

News & Notes

Sunday, February 14, 2010

Remember in Prayer: Mary Baily; James Brewer; Johnny Carr; Sherri Fewels; Marie Hall; Calprettina Judge; David Judge; Dot Ketchum; John and Deliah Mann; Amy May; Lowell Poff; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Vera Roberson; Willa Shaw; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of January is vinegar.

The newest edition of **House to House/Heart to Heart** is available in the foyer for those not on the mailing list.

Please check the **bulletin boards** in the foyer for more information.

Ashland Events: Today: Elder's meeting at 4:00 PM;

Area Events: Today: February 18: Freed-Hardeman University Associates Tippah-Benton County Chapter benefit dinner at the Beech Hill dining hall; February 27: Teacher workshop at the Batesville congregation;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Loving Like God Wants

PM: Solomon: Seeing His Beloved

For the Record (February 7, 2010):

Attendance: 70 Contribution: \$1395.00 Budget: \$1388.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025

www.ashlandcoc.org

acoc@ashlandcoc.org

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 6:30 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Jeff Roberson

Carrol Street

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

A YEAR OF REMEMBRANCE

"Remind them of these things..." (2Timothy 2:14)

Learning to Love

Jeremy Northrop

Today is a special day. Of course, every Lord's Day is special as it is an opportunity for brethren to come together and worship God (see Psalm 133:1). This day, however, is doubly special. It is a day in which this culture honors love and the relationships associated with it. Now, we all know that Valentine's Day is not a religious holiday. However, the concept of love is certainly a biblical one. There are so many passages which speak of God's love for man, man's love for God, and man's love for fellow man. A few of the more popular ones come to my mind:

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 (John 3:16).

We love Him because He first loved us (1John 4:19).

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1John 4:11).

The holiday known as Valentine's Day is one where the emphasis is not on God's love for man or man's love for God. The emphasis, rather, is on man's love for one another. In fact, it could be reasonably argued that the emphasis is generally on romantic love. The Bible has a lot to say about romantic or marital love. While it is easy to get caught up in the infatuations of attraction, the Bible speaks of romantic love in a different way.

First, the Bible teaches love is a choice. This is starkly

different from what the world says about love. The world says if one finds initial attraction, enjoys being around someone, and if all the external factors work out, then love can happen. The world would say that one cannot control the way love happens but that it is a matter of chance and fate. Not so! Adam did not have such a choice in the matter when it came to choosing a mate! He did choose *to love* Eve. We must choose to love our spouses. The idea that love is a choice ties nicely into the next observation we are going to make about love.

Love is a command. God commands husbands to love their wives in Ephesians 5:24, 28, and 33. God commands the older women to teach the younger women to love their husbands in Titus 2:4. Jesus tells His disciples to love their enemies in Matthew 5:44. Love is not optional. It is commanded. It has often been said that if a person no longer loves their spouse, then they need to repent! This repentance would involve voluntarily choosing to keep the commands of God and love as God wants us to love. Some might argue this point and ask how it is possible to love the unlovable. The answer to the question lies in the next point.

And the next point is love is unconditional. God did not choose to love those who were easy to love. No, the text says He loved the world — each one in the world — and gave of Himself to the world. There are so many people who the world might consider unlovable but to whom Jesus showed love. He loved the paralytic in Matthew 9:1-8. He loved the widow of Nain (Mark 8:1-9). He loved the Samaritan in John 4:2-26. He loved the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-12). These are people whom the world might dismiss. Jesus loved them anyway. Why? Because love is unconditional. All that is involved in Christianity (even church discipline, for example) is about love — loving God and loving one another. Hence Jesus said, “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:40).

This leads us to know that love is purposeful. Love does not, as the world says, happen by accident. No, we follow the commands of God and love as He has commanded. This point might be most vividly seen in the book of Genesis. It was a time

of arranged marriages but most of them worked. Why? The people purposely loved one another. Today, our love must be intentional. In fact, marital love will not be successful if it is not purposeful or intentional. In truth, no other type of love will work if it is not intentional. Biblical love is purposeful.

Finally, love is successful. In 1Corinthians 13 — the great love chapter — Paul tells some attributes of love. He says,

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

These things are concluded with the first phrase of verse 8, “Love never fails.” The idea can be reframed like this: It is never wrong to love. Love for God leads us to do His will, even the parts of His will which we may not fully understand. Love for man leads us to treat man correctly as God would have us to treat man. This is true even when it may seem that actions are not the best. We trust God and love one another and thus do what God instructs us to do.

The final conclusion is that love is something we learn. God has set a pattern for the way that we love. He has, in essence, shown us how to love. Remember 1Johh 4:11? It says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” How do we love? We love as God loves us. How much does God love us? He loved us enough to give His Son — a part of Himself — so that we can have spiritual salvation. This point is confirmed for us in John 15:13 which says, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Husbands are to love their wives “as Christ also loved the church and give Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25). How are we to love? We are to love by giving of ourselves. This is the concept of biblical love. It is a sacrificial love. It is literally following the golden rule of treating others as we want to be treated.

Brethren, let us learn to love as God desires for us to love.