

The Love that Saves

By Paul R. Blake

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1Peter 1:22-23).

Peter states that Christians have been born again by the incorruptible seed, the word of God. Cleansing the soul of sin results from obeying the truth. This implies that the truth is not a collection of neutral and impotent facts, but rather is a body of doctrine that moves believers to action and has the power to purify souls. “In sincere love of the brethren” addresses one of the purposes for which souls are cleansed. The apostle Paul wrote that Christians are “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Eph. 2:10), which is similar in construction to what Peter wrote. Both texts reveal God's intention for one who has been regenerated; he is created to do good works, he is purified to love his brethren. Peter joins a command to that information: since you have been purified to love your brethren, fulfill the purpose of your purification and love your brethren honestly and fervently.

This is another way in which a Christian imitates the Father in heaven. God is the essence of the meaning of love; when love is mentioned, God should instantly come to mind. Why does God love man? (John 3:16) Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), certainly not in physical appearance for God is Spirit and has no corruptible flesh, but rather in the nature of our eternal spirit. What is one of the deepest, strongest needs in human kind but to love and be loved in return? If we are patterned after God, it should not surprise us to discover that we received that characteristic from Him. In humankind, he sees souls that He can love and who have the potential to love Him in return. Since love is one of God's defining characteristics, love should also characterize the behavior of His children. Consider, since God sees much to love in our fellow Christians, should we not be seeing the same thing in one another, too? Love is at the center of God's word (Matt. 22:36-40), and it is the hallmark of brethren (John 13:33-35).

The manner of love is unfeigned (anupokritos means "undissembled, sincere: without dissimulation or hypocrisy"; Strongs - 505), pure (katharos means "clean, clear, pure"; Strongs - 2513), and fervently (ektenos means "intently, fervently"; Strongs - 1619). Our love for each other must be patterned after our love for God -- genuine and intense. If we do not have this love for one another, we are not saved.

The Church and the World

“We have lost the art of worship. We are not producing saints. Our models are successful businessmen, celebrated athletes, and theatrical personalities. We carry on our religious activities after the methods of modern advertisers. Our homes have been turned into theaters, our literature is shallow, our hymns border on sacrilege, and scarcely anyone seems to care. Christianity has become little more than objective truth sweetened with song and made palatable through religious entertainment. Christ calls men to carry a cross, but we call them to have fun in His name.” (A. W. Tozer)

“During the past several decades, the church experienced little criticism or conflict with the world, not because the world is more Christian, but because the world and the church are so much alike. We long to be loved so much that we've lost the desire for a distinctly different life. Most of us would rather be dead than different.” (John Drescher)

“The church does the most for the world when it is least like the world.” (Warren Wiersbe)

A Moments Wisdom

- It is discouraging to make a mistake, but it is quite humbling to discover that no one even noticed it.
- Cooperation is doing with a smile what you have to do anyway.
- An opportunity is missed by most people because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like work.
- No clever arrangement of bad eggs ever made a good omelet. No skillful arrangement of bad deeds ever produced a godly outcome.
- It is not what we eat that makes us strong, but what we digest; it is not what we gain that makes us rich, but what we save; it is not what we read that makes us learn, but what we remember; and, it is not what we preach, but what we practice that makes us Christians.
- Honesty pays, but not enough to suit some people.
- Hatred is a great destructive force in this world, and it does the most damage to those who harbor it.
- Tears will get you sympathy; sweat will get you results.
- Most of us spend a lot of time dreaming about the future without realizing that a little of it arrives every day.
- Satan has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all.
- We are most likely to love praise when we are least likely to deserve it.
- Let us live so that when we die, even the undertaker will be sorry.
- When God permits His children to pass through the fiery furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. His loving heart knows how much and how long.
- There is no education like the second kick of a mule.
- Remember that amateurs built Noah's ark; professionals built the unsinkable Titanic.
- The only good thing you can say about an egotist is that they don't talk about others.
- Life is a continual process of getting used to the unexpected.
- Every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; and, every possession, a duty.
- Is it possible that the reason why talk is cheap is that the supply is greater than the demand?
- When Christ is at the center of your focus, all other matters will come into proper perspective.
- Laughter is to life what a shock absorber is to a car; it won't take the potholes out of the road, but it will make the ride much smoother.
- Pity weeps and runs away; compassion comes to help and stay.
- A wise man thinks all he says; a fool says all he thinks.
- Conscience is what hurts when everything else feels good.
- A man who wishes to be delivered from his earthly troubles, should first desire to be delivered from the cause of many of them: his own disobedience to God.
- Our strength is shown in the things we stand for; our weakness is shown in the things we fall for.
- It is the little things that often annoy us the most; we can sit on a mountain, but not on a tack.
- Some folks are so busy at being good that they forget to do good.