**‘And above all things, have love one for another.’ JCC July/2014**

**‘And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.’ 1Peter 4:8**

**‘Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.’ James 5:19,20**

What does it mean ‘love covers a multitude of sins?’ We know God’s love covers our sins ‘as far as the east is from the west’ and ‘casts our sins into His sea of forgetfulness’ but how do we cover a multitude of sins? First, what it **does not** mean is: to see sin and look the other way; to patiently bear the sin until Jesus returns; to ignore the sin; to ‘cover up’ the sin.

When we are wronged our calling is to practice careful ‘moral calculus’. Is this offense one I should let go of? Is it among the ‘multitude of sins’ that love will cover? Love will deal with the sin quietly and Biblically so as to prevent the further development of sin. Or is this offense grievous enough that love means to confront - with grace - my brother or sister? How should I confront what I perceive is sin? **Matthew 18:15-17**

**Step one** – you go to this person and gracefully and tactfully broach the subject of the sin or personal offense that has grieved you.

**Step two –** if the person does not agree with you, do not escalate the issue by fighting, but take one or two witnesses with you and try to resolve the grievous issue once again.

**Step three –** your and others best efforts have apparently failed, so now go to the Pastor and attempt to win back your brother or sister.

This is intervention for the purpose of reconciliation, restoration and recovery; not vengeance, judgment and condemnation. Sadly what we usually do is think we are practicing grace while in fact, we are holding grudges and applying ‘miracle-growth’ to roots of bitterness and resentment.

Maintaining peace in the church and amongst our brothers and sisters will cause us to **under-accuse, over-repent and over-forgive**. We should never be afraid to call sin ‘sin’, but let us be quick to forgive it and then ‘get over’ it, allowing others to move on.