

February 12, 2012

Christians & Valentine's Day

1 Cor. 13: 8-13

I Cor. 13: 8-13

**“8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will fail; where there are tongues, they will cease; where there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13And now these abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”**

**Sermon Thumbnail:** The real story of Valentine began, approximately 250 years after Jesus was born in Bethlehem. There was a priest by the name of **Valentine**. He lived in Rome. And at that time, the Emperor of Rome, was known as Claudius the Cruel. Claudius banned all marriages in order to get men to join his army. It didn't work, but marriages were still banned. Valentine was a priest who performed marriages in secret, because he felt God's love carried over to man's love for a woman (and vice versa) that should be celebrated in marriage.

Responsive Reading: (1 John 2:3-6 & 15-16)

L -We know that we have come to know God if we keep His commands

C - Whoever says, "I know God," but does not do what He commands is a liar

L - the truth is not in that person

C - But if anyone obeys His word, love for God is truly made complete in them

L - This is how we know we are in God

C - Whoever claims to live in God must live and love as Jesus did

L - Do not love the world or anything in the world

C - If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them

**Slide February 12, 2012**  
**Christians & Valentine's Day**  
**I Cor. 13: 8-13**

This is a heads up for all of us ---- Valentine's Day is coming up quickly. So men and ladies the warning bell has rang – don't forget Valentine's Day. I know of one couple that has been married nearly as long as Carolyn and I, who have come to a sort of tradition of going to a card store together – going to the Valentine's Day Card selection, where they read various cards together and then she picks out the card he is to give her. Well it sounds like a reasonable deal to me, but I doubt many men will get by with it. Now we're to be original – we're to “know” just what our wives want.

Ladies may I give you an inside track on your husband .... Chances are very good he doesn't know what you want. Not because he hasn't heard the various hints you have given ... picking up on hints isn't in the male package.

So it could save each of you some heartache if you really want something - just tell him! When I ask Carolyn what she wants – I usually get the same answer – Nothing. I tried getting “nothing” once – I would not recommend it for the married man.

There's a lot of hype about Valentine's day – love – sweetness, warm and fuzzy thoughts. So I thought today it might be good to look to God's Word as to what LOVE is.

**Slide**

**I Cor. 13: 8-13**

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The real story of Valentine began, approximately 250 years after Jesus was born in Bethlehem. There was a priest by the name of **Valentine**. He lived in Rome. And at that time, the Emperor of Rome, was known as Claudius the Cruel. Valentine didn't like Emperor much because of his cruel actions towards the citizens, and he wasn't the only one! Many people felt the same way,

and there was no love lost on the emperor. Now Claudius the cruel wanted a big army, and he thought men should volunteer to join his army. But most of the men just did not want to leave home and go off to fight in wars for the emperor. They did not want to leave their wives and families. So, not many men volunteered for the Roman army, which made Emperor flat out mad. So he had a crazy idea that if men were not married, they would be more inclined to join his army. So Claudius formed a decree that there would be no more marriages. All of the people thought his new law was really cruel. Today he'd probably be made King! At any rate Valentine thought it was ridiculous! One of his favorite duties as a priest was to marry people. After Emperor Claudius passed his law, Valentine kept on performing marriage ceremonies – but -- only secretly. He would whisper the words of the ceremony, while listening for soldiers on the steps outside. Now I'm going to pause with the story and pick it up a little later.

But for now the point is – Would you be able to stand up against injustice???? Are you able to

**Slide stand up for the truth of the Gospel and God's Love -**

While marriage is largely made a mockery by Hollywood – it is God's purpose for a man and woman who do not want to live alone

(include in slide) **Mark 10:7** **'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,** If Christians don't stand for Marriage – who will. It's time The Church turns against the divorce rate and tries to help couples work out problems, rather than run from them and carry them into the next relationship. Now I'm not trying to beat anyone up – don't hear that – I'm simply saying that I believe God can bring healing into relationships and even restore them.

**Slide Psalm 40:9-10**

**“9 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know. 10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your truth From the great assembly.”**

**Slide So point # 1 – As Christians we are to stand up for what is right!**

Sometimes it is dangerous to stand up against society.

Sometimes it is difficult to oppose the world's view of things.

Sometimes it's difficult to proclaim the truth of God's Love.

**But that is what Valentine did!** He opposed the Emperor, when the Emperor compromised God's Word. **And that is what we are called to do!**

Now as we stand up for the Gospel, know that some are going to say: Ah, you're old fashioned, you need to wake up to the new world. You don't buy a car without trying it out do you?

**Slide 1 Cor. 1:18 says: For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing...**

Did you know that a study was conducted on couples living together before getting married. 78% of them divorced within five years of marriage. Where 88% of those who didn't live together first – remain married?

It doesn't bother me when I get opposition from the unsaved! The Gospel message is foolishness to them! What bothers me is when people who proclaim to be Christians are behaving like the world and believe as the world believes. I understand that some are in a learning process – and the Church is to bring them along, so they know the Truth of God's Word as well. This isn't to rain down condemnation – but rather to speak the truth of God's Word.

**It's not always going to be easy to stand up for Jesus! It's more difficult when folks inside the Church won't accept God's truth.**

It won't always be easy to tell of His love! But that doesn't give us an excuse for remaining silent!

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit The Apostle Paul writes in

**Slide Romans 1:16**

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

It was Holy Spirit's power and agape love for Jesus that transformed a band of scared disciples on the day Jesus was crucified into a bold team of Gospel proclaimers.

According to tradition, all of Jesus' disciples except John died horrible deaths rather than deny their Lord. John is believed to have died of old age (mostly) while in exile on the Island of Patmos.

All of the Apostles went out under dangerous conditions... to spread the Gospel. Reality is – it's still a pretty dangerous world if you are a Christian who stands up for the truth of the Gospel.

Paul wrote a letter of encouragement to Timothy.

**Slide 2 Tim. 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,** Paul tells Timothy to not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord! And then he tells Timothy what he might have to face! "Share with me in the sufferings for the gospel" Not everyone we speak to about Jesus will want to hear it! Some people may try to stop us! Some people may choose to avoid us!

In spite of the odds -- We should be willing to tell people about Jesus!

But we should never try to ram it down their throats!

Jesus said in

**Slide** John 3:17 “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

But listen, it’s not going to do much good (if any) to continually tell someone how evil they are, and what they need to change in their life when we’re not living a Christlike life. It’s like telling your children not to smoke while you puff on a cigarette – or telling them not to drink while holding one in your hand ... or telling them to obey the law, when you continually tailor it to fit your needs.

We as Christians cannot go around hitting people over the head with a bunch of Bible verses when our lives are a mess.

Jesus lead by example – His life was a model to those who would follow Him then and also today.

We will never try to lead anyone to Christ by pointing out their faults, or being condescending ..... mean-spirited and hateful! The Gospel is a message of Love! Love the sinners just as much as God loves you or me!

**Jesus loves so much He was willing to die for those who do not know Him as well as those of us that now do know Him!**

**While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

**Now back to our story about Valentine!** Remember he is secretly performing weddings in opposition to the Emperor’s ban on marriage.

One night, Valentine hears footsteps at his door. The couple he was marrying escaped, but he was caught. **He was thrown in jail and told that his punishment was death.** Which brings us to another point.

**Slide** We are called to Die to self for the sake of others. (include scripture)

**John 15:13**

**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.**

**Jesus says that genuine love is seen in a person is willing to lay down his life for his friends.**

In our daily lives --Not many ever face a life or death situation. By God’s grace we may never be called upon to die for another person!

However, every day we do get opportunities to die to self, daily. We are presented with many situations to sacrifice our wants for the wants of another.

**Slide 1 John 3:16**

**By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

Now again, this doesn't have to be confined to actually dying for another person! It can also mean sacrificing your wants for the needs of others! It can just as easily mean placing other people's feelings above your own!

**Galatians 2:20 says:**

**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

Paul explains that the old carnal nature within us that causes us to be selfish people must be crucified! The Holy Spirit within us persuades us to think of others!

**Slide Ephesians 5:2 says:**

**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.**

You cannot "walk in love" and be selfish at the same time!

So maybe on Valentine's Day we should sacrifice something of ourselves for our wife or husband.

**Sacrifice what you want for what your loved one wants.**

Back to the Valentine story!

Valentine is in prison. His crime: performing weddings in opposition to the Emperor's law. He tried to stay cheerful. Many young people came to the prison to visit him. They threw flowers and notes up to his window. They wanted him to know that they, too, believed in love and marriage. One of these young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit Valentine in his cell. They often sat and talked for hours. She believed he did the right thing by ignoring the Emperor and performing marriage ceremonies.

Here's the point

**Slide Give your life to Jesus**

**John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

O.K. We claim to believe in Jesus and likewise we claim to be saved!

But are we loving people?

**Slide 1 John 4:8-9** says:

**He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.**

If we have given our lives to Jesus then we will abide in Him! To give your life to Jesus means becoming a new creature!

**Slide 2 Cor. 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

A truly “born again” Christian wants to please Jesus!

**Slide 1 John 5:3** says:

**For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

So what commandments is this talking about?

**Slide 1 John 3:23**

**And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.**

**On the day Valentine was to die, he left the guard's daughter a note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. He signed it, "Love from your Valentine."**

And now you have the rest of the story: **That note started the custom of exchanging love notes on Valentine's Day.** It was written on the day he died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now, every year on this day, people remember. But most importantly, they think about love and friendship.

God has sent us the greatest love story ever told – and the greatest gift ever given in the person of Jesus Christ.

God loved us enough to die for us!

St. Valentine loved God enough to die for God's Truth.

Will we love God enough to live for Him?

What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day than to commit or recommit your life to Jesus?

