

COMPELLING LOVE Sunday August 9, 2020 AM

Precious 'agape' love – the love of God ... 1 John 4:15-17: *"¹⁵If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus."*

'As Christ is, so are we, in this world' How is Christ in this world? Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 in the light that God is love; and whoever lives in love, lives in God and God in them: The Passion Translation.

Love extends; love endures; remains long-time. Perfect love – **Romans 5:5** - ***⁵Now 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.***

This is the love of God and the love of all mankind shed abroad in our hearts – by the Holy Spirit. We are loved with an unconditional, selfless, divine, self-sacrificing love; the deepest love, the most impacting love upon our hearts; God has set eternity in the heart of man – when that love is sensed there's a resonance – 'did our hearts not burn within us' – on the road to Emmaus; they could have said 'did our ears not prick up' ...

Galatians 5:6 - ***'what counts is faith that expresses itself through love'*** 2 Corinthians 5 – *'the love of Christ compels us'* or 'constrains us' – this love: holds us in God and it also, empowers us to press on, not perturbed by doubt, not repulsed by non-responsiveness, not disgusted by sin, doesn't retaliate when attacked, believes the best, is the Godly motivation for justice; it's the real fire in compassion... this impacting love is the only reason we would work with God in the sanctification process. **This is a uniquely Christian experience** – this is why Jesus said others would know us by the love we had for one another. Caring for those who care not about us; sharing with those who can't pay us back; giving expecting nothing in return from those we give to... This love **makes** Christ central; He loved me and gave Himself for me. It is no longer I that live but Christ who lives in me ... I no longer live for myself primarily – I can truly love God with all that I have because He first loved me - not with a distant insignificant feeling but by saturating my heart with who He is Himself – Love – loved me and gave Himself for me.

We have all the love we will ever need.

So many instances of love illustrated in the last few chapters of Matthew.

- In the last few days, we see him stay at the home of Simon the leper;
- we see love poured out of an alabaster jar – Matthew records this woman pouring it on Jesus' head as He sat at the table;
- we see Jesus at the table with His betrayer;
- even when Judas betrays Him with a kiss, Jesus calls him 'friend – why have you come';
- all the disciples forsook Him and fled; the false witnesses spat in His face, beat Him, and struck Him with the palms of their hands. Mocked Him. Bound Him. Testified falsely against Him with many things. The governor knew that Jesus was handed over because of envy – with all that He responded with silence; did not retaliate once; the governor marvelled at Jesus' response
- nevertheless the rent-a-crowd's call was for Jesus to be scourged and delivered to be crucified; taken into the Praetorium – put a red robe on Him, twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, put a reed in His right hand – bowed before Him and mocked Him; spat on Him and then used that reed to strike Him on the head. When they were sated themselves they put Jesus' own clothes back on and led him again to be crucified – at some point, needing to carry His own cross – after being nailed to it – people were still walking past Him wagging their heads at Him, blaspheming and mocking Him; the two robbers reviled Him like echoes too... but He ministers to them; when He was reviled; He reviled not.

What happens when this love hits the ground?

- curtain of the temple torn in two -
- removing everything that separated man from the presence of God;
- earth shook and rocks split – the ground was never going to contain Him – graves opened;
- believers raised ...
- life broke into the realm of death and removed its sting ...
- love broke into the realm of death and removed its sting...
- everlasting light broke into the darkness ... the devil came to steal, kill, and destroy; Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil – Hebrews 2 states Jesus rendered the devil powerless;
- everlasting love broke into the darkness and took the keys ... took back the keys of death and hell so no longer would it prevail against the Church - these keys effectively are become the keys to the Kingdom – He is the first and the last; He is living One; He was dead, and behold, He is alive forevermore, and He has the keys of death and of Hades.’ Revelation 1.

Such is His love for us – He will love us to the end. He sent His Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit that has shed this all-powerful love into the hearts of the believer. All the love we’ll ever need. At least three times Jesus reminded the disciples that He would go ahead to Galilee after His resurrection and meet them there. When the girls were running back from the tomb on Resurrection Sunday – Jesus meets them on the way... they loved Him so much – **Jesus meets with this kind of love...** Just as He said, He goes ahead to Galilee – and we see these beautiful words he speaks before His departure to the Father.

Matthew 28:16-20 *“¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. ¹⁷When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and teach **all** the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe **all** things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” Amen.”***

We can never tire of preaching the gospel because it is the power of God to save souls from eternal death. We will never tire of preaching the great commandment because it is clearly God’s great command and in obedience to them is the fulfilling of everything else ordained by God. We never tire of sharing the great commission – if the great commandment is our first purpose in life, then the great commission is our second – as birthed out of loving others like God loves us and all mankind.

There are three ‘greats’ in this beautiful passage – a great claim; a great command and a great promise.

How beautiful to revisit these Scriptures! V18: the **Greatest claim** of authority: ‘all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth’: This is, if not the most, one of the most regal/royal declarations that could or will ever have been made.

“ALL AUTHORITY”

ALL: all, every, the whole. Not most, not some, not selective – but the whole – all manner and all means, always.

AUTHORITY: Some translations record this as ‘all power’ - Greek word is power but it is the word ‘exousia’ where in Acts 1, the power promised is ‘dunamis’ – which is explosive, miraculous ability ... **Matthew 28:18** – this authority is right, it’s public; it’s legitimate; superhuman, He is Magistrate – it literally means ‘I exist’ – the Great I AM. Full and delegated influence from the Father – unconditional / unlimited.

Alexander MacLaren said this: **“and so, the hands that were pierced with the nails wield the sceptre of the universe; and on the brows that were wounded and bleeding with the crown of thorns are wreathed the many crowns of universal Kingdom.”**

If we think about it, before there is a start to anything, no matter what it is, there must be an authority to bring the initial call before we can turn the dream into reality; there must be an Author! With lawful right and lawful jurisdiction. Who else can answer prayer? Who else can close the ages? Who can appoint times and seasons? Who else is there in heaven but Him? Who is higher? Who is stronger? Who holds the stars in His hand and yet holds my hand at the same time? Who loves like He does – this love comes from Him – He authored it and there is nothing else like it? Who can send? Who can appoint governors over nations? Who is like Him? Majestic in holiness! Revered with praises! Performing wonders! But the Lord – ‘self-existent One’ Master – only one. Supreme in authority. God!

See Clip: No Other King

Consider this: ‘Lord God Almighty’ **Supreme and overall Master, Supreme and divine deity, Magistrate; all ruling – absolute and universal sovereign and as Revelation 19:6 heralds for all heaven to hear: ‘Hallelujah for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns’ ...**

ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN: Note the tense.

ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME: No question about who to.

ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME **IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH.** All authority in all spheres

Jesus has established the authority and the whole gospel venture is launched out of it. He will bring the ability for them to do it when they are filled with the Holy Spirit but power without being submitted to the correct authority is dangerous. This is why He authorises them before He empowers them. Needs consideration.

And out of His authority He says ‘go’ – Up, Across, Over, Further, Beyond...

GO THEREFORE ... because I have the authority, I can and I do command you to Go / because I have all authority, therefore you are charged with the duty of winning the world for its’ King’... He has all authority; we have all voluntary surrender and He makes clear the mission statement – how they are going to go about it; this is how the dream will be fulfilled; this is the work that brings intention to reality:

AND TEACH ALL NATIONS:

- Teach WHO? all nations; of all nations / all ‘ethnos’ (*this teaching is ‘mathetes’ – to enrol a scholar*)

To make learners, make Christ followers, for people to learn of Christ, they must be born again; we must introduce the Teacher; the Teacher with all knowledge, all power and who is ever present – the Teacher is who we must always point to This is why we preach (proclaim it, publish) the Gospel – this is the task of disciples.

Preach – means to herald ‘as a public crier’ – in particular the truth of the Gospel... how will they hear unless someone preaches – faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God – so to bring people to Christ there is a measure of truth that must be shared ... our experience will capture their interest but the good news of Jesus dying for their sin that they could receive Him and eternal life is the power of God unto salvation. After they receive Christ, wherever possible, we baptise them. This the pattern, the order Jesus set.

BAPTISING THEM... Baptising them; into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.... Plunging them into communion with the threefold God of our salvation... powerful action –

TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHICH I HAVE COMMANDED YOU ... teaching them to **observe all** things which I have commanded you: (*didasko – teach*) - **Training** them how to watch; how to discern what is of Christ and what isn’t; teach them what to keep and what to disregard; teach them what to guard, what to contend for, what to hold fast to, what to serve: **What did Jesus say? What did Jesus do? What is God’s heart in this? What is prayer? How do we pray? What does the Word of God say? And how do we read and apply it? Who is the Holy Spirit? Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Fellowship. What are the promises? What are His purposes? What are His plans?**

How does the Church fulfill these – disciples leading others to Christ. What is needed to stay strong? Disciples coming alongside and training new believers in prayer, the Word, Fellowship, Giving and sharing of testimonies. We do that well –

JESUS SAID ‘TEACH THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHICH I HAVE COMMANDED YOU

Commanded – given the charge, enjoined in purpose

What did Jesus command: to love God with everything, to love people the same – **‘a new commandment I give to you ‘love one another as I have loved you, so you love one another’** John 15; to go, preach the Gospel and teach people how to follow Christ; teach people how to love – this incorporates every other godly action. If we love God first with everything, we will put the Kingdom first. If we love people with agape love, we will ‘go and teach the same’ – for God’s sake; for their sake.

From John 13: ¹⁴*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.* ¹⁵*For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.* ¹⁶*Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.* ¹⁷***If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.***

THE GREATEST BLESSING IS IN OBEDIENCE TO THE THINGS WE HAVE LEARNED OF JESUS CHRIST.

Discipleship is not measured by: the volume by which we are taught, not measured by who taught us, not measured by the resources we hold to, but we are disciples to the level our lives are saturated with God – how we live, how we love, how we move, how we operate, what and how we obey, being obedient to whom we are accountable to

Disciples of Christ, disciples of love; disciplined lovers - bring people to Christ and then teach them how to follow Him. This great authority directs the great commission and is thoroughly undergirded by the most tender and **greatest promise:**

Please see the ‘and’

AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE. AMEN

“and behold, look at this, be sure, understand that... I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”

‘lo’ = ‘behold’ Greek word is pronounced ‘ei-du’ I do. “I Am” – the One with all authority; The Great ‘I Am - covers ‘I was, I am, and I will forever be’ Covers: the One who was and is and is to come. Same base part of the word ‘authority’.

And behold, I am with you always... He is with us – God is everywhere present. Please note the ‘and’ – this promise is connected after a command. The full blessedness, the full power of that promise lays in the obedience to the command.

Last verse of the gospel of Mark: 16:20 ***“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”***

To the end of the age (eon).

To Jesus Christ, there is no greater joy than a surrendered person who loves Him with all their heart and is yielded to His precious voice and word.

John 14:23: *“if a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love Him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.”* (has developed from ‘obey’ Me to ‘keep My word’ – more intimate, more personal).

Believers: Jesus has given the charge for us to love – this love is enough to compel us to share eternal things. Confidence on judgment day – love completed in us has proven that we are like Jesus.

