

Times of Services

Sunday

Wednesday

All Services cancelled due to the COVID-19 Virus Outbreak.

Study and Worship Opportunities

Notice: All assemblies and classes at the building are temporarily cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will send out notice as soon as we get the all clear.

News and Notes

- **Home Bound Members:** Mike Butler, Eula Mae Harless, Joyce Manasco.
- **Limited Health:** Wade McCrary.
- **Prayer Requests:** Jerry Paschall's mother, Frank and Joann Butler.
- **Others to Remember:** Steve Coburn, Jim Ratcliff, Jerry Paschall, Elbert Logan, Mike & Marion Butler, Lee Gallop. Willena Woods is at Windsor Place Room 205.

Contact Information:

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Vol. 7 No. 05, May 3, 2020



East Columbus Bulletin

1 Corinthians 13:13 "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

I have what I call an archive room. It's filled with old periodicals, books and files, mostly about the restoration movement. On the walls are framed several old journals and pictures. Lately, I have been assembling a new project to be framed and put on the walls, old sermons. Not mine. Definitely, not mine. But from preachers long ago, many of whom have passed from this place to the next. I found a file of handwritten sermons belonging to a preacher who has been dead for more than sixty years. One file contained dozens of handwritten sermons all on the subject of love. God's love for us. How we are to love. Love this way. Love that way. I had never seen so many sermons on that one topic.

All of that took me to our verse today. The greatest of these is love. Love is greater than hope. Love is greater than faith. Had God not said that, I probably would have changed that order in my mind. I expect that I'd put faith at the top of the list. Of the three, I think hope would come next. Love is important, and God is love, however, not greater than faith and hope. That's the way I would put it. But, thankfully, we don't have to put these in an order. God already has. Love is at the top. Love comes first.

Why does love come before faith? If we do not believe, we will be lost. Jesus rebuked the disciples multiple times for not having faith. I don't remember any time He got on them for not having love.

Let's put some thought to this:

First, this love is not an emotion or a feeling. This is not romance. The King James uses the word 'charity' for love. We understand charity. Donations, comes to our mind. Charity is one way. We do not donate with the idea of getting something in return. Charity is not purchasing something. It is giving something away. And, why does someone donate or get involved with charities? Because they care. That is the heart of this word 'love.' It is to care. God cares about you. God loves you. This word is expressed in actions. God so loves you that He sent Jesus. God's care, God's love, led Him to do something. But, more than that, we care about ourselves. If we didn't, we wouldn't care if we were saved or lost. But we do care. That love that we find in God causes us to listen, believe and there comes faith.

Second, love causes a person to make changes. If you realize that your eating habits is leading to an early death, you would make adjustments. No salt. Cut down on the sugar. Back off the sodas. Why would a person do that? Because they care. They love. Spiritually, love leads us to making changes. We repent. We put on Christ. We think differently. We toss out attitudes that are sinful and wrong. We learn to transform our hearts and become molded in the way that Jesus wants. Love will do that.

Third, love will want to worship and honor God. When one sees how much God cares and loves him, worship becomes a blessing and a privilege. God is so good to us. Love will humble our hearts, bow our heads and praise the Lord of Heaven and Earth. God has been there during storms, dark valleys, and dark nights. God has been there when we were afraid. God has been there when we were worried. God has been there when we were uncertain. Faith trusts, but love cares.

Fourth, love will open our eyes to others. Love will lead us to forgive and apologize. Love will cause us to share the Gospel message of Christ to others. Love will turn us into servants, who want to help others.

Love will have us praying for others, even our enemies. Love isn't bound by oceans, borders, race, or differences. Love wishes all to excel and do well. Love eliminates hatred and prejudice. Love sees the best and through love, hope is built.

Without love, what is worship? Just a tradition or a ritual. Songs that are not believed. Prayers that are not heartfelt. Empty. Cold. Lifeless. Poor Ephesus left their first love in Revelation. That first love must be Christ. Nothing is greater than a love for the Lord. That is the motivation for all that we do. This is why we go out of our way. This is why we don't grow weary. This is why never quit. Our love for the Lord is strong, rich and unending.

And, what is so remarkable about this love is that God loved us when we were not loveable. Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners. We hadn't stopped. We hadn't changed. We hadn't reformed. Not yet. God loves us, even when we were unlovable. Yet, God has always been lovable. God has never had any bad moments. God has never had to apologize. God never made a mistake. God never sinned.

What a contrast: God loves us when we were not very lovable and we are to love Him when He is always lovable. God is the definition of love. And, the greatest of these three is love. Love is greater than hope. Love is greater than faith. Love is the greatest.

And, if we truly love, or care, then we will be mindful of the way we worship, the way we talk, and the way we treat others. Our actions show that we care or love.

Roger