



LOVE

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LOVE

“And now I will show you the most excellent way.” 1 Cor. 12:31

We could say that the Church in the world today is divided into three major groupings:

- 1.) Prophecy -those who read every current event into prophecy and who can arrange every future event in order.
- 2.) Tongues -those who teach that true experiential spirituality is speaking in tongues.
- 3.) Knowledge -those who teach that one must have super-knowledge (epignosko) if he is to enjoy the super-heavenlies (epouranios) after the super-resurrection (exanastasis).

The Bible deals with all three groupings in one dramatic verse: 1 Cor. 13:8:

Prophecies?—they will cease!

Tongues?—they will be stilled!

Knowledge?—it shall pass away!

A Corinthian situation exists in the Church today. Each division mentioned above is waving its own banner—**WE ARE RIGHT—WE ARE SPIRITUAL—WE KNOW THE TRUTH!** In the midst of all this the Bible warns: “There are divisions among you.” No matter to which of the above groupings a believer adheres, even that group is saturated with divisions. No group is free from it

no matter how much they stress, "We have the answer!" Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, Baptists, Pentecostals, Dispensationalists—all are definitely divided one from another and all splintered within themselves—true Corinthian churches.

What other error do we find among the Corinthians? Immorality. Which group today is free from this plague? From church to church what do we hear? Pastors leaving their wives or having affairs with their counselees while the sheep are following their shepherds. One church member recently commented, "I have sat under three pastors, and now all three of them have been involved in immorality." Is there a group free from this? No. Frank honesty will prove it.

Looking at the Corinthian church we see husband-wife problems. Our contemporary "Corinthian" Church would make the Biblical Corinthian church look like a Sunday School picnic. If the pastor of any medium-sized congregation today would take a determined Biblical stand concerning divorce and remarriage, he might be in the food stamp line the following month. Believers marrying unbelievers is today about as common as believers marrying believers. The Church's stand on this vital truth has become woefully weak. The cry today is, "Don't offend anyone. Be **positive**. As long as the pastor keeps to his preaching on tongues or prophecy or knowledge, he'll do fine. Just don't get to meddling with what we do with our lives, time, money, wives, children, luxuries, etc."

The Corinthian church had another problem:

money. The rich sat in one corner full and drunk, while the poor faced them from the other corners hungry. Yet they were practicing the Lord's Supper to remember the One Body in which there is no difference in rank. The contemporary Corinthian church is filled with saints living like they were already in the Kingdom, enjoying every luxury that BankAmericard can afford. Multiplied millions of dollars are spent on air-conditioned, cushioned, carpeted buildings while the saints in many foreign lands sit on wooden benches on the packed earth under a grass roof. One mission headquarters that prides itself on feeding the poor and pleads for vast amounts to fulfill that purpose, has an office costing at least a million, fully air-conditioned, with stereo music piped throughout. The Director's office alone is the size of a small house and one wades to the mammoth desk through the deep carpeting. And yet that Director rarely uses his office! A battery of computers and over 200 employees keep track of the donors.

Super churches are being built today with upwards of 10,000 members and yet the average missionary must do 18 months or more deputation to raise enough support to go to the field. Many never succeed even in that time. Today the Mormons have placed as many missionaries on the fields as all the evangelicals put together according to "The Church Around the World." **Paul's** and **Timothy's** cannot be sent out if the Church lives like the Corinthians. Only Thessalonian-Philippian type churches can be senders.

Just like Corinth our contemporary Church

boasts in all its gifts as though through its own efforts these gifts came about. In every case there comes the feeling of being a bit higher than other saints.

"We immerse with the right formula the right people, at the right time, in the right manner, to make them members of the right church."

"We speak in tongues more than they all."

"That is true, but **WE** have that super-knowledge that places **us** the highest of all."

Everyone is boasting, "We are the **greatest** of all."

It is similar to the tigers in "Little Black Sambo" who boasted, "Now I'm the gra-a-a-ndest tiger in the jungle!" No doubt the results will also be the same because the Bible says, "You will devour one another."

The contemporary Corinthian church is infiltrated with corruption. Every imaginable device is employed to convince the saints to give: automatic typewriters impress the recipient with the idea he is getting a personal plea, or maybe lottery tickets (the proceeds to be used to feed hungry millions) or your chance to win a Ford Galaxy. On the radio the other day it was announced, "Send me a gift of over \$40 and I'll send you a Bible that retails for \$30—absolutely free!" Trinkets are sold, books are offered, clubs can be joined; or if that doesn't work, you can get an annuity and have income for life. Sunday School buses lure the kids with lucky dollar bills under some seats. Three of the super-evangelist salesmen are now facing the courts for illegal practices. And so it goes on and on, the Corinthian history repeating itself a thousand

times.

What is the miracle drug, the balm to heal the putrid cancer that is eating away at the Church? Is it to emphasize tongues (or to de-emphasize them)? Is it to write more books on prophecy? Is it to delve deeper into the mysteries of knowledge? There remains yet the **most excellent** way which is

L-O-V-E.

Because the Corinthians put great emphasis on three gifts: knowledge, prophecy and tongues, the Bible has a threefold solution to their ills: faith, hope and love, but the **GREATEST OF THESE** is love. The Apostle Paul while writing this certainly would not say that knowledge, prophecy and tongues were evil for he had all three of these gifts himself; but he realized that these gifts in the hands of pride, lust, envy, etc. would become a curse. If we think of these gifts as **tools**, no more and no less, we see that tools are not an end in themselves. Tools are used to build up, but wrongly used, tools can divide and destroy. Tools may also be stored on the workman's bench and remain useless. Has the contemporary Church made tongues, prophecy and knowledge an end in themselves? Such was never God's plan. No reward will be given because we had knowledge or tongues or prophecy. The reward will be given in the event something has been built with these tools. The Bible makes it clear to the Corinthians that we shall be judged for how we build and the materials we use. We will be judged by what we have accomplished with our bodies, judged by our works whether good or bad. Certainly the

judgment will not be according to how many gifts we were given, but by how we invested those gifts.

The use of tongues as at Pentecost to preach the gospel to all creatures under the sun in their own languages will be greatly rewarded. All missionaries pray for tongues to preach in foreign languages. But to use tongues as the Corinthians did to display, to cause confusion, to satisfy pride is not God's order. Prophecy is important to warn people of judgment to come in order to turn them to Christ and to be patient waiting for the Blessed Hope. However, using prophecy as a matter of pride, dividing the Church, is evil. Knowledge used as a tool to put down those who oppose the truth by teaching doctrines of devils, is wonderful. Knowledge to teach people the deity of Christ, resurrection of the dead, etc. is invaluable. But when it causes a man to go off into a corner to make his own denomination and to wave the banner of pride, it has lost its purpose. Spiritual gifts, to be of any value at all, must be used only in love to build, not to divide and destroy the Church.

None of us likes to admit to being Corinthian, but to a great degree we are. Is there any church today that is not problem-filled? Examine the cause of these problems: lack of love. Lack of love by the pastor for the flock, lack of love by the congregation for their shepherd, lack of love for our wonderful Saviour, lack of love for the lost, lack of love for our neighbor, lack of love for our brother.

Two loves there are that we don't lack: love of self and love of pleasure. Somehow the Church has

become like a theater—those who entertain the best get the crowds. The preacher with the best jokes is the most popular. Young people go to church if they are properly entertained. The Sunday School offers a Frostee-freez to all who will ride the bus. Or as one advertised: "Bring your friends to church and win a TV." Often the church is the place to meet the boy friend or girl friend and spend the worship hour in the back pew chatting. Some have found it a presentable place to pick up an hour's sleep, a place to relax and make plans for the next holiday, a place to daydream. The only **cross** that is recognized today is the one which decorates the wall behind the pulpit. The only cross which is taken up is the one that hangs about the neck as a piece of adornment or perhaps as a good luck charm. One radio preacher quipped. "Take up thy credit card and follow Me."—no cross at all.

LOVE AND THE CROSS

What is love? It is that motive within us that causes us to do almost all that we do. God's love is the cross. Only one reason is ever given for the Father to send His Son to the cross—it is LOVE! Love is the cross. Whatever we love, we will go to the cross for. If we love self, we will go to the cross to please self, work night and day, sacrifice time, and exhaust our energies just to provide some satisfaction for our self love. If it is pleasure we love, to what ends will we go! Fishing, hunting, golfing, skiing, camping, boating, flying, etc. can become obsessions whereby every spare moment

and every spare dollar are spent for pleasure. It is like Peter in the Bible who had such a love for fishing. When he should have been fishing for men, he was out on the sea taking his companions with him. How he loved fishing. He could spend the whole night out on that sea—without sleep and in extreme danger and nothing to show for it either—just fishing. But when asked to pray one hour, Peter fell asleep. He loved fishing more than he loved anything else. Our Lord met him on the shore one morning after a long night on the sea when he had caught nothing. Jesus loved Peter and prepared him breakfast. Jesus loved and gave His time and energy to supply Peter's need. He went to the cross for Peter, but Peter could not go to the cross for Him. It is remarkable that Peter denied the Lord three times before the cross. Three times after the cross the Lord asked, "Lovest thou Me, Peter?" "Lovest thou Me more than these?" We are not told what "these" referred to, but most likely those fish. The Lord has allowed us to fill in the "these" in this verse with what we personally find in our own lives. If the Lord were to meet you at your favorite place and pastime, would He repeat the phrase, "Lovest thou Me more than **these?**"

And your same answer: "I love you, Lord."

Then He would say, "Feed my sheep."

Making this frankly personal, would you feed His sheep? Would you go to the cross for His sheep? Would you spend nights out in the world feeding His sheep? Our Lord Jesus must have **first** love or **no** love! Nothing else will suffice. We give our time, money and talent to that person or thing we love. He demands "first" of all we have and are.

A man falls in love with a woman. What is his first thought? "What can I give her?" "What can I do for her?" Giving is an expression of love and no matter how great the sacrifice for love, there is no sense of pain. **Love takes away the pain of sacrifice.** If it is painful to give, then love is not the motive.

'MOTHER' LOVE

An infant has no love. He gives nothing and wants everything. Does that sound familiar? A mother gives everything to her baby and expects nothing in return. This is the purest form of human love. The opposite of this is the baby for he constantly demands and is willing to give nothing in return. Where do we stand in this regard?

Marriages are based upon this strong emotion called love, but lust is misinterpreted as love. Each partner enters marriage for what he can get out of his partner, whether it is sexual satisfaction or material security, because lust is misinterpreted as true love. This couple is not long into marriage before the tug-of-war begins, each trying to pull something from the other. They keep pulling so hard that they pull apart. Statistics are rapidly reaching the "one marriage-one divorce-one birth-one abortion" ratio, the end result of marriages based on lust not love! It is a sound principle that to gain profits, one must invest much, work hard, and manage well. A simple but true rule is: if you put nothing into it, you can get nothing out of it. Couples are attempting to enter marriage with no investment, no hard work, and no good management. In other words, no love. Small wonder it can't work.

In Church Pastor enters Pulpit for what Pastor can get out of Congregation. Congregation enters Pew for what Congregation can get out of Pastor. There is no investment and there is no return. There is no **love**. We get profit out of church membership according to our investment and we would not limit investment to money alone. How many people have left a church complaining, "I can't **get** anything out of it." It is heard over and over again. If these unhappy folk had truly invested their lives and fortunes in a church, and then found no returns, it is better to seek a better investment. But usually there is no sacrificial investment. Like the infant, they take in milk and give nothing in return. No wonder the Bible says in Hebrews that it is time to **grow up**. In the love chapter Paul says that when he grew up he put away childish things. A healthy maturity brings about true 'Mother' love. The Corinthians were instructed to grow up and to put away childish things.

LOVE IS A CURE-ALL

What does love do for us?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. 1 Cor. 13:4-8a (NIV)

Nothing doubting, love could cure every problem and every evil in the Corinthian church. Love will do the same for our churches today! We need this love medicine daily and hourly. What if love ruled our homes? Do we have problems in our home? Yes, we do. What is the source? Is it not selfishness? The children are quarreling. What are they saying? "This is mine!" "No, it's mine!" "It's my turn!" "No, it's my turn!" "You do the dishes." "No, it's not my job." Would not real love wipe those problems away? Oh, how we become competitive and teach this to our children!

In the Lord's work there is a place for competition. The Bible even says, "Run that you may win the prize." But this is a love race. He who loves the most, gives the most and wins the crown. St. Paul counted all things loss that he might win.

LOVE GIVES LIFE ITS VALUE

There is no person in the Church that is not gifted. In the human body every part has a gift, every part has a job to perform. So also is the Body of Christ, His Church. But for that talent or gift to find true value and purpose, it must be used in **LOVE**. Otherwise it has no value at all. Is not this what the Bible is telling us in 1 Cor. 13:1-3?

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor

and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Therefore, love gives the gift its value. Knowledge has divided and destroyed church after church. Tongues have put the Church in complete confusion. Why? Simply: no love. Men seek knowledge, not as a tool to win souls to Christ, but as a tool to fight and divide the Church. Men seek tongues, not to speak to foreign nations about Christ, but to vaunt their own pride. There is much to say about this in 1 Cor. 14. If love is not the center of your life and the motivating force in what you do, your life is being wasted. If love were the center of the Church, we would not be divided and sub-divided into hundreds of sects and denominations. We would truly be ONE as God intended us to be. In spite of all the gifts, the Corinthians were called down for their divisions; they were not commended. Yes, we may have the truth, but if we use truth to divide the Church, then it is no longer truth.

Husbands and wives nowadays are divorcing on the least issues, creating havoc in the home. Churches are also practicing divorce, splitting up and leaving the Church in havoc. When we talk about our testimony in the world, what testimony does the evangelical Church have today? The same testimony the Corinthian church had—not so good! It is not the knowledge (or lack of it); it is the love we need. Why is it we cannot disagree and discuss these disagreements **in love** and still live together? Must we always separate just because of a different opinion?

Legally, in God's eyes, it is impossible to divide husband and wife. When man and woman come

together in marriage, they cease to be two and they are now one flesh, joined together by God, and no man can put them asunder. Husband and wife are inseparable in God's eyes. To divide and remarry is to commit adultery. The same is true of the Church. The same union exists according to Ephesians 5 between the believer and Christ. If husband and wife can divide legally—in God's eyes—then there is no security in salvation for the believer. For if the marriage bond can be broken, then the union between Christ and the believer can be legally broken. Actually fellowship can be broken, but the union can never be broken. And if fellowship is broken, it can only be restored as **love** is restored. But it **can** be restored! Even Saul's bitter hatred for Jesus Christ was turned to one of the greatest love relationships in the Bible.

“SEX IS LOVE”

When the NOW generation speaks of love, they have one thing in their minds: SEX. The Scriptures teach that God is love. Then according to the above premise, God is Sex. For many this is true; their god is sex. We can point to some of our modern-day psychologists for this view, who teach that all of life revolves about sex—it is the center. Many of the books written on marriage make sex the center also. Nearly all advertising today is built upon the premise that sex is god and that sex is love. But is sex love or god? We love our mothers and fathers. Is this involved with sex? We love our children. Do we love our children sexually? We should love our country. This is certainly not sex love. There are myriads of things that one loves, none involved with sex.

Much sex that is carried on today has nothing to do with love. Think of sex in the world of birds, fish and animals—is love involved? Many men today choose to go to a prostitute for sex; do they love that prostitute? Does the prostitute love the men she has—or does she hate them? A great deal of sex that is carried on today is born from selfish lust and the only desire is to please self. Sex can be an expression of love if true love is involved; the sex act is to give joy to the one we love. Notice the purpose is to **give**. Unhappy marriages have selfish partners who are not willing to give. Any marriage whose principal objective is sex is bound for failure, the reason being that the only joy in the marriage will be in those few moments in bed and even those moments will be filled with frustration when love is missing.

THE PRAYER OF LOVE

How often do we find in our prayers a completely selfish motive: Give me. Give me. Give me. Bless me. We come to God for what we can get out of Him, not for what we can give Him. The Apostle Paul called himself a **love slave**. A love slave arises in the morning and comes to his master saying, "Here I am, Lord, what will you have me do?" He wants to serve; he wants to please his master. He is not working for salary or reward. He is not working for slavery's sake. His motivation is LOVE! In our love relationship with the Lord, He gives and we give—we communicate via love. This is true in marriage, church or country. If I give, I receive. If you give, you receive. It is impossible to love without giving. What we are willing to give

will depend on how great our love is. Little love: little giving. Big love: big giving.

Did you ever realize that in all of the prayers of Paul, he never asked prayer for his personal needs? Even when he was in prison he did not ask prayer that he would be released. He prayed for more open doors to preach the gospel!

PAUL'S LOVE LETTER

Often we feel 1 Corinthians is Paul's great love letter and truly it is. But there is even a greater love letter than 1 Corinthians. Do we belong to a certain elite group of Bible students who possess the highest truth of all—who are no doubt the greatest and most well-balanced and well-informed Bible students of all ages in the Church? We know how to rightly divide the truth and often in the process divide the Church! The truth of Ephesians is thought to be a bit higher than that found in 1 Corinthians. Ephesians is thought to be the super-knowledge book. Knowing this truth enables a believer to enjoy a special out-resurrection and places him in the super-heavenlies, even higher than God for His abode is said to be in the mere heavenlies! We judge every man on one major issue: Does he know our truth? He may know the truth and be living a lie, but nevertheless, he knows **our** truth and that is what is important. Yes, Ephesians is our book.

If this treatise is going to be worth anything to the knowledge group, it must be found in Ephesians. There are certain words that are especially acceptable to them. Many believers name their churches **GRACE**. **Grace** is found seven

times in Ephesians. The popular word **Mystery** is found six times. It surprises us to find that the seemingly all-important word **knowledge** only occurs four times, **to know** five times. **Truth** is found six times and **dispensation** but twice. There are those in the super-knowledge group that are "5 Point" Calvinists, which are more than Calvin himself, and who go so far as saying Christ only died for an elect few. To them the word **predestination** is the key to understanding God, but we see it only four times in Ephesians. Often Paul is exalted and Bibles are well-worn in the Pauline epistles. These are the epistles for this dispensation of the grace of God, but Paul's name is found only twice in this letter. Today we live in a world that is preaching peace when there is no peace. It is the most popular word on the lips of one-world politicians. **Peace** is found seven times. **Faith** is a close sister to love and is a lasting fruit of the Spirit. As expected **faith** is found more than the previously mentioned words—8 times. How we love to divide the Church on the pre-, mid-, or post-tribulational coming of Christ. But **hope** comes only three times here. All of these countings are from our commonly read English A.V.

Now then, how about the one word that stands out above the others in Ephesians: **love**? It occurs 21 times in the book, making Ephesians the Apostle Paul's love letter to the Church. Paul exhorts that love is the highest level in the school of grace. To miss this emphasis on love is to miss the specialty of Ephesians. God in His matchless and wonderful love reached down to save all Gentiles by grace if they would receive this love and grace.

Constrained by the love of Christ, the former persecutor takes up the cross and carries God's message to the Gentiles. No sacrifice is too great nor distance too far; even life is not too dear to place on His altar!

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. Acts 20:24

Can we follow Paul as he followed Christ? First of all, we don't have that love—that love that constrains us to go to the ends of the earth, that love that bears the cross. This is the challenge. Sell out to Him and take this message of love to a lost Gentile world. What is the cost of love? The cost is the cross.

How is the word **love** used in Ephesians? It first occurs between verses 4 and 5: "In love He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ." If it were not for His love, we would be hopelessly lost. But He loved us before the foundation of the world, and in love predestined before the foundation of the world to send His Son to die for the sins of the world. Through love He predestined to save all who would put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. If He had not through love predestined to save all who would believe, we would all have died in Adam, lost for eternity. It was His love that accomplished it all.

There was one marked difference between the Ephesian church and the Corinthian church. The Corinthians had all the gifts but they had no love. The Ephesians are commended in 1:15 for the love they had for all saints.

Perhaps the most striking use of the word **love** in Ephesians is found in 3:17-19:

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established **in love**, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the **love of Christ**, and to know this **love that surpasses knowledge**—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Often we speak of a believer being rooted or grounded, in other words, established. This portion quoted above shows that this is the way to becoming established: the way of love. Then the Word says we may have power. Power to do what? Power to comprehend the complete range of the measure of Christ's love. What a beautiful state, to be rooted and established in love so that we can comprehend His love!

According to the Bible there is only one way to speak the truth, that is **in love**. Eph. 4:15. Usually we all speak the truth, but how? In bitterness, anger and pride. Sometimes one pastor may grab the other pastor's necktie while angrily proclaiming the truth! Or a part of a congregation may abruptly walk out of a church while professing to stand for the truth.

It is great to see a believer grow and be built up. Eph. 4:16 says: "From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." It is love that causes the believer to grow and be built up. This is in confirmation of 1 Cor. 8:1-3:

Now about meat sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God.

Here **love** is contrasted with **knowledge**. Love wins out because it builds. Knowledge has the tendency to puff up like a balloon. The passage goes on to say that the man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know, but the man who loves God is known by God!

LOVE FRUIT

Our desire should be to be spiritual. What does it mean to be spiritual? In simplest terms it means to bear spiritual fruit. The fruit is itemized for us in Galatians 5: 22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Right at the top of that tree called spiritual is the fruit called LOVE. And just below the beautiful fruit of love is the cluster of all the rest of the fruit of the Spirit. Tongues, prophecy and knowledge are not there. The spirituality of any man is judged by his fruits. Amazing as it may seem, this spiritual fruit is not found in most doctrinal statements. Usually it is not listed as a membership qualification. The norm is to qualify a man on his knowledge, not on his life, all of which leads to the Corinthian situation of today. Too long we have judged a fellow-believer by his knowledge and disregarded his fruits. We should be able to be partners with any true brother who is producing the fruit of the Spirit and is built up in love.

If Paul employs the word **love** much, John abounds. In 1 John the apostle packs in love more than 40 times in five short chapters! It is worthy of study, this epistle of love.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 1 John 3: 16, 17

Through these pages we have felt a burning in our own hearts. As we look back we see much of the Corinthian in our own lives. Lord, forgive us. Help us in the days to come to put love on the throne.

IS LOVE A LAW?

The Apostle Paul instructed the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 11:1, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." Translators chose to break the thought here, but 1 Cor. 10:33 must not be separated from 11:1 or the whole meaning is missed. Together the theme is:

Even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

To bring this **home** we must read Romans 15:1-3:

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even

Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

What is the conclusion? Paul pleased not himself; Christ pleased not Himself; we are not to please ourselves, but all are to please our neighbors for their edification. Thus is the expression of love. Thus is the way we can follow Paul as he followed Christ.

Further magnifying on this point, we compare two other expressions: one expressed by the Lord Jesus Christ and the other by His apostle.

Mark 12:28-31. One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.'" The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no greater commandment than these."

Romans 13:8-10. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: Love does no harm to its neighbor. "Love your neighbor as yourself." Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

LOVE according to Christ and according to Paul is the fulfilling of the Law. The first commandment is to love God, and the second is like the first, to love our neighbor. Both commandments are brought in the one action of **love!** Christ concludes love is the greatest. Paul concludes love is the greatest. Therefore we must agree love is the greatest.

The world 2000 years after God's gift of love, still lies in darkness. Why is it so? What real sacrifice have we to make to express our love to God? What has our love for Christ cost us? What pain have we experienced? Is it enough merely to acknowledge that we are living in luxury at the expense of souls perishing in sins? No.

Test your love. Challenge yourself to express love in active, seeable ways. What is the first step? Basic to it all is desire. You must desire to love as Christ loved. Read aloud slowly Matthew 26-28. Then challenge yourself to love as Christ loved when He went to the cross. When you have such a desire, go to your prayer closet. Close the door and while on your knees, give up your heart to the Lord (you may weep here because the transfer of self to Him is not easy). Ask Him to **fill** you with His love. Ask God to reveal to you in what **special** way you can personally express your desire and love to a lost world. Spend time. Talk to Him until He speaks to your heart. Worship Him. Surrender all you are and have to the Lord. Then come from that closet prepared to love Him and your neighbor, be he believer or unbeliever. And He will give you a cross to bear, but be prepared for it and the pain that accompanies it. You cannot get involved in reaching out to the lost without taking up some of their problems and pains. Remember, it is joy to suffer with Him.

The world is crying to see LOVE in the Church of Jesus Christ.

The world is dying because of a lack of LOVE in the Church of Jesus Christ.

