? What in the world is it? Philoxenia. Philoxenia is a composition of two Greek words. Some of you would be familiar. Philo means... Gospeliters, I'm sure you know Philo means..love . Excellent! It's a kind of friendship love, brotherly love. Philo means love. Xenia? Xenia? There's an English word that I think could describe Singaporeans today. It will be the word "xenophobic". Excellent. Xenophobic. Do you know Singaporeans today are pretty much xenophobic? What is xenophobic? Means you are afraid or you're adverse to foreigners. Now, I think it's just simple, logistical, infrastructural problems that we have a small little island with many, many people crowding and so we've been used to kampong lifestyle and suddenly the world has changed around us and therefore there's a kind of xenophobia in this nation.

So the word "phobia" is to be fearful. The word "xeno" is strangers or foreigners. Or if I add in another word, aliens - different from us, aliens. In the Greek philoxenia is to love aliens. That's a new way of looking at things. I love foreigners. I love strangers. I love people who are different from us. Whoa, that is what love is. You see, it's easy to love people who are same like you. It's easy to love people who like you, but to love someone who is different from you, who is totally of a different culture than yourself, that is something supernatural. That's love. So that is the word that you need to grasp.

The third word I'd like us to look at is the word "seek". I just want to emphasize that the word "seek" is to pursue very hard. In fact elsewhere in the Bible it's translated to be "persecute". To persecute someone is to chase after someone. You want to get him. And Paul is saying when you have love, you don't persecute people to kill them, but you persecute strangers to serve them. That's the fresh way of looking at love. And you don't see yourself as an individual. You see yourself as part of the body and you



want to meet the needs of the brothers and sisters in Christ. And you see yourself today as someone who is actively on the lookout to serve foreigners, not be xenophobic but be a xenophiliac. You love them. You want to welcome them, you want to serve. What does this mean for you and me?

I believe this is so real. This is real. These words are not theory. I think one time, there's a way to read the Bible as if it's just a set of rules and regulations that are ideals that will never be attainable. But I say this to you. I think this is totally attainable, in the power of the Holy Spirit. We see that this is no mere idealism. It is reality. 2000 years ago, I know at least this happened, recorded in the Bible. 2000 years ago, I see a people who contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. You say where? In the book of Acts. When I read the Book of Acts and chapter 2, I'm always amazed because I see a people that is so radical, so different from us today.

The Bible tells us in the Book of Acts, that the people sold all their present possessions and had all things common. That is quite something. If they've their iPads they'll sell it. If they've their iPhones, they'll sell it. If they have their Mercedes they'll sell it. If they have their Sentosa Cove waterfront home, they'll sell it. If they've ten properties they'd sell it. Why? They sold it to have all things common because they saw that other brothers and sisters in Christ are just struggling. Because of coming to faith in Jesus, they're ostracized. They're kicked out of their social circles. They cannot get a job outside, and they're all struggling. And so those who have been blessed, they put themselves into the shoes of the poor. They saw the needs of saints. They didn't say this is my Sentosa Cove home, this is my Mercedes-Benz. They didn't say: this is my money, you've no right to it! They said: no, I'm saved by the blood of Jesus. I'm part of this universal body and when you suffer, I suffer. I'm willing to contribute to the needs of the saints. Radical. Just think about it. Would you ever do that? You say pastor, this is too way beyond me. Well, that's why we regularly need the Gospel of Jesus to come right in our hearts, to change the way we think, the way we feel.

Let me say this, if you're really serious about this verse, it will change the way you look at your money. I know I'm touching something very sensitive. Wah, Pastor you

talk about money. You can talk about God. You can talk about religion, you can talk about faith, but don't talk about money please, very sensitive. I want to talk about money because Jesus talks a lot about money. This is where the rubber meets the road, you know. How you spend your money tells you a lot about your faith and your heart. I want to tell you something about your money. If you really believe that you're to contribute to the needs of the saints and to show hospitality, there is something that will change in the way that you look at your finances. Let me give you a quote.

“God prospered me not to raise my standard of living but to raise my standard of giving.”

Em, in many churches, health and wealth is preached to enrich oneself. But the biblical teaching is that when you're enriched, it is to give of yourself, never for yourself. God did not give you enough. God did not give you much in order for you to enrich yourself. This quote is great because it tells us that He prospers us that we may give to others, and that should change the way you look at your finances. I'm not sure how you spend your money. I wish I could look in your bank accounts and checkbooks, and I'll be shocked, wa lau, this guy has so much money ah, can't tell! Wah this guy gave so much, I didn't know! It will be quite an amazing time when we all open our checkbooks, isn't it? But it's not for us to search and interrogate your life. It's for you today to check yourselves.

How do you spend your money? Is contributing to the needs of the saints something prominent to you? Well, love changes the way you look at finances. I believe love changes the way you view your house. The Bible says you are to seek to show hospitality, right? And it is not just spoken in Romans 12, it's also spoken in Hebrews 13. This is what brotherly love means. It means you show hospitality to strangers.

Now there's a couple, there's a family here that I know is running a hotel. They're called GLCC Hotel Business and they're Pastor Sinon and Sister Lorna. Am I right? All our Filipino brethren, you will know this is the Grand Hotel of Singapore. Anyone from Philippines passing by or coming to Singapore, they'll stay in this hotel, called

Pastor Sinon and Sister Lorna Hotel, and they are so hospitable. It's amazing, I hear that sometimes, their house, and it's not like they stay in a big, grand house, it's an average flat, but they're always having guests. Hospitality. Now it's not because it's easy. It's hard. To clean up, to cook, to take care - it's not easy. That's why 1 Peter says use hospitality without grudging because it's easy to be. It's easy to be upset. People say guests are like fish. They turn stale after three days. You can have someone stay for one or two days, it's fine lah. More than that, wa liao, this and the grudging heart can come up. But a person permeated with the Gospel manifesting in love will show hospitality even to strangers, people you don't know, people who've never been to your place before, you'd be glad to do it, and this might surprise you, but if you're looking for a pastor, if you are looking for a pastor, you are looking for elder, you're looking for someone to serve the Lord in the pastoral capacity, what do you look for? You look for integrity, you look for a man who is filled with the Scriptures, you look for a man who has a godly life, you look for a man who is able to teach, you look for people who are faithful to their wives, who rule their families well. These are some of the qualifications, isn't it? You're familiar with it. But can I show you a qualification that we all forget, and it's this, it's got to be hospitable..not so important, so I relegate it. I know your mind because my mind was like that. Hospitable not very important ; apt to teach, yes, very important. But instead, apt to teach is after hospitable.

A pastor must have a love for his flock. That's clear, but at the very same time I believe a pastor must have a love for people who may not be his flock. Hospitality. It's also key to missions. I wish I had more time, but hospitality is also key for missions. In the early days Jesus sent out His disciples and whether a disciple stays in the place depends a lot on hospitality. If they will not receive you, then shake off the sand from off your sandals and go to another place. Do you know that when you are hospitable to guests, to people, you're facilitating the work of God. I remember those days in GLCC, we regularly have advertisements, not advertisements but requests for help, people to host families and I'm thankful for many of you who've exercised hospitality. You've entertained strangers and I think it's a great thing. It's a manifestation of the heart of love and we do all this not because we're forced to. The book of Acts is not about communism. Everybody got to do that. No, it's because they want to. Christianity is from the inside out.

So today I want to just apply this to you. Are you a person of love? How do you manage your finances? How do you see your house? Are you involved in brothers and sisters' lives enough so that you can meet their needs? Do you care for their emotional needs? Are we a people that will tear people down or are we a people who will be conscious with our words and to build people up? Do you know those are needs? In this world where the world is just tearing everybody apart, the church ought to be a people of grace. It's weird that when this tongue that's supposed to be a fountain of blessings becomes a fountain of cursings and discouragings. We need to meet needs, to be encouraging people, helping them in their lives. We need to be meeting needs in a spiritual level. There are some who are struggling in their walk, some who've just divorced, who've just gone through illness and it takes, the one and others, not just a pastor, but it takes all of us to contribute to the needs, visiting them, praying for them, helping them, doing Bible study with them. That's what it takes. "Ye which are spiritual, restore your brother in the spirit of meekness". I could go on and on but I think the personal application is clear. Are we a people of love?

I want, however, to focus on the second part. It's not just about you as a person, but we as a people. We started our message today with a picture of some very ungracious people. They are all acting la ah; they are not like that in real life. Just to assure you, if you're new with us, this is not real alright. This is just staged. James, ungracious, unkind, taking up a lot and saying: we don't care, we just want to be there, we just want to be there in the most convenient way. Then there are people who say: there! Wah! This is the kind of face you want to..(Pastor laughs) So cheeky, the acting is so good" It's so cheeky! There! There! And you want to exclude people because they're not part of you. They're not like you and you say: yea, you're going to disturb our happy, holy gang and go somewhere else please. Or how about Dennis and Jo who say: I'm so comfortable already, don't disturb my comfort.

Hey, let me ask you: what will be a more accurate description of GLCC? Really. So what we call ourselves? But how do we measure to the test of love? Are we Gospel Light Christian Church or Good Luck Country Club? Again I say good luck because that's the attitude we have to people who are different from us. You say: good luck to you, if you can fit in with us, join us. If you can't, good luck. Hey, something is missing. Christ never treated people that way. He reached out toward us. If he treated us as good luck to you, he would never have come down. So are we a club or

are we a church? What's the difference? Let me try to fine-tune the difference a little bit for you.

I thought quite hard about this. I'm not very good with this. So I could only come up with three things and they are very similar. So pardon me, if it is not very, very descriptive, but here are the answers. Country Club. This is the language of a Country Club member - Members only. So we welcome only members. If you're not a member, you're not quite welcome. In fact, if you're not dressed.. you go to clubs that have standards of dressing, right? No slippers, no flip-flops, no singlets, no shorts. And unless you're willing to conform to that standard, you're not welcome there. Let me ask you: are we a country club, where it says members only, or are we more like a Christian church? Do we say to people: unless you meet up to my standards , you're not welcome here.

I've read of people, I've heard of pastors who tell me, in their churches, when someone comes in with slippers, the members tell them, the new visitor, who's here for maybe the very first time, "Can you please go home and change your shoes, then you can come back?" Members only. Must wear long pants, shoes..Now I'm not saying next week you'll all come in your slippers and so on, please don't mistake what I'm trying to say. Is that the message we give to people? "Oh, are you coming to our service, then can you please go and shave yourself?" That's what I hear, "Can you go and shave, before you enter the house of God?"

Or maybe we give.. we don't say those things. We are too polite, we're too paiseh, we're too embarrassed to say, so we give people the look, the laser sharp look. It's seen. Out of the abundance of the heart it will be seen. I read about Philip Yancey. He wrote a book called "What's So Amazing about Grace?" He shared about a friend, his friend who attended church for the first time. And this friend was also an alcoholic who joins Alcoholics Anonymous. He's struggling in his life. He's beaten down. He's struggling with addiction to alcohol. He went to church and he was late and everybody turned round and said, "You've no right to be here, you're late." First time to church. And then he said when he went to Alcoholics Anonymous, when he was late, everybody turned around, stood up and clapped for him. "Thank you for

coming. We know that you're late maybe because you're even struggling to come and we want to welcome you."

I don't know about you, but it's strange that Alcoholics Anonymous will be more gracious than a Christian church. Strange. But that's what life is. After a while when we gather, we've a clear purpose to reach the world for Jesus, we're here to help people come into a life-changing relationship with Jesus, but soon enough we evolve to be a country club, to be a members only exclusive club. But the church says: All are welcome. You know why? Because Jesus welcomes all. The people that won't come to Jesus are the self-righteous ones. He said that sinners and publicans enter the kingdom before you. He came, Jesus came to welcome sinners. How do I say that? How can I be more explicit than to say, Jesus came to seek and save that which is lost?

Let me say this in another way. He came to seek and save that which is sinful and dirty and messy. He ate with sinners and publicans. He didn't have a club that says oh, no, only when you meet up to my standards. Herein is our Savior, who demonstrates grace. Country club people say: it's all about us! It's got to be me, my needs, our needs! We ought to have a church that contributes to the needs of saints. We must be serving one another. We must. That's biblical, we need to build each other up, but it's not all about us, it's for others too. It's for others too. And then here we are. Country club has standards, dress code, blah blah blah... and by the way, I believe a church must also have standards. We must. We have to have standards. The Bible is full of standards, but at the very same time, let us realize there's a difference between having standards and having grace and truth.

Jesus, the Holy one, has unbelievably high standards. If you want to compare standards, I'm sure His is way beyond us. He's holy; He has high standards. But when He met the sinner who was just caught in adultery, He didn't say to her: you dirty sinner, get out of my way! Clean out your life, then come to me! Did He ever say that? He said to her: neither do I condemn you. Grace! And then go and sin no more. Truth! But here we are like the Pharisees surrounding sinners who're not like us and we say: you clean up your life before you can join my club.

My friends, we can be orthodox, we can be preaching things, we can be teaching things that are true, but miss out on the spirit of love. Jesus was full of grace and truth. I believe grace is what is needed for the world today. I also believe that if you preach grace and there is no objective truth, grace is not true grace, because they don't know why they need grace. Truth shows you your need; grace meets you at your need. And you need to have both grace and truth. And as a church we must be careful, that was. We must have clear standards biblical standards. We must be a people of grace that has philoxenia in our system. I'm thankful for church, for all these years we've demonstrated philoxenia. I just want remember what happened, like I don't know how long ago this was, maybe 8, 9 years ago when we first started Chinese construction workers' outreach. To be honest, the Chinese construction workers are a different people from us. Yes, I'm ethnically Chinese. They are Chinese. But in a very real sense, culturally we are very different. Linguistically, we are different. When they speak Chinese, most of the time I can't quite understand. The food they eat is different. Their lifestyle is different, but I thank God for a church that did not say because you're different from us, you've no business to be with us. I thank God for many of you Gospeliters, who served the Chinese construction workers with your life, every Sunday, being there to cook for them, serve the dishes to them, welcoming them, busing them in from the construction site.

I thank God for Gospeliters who have the love of God to love strangers and that has been the culture of GLCC. Right from the beginning, we served our Filipino, our workers who are in this land. They're not native to Singapore but doesn't matter. The Great Commission is to all ethnos, all people, all nations, all people groups. I thank God for Kids' Club in this church. You bus children in from different corners of Singapore, some from very, very difficult families. I thank God for the York Hill Outreach. You reach out to people who are demographically, socio-economically different from us. But doesn't matter, we want to serve you. Philoxenia.

I want to ask you today: what is this worship service about? Members only? That's not my desire. I want to serve members. I want to help you come to the Word of the Bible, to the Gospel of the Bible and to know the God of the Word, the God of the Gospel. I desire this for all Gospeliters, but I pray that this Sunday, worship services

each and every Sunday, we will partner with you so that your friends, your loved ones who're outside of the Kingdom, who've never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be welcome in our midst that we may serve them and help them come to Jesus Christ. Otherwise, I'll really be singing: stand up, stand up for Jesus with four, five of you, because when we are not having the heart of Jesus in reaching the world, something shrivels up inside of us.

Now I'm not saying this worship service shouldn't have standards. We must have standards. Sure we must! And if there's anything unbiblical, it should be thrown out straight away. Oh but, but let us be sensitive to our friends. Newcomers, treat them well, value them, speak to someone whom we've never met. Welcome them into our midst. Be conscious. I'm trying my best to be conscious of all the friends who're coming and I realize that after preaching for many years, I use language and words that a newcomer will be totally confused with. Help me with it because I want to speak to those whenever been churchd before as well. This is my heartbeat and I pray this will be your heartbeat, that even in our services we'll be sensitive, we'll be serving those who have never been to church before. You say why? Why must we do all that?

Let me tell you why. Because all of us, all of us are aliens. Do you know that? We were all aliens. We were all outside of the grace of God. We were all ruined in our sin. And the Bible tells us, this is a great verse, I love this verse in the light of what we are speaking about. "Remember that you were at that time", remember this, don't forget your roots. Do you know the nation of Israel used to be slaves in Egypt? They were and God delivered them out of Egypt to be a nation, and you know what God said to them? God said to them: because you were strangers before, you were aliens in a different nation, I want you now to treat strangers in your land well. The key order, command for hospitality is to Israel because they have to remember their roots, and that is consistent throughout the Bible about the good Samaritan, how he served a Jew who was racially different from him and how Jesus lifts up that standard to a superhigh realm where He says: Love your enemies. Why, because we were once aliens, because we were once enemies, and the Bible says, "Remember that you were at times separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers." Look at these words, aliens, strangers, separated. You had no hope, and you're without God in the world, but now, because of Jesus, you who were once far



off have been brought near by the blood of Christ, and we who have been aliens have been brought in and blessed by the Gospel. Shouldn't we go out and serve the aliens who're now separated from the covenants of promise, separated from the grace and the goodness that is all in Jesus?

Pray that for us, Gospel Light Christian Church will remain Gospel Light Christian Church and never become Gospel Light Country club. I pray that we'll be a people who'd love one another.

Can I even suggest this to you? Maybe every week, not maybe, you should, every week, look for someone you have never spoken with before and say hi to him. I'm pretty sure you entered this room, sitting in a seat and say: I'm very comfortable, don't disturb me. Can you just look to your left, and to your right? Look at the people. They're real ok? We didn't plant robots beside you; they're real people. Look to the left. Ai ya, this one very weird, but we'll love you, alright. It doesn't matter the color of the hair. Really. It doesn't matter the tattoos on his body. It doesn't matter the rings that he wears. It is not the key. The key is your heart. Is there the love of Christ in you, that gives you philoxenia? So every week, I pray, come to church, not just to hear a sermon. I think a sermon is very important. I think praising God is very important, but come to church ready to exercise philoxenia. And I tell you what. When you exercise philoxenia, you're worshiping God. You are worshiping God! Why? The logic is this: everything that flows in Romans 12 is because we are presenting ourselves a living sacrifice. And it's when I present myself a living sacrifice that I will sit here and say though I am very comfortable, it's not about my comfort. It's about him. He may be here for the 1st time, he is struggling in his life, he's just broken up with his wife, he's going into depression and I want to meet needs, I want to love people to the cross of Jesus.

So would you do that? Every Sunday, make this your worship experience, not just to sing, not just to hear, but to serve one another. That is worship. That is what glorifies God. And that is what will make GLCC truly a Christian church. It's not the sermon here. It's great that we have preaching of God's Word. But it can be so much more. So don't shortchange yourself. I want to encourage you, let's be a church that looks out for others, meet the needs of one another and practice hospitality all the time.

Today if you're a guest with us, I want to say to you again, you are our VIPs. Thank you for coming, and I'm very thankful this morning we'd people who come in for the second time. Basically they came last week or the week before, and this week they're back again. We're grateful for the privilege to serve you and I hope every Sunday as you come, you hear the Word of God, you are with the people of God, you'll see Jesus, because ultimately everything we do flows from Jesus.

Why do we love? Why do we give? Why do we serve? Because Jesus is the ultimate philoxenia. He is the ultimate philoxenia. It's because He loved aliens and strangers like us that He came to die for us. He gave His life for us as an act of obedience to His father. Today let us be willing to live for others as an act of worship and obedience to Him. Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners. Let's reach out to people while they are yet sinners. Let's be a Christian church and not a country club. May the Gospel flow through your life and as a result, glorify Him, which is in Heaven. Let's bow for a word of prayer.

This morning, I shared with you the look of love. I'm not asking you about your Bible knowledge. Don't tell how many times you've read your Bible. Don't tell me what books you've studied, because this is the question we cannot avoid. Have we been a people of love? This is a question I asked my own life. So easy for me to hide under the title, Pastor, to hide behind the ministry, Pastor, to hide behind the office and the function of a preacher. It's easy but it's not what I want to do because God sees my heart.

My dear friends, God sees your heart today. Is the fruit of the Holy Spirit seen in me? Is the beauty of Jesus seen in me? How do you see yourself? A soloist detached from the needs of the brothers and sisters around you, living your life on your own, being comfortable about it, but totally un-Christ like about it. And I say to you Gospeliters, be careful about the country club syndrome. So easy for us to lose sight. Jesus came as to seek and save that which is lost. We must have the heartbeat of Christ beating in us.

Now let's look today at the cross of Calvary, because it's all flowing from there. We need today a clear vision of the cross. We need today a clear vision of our great example and Lord Jesus, the ultimate philoxenia, full of truth, and also full of grace. May God help you today, help us today, to be a church that will welcome sinners into our midst and to love them to the cross of Jesus Christ. And so Father, we today we come to you. We could manufacture studying the Bible. We could manufacture wristbands and necklaces, but this mark, this mark of grace, love, is something we can't produce. And so as we look at the cross, as we look at your Son, even in this time, would you make us more like Him. By your Holy Spirit bear forth the fruit of love. I pray that each one of our lives would be more and more Christlike. I pray that as a church we'll be more Christlike. Father, many things are spoken, but that which is of you I pray you will deeply establish in our hearts. May this church continue to shine forth the Gospel light that others may see and come to Jesus, your Son. We pray all this in Jesus' Name.