

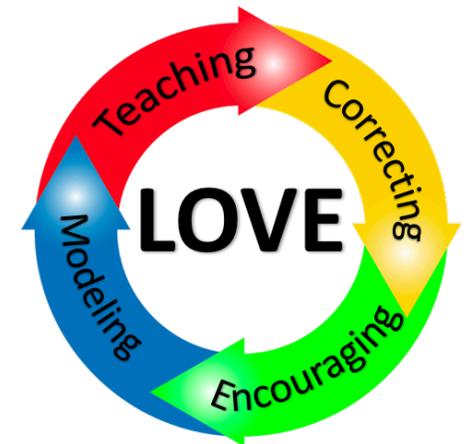


FALL 2018 DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 3: October 22nd – 26th

**DISCIPLES
MAKING
DISCIPLES**

Helping Others Follow Jesus



I AM HOPE

Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Dr. D.Z. Cofield, Senior Pastor
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Monday, October 22, 2018

“Who Will Meet the Needs?”

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

One preacher told of shopping at the supermarket when a lady came down the aisle heading straight for him. She screeched to a halt within a few feet of him, wagged her finger, and said, "I left your church. I left your church." So he said, "Well, if it's my church, I think that was a very wise decision. If it's my church, I think I'm going to leave too." She said, "Don't you want to know why I left?" He said, "No, not particularly, but I think I'm going to find out." And he was right. She said, "You weren't meeting my needs." He answered, "I don't ever recollect seeing you before, let alone talking to you, let alone knowing your needs. Did you ever tell anyone specifically what your needs were?" She couldn't recall that she had, so he raised another question. "Can you tell me, if we have 5,000 people sitting in that church, ALL with your attitude, how is anyone's needs are going to be met? If you reserve the right to have that attitude, then you must give everybody the freedom to have that attitude. And if everybody has that attitude, who on earth is going to do all the need-meeting?"

Paul is encouraging the church in Philippi to avoid doing things out of selfish ambition or conceit, but instead to view others as more significant than themselves. Doing this brings out the attitude of a servant, the prime example of

which is Jesus, Himself. Read how Paul describes Jesus' ultimate act of servanthood, in Philippians 2:5-11.

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When we view others head of ourselves, and look after the interests of others, we provide a motivating example to someone else, who will pass it on. When everyone in the local church does it, that group of believers becomes a beautiful expression of God's love and the believers role in realizing it.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of humility in servant leadership. Abandoning our selfish tendencies helps us to serve more like the Master and be more effective in doing the work of the Church.

If you climb too high up the mountain, you won't be able to reach down to help the one who needs your help.

– Min. Russell De Pina

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

“Loving All People”

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35 (ESV)

Have you ever really given both the time and effort to understanding the true meaning of “loving one another”? Jesus presented this blueprint during His last days before giving His life for our sins, so that we may have ever lasting life. Today, and as it was during the time Jesus walked the earth, we often find so many different meanings or ways that we believe or know what love is. Some of us think that it’s a measure or tool by which we can gain someone’s attention or affection, only if we are willing to give voice to the three simple words, “I love You.” But there are true believers and followers of Jesus who truly understand what He brought by way of His Father that brings a much deeper meaning of what true love is. The apostle John wrote it so plain for anyone to understand in his last hours with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as seen in today’s text. This “*New Commandment*” that Jesus spoke of was demonstrated not just at this time, but throughout His walk amongst us, some 2000 years ago. It should have been no surprise, yet it was a bit confusing to the disciples, especially Peter who asked Jesus, about the meaning of washing one another’s

feet (John 13:6-14). This “servant attitude” precludes all sense of true godly or *agape* love. This love is selfless, sacrificial, timeless and unconditional love. *Agape* perfectly describes the kind of love Jesus Christ has for His Father and for His followers.

As a child growing up in our household, my parents always instilled in us to “love one another”, to care for one another, and to treat one another like we ourselves wanted to be treated. I’m sure we all remember the times our parents would make us kiss and hug one another after we had fought amongst ourselves. You probably did not understand it then, but as you grew up and encountered all that life has to offer, you finally realized that life without this “*agape*” love expressed in this “*New Commandment*” truly gives meaning to life. As believers, we know that Jesus loved people. He loved thieves, prostitutes, tax collectors, diseased people, poor people, children and His followers. He loved people who were devoted to Him and those who were different from Him. He even loved difficult and dangerous people. Everywhere Jesus went, He showed compassion in word, in deed, and in action. He did not only go to the wealthy or the prominent; He also ministered to the outcasts. He loved them, and He served them. Jesus showed the importance of dedication and commitment in servanthood with this final “*New Commandment*”. Therefore, this is our call to action as believers. Take the time each and everyday to meditate on His precepts, so that you can become a disciple of “HOPE.”

Because we are loved by Him, we are called to love like Him. The extent to which we love one another validates and communicates our faith.

Christ's love is the standard; how do you measure up?

– Bro. Clifton Clark

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

“Loving All People”

⁴³ You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Matthew 5:43-45 (NKJV)

As a teacher of “the Bridge” on Sunday mornings during youth service, I often see children that bear a striking resemblance to their parents. When I see the child with the parent, I have not doubt about paternity or maternity. Their mannerisms, their speech, how they interact with others, can often be very much like their parents. Essentially, the child will be like a “Mini-Me” to the parent.

In today's passage of Scripture, Jesus was trying to help us learn how love like Him. In verse 43, I find it interesting that Jesus says, “*You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’*” You see the actual Scripture partially referenced is Leviticus 19:18, which does state that we should love our neighbor. However, it does not state that we should hate our enemies. The latter part is thought to be some form of Rabbinic addition. Many Jewish teachers understood the neighbor to be someone of their own country, nation, religion whom they were pleased to look upon as friends. Basically, people for which they had a natural affinity.

Jesus is calling for us to be like Him and love people who may not be so loveable to us. He died not just for people who liked him, He died for those who did not. In fact, when we are in our sins the Bible describes us as “enemies” of God (Rom. 5:10). Some theologians interpret Part A of verse 45 which states “that you may be children of your Father in heaven,” to mean “that you may be like your Father in Heaven.”

In other words, the same love that He showed us, by dying on the cross, should be shown to people who we may not like. A show of love does not call for intimate interaction. Love can be displayed when you decide to pray for them in areas where you may see a need. A show of love could be a kind statement or card if/when they experience a time of loss. A show of love could be a soft answer in the face of harsh statements. Our ability to show love could present opportunities for God's kingdom to be expanded through our witness.

Do you have any opportunities at work, school, or in the neighborhood to show love to someone who may not be loveable?

Let's work to make sure that our lives show a resemblance to Christ through love.

– Min. Juene Franklin

Thursday, October 25, 2018

“The Baby and the Homeless Man”

12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (NASB)

A husband, his wife, and small baby were eating breakfast in a restaurant one morning. As the baby sat in a high chair, her eyes begin to sparkled with laughter and her mouth bared a toothless smile. The mother looked around to see why Stacy was so excited. As she looked around, she saw a homeless man a few tables away waving and smiling at Stacy. He had on dirty clothes, uncombed and unwashed hair. He also had a foul odor. Stacy continue to smile and mumble "Da, da," as the homeless man asked, "Hi there baby. Do you know Patty Cake? What about "peek-a-boo?"

The mother and father were ashamed, but not Stacy! After finishing breakfast, the husband went to pay the bill as the mother picked up Stacy and made a dart for the exit, on her way to the car. The Homeless man was between them and the door. As she was passing by, Stacy reached over and grabbed the homeless man's clothing and would not let go. Stacy went from the mother's arms into the arms of a homeless man, a complete stranger. Stacy laid her head on the man's shoulder, and the man closed his eyes as tears rolled down his face. After a few moments, He gave Stacy back to her mother and said, "Bless You, Madame, for giving an old man like me the best gift he could ever hope for." LOVE! The baby expressed love to a stranger, while the mother was reluctant to love.

In First Thessalonians 3:12, Paul prayed that the Lord would cause the church in Thessalonica to increase and abound in their love for one another, as well as for all people. The word “*increase*” means to grow in intensity and “*abound*” means to express openly. In essence, Paul's prayer was that God would cause them to grow in loving attitudes and actions towards all people. The reason for this is so that God would be glorified.

As a believer, are you loving all people? How do you respond to a foul-smelling homeless man, wearing dirty clothes, with uncombed, and unwashed hair? What do you do when you missed the mark of loving all people? Let's go back and examine what the mother did in the story.

With Stacy in her arms, the mother ran for the car. Her husband asked her, why was she crying. She said, “I have to ask God for forgiveness. I just witnessed God's love shown through an innocent child who saw no sin and made no

judgment." The problem is the baby saw the man within, but the mother saw the outward appearance. She said, "I felt as if God was asking me if I am willing to share my child for a moment when He shared His Son for eternity."

Are you willing to share the sacrificial love of Christ with all people? God demonstrated His love towards us by sacrificing His Son. Now go, confess, repent, increase and abound in your love for all people for the glory of God.

"All We Need Is LOVE . . . Love Is All We Need."
- 1967 Song Lyrics from The Beatles

**"Genuine love is the only thing in the Christian life
which cannot be carried to excess."
- D. Edmond Hiebert**

- Min. Darrell Rose

Friday, October 26, 2018

"Who's Your DADDY?"

⁷ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* ⁸ *Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

1 John 4:7-8 (ESV)

Shortly after the parents find out they were having a baby, they started imagining what their little one is going to look

like, who are they going to behave like. Will the baby have the mommy's nose and hair? Will the baby have their daddy's good looks and height? Without question, babies do inherit part of their parent's traits and genetics is such an interesting part of how these things work. The idea that the little one will have the traits that remind mom and dad of themselves is quite amazing. The fact is that it is so very complicated. The baby does get twenty-three chromosomes from each one of their parents. This means that there are so many variations that the genes can take, it is not a wonder that we like to guess who the baby is going to look like and what their personality will be like. This brings to mind a profound and interesting question of spiritual nature. What is the identifying trait or gene that would identify genuine Christians?

In our text for today, the Apostle John repeats his call to all Christians to continue to *"love one another."* He goes on to remind us that God is the true source of all love; therefore, loves comes from God. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was sent from God the Father, embodied love and demonstrated that love in His life on earth. This love certainly does not come naturally for we humans. We are not born with it, as part of the natural inheritance process, neither can we go to a school to learn it. Those who place their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, receive the totality of God's love only through the Holy Spirit. This is what the Apostle Paul explains when he says, *"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us"* (Romans 5:5). We must experience the new birth, be born again, be spiritually regenerated, in order to receive God's love.

When you reflect on the love the Jesus Christ showed towards sinful mankind, you will come to realize that God's very nature an essence is love. And because He is love, He can do nothing without love, or better yet, love is the basis for everything He does. Think of how He has loved you: unconditionally, sacrificially, always for your good, visibly expressed, and has a moral standard of right and wrong. This is the kind of love that God expects Christians to show to ALL people. In other words, when we don't show God's love, the love that we have received from Him, to ALL people, we are acting as if we have never received God's love in the first place. However, if you are a Christian, this is far from the true. That why John says that we are to "*love one another.*" He is commanding us to be who we are, the redeemed children of God. Demonstrating God's love to ALL people, provides proof of our spiritual birth and relationship with Him.

DNA tests are used to prove or disprove paternity. The world uses a swab from the inside of your mouth. But God uses how you act towards others to prove that you are His child.

Do you know who your FATHER is? Then you had better act like Him!

- Min. Mark Slone