



Springfield Area

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CO-SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

ILL. Have you heard the story about the actor who was playing the part of Christ in the Passion Play in the Ozarks? As he carried the cross up the hill a tourist began heckling, making fun of him, & shouting insults at him. Finally, the actor had taken all of it he could take. So he threw down his cross, walked over to the tourist, & punched him out.

After the play was over, the director told him, "I know he was a pest, but I can't condone what you did. Besides, you're playing the part of Jesus, & Jesus never retaliated. So don't do anything like that again." Well, the man promised he wouldn't. But the next day the heckler was back worse than before, & finally the actor exploded & punched him out again.

The director said, "That's it. I have to fire you. We just can't have you behaving this way while playing the part of Jesus." The actor begged, "Please give me one more chance. I really need this job, & I can handle it if it happens again." So the director decided to give him another chance.

The next day he was carrying his cross up the street. Sure enough, the heckler was there again. You could tell that the actor was really trying to control himself, but it was about to get the best of him. He was clenching his fists & grinding his teeth. Finally, he looked at the heckler & said, "I'll meet you after the resurrection!"

A. You know, sometimes it is hard for those who profess to be Christians to behave like Christians should. We try to carry our crosses, but if someone crosses us, we tend to lose our composure & behave in much the same way the rest of the world behaves.

But the Bible teaches us that we are to be people who exercise love in all of our relationships with one another.

Listen to these words, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" [Romans 12:18]. And again, "Be completely humble & gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" [Ephesians 4:2]. And still again, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men & to be holy..." [Hebrews 12:14].

SUM. Now all of those Scriptures say the same thing. It may be difficult sometimes, & not everybody will be easy to love, but if it is possible, we are to live in peace & harmony with everyone.

PROP. So I'm beginning a series of sermons this morning that will deal with how to get along with other people, & we'll focus on 1 Corinthians 13, the "love chapter" of the Bible. This morning we'll look at the first 3 verses which Paul begins by saying, "Now I will show you the most excellent way."

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE IN OUR LIVES

He is saying, "I want to show you the best way to take care of virtually every situation, & that is the way of love." Then he points out that love is more important than 5 other things that Christians consider very important.

A. In vs. 1, Paul says that love is more important than spiritual gifts. "If I speak in the tongues of men & of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

On the day of Pentecost, when the very first gospel sermon was ever preached, God gave the apostles the special gift of being able to speak in languages that they had never learned so that the people hearing them could understand what was being said.

But here in 1 Corinthians, Paul is saying that if God gave him the gift of speaking every human language, & even the heavenly language of the angels, but he didn't have love, then he would be nothing more than a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. Now what did he mean by that?



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ILL. Back in the 1st Century, there was a big gong or cymbal hanging at the entrance of most pagan temples. When people came to worship, they hit them to awaken the pagan gods so they would listen to their prayers.

Here, Paul is saying that even if he were so blessed that he could speak with the greatest of eloquence in every language, but didn't have love, then his life was as useless as this ridiculous act of pounding on a gong to awaken nonexistent gods.

SUM. You see, love is more important than any spiritual gift.

B. Then in vs. 2 Paul says that love is more important than knowledge. "If I have the gift of prophecy & I can fathom all mysteries & all knowledge, ...but have not love, I am nothing."

Paul says that even if you know it all - if you know everything there is to know about nuclear science; if you know everything there is to know about medicine; if you know everything there is to know about philosophy & psychology & theology & every other kind of "ology" - if you know it all, but have no love, then you are nothing at all.

It has always amazed me that when people look at society & try to analyze what is wrong with us, why we're killing & abusing one another, that those experts always seem to come back with the same answer, "We need more education. We need to get everybody educated, & then we won't have these problems anymore."

But I don't think education is the answer. I'm certainly not opposed to education. But listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:1, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." I don't think we need more knowledge near as much as we need more love. We need a whole lot more love & the hearts of people need to change before society will ever change.

C. Thirdly, Paul says that love is more important than faith. Can you believe that? Now he doesn't say that faith is not important. He just says that love is more important than faith. He said, "If I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

Faith, we are told in the Scripture, is so important that it is impossible to please God without faith. And I trust that all of you here this morning have faith. But what is your faith? What do you believe for sure this morning?

Do you believe that God is the creator of the world? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is His only begotten Son, & that He came into our world & lived a sinless life, & that He died & was buried & on the third day rose again? Do you believe that He is now at the right hand of the Father, & is preparing a place for us, & that one day He will come again? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is our guide & counselor & comforter?

If you believe all those things, then that is well & good & I commend you for it. But the Bible teaches that if you believe all the right stuff, but you do not have love, then you are nothing. Because even faith is of no value unless it is backed up by love.

ILL. The priest & the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan had faith. The problem was they had no love. So they walked by on the other side & just left the man lying there to die.

In Galatians 5:6 Paul says, "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."

D. Fourthly, love is more important than generosity. Paul says, "If I give all I possess to the poor...but have not love, I gain nothing."

Now notice that he doesn't say, "If I give 10%." He says, "If I give everything, if I empty my checking account, if I give all my retirement funds, if I sell my house, if I cash in my insurance policies, if I sit on the corner with nothing left but what I'm wearing, & I've given it all away to help the poor, but I don't have love then I am nothing at all."



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You see, generosity is not enough. Are you a generous person? I get calls all the time, & I'm sure you do, too, from people appealing for funds for worthwhile causes.

But why do you give? Do you give because the preacher just preached a sermon on stewardship? Do you give because you feel guilty if you don't? Do you give because you want to impress others sitting around you? Do you give because you're afraid that God will get you if you don't? Do you give because you think you will get more than you give?

You see, all those are wrong reasons. If the only reason that I give is to receive or to benefit myself, then love is absent, & giving is empty. The motive for giving should be love, love for God & love for God's people.

E. Then he says that love is more important than accomplishments. He says, "If I...surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

He is talking about martyrdom. He is talking about being so faithful & so committed to God that you end up dying because of your faith. How deep is your faith? How deep is your commitment? Are you willing to lay down your life for God, if it came to that?

But Paul is saying that even if you go to church every time the church doors are open, if you read your Bible faithfully, if you pray, & do all the things that a Christian person ought to do, but if there is no love behind all that then it is nothing in God's sight.

SUM. So he is saying that love is more important than spiritual gifts, more important than knowledge, more important than faith, more important than generosity, & more important than all the things that you might accomplish for the kingdom of God.

II. THE PRACTICE OF LOVE IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

So obviously, love is very important, much more maybe, than we ever realized before. Listen to what Jesus says in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Now notice that Jesus says that this is a commandment, not a suggestion. And God never commands us to do anything that we cannot do.

We tend to think that love is something that just happens to us because that is what the world teaches. You fall in love like you fall into a ditch, or you fall out of love like you fall out of a tree. You can't help it. It is something that just happens to you.

ILL. Someone sings, "I can't help falling in love with you." Someone else sings, "You've lost that loving feeling." Someone else sings, "I love you. Please tell me your name." That's really deep stuff, you know.

But the Bible teaches that love is something we can control. God commands us to love each other. Which means, I can will to love you, & you in turn can will to love me. So this is not a hopeless situation at all.

Now, what kind of love is being talked about here? In Philippians 2:4 Paul says that he wants us to behave as Jesus Christ behaved. In other words to love in the same way that Jesus loved.

And here is the way Jesus loved. He said, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." In other words, love becomes unselfish. You begin to think about other people & their interests just like you think about yourself & interests. You become unselfish. Now I want to apply that in several different areas.



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A. First of all, see how that would work in the family. Let's suppose that someone in every family represented here this morning would say, "I'm going to go home & put this into practice."

Start with your spouse. You ought to love your husband or your wife first & most. You ought to be kinder, more tender, more gentle to them even if they're behaving like a jerk. Begin first in your marriage relationship.

Can you see how that would affect the atmosphere of the home? There wouldn't be any arguing or bickering, no sharp words between each other because their interests are just as important as yours. And pretty soon it filters down to the relationship you share with your children, maybe even your in-laws & your out-laws & everybody else in the family. Just because you love them.

B. It begins in the family, & it spills over into the church family. In fact Jesus said, "By this they shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

That's the way the world will find out that the message of Jesus Christ is valid. And if we're really going to love each other the way Jesus loved us then we have to develop in our own lives the same kind of compassion for people that Jesus had.

ILL. A friend told about renting "Free Willy" & watching it with his grandchildren. He said that they were enthralled with the movie, especially one grandson who was almost 5 years old. His grandson sat his little chair in front of the TV set & didn't move for two hours as he watched that movie. His eyes were fixed to the screen. He was mesmerized. He watched everything. You could see little tears in his eyes. You could see him laugh when he was supposed to. He was totally caught up in the movie.

APPL. Can you remember getting caught up in something & so identifying with what's going on that you actually became a part of a story? Well, that's compassion, & it will cause us to ask ourselves some tough questions.

"What's it like to hurt deep inside & no one knows you're hurting & you don't feel free to tell them that you're hurting? What's it like being sick & knowing you're not going to get well, & wanting more than anything else to live? What's it like to be handicapped? What's it like to be a minority? What's it like to be dealing with marital problems or domestic problems? What's it like?"

What kind of burdens are people carrying, & do we care enough to help them bear those burdens? That's what it means when Jesus talks about loving one another as He has loved us.

C. Finally, we are to let that love flow into the workplace, too. We do it when we show those people who work next to us that Jesus Christ is our Lord, not just with words, but by the example we set.

You may have a hard boss that you don't like very much. Or you may work with someone who makes fun of the way you live. But Jesus said that we are to love our enemies & pray for those who persecute us.

In fact, Paul writes in Romans 12:20-21, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

ILL. There is a story about Doug Nichols I want to share with you because I think it illustrates what I have been trying to say this morning. Doug Nichols went to India to be a missionary there, but while he was just starting to study the language he became infected with tuberculosis & had to be put in a sanitarium.

It was not a very good place to be. It was not very clean & conditions were difficult because there were so many sick people there. But Doug decided to do the best he could in that situation. So he took a bunch of Christian books & tracts & tried to witness to the other patients in the sanitarium.



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But when he tried to pass out tracts, they were rejected. No one wanted them. He tried to hand out books, but no one would take them. He tried to witness, but he was handicapped because of his inability to communicate in their language, & he felt so discouraged.

Here he was. Because of his illness he would be there a long time. But it seemed like the work that he had been sent to do would not be done because no one would listen to him.

Because of his tuberculosis, every night at about 2 o'clock he would wake up with chronic coughing that wouldn't quit. Then one night when he awoke he noticed across the aisle an old man trying to get out of bed. He said the man would roll himself up into a little ball & teeter back & forth trying to get up the momentum to get up & stand on his feet. But he just couldn't do it. He was too weak.

Finally, after several attempts the old man laid back & wept. The next morning Doug understood why the man was weeping. He was trying to get up to go to the bathroom & didn't have enough strength to do that. So his bed was a mess & there was a smell in the air.

The other patients made fun of the old man. The nurses came to clean up his bed & they weren't kind to him, either. In fact, one of them even slapped him in the face. Doug said that the old man just laid there & cried.

Doug said, "That next night about 2 o'clock I started coughing again. I looked across the way & there was the old man trying to get out of bed once more. I really didn't want to do it, but somehow I managed to get up & I walked across the aisle & I helped the old man stand up."

But he was too weak to walk, so Doug said, "I took him in my arms & carried him like a baby. He was so light that it wasn't a difficult task. I took him into the bathroom, which was nothing more than a dirty hole in the floor, & I stood behind him & cradled him in my arms as he took care of himself."

"Then I carried him back to his bed & laid him down. As I turned to leave he reached up & grabbed my face & pulled me close & kissed me on the cheek & said what I think was 'Thank you.'"

Doug said, "The next morning there were patients waiting when I awoke & they asked if they could read some of the books & tracts that I had brought. Others had questions about the God I worshiped & His only begotten Son who came into the world to die for their sins."

Doug Nichols says that in the next few weeks he gave out all the literature that he had brought, & many of the doctors & nurses & patients in that sanitarium came to know Jesus Christ as their Lord & Savior, too.

He said, "Now what did I do? I didn't preach a sermon. I couldn't even communicate in their language. I didn't have a great lesson to teach them. I didn't have wonderful things to offer. All I did was take an old man to the bathroom & anyone can do that."

SUM. Someone has said, "They will not care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

There is a more excellent way, & that is the way of Jesus Christ. This morning if you are here & outside of Jesus Christ & you don't know Him as your Lord & Savior, we extend His invitation to you. We pray that you will respond as we stand & as we sing.

Submitted by Pastor Bill Kelley



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A Message from your Community Lay Director

What a great time of the year as I have been able to watch the change of seasons while I drive to and from work. Some of you may prefer one season over another, but I prefer and really enjoy the changes that take place from one season to another. One of the things about these changes is that we cannot stop it or reverse the process. Once God starts these changes a calliope of colors and activity erupts all around us. With all life becoming very aware of these extreme changes occurring on a daily basis. The same process happens when we fully trust God to come into our lives. He makes these dramatic changes from a sinner to a disciple of his word. Are we ever really prepared for these changes in ourselves? Let us rekindle the fire in our hearts and prepare for the rest of our lives and the pilgrim lives of the upcoming walks.



Please consider printing off and giving to an Emmaus sister or brother that may not be getting the newsletter, or that they don't have a computer. Please contact Database contact with any changes or updates of address, phone numbers, email, or for any type of changes.



Applications and willing servant forms <http://www.spfldemmaus.com/>



can be found on web site at

-  Madison CI #1 Oct 2 - 5 2014
- Hocking CI #13 Oct 9 - 12 2014
- Chillicothe CI #3 Oct 16 - 19 Death Row

- Marion CI #36 Oct 23 - 26
- KOC #15 Oct 24 - 26 Kairos Outside
- ORW #41 Nov 6 - 9
- London CI #7 Nov 6 - 9

Prayer and cookies are always desired contact Greg Stout, Kairos Rep for questions or check out the

information on the website <http://www.spfldemmaus.com/>





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Reminder Note from Music Director



There are a couple of ways that I would like to promote that over the next couple of months. First of all, I would like to see an Emmaus Praise Band form. If you play an instrument or sing in a praise team, please feel free to contact me. I envision a Praise Band made up of Emmaus Community Members, that practice from time to time and will lead music at the Gatherings. I am also looking for special music such as soloist, groups, and praise bands, anything that will help to fire up this community for God.

Music has always been a very strong part of the Emmaus Community, and I would like to see it become a stronghold again! If you are interested in playing or singing in a Praise Band, or sharing your Love for the Lord via special music during one of our gatherings.....Feel free to get with me at any gathering, or contact me on my cell at [937-206-3793](tel:937-206-3793).
In God's Love,

Ben Webster, Music Director



Gatherings begin at 7 pm

October 12



November 9

December 14