

Loving Brethren In Deed And In Truth

I. Introduction: The Importance of Love....

In Matthew 22, Jesus is approached by a lawyer and asked a challenging question in verse 36: *“Which is the great commandment in the Law?”* Of all the laws that God has communicated to His people, how could only one be identified as the greatest? Jesus, of course, was able to understand how to answer the question and quotes Moses from Deut. 6 in His answer: *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”* Jesus tells the lawyer that this is the first and great commandment and then proceeds to give the second: *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* In both of these laws, **love** is the key.

When we love God with everything we have (heart, soul, mind, strength) and include the love for our neighbor in our attitudes, we can be the children that God desires. Love is two-fold: it is an intense feeling of deep affection together with action. The affection and the action must be present for love to be what God wants it to be. Look at Paul’s explanation in 1 Corinthians 13 of how important it is that love be in our mindset:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. (vs. 1-3)

Without love, we are nothing. Regardless of our actions, abilities, or knowledge the absence of love is unprofitable.

But our love must be in the manner directed by God...in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18).

II. God: Effusive Love

Our heavenly Father has been, and continues to be, excessively demonstrative (i.e. effusive) in His love for mankind in deed and in truth. Throughout the prophets, God continually states His love for His people (Is. 43:4; Jer. 31:3; Mal. 1:2). We can understand love because of God. John states in 1 John 4:7 that we must “*love one another, for love is of God.*” From the beginning of time, God has had the best interest of His creatures that He made in His image in mind. It was His will that determined that those who are righteous will inherit the kingdom that was prepared “*from the foundation of the world*” (Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:3-7). How has God demonstrated His love? Through His actions!

1. God gave us the perfect law. (Ps. 19:7-11)
 - a. The law was given for the good of mankind. (Deut. 6:24)
 - b. His word never changes. (1 Pet. 1:23-25)
 - c. It is a light for our walk along the pathway of righteousness. (Ps. 119:105; 119:11)

2. God cares for us. (Ex. 19:4-6)
 - a. He provides every perfect gift. (James 1:17)
 - b. He provides the basic necessities of life. (Mt. 6:25-33)
 - c. He remembers our origin. (Ps. 103:13-14)
 - d. He loves the stranger. (Deut. 10:17-18)

3. God gave us His Son. (1 John 4:9-10)
 - a. His love was demonstrated through His actions. (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16)

- b. He blessed us with every spiritual blessing through Christ. (Eph. 1:3-7)

III. Jesus Christ: Embodiment of God's love

To embody is "to represent in bodily form" or "the concrete expressions of something". When Jesus states in John 10:30 that He and His Father are one, He is stating that His statements, actions, and attitude are a bodily expression of God the Father. Jesus clearly demonstrates the immense love He has for His Father through the statements that He makes: "*I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught me, I speak these things*" (John 8:28); "*I honor My Father*" (John 8:49); "*I do not seek My own glory*" (John 8:50). Jesus submitted to the will of His Father (John 6:38; Luke 22:42).

But more importantly, Jesus demonstrates the love of God through His actions.

- A. Jesus exhibited compassion to individuals and the multitudes. (Matt. 9:35-36; 14:14; 15:32). Note: action (i.e. healing) quickly follows when Jesus has feelings (i.e. compassion) toward the people.
- B. Jesus demonstrated mercy. (John 8:5-7)
- C. Jesus served. (John 13:1-17; Phil. 2:7)
- D. Jesus gave His life for mankind. (John 10:14-15; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:21-24; Hebrews 9:24-26)

As Jesus states in John 15:12-13, "*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*" Jesus truly loves mankind in deed and in truth.

IV. Christians: Emulation of God's love

Just as children try to emulate their parents, Christians should endeavor to equal the love that our heavenly Father has demonstrated on our behalf. As mentioned earlier, John states in 1 John 4 that love is of God (vs. 7), that God is love (vs. 8), and that God's love was manifested through the sending of His only begotten Son (vs. 9). John goes on to state that *"if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"* (vs. 11). We are to strive to be imitators of God as dear children (Eph. 5:1) and walk as Christ walked using Him as an example: *"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma"* (Eph. 5:2). Paul encourages the Christians at Corinth to imitate himself as he is imitating Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

Through the demonstrative deeds of God and Christ, we see that love must include both feelings and actions to be acceptable in God's sight. We can say many things, but our deeds will demonstrate our hearts intents. John goes on to state that if someone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar. If we say we love God but our actions don't correlate, we will be guilty of the sin of lying. God's children are commanded to show love to the brethren; *"And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also"* (1 John 4:21). As compared with the Father and the Son, we can do no great things, only small things with great love.

Loving in deed and in truth

1. **Put God first in our life**

By recognizing and acknowledging that God & Christ are the examples that we should emulate, we must listen to God's word and allow it to become entrenched in our lives. It must become an integral part of our everyday actions.

Jesus states in John 14:23 that *“if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”* As John states, *“this is the message that we have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another”* (1 Jn. 3:11). From the beginning, our example has been to put others’ needs first. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”* (Jn. 3:16); *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). God loved us so much He gave His Son – demonstrating His deep affection for mankind through His deeds. So too must we demonstrate our love toward one another with deep and constant affection and corresponding deeds. We must let our lights shine!

2. Let our lights shine

As Jesus was teaching on the mountain in Matthew 5, He reminds His followers that they are the light of the world likened unto a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. He encourages His disciples to *“let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”* (Mt. 5:16). Jesus knew that God’s plan included His children performing special acts of kindness, compassion, and mercy because we are made in Their image (Gen. 1:26). Therefore the question is: are we living our lives in the image that God designed?

“Each of us is God's special work of art. Through us, He teaches and inspires, delights and encourages, informs and uplifts all those who view our lives. God, the master artist, is most concerned about expressing Himself, His thoughts and His intentions, through what He paints in our character. He wants to paint a beautiful portrait of His Son in and through your life - a painting like no other in all time.”

Joni Tada

Let your love shine through your actions and behaviors. Don't rely on words to show your love especially when they're not supported by behaviors.

- What are some of the actions that we as Christians can do to love in deed and in truth?

- **Share what we have with needy brethren**

- Reference the example of the early Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44-45)
- Open our hearts. (1 Jn. 3:17-18)
- Trust in the living God. (1 Tim. 6:17-19)
 - Remember that we are all rich in physical blessings as compared to others in this world.
- Remember to give of yourselves. (2 Cor. 8:5)
- God is pleased with our sharing attitudes. (Heb. 13:15-16)

Giving is a joy if we do it in the right spirit. It all depends on whether we think of it as "What can I spare?" or as "What can I share?".

- **Serving others**

- Tasked with serving others through love. (Ga. 5:13-14; Rom. 12:9-10)
- Become a servant to win souls to Christ. (1 Cor. 9:19-23)
- Believers and the beloved are benefited through service. (1 Tim. 6:2)
- We glorify God through our service. (Mt. 5:14-16)
- Our interest should be on God and others. (Phil. 2:1-4)

- **Hospitality / Helping evangelist**

- We must share our good things with those who teach. (Gal. 6:6)
- Take the time to help "refresh the spirit" of those who are evangelizing. (1 Cor. 16:13-18; Phil. 4:14-17)

- Have the right attitude when showing hospitality. (1 Pt. 4:8-9)
- Gaius is commended for his generous acts for the brethren. (3 Jn. 5-8)
 - Other biblical examples of brethren showing hospitality:
 - ✓ Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)
 - ✓ Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-34)
- **Doing good deeds**
 - Let us do good to all. (Gal. 6:10)
 - Maintaining good works is profitable for men. (Phil. 3:8, 14)
 - Our preference should be to our fellow man. (Rom. 12:9-13)

"Today is unique! It has never occurred before and it will never be repeated. At midnight it will end, quietly, suddenly, totally, forever. But the hours between now and then are opportunities with eternal possibilities."

Charles Swindoll

Let us pray to God that our lights will so shine that our actions proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

V. Conclusion: loving in deed and in truth – a reflection of Christ

Paul tells the Corinthian brethren that Christ "is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4), and it is Him that they preach. Paul's desire is that the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" shine upon the brethren. Paul continues and states that "*it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. 4:6). We should reflect Christ in everything we do. As Jesus ends His message from the mountain in which He taught concerning love for God, love for your fellow man, and the attitudes that should be instilled in the hearts of God's children, He clearly demonstrates that He "walks the walk!"

Matthew 8:1-3

“When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”

Jesus loved in word and tongue and followed it up with loving in deed and in truth.

Let us pray that we can have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5) and truly **love our brethren in deed and in truth.**

Jesus – our prime example of loving brethren in deed and in truth.



“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:14-15)