

Abounding Love

Philippians 1:8-11

8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. NKJV

In 1965 a new song hit the hit parade. What the World Needs Now is Love Sweet Love. It was a great success, eventually recorded or performed by over 100 artists. There is something in the heart of mankind that knows that the words are true. But as humans we have no way of bringing that song to fruition.

Our problem is not that we do not know what the world needs. The problem is that sin has corrupted everything in the world. This week lovers across this land with exchange cards and gift, candy and well wishes. But even lovers are not what they used to be. Lovers now include that extra-marital one, even same-sex ones.

But the church, who was supposed to be known by their love for one another, (Joh 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another) hasn't done too well either. But they are much better than the world. For at least they do know the solution.

The solution is not found in mankind but in God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Paul in this letter tells the Philippians of his prayers for them. And how that he prays that they might abound in love. Not that their bank accounts might abound.

“As in all his recorded prayers, the apostle did not pray for physical needs or church growth. It was not that those things were unimportant to him, but that spiritual issues were of supreme importance. He performed miracles of physical healing (Acts 14:8-10; 19:11-12; 20:9-12) and advised Timothy to "no longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Tim. 5:23). But the primary focus of his prayers was on the spiritual welfare of others.” MacArthur New Testament Commentary

Love is the greatest spiritual gift. For out of it comes all others.

“As in numerous other texts (cf. Rom. 5:3-4; 2 Peter 1:5-7), the things Paul mentions in Philippians 1:9-11 are sequential, each building on the foundation of the previous one. Abounding love produces spiritual excellence, which produces personal integrity, which produces genuine good works. Together they attain the supreme objective of God's praise and glory.” MacArthur New Testament Commentary

I. Abounding Love

- A. Love is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship, it carries a Christian full-sail to heaven. When love cools, obedience slacks, and drives heavily, because it wants the oil on its wheel that love used to drop. —Watson, 1696.

- B. Napoleon said, "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I myself, have founded great empires : but upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus, alone, founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him. , , . I think I understand something of human nature ; and I tell you, all these were men; and I am a man : none else is like Him ! Jesus Christ was more than man." —Napoleon I., 1769-1821.
- C. The source of Christian love is God.
1. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 (NKJV)** ⁹ But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; ¹⁰ and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;
 2. Romans 5:5 (NKJV) 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
 3. Galatians 5:22 (NKJV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
 4. 1 John 4:7-8 (NKJV) 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

II. Abounding Love in Knowledge

- A. Christian love is not just some sweet sentimental goggleigoop told hold of the 60s in this country.
1. Biblical love involves obedience to the Word. "If you love Me," Jesus said, "you will keep My commandments... He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him... If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; cf. 1 John 3:24). MacArthur New Testament Commentary
 2. Christian love is in knowledge of His word, His will.
 3. For many churches God's love is a hundred miles wide and a 1/4 inch deep.
 4. God loved us enough to not leave us in our sin.
 5. Do we love people enough to speak the truth in love.
 6. Remember Jesus said that the truth would set us free.

7. Love that leaves people under their sin is not real love.
- B. How did we get this way?
1. We have become a nation of Christians without Bibles.
 2. Churches without the gospel, the real gospel.
 3. We are to first love God with all our hearts and minds. Then we are to love others as ourselves.
- C. But there is a danger of having all the right teachings and still be not have love.
1. Rev 2:1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent.
 2. Our love is guided by knowledge but knowledge without love is not good either.

III. Abounding Love in Discernment.

- A. The word translated "discern" in classical Greek refers to testing something or someone. It is the technical word for testing money to determine whether or not it is counterfeit. It occurs in a political context for the testing of a candidate for office. Herodotus uses the word for the testing of oxen by Egyptian priests to see whether they are fit for sacrifice (Histories, II, 38). This is the word used by Paul when he says that Christians are to be renewed by the Holy Spirit so that they may "test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2). Boice, J. M. (2000). Philippians: An expository commentary (46). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- B. Everyone has to make choices every day.
1. The apostle prays that these may abound in love more and more so that they will have discernment.
 2. What to make the right choices, abound in love and you will.
 3. **Romans 13:8-10 (NKJV)** ⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "*You shall not commit adultery,*" "*You shall not murder,*"

"You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

- C. Albert Einstein said that only two things were infinite. The universe and man's capacity for stupidity and he was not sure about the universe.
 - 1. I read in the news last night that hundreds of people were stranded on the roads out east, notwithstanding they had been warned that it was going to snow 30 inches.
 - 2. I am constantly amazed at the senseless decisions people make that ruin their lives and the lives of the people they say they care about.
- D. What to have good discernment, abound more and more in the love of God.
 - 1. "biblical love is a choice. It is based solely on the intent of the one who loves, not on any merit of those who receive it." MacArthur New Testament Commentary

IV. The results

- A. That you may approve the things that are excellent,
- B. That you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,
- C. That being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ,

V. To the glory and praise of God.

(3338.) Love to God would make duties of religion facile and pleasant. I confess to him that hath no love to God, religion must needs be a burden : and I wonder not to hear him say, " What a weariness is it to serve the Lord." It is like rowing against the tide. But love oils the wheels, it makes duty a pleasure. Why are the angels so swift and winged in God's service, but because they love Him? Jacob thought seven years but little for the love he did bear to Rachel. Love is never weary ; he who loves money is not weary of toiling for it ; and he who loves God is not weary of serving Him. —Watson, 1696.

Love of fellow Christians is a sure mark of saving faith. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples," Jesus said, "if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Expanding on that truth, John later wrote: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death... If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 3:14; 4:20). MacArthur New Testament Commentary