

The Gospel Herald

“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by
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Unconditional Love

It was about a couple years ago that I went through some trying experiences as I was doing some itinerate ministering in a few meetings around about. In my attempts to set forth the Biblical discourse in this particular meeting, I had been scrutinized and criticized by a misunderstood statement. The criticism got back to me some days later, as I am not one to handle criticism to well; it becomes intimidation to me at times and emotionally hurtful.

I had told this particular elder that I was not interested in returning to minister if I have to feel as I am “walking on eggs” as being scrutinized by every word spoken. I would feel bound of “liberty” in that particular situation with that church member present.

The elder replied, “Brother, you may try and avoid me and run in every direction away from me, but I will seek you out and I will not let you just walk away from our fellowship and friendship that God has allowed us to have over the years.” That statement was one of the strongest demonstrations of genuine Christ-like love towards another brother that I have ever experienced. I (God-permitting) shall never forget that statement and the seriousness that reinforced his statement.

It can become easy when hurt emotionally and your feelings stirred with rejection to merely say, “I don’t need this aggravation and criticism, I’m outta here.” But, where God reminds us that we are BOUGHT with a price and we are not our own, it causes us to examine ourselves and consider “Do I have the right to act this way?” If I am not my own, and I am Christ’s, I must serve him and trust him to silence the gainsayers and critics and challenge them to compare the spoken word with the written WORD. If God has sent me, I must trust that He alone shall make me willing and able to stand before God’s people and herald the Gospel trumpet as loud as possible, “The Lord God reigneth and Christ has come to seek and to save sinners”

Jesus said, "This is my commandment, That ye LOVE one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

"Let Love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:9-10).

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10).

"And the Lord MAKE you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (I Thess. 3:12).

Let brotherly love continue (Heb 13:1).

"See that you that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22).

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7).

Dear brethren, I know a young preacher who I met about a year ago. This dear 40-year-old gift to the church was serving as a unique pastor and Bible preacher with a dynamic expression in the pulpit; one that would set forth the Gospel with spiritual zeal that was (to the best of my discernment) Holy Ghost-inspired. I said to a friend, "if the people are not careful and lift him too high on a pedestal, pride may become his downfall.....Satan would love to destroy that gift in this Church".

Low and behold, I got news last week that the brother WAS NOT preaching but had stepped down. I was concerned. His health? Possibly emotional trials? As I called a dear brother who was a member of the church and inquired of the preacher's reasoning for stepping down, he sadly reported it was over an immoral involvement with another woman in the church. I was overwhelmed with sadness and what I feared may have happened, had. Popularity and the lust of the eye brought down the young preacher and he fell to the temptation of the lust of the flesh; a wife, couple young children now battling to keep it all together. Trust had been injured, deep wounds have been injurious to the church's testimony and ministry. Plus, the married woman member who was the other involved party. All of the involved, from what conversation I received, stood before the church and confessed their sin in the matter with tearful broken remorse.

How sad, grievous is the matter as my heart aches for the brother's fall.

Just as the dear elder and loving brother demonstrated to me Christ's love in chastening me as a brother, God moved upon my heart this very day. I called the young preacher, I said, "I have recently heard word of you not preaching of late, and heard bits and

pieces as to the reason. I called you to merely express That I LOVE YOU AS A BROTHER, and as an older brother want you to know that as CHRIST has loved me, so am I able to love you in this very trying time in your life, ministry and marriage. I have not called to council, preach to you, nor say anything more, than GOD is Almighty and these events are not accidents, nor outside God's divine purpose. There is something great to be learned from all our experiences no matter how devastating and can even cause us to reap great sorrow in our remaining years, from sin's degradation. My prayers are for you, the family and the church, and may the Lord our Saviour cause reconciliation to be established for his glory, praise and honor." The dear young preacher was humbled and said, "I greatly appreciated your call, love and concern as it means a lot to me, Brother."

God is teaching this unworthy soul how to love the brethren "unconditionally." If they be brethren as revealed by remorse, repentance and the evidence of turning away from that which beset them, we have NO CHOICE, but to love them that we might GAIN the BROTHER, not reject them to the barrenness of despair.

Oh that I may know more of my Saviour's love and what it means for Him to love through me and you as brethren in Christ Jesus.

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