

LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God” (I John 4:7). As we look at this old world, most will agree that nothing is needed more than love. Yet, it is something that is not seen too often—at least, not as the word is used in Scripture. We are not referring to sensual love. We see plenty of that. Nor do we mean a strong affection for a person or thing (Webster’s definition). This is often a perverted love which amounts to idolatry, especially when it is directed toward things. The love to which we refer is not a romantic, sentimental thing. **Agape**, the word used most of the time in the New Testament, means to will and to do that which is good to another (cf. Rom. 13:8-10; I Cor. 13:4-7). It means acting toward others the same way God, in Christ, acted toward us, even while we hated and despised God and refused to serve Him (Rom. 5:6-8).

This type of love is not entirely lacking in people of the world. Jesus used the word in referring to the way the world loves in Luke 6:32f: “If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same.” In this passage, however, He showed how limited that love is in that it operates only within very small circle—“those that love them.”

The Christian’s love is much broader. He is to love as Jesus loved. Jesus said, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another (John 13:34). This includes even his enemies; that is, those who have malice and animosity toward him, not those toward whom he has hostility, for the child of God is not to harbor ill will. This is a distinctive mark that sets Christians apart from the people of the world.

This is not to say church members always love others this way. Indeed, churches have been torn apart from lack of love. Brethren have devoured one another, although such is condemned. “For ye, brethren were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:13-15).

No matter how far we have progressed in loving others, there is always room to grow. Paul wrote: “Brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk, that ye abound more and more” (I The 4:1) Paul also penned these words: “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment.; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Phi. 1:9-11).

Loving one another is not optional. Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). John wrote, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). If having eternal life is contingent on knowing God (and it is); and if the person who does not love does not know God (and he does not), then the person who does not love does not have eternal life.

John said: “We know that we have passed out of death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death” (1 John 3:14). Death means separation. To abide in death means to be separated from God. John says we have passed from being separated from God into life because we love the brethren.

There is no room here for equivocation. You either love them or you do not. To passively not love a brother misses the mark. Do you answer the question, “Do you hate your brother?” with something like “I don’t hate him; just don’t love him?” Then you are abiding in death, for you must actively love the brother in order to have life. God requires a more active quality. The trouble with “not hating” is that it never remains merely passive. Unless we love the other (will what is good toward him), the least injury, real or imagined, will produce a response in us which is anything but love.

On the other hand, if we actively love him, we will think the best of a brother, regardless of what he might do or say. We will ignore words or actions that hurt. We will have a magnanimous, attitude toward him which is willing and anxious to forgive. Such love makes us like God and shows to all that we really have passed out of death into life.

Al Brown, Deceased



BELVEDERE BEACON
Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)
Volume 10 Number 23 June 7, 2009
A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST
535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574
(Greater Augusta, GA area)
SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
SUNDAY: Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY: Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.
EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663
www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

CONTROLLED OR UNCONTROLLED

The child of God is a controlled being. He lives a controlled life. Dying to the life of sin (Rom. 6:1-7), he lives now unto God (v. 10). In obeying the will of God, so submissive is he that he works at “*bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Cor. 10:5). His thoughts are to be channeled into the areas of the true, the honest, the just, the pure, the lovely, and those things of good report (Phi. 4:8). Thus, he is called a “disciple —a disciplined one; yea, one who lives his life in keeping with a discipline over him, the Word of God!

With that thought before us, let us be reminded that the one not a child of God, and thus not living that controlled life, then lives an uncontrolled life—pictured in the Bible as the life of lust, human desire, excess—SIN! Paul reminded the Ephesians that when they were “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Eph. 2:1), they walked according to the course of this world, in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind...” (v. 2-3). Uncontrolled! The difference is seen, again, in Romans 6:16 where the point is made that one will yield himself to, and be a servant of, either sin or righteousness. More, the apostle goes on to say, that the “yielding” is through the use of our “members”—members of our bodies (v. 19).

Then, the non-Christian may yield his members to commit fornication, but the child of God is a controlled being, and he cannot do so (1 Cor. 6:13)! The non-Christian may yield his members to steal from his fellow man, but the Christian is a controlled being, and he cannot do so (Eph. 4:28)! The non-Christian may give himself to the most intense feelings of hatred toward another, but the Christian is a controlled being, and cannot do so (1John 2:10-11)!

Controlled or uncontrolled! On that point, one’s obedience or decision to remain in disobedience often centers. Some really do not want to be that submissive, that obedient, that sacrificial, and thus reject the Gospel. In obedience, we are stating that we will live the disciplined, controlled life. Every failing and shortcoming the child of God has amounts to a breaking out of that controlled mold.

In the examination demanded in 2 Corinthians 13:5, we need always to ask, “Am I really in God’s control...Am I really submissive...Do I expend all effort to put the Lord and his will and kingdom, first” (Mat. 6:33)?

Bill Jackson, Deceased

We know that more than two murders took place this past week in this country, but there are two that stand out.

The first occurred on Sunday when Dr. Tiller, the controversial abortionist was gunned down while he was serving as an usher at his church in Wichita, Kansas. The second occurred the next day when a young soldier, Private William Andrew Young, was gunned down and another young soldier was wounded outside an army recruiting office in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The difference in coverage in the national news media has been stark and the reaction from government officials has also been vastly different. Despite the fact that all the major pro-life leaders soundly condemned the killing of the doctor, the media voiced concern that this could bring about more violence against pro-choice doctors and abortion clinics and government officials planned to increase security outside, at least, some abortion clinics to prevent possible violence. When it came to the murder of the young private, the reaction of the media and government officials has been totally different. The fact that the gunman was a Muslim with ties to terrorist groups, and that he might be involved with others (indeed, his computer had on it information about other possible targets) was downplayed. Further, there were no calls to provide security outside of military recruitment offices even though the reason for the shooting was the hatred for the US Army for what the gunman perceived as the treatment of Muslims by the US Army. Yet, Private Young and the other soldier he shot were just out of basic training and had not been involved in military action in the Middle East.

Further, the difference between those murdered is also very revealing. The young soldier, having not yet been into combat has not killed anyone and had he been in action he would have been involved tracking down and possibly killing Islamic terrorists who had chosen to participate in actions meant to harm innocent civilians both in the Middle East and throughout the world. On the other hand, Dr. Tiller, often referred to as “Tiller the Baby Killer” was known for killing multitudes of unborn children who had not had the opportunity to choose anything. He was known for his willingness to perform so-called “late-term abortions” and being involved with abortions that were not legal, even with the liberal abortion laws in this country.

While no one deserves to be gunned down in cold blood, it is clear that in the sight of God, Dr. Tiller was a murderer himself. Such was not true respecting Private Long. In the name of choice for the woman to kill her unborn child (the abortionists would say it’s her choice since it is her body – but it is not her body, it is another body, another life residing in her body), Tiller had performed countless abortions. In God’s sight Tiller was guilty of murder – something that God hates and are an abomination to Him (Proverbs 6:16-17).

However vile we may think Dr. Tiller to have been, in the light of the teaching of God’s Word concerning the sanctity of human life, such does not give anyone the right to take the law into their own hands and cold-bloodedly murder another human being. Remember, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19). God is the judge. We will all have to stand before Him and judgment will be made against all (II Corinthians 5:10). We know that, at the judgment the Judge of all the earth will do right (Genesis 18:25).

We cannot, therefore, condone the cold-blooded murder of either Private Long or Dr. Tiller. However, we must continue to speak out and condemn the taking of the life of the innocent unborn.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, and Tim Smith.

Lanny Niver asked for continued prayer as he awaits word concerning back surgery.

Adrienne Farmer took DaJon back to the Shriner’s Hospital Friday as she had an infection in the area of the incision for her back surgery. She was prescribed antibiotics and is back home. Continue to keep her in prayer as she continues her recovery.

We will have a cookout on June 27 – Hamburgers, hot dogs and trimmings. Also on July 11 we will have a low country boil. Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to participate.

"BEHOLD I THOUGHT"

- 1. Interfered with NAAMAN'S CURE..... 2 Kings 5
- 2. Brought FALL OF MAN Genesis 3
- 3. Brought DEATH TO UZZAH..... 2 Samuel 6
- 4. Brought RUIN TO UZZIAH..... 2 Chronicles 26
- 5. Prevented ISRAEL'S SALVATION..... Romans 10:1-3
- 6. CONSCIENCE CLEAR - BUT SAUL WAS LOST.... Acts 9; 23:1

WILL YOUR THOUGHTS DEPRIVE YOU OF SALVATION?
(Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46)

WE MUST OBEY THE WILL OF GOD TO BE SAVED!
(Acts 2:38, 41; James 1:21, 25; 2 Peter 1:3)