

A Verse to Live by

“Let all that you do be done in love.”

1 Corinthians 16:14 (ESV)

October Prayer Focus

We need to be a church filled with faith, hope and love. Please pray with me for God to increase our love for Him and for each other. 2 Thessalonians 3:5 is a great verse to pray for our church members, “May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance.” As in the story of Moses, we saw godly love lead to perseverance. People who visit our church should sense an outpouring of love.

Life Application Challenge

We need to put love into practice. So, each day this month, I would like you to show love to someone God has put on your heart. Let them know they matter, are not forgotten and that you sincerely love them. A phone call, or send a card, take someone to lunch. This can get awkward, but it is always rewarded by your Heavenly Father. “Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.” (Mtt. 6:4)

Recommended Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 13 - Want to learn how to show Godly love? This is the chapter to read. 1 John 4:7-21 - This explains that our love for others proves if we are a child of God. Psalm 103 - A wonderful chapter reminding us of God’s goodness.

Church On Fire!

Eleventh Street Church of God | October 2020 Prayer Newsletter

The Greatness of God's Love

Have I told you lately I love you? If I haven't, I want you to know I love you.

This is the last newsletter in my series on the verse, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13) The greatest of these "greats" is love. Church family, we better be very good at showing it. We must get over the discomfort we may feel sharing love, because we are fighting against an enemy that has no discomfort discrediting us and convincing the world God and the church are "fake". The best weapon against that accusation is true, risky, sincere love for each other. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn. 13:34-35)

It is so important to understand how much God loves us because, "We love because he first loved us." (1 Jn. 4:19) We read in 1 John 4:8, "God is love". God does not just love us, He Himself is love. It is an attribute of God. He has always been love and He always will be. We are here because He loves us. In no way do I feel I can convey the greatness of God's love in this newsletter, but I sure hope to help you understand a little more how much He loves you. Let's consider God's love for a moment: God chose to create us in His image (Gen. 1:27), then gave us an awesome "job" - dominion over the rest of His creation (Gen. 1:26), we messed that all up and He consistently rescued us from our mistakes (Ps. 130:7-8), but we were so hopeless and badly behaved He sent His perfect, precious Son to save us from ourselves (Is. 53:6), and if that isn't enough, He promises us an eternal reward in paradise (Ro. 6:23)! I don't think we consider enough all He has done for us and how much He must love us to do all that for us. We get used to repeating the cliches about His redemption and love without really internalizing the absolute honor it is to be unconditionally loved by our Abba Father. Think about this, you and I are created in the image of our Almighty God, redeemed by His innocent son, and guided by His Holy Spirit - "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Ac. 2:38) And this Trinitarian power team is here to help us through our lives so we can fulfill the purposes He has for us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13) To say God has invested in us is an understatement! He has not been stingy with us. I want you to understand just how loved you are, how valued. Friends, the cross didn't just reveal your sin, it reveals your value." This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 Jn. 4:10) Rest assured He loves you, intimately, deeply and infinitely.

Truly saved people will truly love others. "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 Jn. 4:7-8) How can we truly love each other? Firstly, we must understand love is a choice which is then followed by an action; there is not always a feeling. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 teaches us exactly how to show love: "Love is patient and

kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." We can do these things even if we do not feel like it. What does this look like in real life? If someone upsets us, instead of being harsh and losing it on them, we can choose patience and forgive them. We don't allow ourselves to become envious when others are blessed by God and bitterly think "why did they get that and not me?" We keep our egos in check and do not boast about all we have done for someone seeking to glorify ourselves which leads to arrogance. We don't allow ourselves to be rude, a rude response or attitude is a sure way to prove you don't respect someone. We let go of past hurts. We are not pleased when others do wrong or mess up. We help people carry their loads when it gets too much for them. And we never, ever, ever give up on people. This kind of love is hard, messy, and time consuming. It'll inconvenience you and your busy schedule. At times, it will make you uncomfortable, uneasy and maybe exhausted. But how many times have you needed this kind of love yourself? How many tears have you shed alone wishing someone would understand your pain and sit with you? How many mistakes have you made and sat head hung down, ashamed and just wishing someone would say, "I still believe in you"? We have all been at our worst. No greater tragedy is there than a hurting person living their whole life never knowing the love of a friend or worse the Savior. We, as the church are Christ's body and need to be showing His love. There are broken people giving up everyday. Love doesn't say I am sorry you are suffering, it says I'll sit with you while you're suffering. Love doesn't just say I will pray for you, but I'll pray with you (no matter how awkward it feels). Love doesn't look at a person falling but holds them up until they are strong enough to stand on their own again.

One of my favorite Bible stories is in Exodus 17. You probably know it. The Israelites were at war with the Amalekites, and when Moses' hands were up the Israelites were winning, but if his hands lowered they started to lose. Eventually, his arms grew tired. "When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up--one on one side, one on the other--so that his hands remained steady till sunset." (Ex. 17:12) So Aaron and Hur came to his aid. Notice they **brought** him a stone to sit on, and **held** his arms up for him **until** the battle was won. They didn't say, "Hey Moses, you got this, just have faith." Nor did they offer him advice, "Hey Moses, if you'd go get a stone, you could rest while doing God's work," or "Maybe you should have worked out more so your arms were stronger." No, they brought the rock, sat him down, and held up his arms until the battle was won. Telling an already worn, tired person to help themselves, is not only mean but lazy. You really don't want to help them so you put it all on their shoulders. Thank God He doesn't do that to us! It's important to note that the victory was not just Moses' but for ALL God's people. When we help one win, we all win. And this, my friends, is the way love works.

Watching God Work,

Carolyn Abel