



BECOME AN EXTREMIST OF LOVE

SUMMARY:

This week we are kicking off a brand-new series called, Stormproof: Finding Faith in Life's Difficulties. To start off this series Pastor Derwin is talking about the storm clouds of division, anger, and hate that often plague our world. Throughout history these storm clouds have threatened us with their ominous intimidations. The way we fight back is by becoming extremists of love.

The reason we are able to become extremists of love is because, as Christ-followers, we have experienced Jesus' extreme love. The Bible tells us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). As a result, we are able to love others, including our enemies or people who persecute us. This is a radical form of love that is often not present in our world. The truth of the gospel, that the world doesn't want us to remember, is that we *have* unity. We *are* a united people. The world tries to divide us and pit us against one another—whether it be through political affiliations or differing ideologies—but the blood of Jesus is stronger and binds us all together. All we must do is walk in that unity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Take a moment to get to know each other in your group. What are some differences you can note? Use these questions as a guide: *Do you prefer coffee or tea? Would you rather read the book or watch the movie? Who is the G.O.A.T—Michael Jordan or LeBron James? Would you rather vacation at the mountains or at the ocean?*

No matter your differences, all Christ-followers have Jesus in common. The differences we discussed may seem silly or surface-level, but there are real divisions amongst God's people today. One of the biggest divisions fall on party lines. Pastor Derwin often reminds us that we do not belong to the party of the donkey or the elephant, but to the party of the Lamb. *Why is this an important reminder for us all?*

Read Romans 5:8-11.

How did God show His great love for us?

What does it say we are now in verse 11?

STORMPROOF

FINDING FAITH IN LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

Read Matthew 5:44-45.

Who should we pray for according to these verses?

Do you find that to be a difficult task?

Why do you think Jesus is calling us to pray for our enemies?

Read Romans 12:17-21. These verses give us come more insight on praying for our enemies.

From these verses, why do you think God calls us to love our enemies?

Verse 21 says, "Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good." What does it mean to "do good"?

Is there a person in your life that you find difficult to love? Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you an opportunity to show them God's kindness.

Read Ephesians 4:1-3.

What keeps us united to one another?

Pastor Derwin shared the story of Corrie ten Boom. She was a Dutch woman who lived during the time of the Nazi regime. She was sent to prison and later a concentration camp for her efforts against the Nazis. In 1971 she published a book called *The Hiding Place* detailing her experiences. One day, after the horrors of the war were over, she was at a church service in Munich where she encountered a former S.S. man who was one of her jailers. He approached her grateful for the message she had just delivered on Jesus washing our sins away. He thrust his hand out to shake hers. At first, she kept her hand by her side. And she thought, "Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him." She still struggled to forgive but kept praying until she was able to raise her hand to his. She says, "And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself." *What impacts you about Corrie ten Boom's story?*

End your time praying for one another—that the love of Jesus would radiate and shine a light on those around you.