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Monthly Newsletter of New Life Church of Christ

new life news



A Love Story Through My Ages

Steve Kistler

My birthday is on February 14th, Valentine's day. It was a Wednesday and I was born early in the morning in a hospital in Cincinnati OH. My mother tells me that I was the best Valentine's present she ever got. Certainly she has loved me from that moment on.

Valentine's Day: A day that is generally connected to romance and love. As a boy I was always embarrassed when people would make a big deal about being a Valentine's baby, I didn't want to be associated with love and all those yucky sticky emotions. I mean Eww! Yuck! My understanding of love was very one sided. It was about receiving love. It was my parents (mainly, although there were others) loving me.

When I grew up some and noticed GIRLS. . . well all of sudden love and those yucky sticky emotions didn't seem so bad! It turns out there was a lot that I had not understood before. This love thing had some real potential! (see Song of Solomon chapter 1) Of course, this love as a romance idea required me to look beyond myself and to focus on the needs of another. In the end, though, it was still mostly about what I gained.

When I grew up some more and got married and had children, my understanding of love changed again. Love, it turns out is not so much about receiving as it is about giving. It is not so much about emotions as it is about commitment. (see 1 Corinthians chapter 13). Love is sometimes hard work. It takes effort and planning and forgiveness and losing sleep and tears and just about all I've got in me.

When I grew up some more and my children became adults and my hair started turning grey, my understanding of love deepened again. How do you love someone with no expectation of your love being returned? How do you love someone without approving of their sinful behavior? How do you love those you do not even know? How do you love as God loves?

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16,17

It turns out that all along this journey through my life, God has been using the people of my life to teach me about himself. Ultimately, God IS love. (1 John 4:8) So I end this little story by encouraging you to continue to seek love, and seek to love and in both of these efforts to find our Loving God!

Following Jesus by **Loving** God, **Loving** People and Making Disciples.

What's Love Got to Do With It?

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). This simple and yet profound phrase reveals a lot about the loving relationship with have Christ. Here are just a few things to stir our thoughts on this verse. First, Jesus says *if* you love me. He doesn't force His love on us any more than He demands our love from us. Jesus wants us to choose to love Him. Second, keeping the commands of Christ does not necessarily infer a relationship with Jesus. This is a central theme throughout the Old Testament in that while God's people were living by the law, they were often reminded that the law was meant to point them to a relationship with God, not be obeyed apart from Him. Third, our love for Christ comes with the requirement to keep His commands. There doesn't seem to be any option regarding how we are to live our lives if we have a relationship with Christ Jesus.

So what does love have to do with all of this? Everything! Our lives must be centered on God's love for us and our love for Him. So what does this loving relationship look like? What are the commands that we should be keeping if we love Jesus Christ? I have outlined just a few words of Christ to help us answer these questions.

Repent	Matthew 4:17
Follow Me	Matthew 4:19
Rejoice	Matthew 5:11-12
Let Your Light Shine	Matthew 5:16
Be Reconciled	Matthew 5:23-25
Keep Your Word	Matthew 5:37
Go the Second Mile	Matthew 5:38-42
Love Your Enemies	Matthew 5:44-46
Seek God's Kingdom First	Matthew 6:33
Ask, Seek, Knock	Matthew 7:7-8
Do Unto Others	Matthew 7:12
Choose the Narrow Way	Matthew 7:13-14
Hear God's Voice	Matthew 11:15
Forgive Offenders	Matthew 18:21-22
Be a Servant	Matthew 20:26-28
Love the Lord	Matthew 22:37-38
Love Your Neighbor	Matthew 22:39-40
Take, Eat, and Drink	Matthew 26:26-28
Make Disciples	Matthew 28:19-20

Of course there are many more commands of Christ throughout scripture. My intention is not to create a checklist of commands to follow, for doing so would simply create a law that we could never uphold. Instead, my aim is to encourage us all to obey the commands of Christ more and more each day. Jesus loves us, and we must respond in obedience if we are to love Him. After all, love has everything to do with it.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps not record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

And now these three remain; faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Kyle's Korner

Jacob loved Rachel, so he answered Laban, "I'll work for you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

...So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

Genesis 29:18, 20

Love requires work and patience. Being so much more than an emotional 'tingle' that we get when a certain significant other is around, love is an active commitment to put the greatest good of another before ourselves. But this view of love isn't what our young people generally see modeled in their day to day lives. The kids they go to school with a model "love" that is fleeting, emotionally based and conditional upon personal happiness. But this isn't love. It is, to use the word of *Thumper* the Rabbit who was a close friend of *Bambi*, being *twitterpated*. Twitterpation is a biological reaction to the opposite sex, when pheromones overpower our common senses and we are drawn with intense desire to the *him* or *her* that has come to mean something special to us. Our palms sweat, our heart races and the only coherent thought we have is a desire to have this other person for ourselves for all time so that we can have these feelings together forever and ever. But, being a hormonal response, twitterpation is temporary. Familiarity drowns it out and the feelings and flutterings of the heart become harder and harder to come by. And so all the movies, books and teenage romances our children see promote the lie that being twitterpated is the same thing as loving.

In our verses above Jacob models love. He is willing to work hard for Rachel. He is willing to wait for Rachel. There is nothing easy about this. In fact, if we keep on reading we find that he is cheated and ends up marrying Rachel's older sister, Leah, and then has to work and wait for seven more years! But he worked and he waited. Working and waiting are marks of actual love that is based in the character of God. He works on our behalf, and he is patient with us and allows us to grow into Him. This is love. Whether it be love between friends or deeply romantic love, these principles are still at the root. Love works and waits whether it feels like it or not.

Sometimes, as in verse 20, the work and waiting seem to pass quickly because we are deeply motivated. At other times love is very much like being crucified on a lonely hill at a time when it feels as all the world has turned against you. Love can be pleasant, but love can be messy. But what love is not is something that is conditional upon personal feelings of happiness. It is not a quickened heartbeat and shallow breathing. It isn't being twitterpated.

I always urge parents to discuss this important distinction with their kids. They certainly won't hear it from their peers or on the "rom-coms" that they watch. They won't hear songs on the radio dedicated to sacrificial love that works and waits. So it is up to us to point them to the God who is Love. Romantic love is a wonderful thing. Being twitterpated is a wonderful thing, but romantic twitterpation must always give way to love, a real love that reaches beyond ourselves and works hard and waits long.

Blessings,
Kyle

February Events

Feb 3 - Upward Games

Feb 7 - Comfort & Joy Sewing 9:00am

Feb 8 - Care Package packing 6:30pm

Feb 11 - Sonshine Singers Practice 4:00pm

Feb 10 - Upward Games

Feb 15 - Sr. Moments Event 12:00p

Feb 17 - Upward Games

Feb 18 - Sonshine Singers Practice 4:00pm

Feb 21 - Comfort & Joy Sewing 5:30pm

Feb 24 - Upward Games

Feb 25 - Sonshine Singers Practice 4:00pm

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39



LOVE

February Birthdays

- 1 – Brody Dawson
- 4 – Ainsley Ford
- 6 – Caleb Kindt
- 7 – Tom Roseberry
- 9 – Grace Rogers
- 10 – Hailey Ehret
- 11 – Matt Bowers, Brad Brown, Megan Frontz
- 13 – Jack Brokaw, Carlene Hickerson
- 14 – Lisa Atwiller, Steve Kistler
- 15 – Myla Dawson, Anna Dudgeon
- 17 – Rebekkah Broughton, Evelyn Roseberry
- 18 – Jon Fletcher
- 19 – Pat Snyder, Deb Solis
- 20 – Sadie Slone
- 22 – Parker Hawkins
- 24 – Linda Dudgeon, Mary Masters
- 25 – Todd Atwiller, Sarah Johnson
- 27 – Jonah Sharp
- 28 – Garnet Cover

Jason's Jam

I was walking around Walmart today and was drowning in a sea of "love". Valentine's Day and the love involved with it is in full swing. It simply reminded me that this world does not fully understand this love, we as Christians have received and the love we are to be showing. It's agape love, a perfect, deep love that Christ offers to everyone. It's part of our mission here at New Life, by loving people, and I challenge you to spend some time in the Word and in prayer to see what that needs to look like in our lives. If we are not showing this love, then the only influence of love this world will have, will be down the aisles of the department store.

My hope is that our children will get a grasp on this love, how Christ showed it to us and how we show it to others. Please continue to pray for our kiddos here at New Life, as they continue to grow in Christ.

