Reading Ahead of November 8 Service

Series Vision:

In a world that has always been badly torn by division, ethnic cleansing and racism, Jesus came and gave his life to create one new people, who would be unprecedented in unity and values (Eph 2:15). In John 17, Jesus gives us a window into what's on his heart by praying for himself, the disciples and us. He prays that we be one (John 17:23). The reason this is so important is because **the one-ness of the church is directly correlated to its witness in the world** – Jesus says that we are brought to complete unity, then the world will know that Jesus was sent by God.

This isn't what we're experiencing today. We've allowed the church to be defined by divisive constructs (for example, as Christians - red or blue). The first thrust of this series will be helping us to step out of the current mess we're in to hear what the Scriptures says about the church. The second will be to lay out a groundwork for the posture and practices that will help us to step into being one.

**Continued Prayer and Fasting for Our Nation as we seek unity in the body of Christ THROUGH the election. Here are the details:

> *With Election Day coming up on November 3, we too as the people of God have an opportunity to pray and fast for this important process and day of our nation's governance. Between October 30 and November 8, we invite the whole church to participate in 10 days of prayer & fasting, as we cover and bring our nation before the Lord, before and after the election. We want to see the Kingdom of God come on earth in our nation as it is in heaven and ask God to protect us from the enemy's attempts to create chaos. More details about this fast can be found at epicentre.org/election.*

Reading Ahead of November 8 Service: John 13:34-35

*Context to the passage:
Jesus has been journeying with His disciples for quite some time now. These verses represent the greatest commandment He gives them right before He is to lay down His life for the sins of these disciples and all of the world. His disciples do not understand the magnitude of the persecution, betrayal, and hatred that He will endure all the way to the Cross, and thus, they are not to understand the power of this command until after He fulfills his Father's will at Calvary. Jesus' heart all along is to create a kainos (new people), so he initiates a kainos covenant (see Luke 22.20) with them: the communion. Now, in this passage, he tells them that there is a kainos commandment for the kainos people: That they love each other. This is first and foremost what we're to do.

Before you jump in:
We want to encourage everyone to invite Holy Spirit's presence to meet you right where you are as you sit in this week's passage before Pastor John shares what he feels is God's heart for our church family this Sunday. As you engage with Holy Spirit in this passage, be asking this question - "Holy Spirit, what is one word or phrase from this passage that you want to impress on my heart for this week? Then, when you're ready, jump into the passage...

John 13:34-35 (The Voice)

34 So I give you a new command: Love each other deeply and fully. Remember the ways that I have loved you, and demonstrate your love for others in those same ways. 35 Everyone will know you as My followers if you demonstrate your love to others.

Seek to Engage God's Heart after Reading:

1. Go ahead and first write down the word or phrase you felt Holy Spirit was highlighting to you. Be encouraged to continue praying and asking throughout your week for revelation on why He was highlighting this specific thing to you.
2. Jesus, help me to get the vision for love that's in your heart. Will you reveal to my heart where I'm missing it? **Take time to write down any shortcomings, faults and failures that come up in your heart and ask Him for instruction.
3. Lord, are there specific kinds of people (on a political, racial, socioeconomic, or other level) that are hard for me to love the way You love? **Think of a specific person that you're in relationship with that's difficult for you to love and ask God to reveal things in your heart. Also, ask Him how to pray for their heart and engage with them this week.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace!