***The Greatest Commandment

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-034***

Please open your Bibles once more to Colossians 1:3-8. Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," number 12.

**Love Makes the World Go Round**

There's an old popular song that says that love makes the world go round. The Bible expresses this same sentiment in various passages in the New Testament. Now, here is one time that I certainly hope that you have brought your Bibles with you. Berean Church is distinctive in this respect – that you always need your Bible here in the church service, because that's what it's all about. You're not going to hear the same sermon that you've heard before about the gospel. Therefore, you're going to need the authority of the Word of God before you.

Love makes the world go round. And how true that is. And when it's not there, things don't go round in the right way at all, particularly when it comes to that which is the circle of the community of Christians. Paul had joy and delight to be able to say to the Colossians, "You're a loving group of people. You have the right mental attitude. And if there's anything we should get from that, it's the enormity of the importance of that factor. That's why he stresses it. But I want you to realize today but the Bible also says, "Love makes the world go round" not the world's love, but the real love that can only come as the fruit of the Holy Spirit to the believer who is walking in temporal fellowship, and whose mind is coordinated with the Word of God.

**The Greatest Commandment**

Let's go back to the beginning, to Matthew 22:37, when the Pharisees want to know from Jesus, "What's the greatest commandment?" What ties it all together? What is the great motivating factor in any human life?" Jesus quoted the Old Testament passage that answered that question. "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart; with all your soul; and, with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments, depend the whole law and the prophets.'"

That's the Bible's way of saying that that's what makes the world go round. All that the law and the prophets have to say, which is to bring people in connection with reality, is fulfilled only when there is first, a total immersion (a total expression) of love toward God. And that's the point of these phrases: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (with all the deepest personal feelings that you may have); with all of your soul (with all of your personality – everything that you are); and, with all of your mind" (and that word means "understanding" – with every piece of understanding you have, you are overwhelmingly in love with God).

Now, if that were true, there'd be no sacrifice that you would not be willing to make for God. There's nothing that you would not put yourself out for in behalf of the Lord's work. There is no point at which you would not be careful not to offend him. And at no point you would not want to do what He tells you to do, and refuse to do what you're told not to do. You just would be obedient. And out of that love for God would come that total love for your neighbor as yourself. And we're thinking about Paul's commendation, "Your love for all the saints." This is love for your friends. And you will love your neighbor as yourself.

Move over to the gospel of Luke 6:27-28: "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you." Now, you know yourself now, by what you understand of the meaning of the two Greek words for "love" in the Bible, you know which one is used here: "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies?" You know very well that that's not "philos" love, an emotional love that can't be commanded. You know very well, that this is a mental attitude love. Your enemy is there (and he is your enemy), and he doesn't like you, but you have no bitterness and no ill will toward him. He has abused you. You turn him over to God, and you forgive him instantly. You're not the kind that says, "I'll forgive you when you apologize," or, "I'll forgive you when you confess." That's only the low-life type that do that in the Christian community. Those who are true members of the royal family in their practice say, "Yes, that was very foolish for you to do that, but I don't hold it against you. I give it up, and I leave that between you and God." And you bless those who curse you and those who mistreat you. Now that's what makes the world go round.

I once heard the former teamster Union President Jimmy Hoffa, when being interviewed on TV, was posed the question: "What is your life philosophy? How do you conduct yourself?" He said, “My philosophy is: 'Do it unto the other guy before he does it unto you.'" Well, one day he took a ride over to Jersey with some of his friends, and he didn't do it to them before they did it unto him. And we have never heard of Jimmy since then. That's the world's philosophy, but the Word of God says, "No, that's not what makes the world go round."

Take a look at John 13:34-35. Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you: that you love ('agapao') one another, even as I have loved you: that you love one another. By this, all men will know that you are My disciples – if you have love for one another." This is what makes the world go round. Here, Jesus says, "I'm giving you a new commandment. It isn't really new in some respect, but it is new in this respect – that you are now a new species of human beings. You're no longer Old Testament Jews. You are New Testament Christians. You are a totally different group of human beings. And to that community of that species of new people that you're a part of, I command you to have absolute mental attitude goodwill. You are to love one another." And then He says what is seemingly impossible: "Even as I have loved you, so you love one another."

Now which of you would like to raise your hand and tell me that you love people with the divine capacity with which Christ loves you? I asked that question many years ago in the service, and one man raised his hand. He was the smart one. Because of the power of the Spirit of God and the capacity for mental attitude love, you can love people with the way God loves them. And when you treat people in a way that is unbecoming with mental attitude goodwill, you are not functioning on the love of God. Therefore, you are not making the world go round. You're making the world (and your immediate world) go into a tailspin and a crash.

John 15:13: "Greater love has no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friends." That's what makes the world go round. A parent who would interpose his physical body between a child in danger, in order to protect that child – that's love that only comes from a divine act of God upon the soul. That's the kind of love that makes the world go round.

Move over to Romans 12:9: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good." Point number one of what makes a world go round is when Christians love each other without being two-faced. And when you are (when that is what happens), then this is what the consequence is. This is the kind of a world you will create: "You will abhor evil. You will cling to what is good. You will be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor (not be pushy, getting ahead of one another); not lagging behind in diligence; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; persevering in tribulation; and, devoted to prayer." How's that for a defense for prayer meeting time with the believers? "Contributing to the needs of the saints," because that's what makes the world go round – the mental attitude love of the believer. And you're not standing around, waiting to see if somebody else will contribute to cover the need, so that you don't have to do it. Here's one place you should be pushy as a Christian. You should push your way to the first of the line to get to the offering box ahead of others.

"Bless those who persecute you. Bless and curse not. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Now, what a way to make the world go round. And it all begins up in verse nine with: "Let your love be without hypocrisy."

Look over in Romans 13:8, "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another." And that's a bill you should never consider paid in full. Every believer within the circle of your association, and particularly within this household (this community) at Berean Church, is a person that you owe a non-payable bill of mental attitude goodwill, with all the sacrificial implications of that. And it's not dependent on how they act. It's only dependent on how God has acted towards you. "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law. For this, you shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet; and, if there's any other commandment, it is summed up in this: you shall love your neighbor as yourself." All these terrible moral evils you will not do to people if you love them. Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the Law.

Move over to Galatians 5:13-15: "For you recall the freedom, brethren. Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. But through love, serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, take care, lest you be consumed by one another." Those who do not function on "agape" love are the kind who will bite their fellow believers; who will seek to devour them; who will snarl at them; and, who will not seek to protect them and keep them secure from all harm and all ill-repute – anything that they need your consideration for. Biblical "agape" love is what makes the world go round.

Ephesians 3:17-19: "So that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith. And that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth; to know the love of Christ will surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." What God has for us is to fill us with the totality of His divine viewpoint. We come into the Christian life with a mind that is blank with divine viewpoint. It is filled with human viewpoint, and that human viewpoint is what guides your emotions and what guides your decisions. And it is sitting in a room like this in these church services, listening to the resounding words of the Scripture, and to the exposition of the Word of God, that causes you to start erasing the human viewpoint, and to replace it with divine viewpoint. And that's what this verse is all about. And when that mind is filled with the love of God, then you'll have knowledge which surpasses human understanding, and you'll find yourself filled with the fullness of God. And you'll find yourself just naturally acting the way Christ would act.

Ephesians 4:2-3: "With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in a bond of peace." It is the Spirit of Christian love that preserves the bond of unity within a local congregation. When that Spirit of "agape" love is not there, then that unity is fractured, and that unity is put under stress.

Now you are not told to create a unity of the Holy Spirit. He has already done that at the point of salvation. What we are told to do is not to be breaking it up. How do we break it up? We keep the world from going around in love the way God designed it to roll.

Move over to Ephesians 4:15-16: "But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ; from Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." It is Christian Love that builds the local church community, and which builds believers up in their mission that God has for them. We are mutually building each other up through the work of our love for one another. And that requires truth.

Get over the idea that someone can be acting in a way that is wrong, and that is contrary to principles of doctrine, and that is contrary to the principle of the laws of divine establishment for government – get over the notion (that's human viewpoint) that you can speak lovingly without speaking the truth. To tell people the terrible things that they're guilty of is an act of love. You cannot be loving our society today without pointing out the evils that are there. If you love them, you tell them what is there.

Our society separates truth and love. That's the point. They like to say, "Well you must be loving. You have to speak in a loving way. You have to act in a loving way." And what they mean is that: "You're telling us the truth. It is very irritating. And we don't like to hear the truth. It is controversial. It is upsetting, especially when you're stepping on our toes. We'd just as soon that you keep those Scriptures to yourself.

Let's go over to Ephesians 5. Boy, I have a long one for you here. The first part of this whole chapter is the consequences of people who make the world go round in love. Look how they make it go round: "Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children. Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us – an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." There's one of the definitions of "agape" love. Mental attitude goodwill has a sacrificial aspect to it. And that is exemplified in a superior way by the Lord Jesus Christ – the love that sent Him to the cross. And if you have that love, this is the way the world will spin: "But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints. And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or course jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

Do I have to tell you how the world is characterized by this kind of talk; this kind of jesting; and, this kind of putting out that is just offensive and oppressive to a loving mind of a Christian? And yet they think that they are acting in camaraderie: "For this with certainty, and I want you to be aware of this. This passage now is going to tell you things that your mind is going to say, "Oh, that applies to unbelievers." That is wrong. We are now talking about Christians. He's talking about people who are believers. He's talking about people who once were unsaved, and in darkness, but now they're saved, and they're in light, but who are still living without the motivation that "agape" love places in the life, and pushes you into the right conduct.

Here are Christians living without love, and here's what they'll do. Ephesians 5:5: "For this you know with certainty: that no immoral, or impure person, or covetous man, who is an idolater (because he's worshiping his money), has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." "Has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" – don't make the mistake of thinking that that means that he's not saved. Don't think that it is saying that, if a person is immoral; he's impure; he's covetous; and, he's an idolater, that he cannot be saved. I know lots of people who are Christians who are immoral; who are impure; and, who are covetous. They are Christians, and they're still that. Are you going to tell me that they're not going to heaven? They're going to heaven all right, but what they will not have is a place of ruling authority in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

The Kingdom of Christ and of God is not the church. So, don't talk about bringing in the kingdom like some of our denominational friends do. We're not bringing in the kingdom. We're bringing in the body of Christ. And the kingdom is made up of thrones. And we learned that in Revelation – that there were a multiplicity of thrones which Christ was ready to give out. And some of the believers in the body of Christ, the church, are going to be given a throne. And they're going to be given a realm of authority in the new earth which they will administer. But it's not going to be the gang within the Christian body who acted outside of "agape" love, and who acted outside of the motivation of the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 5:6 says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words." Just turn on your television program and listen to the TV preachers, and you'll hear empty words which are very deceptive. They're not untrue words – they're just empty words. They're empty connections. They are no connections. They're pointless connections. They're just pulpit personality words to draw the crowd: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." Now there you have the unsaved: "Therefore, do not be partakers with them (the world's unsaved crowd). For you were formerly darkness." Aha, do you see what I told you? These are Christians. These are formally darkness people, but they're not darkness anymore. They're saved. They're just acting like darkness.

"But now you are light in the Lord, so walk us children of light. For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead, even expose them. For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." And that means you, Oprah and Geraldo Rivera, and all the rest of you who speak publicly of things that are done in secret that are horrible things of evil that no one should listen to.

"But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light. For everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason, it says, 'Awake, sleeper. Arise from the dead (talking to Christians – wake up, carnal Christians, and arise from your spiritual deadness – out of temporal fellowship), and Christ will shine on you." The world will start going around for you – the world that God designed for your life.

Verse 24: "Therefore, be careful how you walk – not as unwise men, but as wise; making the most of your time because the days are evil." And whose days are more evil in the history of the human race than is ours: "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." His point is that if love runs your life, you will not be guilty of walking and acting like the world, and you will not waste your life. You'll not squander your life. And there are some people who are going to find they were wrong in resenting our alerting them to spending their lives, that were soon over and soon gone, and not living in terms of eternity. Had their love been focused in the right place, they would not have done that.

Ephesians 5:28. Here it is applied in the family context: "So husbands ought also to love their wives." This is describing how Christ loves the church.

Verse 25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church. He gave himself up for it."

Verse 28: "So, husband are also to love their wives ('agape' love) as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." So because we are members of His body: "For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother; shall cleave to his wife; and, the two shall become one flesh."

Verses 32-33: "This mystery great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each individual among you also love his own wife, even as himself, and let the wife see to it that she *respect* her husband." It doesn't even tell her to love her husband. It doesn't tell her to have a mental attitude goodwill toward her husband. It tells her to respond the way she will naturally respond to a husband who acts with love. She will respond toward him with respect. And you know what respect for God means. It means it means an awesome, fearful walking in His presence.

Now, if you have a husband who is functioning on the Word of God, and who therefore is treating you appropriately, and who's leading you in ways that are true, you're not going to be too quick to want to say, "I want to play Eve, and I want to run things my way. I want to play Eve, and I want to be equal with you. I want a marriage which is 50/50. I don't want a marriage which is 51/49, where there's somebody in charge, and I have to say, "Okay." When "agape" love is functioning, that husband has the manliness and the intestinal fortitude. "Intestinal fortitude" is a euphemism for "guts," but I don't want to use that word." If he has the intestinal fortitude to do what is right, then that woman will look up to him, and say, "This guy is something," and she will have an esteem for him. But if he does not win and merit that esteem with that "agape" love, then her world will not go round, and neither will his.

How about Philippians 1:9-11? "This I pray: that your love may bounded still more and more in real knowledge and an all discernment." "Real knowledge" is our old word "epignosis." The Greek word for "gnosis" means "knowledge," but "epignosis" (ep-ig'-no-sis) means "knowledge that has come from up here, in the head," and you said, "Lord, that sure is right. I believe it." And is shot right down into your human spirit, and was restored there now as operational truth. What you know up in your head will never guide your life as a Christian. It can't work. It has to be in the human spirit, where it's cycled up as per need by the Spirit of God. And this says: "I pray that your love may abound still more," in positive volition to the Word of God. That's the only way love is going to develop and expand.

Now, how can you be positive toward the Word of God if you're not even here in the service to hear it? We have this contempt for the evening service sometimes: "I'm above it." Just look around at all the signs that you see in the churches here in Irving, and their contempt for the evening service: "Get here as early as possible, and get it out of the way, so we can have some fun time at night. Our kids have to go to bed, and get ready for school. Baloney. The only things your kids have to do is to know and hear the dignity of the Word of God, and to be positive toward that Word. Then they will have all discernment. Then they will not be fools. Then they will not be disappointing to you. At least you will know you gave them a chance.

"So that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ," which means the day of the rapture.

Verse 11: "Having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God."

Now that, folks, is what makes the world go round – that kind of devotion to the Word of God which requires your presence.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13: "And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you, so that He may establish your hearts unable in holiness, before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." That's the Second Coming. "That the Lord may cause you to increase in bound in your 'agape' love, for whom?" For one another, and then for all mankind." That's what makes the world go round. This is that kind of love. It is just as Paul says that we do for you: "So that He may establish your hearts (your minds) unblamable in holiness, before our God and Father, so that even your thinking and all that that motivates you to do, is going to be an act of holiness until you come back in that great company from heaven with Christ.

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12: "Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. For indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia, but we urge you, brethren, to excel still more." What he is referring to is the money that was being sent to the poor saints in Jerusalem. And the Christians in Macedonia gave out of their *poverty*. The rich guys didn't have much strain on them, but the poor folks – there was a stress for them to take from what little they had to send to poor people who were worse off than they were. And they did it. And Paul commends them in 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9: that they did it out of their poverty. This was like the poor lady at the treasury, such that Jesus said, "All those rich guys are very pleased with themselves with what they've done, but they have plenty left. They're still going to go to Acapulco, and have a good time tooling around. But this poor woman, she gave her very living. She doesn't have another meal left. She did indeed give an expression of love.

Verse 11: "And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, and attending your own business, and work with your hands just as we commanded you, so that you may behave properly toward outsiders, and not be in any need." Now if there's anything that makes the world go round, this is the way the world should go round. This is the way the world ought to be. And this is the world the way that God has designed it – to lead a quiet life; to mind your own business; to be your own priest; and, to let other people handle their own priesthood. And stop trying to pretend that you are better than other people; you're more noble; and, you're more righteous, because you're not. You just happen to be better in certain aspects. But if we wanted to take an inventory, we'd find your weak spots and you're blind spots, and the place that you're pretending that the Word of God has not spoken on what you're doing that you shouldn't be doing. Mind your own business. And, furthermore, work with your hands.

The state welfare people (the government control people) don't like this verse, I guarantee you. For the apostle, on another occasion, says not only to work with your own hands, but he says that if you don't work, you don't eat, so that you may behave properly toward outsiders. Have you ever noticed how the government program violates this? I always have a problem. Every time I see welfare people, they're well built. But when I see people who are lining up to collect their weekly checks, they're very slim.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 says, "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction. And that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another." All these people who serve your families in a variety of ways, here in the Berean ministries, are to be esteemed because of their Christian service. And you give them slack because they're not perfect, since you're not either. And you recognize that they have their ups and their downs, and you have a forgiving and understanding spirit. And when you have a problem, you try to make things better: "We request of you that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you." And we have a host of people who are diligently working among us. That is characteristic of this congregation, because this congregation is oriented to the Word of God. The people who don't diligently work among us, it's because they're not much for the Word of God. And they do have charge over you, by God's authority, and they give you instruction, therefore, by His authority. And when they give you instruction that you don't think is right, you check it out in the Bible. And if you still don't think it's right, you put it on the back burner.

I'm amazed how people like to put pressure on me – that if I disagree with them, and I say, "Okay, see how it works out," that makes them mad. They want me to say, "Okay, I agree with you." They don't want me to say, implicitly, "I don't think you have that right.

Now, it's nice being treated as a pope. But if you're going to treat me as a pope, you should buy me a robe, and a crown to wear with it, so that I can live up to my status – if what I say is so has to be so all-powerful to you.

Live in peace with one another. That's what makes the world go round.

Hebrews 10:23: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." Now that's our calling. That's what makes the world round – Christians stimulating other Christians to have mental attitude goodwill ("agape" love) toward one another.

Now, how can we do that? Well, fortunately the Spirit of God said, "I'm glad you asked that question." Please read on. My Bible says, "Please read on to verse 25." And here's what it says. How am I going to stimulate one another to love and to good deeds? "Not forsaking your own assembling together, as is the habit of some (who skip the evening service because they have a contempt for it), but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." How are we going to stimulate one another to "agape" love, and to divine good service? By encouraging one another with your presence here in this service, when the Word of God is open, and the assembly of the believers meet. In the New Testament church, the room was always overflowing. And I guarantee that there were people standing outside of the building, because, when they gathered, they were gathering for their lifeline. And the apostles' doctrine is, we're told in Acts 2, what they gathered for.

You can't afford to do this to yourself. And while you're going to still do it, at least you know better. That will not make your world go round. It will make your world be very small and very puny, and maybe it'll even crash on you.

Hebrews 13:1-5: "Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves are also in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for fornicators and adulterers, God will judge. Let your character be free from the love of money – being content with what you have. For He himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

The woman at the treasury, with her two little copper coins, knew that. She didn't have anything. But what she did, she gave. And she didn't make stupid, little excuses about hard times coming. When the need was there, and she had the means to meet the need, she did it. Why? Because God said, "I'll never fail in My logistical grace to you. What you need to eat; to live; to be sheltered; to breathe; and, to be clothed – that's logistical grace. You have to have those supplies, and I will see that you get them."

Verse 6: "So, we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" That's the love for God that makes the world go round.

**The Extreme Right**

Then there's 1 John 3:11-12: "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brothers' were righteous." The world does not like Christians because they do what is right. The world calls fundamental biblical Christians "the extreme right." And they're quite right about that. We are *extremely* right, because the Bible is so right, and this is nothing for you to be intimidated about. They're only hitting you because there are Cains. And please remember that you can hit people with your tongue, as well as with your actions. And you don't do that to Christians. You don't do that to anybody, because that's not "agape" love. From the beginning, our practice is governed by what makes the world go round: mental-attitude, goodwill love.

Verse 14, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." A Christian who does not operate on "agape" love is living out of temporal fellowship that is a position of spiritual death, because death is always separation from God.

Drop down to 1 John 3:16: "We know love by this: that He lay down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." There's the sacrificial aspect of "agape" love: "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need, encloses his heart against him. How does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and in truth." Boy, does that ring a bell? Don't stand up in testimony meeting, and tell us about the great things that God has done for you, and your love for the saints, and your love for God. Learn to walk the talk. That's what the Word of God says: "Where there is not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and in truth. And the people who are those who genuinely love you, and those who are treating you with the love of the Spirit of God, which is propelling within them toward you – they will treat you with that concern for your need. They will not treat you to justify and to make you comfortable in your indolence. You may be the kind who won't take the job. That is like one man on welfare I heard recently say, "Do you think I'm going to go to flip hamburgers at McDonald's? That's minimum wage, and I'm worth more than that."

Well, if I was down, and I could flip a hamburger into my mouth once in a while. . . I do would that at summer camp when we have pancakes. I amuse the little girls by showing them how I can take the pancake on my tray, and I get it flipping in the air, and it lands right on the tray. Then I tell them, now I am going to flip this pancake, and it will land on Susan's head. Watch very carefully. Let me put the syrup on first. And all the little girls giggle, and they think I'm very cute.

However, the Word of God is for people who work. It is not for you to go through a welfare line off of somebody else. And if you have to flip the hamburgers, that's good. Some people wouldn't want to be garbage collectors. That's usually pretty good pay. You get all to food that you want. And people should be glad to have that kind of a job. It's amazing how many attitudes we have that have been created by people who said, "We're going to be compassionate. It's compassion. Our government will be compassionate." Of course, that word doesn't even occur in our constitution. And I had a man recently say to me, "Oh, you just want to do things by the Constitution." And we were talking about some political thing. And I thought, "Wait a minute. Where did I miss something here? My education has been really fractured, because that's what I thought it was all about, so that everybody's freedom could be protected from any dominant group. And the Constitution was there to protect us, like President Washington said: "The power of a government is like fire. It is a useful servant, but a fearful master, and it must be held under control." Thomas Jefferson said, "It must be tied down with chains of steel, lest it encroach upon our liberties."

Well, this is what the Word of God supports. It supports that things be done by love – not by the false human viewpoint compassion that government spews out, which only hurts people, and which is insulting, and makes subclasses that can never get out of their tragedy. When we're talking about love that makes the world go round, we're talking about that Holy Spirit love. And what that will do is tell a person: "Do you have a need? I'm going to help you through this time, but you better get a job. And there are plenty out there."

1 John 4:7-11, "Beloved, let us love one another. For love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God. For God is love. By this, the love of God was manifested in us: that God has sent His Only Begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. And this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

In Colossians 1:4, the apostle Paul speaks of the love that Christians had for their friends, the brethren in the congregation – their friends in Christ Jesus. Their faith connected the Colossians with Christ, but their love connected them with all the believers. The false teachers in Colossae threatened this love for their brethren in Christ, with all the terrible consequences that that would have: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Now what we need to look at is the Bible doctrine of love for your friends with all of its enormous implications, and all of the things that are the consequence of a genuine love for the brethren – these people who should be your greatest of friends. Next time, we will look at the doctrine of love for our friends.

Father, we thank You for these passages of scripture that have reminded us, from one end of the Bible to the other, that love is the great characteristic of our God. You are not a tyrant and a brutal God as the gods of the pagans that they have invented in their own sin nature images. You are a God of longsuffering; a God of patience; and, of God of grace. We thank You for these passages of Scripture that have reminded us that the real world that You have designed – our small world close to us, and our larger world at a distance, is put together on the principle of mental attitude goodwill love. And we pray that You will help us to rise to it. And when we see that it is not being followed, we will pray for grace for those who are guilty to rise to their heritage in Christ, but that we ourselves will not fail to act in the highest and the finest tradition of mental attitude love. We pray Your blessing upon our efforts to incorporate in our lives, and to store in our human spirits by positive volition, the Word of God which we have heard this day. In Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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