

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Even the Media See That “Love” Is More Than Emotion!

About anytime I hear that Dick Feagler, local news broadcaster for Channel 3, is going to comment on something, I quickly change the channel! There is something about his way of commenting that just “turns me off.” Having said that, you can imagine my surprise when my wife Joyce called my attention to his Beacon Journal column (2/14/92), and I found some of his thinking worth considering here.

He was commenting on Valentine’s Day, and its custom of expressing “love” for our families and friends. He made an excellent point about how carelessly and incorrectly we use the word “love” on this special day. Even our “love songs” are not about “love,” according to Feagler, but “they are usually about either lust or ego.” How true that is! He said most of them “aren’t very romantic.” He likened some of them to jingles about certain cars. He observed, “Most young men and women know a lot more about the car they pick than they do about the lover they pick. That’s why the divorce rate is over 50 percent.” And, he is right about that, too. He wrote about people “falling in love, . . . I just couldn’t help it. It just happened.” He said it made love sound like some kind of rash, that people catch. Feagler said, “You’re smart to stay away from somebody who claims that love is something he caught from you like

stomach flu. Next week he may catch it from somebody else.” Young people, make a note of that!

He proceeded in his article to give a definition of “love” which he borrowed from the book, *The Road Less Traveled*, by M. Scott Peck. Peck says this: “Love is the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth.” Feagler added, “Love, in other words, is not a feeling. It’s a decision. An act of the will. It has a goal — to become better and make the loved one better. It has a price — the work of extending yourself.” I like that. I think he has grasp of biblical love, whether he realizes it or not. Before turning to some other sources on the subject of love, the Feagler quote with which I shall close is “They ought to start teaching love in school, but they’re too busy teaching sex. . . Draw a heart around this column and send it to your special someone. Before you load a gun (for a crime of “passion,” LW). Or have a baby. Or buy a ring.” How did this guy learn all of this? It seems out of place with him.

Notice these definitions of the Greek word, *agape*, translated “love” in the New Testament. “Love can be known only from the actions it prompts . . . Christian love . . . is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, . . . and works no ill to any” (Vine, 21). Thayer (p. 3) defines love in this way, “. . . to be full of good-will and exhibit the same . . . to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of.” The *Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 3, p. 989), says of *agapao*: “denotes a love founded on admiration, veneration, and esteem. It means to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of (Matt. 5:43f.). It is to be full of good will both in thought and deed.”

Clearly the feeble excuses for “love” which men frequently discuss fall far short of what the Bible word means. We hear people describe what the Bible calls “fornication” as “making love.” The baby born out of this act of fornication is called a “love child” in the media. Feagler talked of

men who shoot women because they “love” them. Is it any wonder that people do not know what Bible love is?

Bible love is not just an emotion. It is not just something that a person catches. It is not a warm response to something or someone because of what they have done for us. It goes farther than that. It is an act of the “will.” It is something we “decide” to do; it is a “deliberate” act. It is the product of a thought-out matter or circumstance. We “will” to “love” somebody. This is why “love” can be commanded. The Apostle John wrote, “And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another” (2 Jn. 5). He adds, “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1 Jn. 3:11). Bible love can exist — even love for our enemies — because we “will” to obey the “command” to “love.”

Finally, notice that in all the definitions of love, there is the element of “action.” Love demands that we “act” to the good, and in the interest, of the one that we love. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15). We can “will” to keep his commandments, and we will be “actively doing something” when we obey him. In like manner, when we love someone on this earth, we will “act” in a way that promotes their good, seeks their welfare, and does no ill to them. That is why love for the brethren is such a precious thing. It builds others up. It strengthens and encourages them. It does them no harm.

As we think of those whom we “love,” is it possible to see true, Bible-based love in action? Or, is it some shallow something that will not survive the smallest disturbance? The Lord’s church can be built on Bible love. It will be destroyed by the other kind!

- Lewis Willis, 1993

The Voice of the People

King Saul was sent by the Lord to utterly destroy the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15. He was told plainly to *"go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."*

The haughty Saul spared Agag, the Amalekite king, and the best of the livestock were brought back. When Samuel the prophet rebuked Saul for his disobedience to God, the rebellious king admitted, *"I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice."*

As the leader of the people, Saul had the responsibility to go before them in the fear of God. No matter what the people desired, God's will should have been respected by the king. Saul let the people lead him when he should have been leading them.

Elders in the church sometimes cave in to the demands of the people when they should insist on following the New Testament plan for the church. Preachers often are influenced by the voice of the people. They preach what the people want to hear rather than what the people need to hear. Such men ought to read, believe, and obey Paul's charge in 2 Timothy 4.

Let us always fear God and obey his voice.

- Irvin Himmel, 1996

Christ's Compassion

Jesus' life was filled with demonstrations of compassion. We would do well to emulate His example.

Compassion is "a sympathetic emotion created by the misfortunes of another, accompanied by a desire to help." Genuine compassion involves love, great feeling, interest, and concern.

The Gospel accounts tell of various ones on whom the Lord had compassion. Such individuals include a leper (Mk. 1:40-41), a demon-possessed man (Mk. 5:18-20), a widow who lost her son (Lk. 7:11-15), and two blind men (Mt. 20:30-34).

Jesus did not simply "feel sorry" for those suffering. His compassion motivated Him to do something. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and opened the eyes of the blind.

How are you demonstrating your compassion for others?

Many are suffering both physically and spiritually. Do something!

- David McPherson

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Caution: The Influence of Mass Media!"* (text: Prov. 4:20-27); Sunday evening: *"Introduction to the Books of Prophecy!"*

SCHEDULE: Our Gospel Meeting will be July 28 – Aug. 2, Sun. regularly scheduled times, M-F at 7:00 p.m., with Tanner Campbell, of Piggott, AR.