

## THOUGHTS FROM CHAPLAIN RICHARD

Hello friends,

How well did you navigate the family expectations over Christmas and New Year? Have any arguments spoiled the celebration of our Lord's incarnation - the most glorious event in earth's history?

We shouldn't be surprised that our enemy would like to disrupt these times of remembrance, and our family harmony. I hope none of us ran away from the good fight - the fight for truth and love?

In a bible study recently some friends of mine discussed what love should look like in our everyday life. We looked at the definition of love from 1 John.

*'God is love'. 1 Jn 4/8*

He demonstrates that love, and defines it for us.

*'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us'. 1 Jn 3/16a*

*Because of these things... 'we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers' 1 Jn 16*

In fact, John uses whether we love each other or not as a test of our being God's children.

*'We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers.' Jn 3/14*

But unlike the world's definition of 'getting on with everyone, not making waves', true love is not always harmonious!

Jesus is the perfect representation of God, who is love, therefore he is love incarnate (God in human form). He always spoke the truth in love. That is, his motive was always the ultimate good of the one he was speaking to. Unfortunately, there are many that do not want to hear the truth, no matter how lovingly it is presented.

Jesus gives us the perfect example of how to love. Philippians Ch 2 says:

*3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

*5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

*6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

*7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

*8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross!*

So our lesson when speaking truth is to have the same mindset as Jesus - a willingness to serve (and die for if necessary) the one we are speaking to.

I have found these truths very challenging when determining how to speak certain things to people - but as we become more and more like Christ they should inform ALL our words and thoughts!

God richly bless you as you apply the truth in faith,

Your brother in Him

Richard