

// / That Your Love May Abound

Philippians 1:9 – 13

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~ Although I am unable to exhaust the full meaning of the verses we considered in our previous report, I am sure I thoroughly exhausted you dear readers by attempting to do so. So, let's begin this leg of our Spiritual Safari by expounding a bit further on the place we left off. Christian living isn't done way up high in the Heavens, and it isn't a pious pretense of being unattainably spiritual, devout and holy. No, Christian living means living down here in the reality of this present evil world with all of our problems, heartbreaks, difficulties, worries, troubles, complications, and disappointments. Our Christian lives have everything to do with our shoes touching the sidewalk of our neighborhood and community – and many other mundane, common events that comprise our day to day life as human beings inhabiting planet earth....

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment;

~ Contrary to popular belief, we do not love everyone and everything. The concept of love that the liberal has spread out on the societal bed is nothing but blah. It literally means nothing to anyone. The liberal always talks the most about love, but is the least lovely person taking up space on the planet. Frankly, I do not know of any group of people that can be meaner or more hurtful with their mouths than a liberal; and some of them call themselves fundamentalists, too, by the way. The liberal can always say some sentimentally slushy stuff; but they never produce any substance. Well, Biblical love doesn't slop over on every side. Love must be expressed with knowledge, wisdom and judgment, understanding and spiritual discernment. Those five elements, friends, are found neither in quantum mechanics, cosmology, world literature, mathematics, science, world history, nor any man-made theory or philosophy. You are only going to find wisdom and spiritual discernment in the Word of God — or you won't find it — and you can just write that down.

We must be extremely careful about who we love, who we trust, and who we allow into our lives. Many people say they love everyone; but that's just sentimental rot. There are quick-witted, slick self-professing believers who can almost always take advantage of a new preacher. The gullible and naïve Christian doesn't stand a chance against these types. Open the door for the wrong one and they'll eat you alive. Around this forum on which I teach, I have been the target of every ruse imaginable to mankind. Outright fraud is hurled at me every single day – non-stop. Until we learn how to identify religious racketeers of all levels, the potential is there for them to create utter disasters in our life. They will tell you they are thankful for your friendship. They'll call you pastor, and tell you that you are their spiritual father, and ask you about your family, and invite you to visit them — and offer all manner of flattery — and then they tell you how they need to be taught about Jesus by you because you are such an outstanding man or woman of God. They act very interested in and constantly ask about the Bible. They'll tell you they have accepted Jesus as their Savior, and how they are feeding widows and orphans, and organizing crusades, and preaching in the villages, and they'll send you a thousand pictures of starving babies, or people being baptized, and ask you to pray for them. Then, they proceed to tell you how they are blessed by your prayers and the Lord is going to bless you more — if you will just send them a little support. If you respond, they will literally squeeze you until you feel like you are oozing with goodness.

Of course, there are legitimate causes out there; however, if there were truly that many people doing what they call "*the Good Samaritan work*" of the Lord, then this world wouldn't have any problems, friends. I don't buy it — not for a nanosecond. Most of those "*orphanages*" are raising children to sell on the black market into the sex-slave trade. Others are set up by corrupt governments of countries to solicit dollars for their own pockets and warfare. They're mostly criminals, to be sure. The *ONLY* way you can ever know the difference is if you personally travel to that place, spend a significant amount of time there, and see what they are teaching those little orphans about the Word of God. If you give them money without a personal investigation, then you are a simple fool; that's something else you can write down. God will hold us accountable for sinful giving. If you haven't read our last report, I highly suggest you go back and do so now....

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence and walking in the light of truth till the day Christ raptures the church;

~ Here's an extremely important verse – verse ten – and this is another verse that is *rarely* taught. It certainly needs some explanation because, actually, what Paul is saying here is, “.... *you need to try the things that differ.*” This is directly related to the Lord's will for your life. Almost every decision we face in life has at least two routes we can choose; and most of the time, we simply cannot immediately know which way is best. If you think God is going to send an angel in the night to speak to you in dreams and point the way out, I say you are woefully mistaken. No, you're going to have to utilize consecrated and concentrated gumption. The thing that differs for almost everyone is daily Bible study. You may pray about something and discover that thing just isn't going to work. The only way you'll reach a solution is in the Word of God. When we return to the Bible, and examine our lives and re-calculate accordingly, we'll begin to figure out what the Lord's will is. God isn't going to hand us a map with a pre-planned route all mapped out. He doesn't reveal His will for our lives that way.

The word “*sincere*” in verse ten is interesting; and in the Greek it is *sina cera* - which means “*without wax.*” When the Roman empire began, they were extremely brutal and overbearingly strong. They destroyed many of the Greek artistic treasures throughout Asia Minor. The Temple of Diana was an architectural marvel of beauty, even though it was Satan's headquarters for some time, but it housed a trove of Greek art that was sacked and broken. Later, the Roman's began to realize what a valuable treasure they had so, if a statue had a crack or was broken, the crooked art dealer would simply make a repair using wax! They became masters at this deception — and it would be literally impossible to detect the flaw until it was too late. Of course, they would market it as and represent it to be unblemished. Later, some Italian merchant would take it back to Italy, and sell it to another unsuspecting buyer. Then, one hot day, the art piece begins melting out on every side of — whatever it was. So, the reputable art dealers began to certify their merchandise by labeling it *sina cera* — without wax.

Paul is saying, “.... *don’t be a phony – be genuine and real.*” Many people are running around telling everyone “*praise the Lord*” and about how much they love everyone — when they’re really poised to stab someone in the back the moment they have a chance. That’s what Paul is talking about here; and, moreover, “*offence*” in verse ten means to be “*blameless.*” Now, it is absolutely impossible to preach or teach the Word of God and not offend someone today. That’s one main reason we must pray always for our preacher or teacher; and we should defend them when we see them being attacked.

Most of you know that I do not feel called to be a preacher — and I’ll tell you why: because if I stood up and gave my message in a church today, they wouldn’t have a congregation. People are antagonistic towards sound doctrine and would, at best, simply walk out on me. I suspect insults would be hurled at me on their way out. Frankly, and I’m just being honest — because I always am honest with you dear readers — I cannot avoid presenting as offensively as I can possibly be because we’re educating people on things they have likely never heard before from another Christian. Even so, even the most offensive preacher or teacher can still be blameless. I am accused of all sorts of things that I am not guilty of; and I just happen to thrive on that controversy. People say things about me that are awful, horrible and terrible — and not true. I can’t prevent people from saying bad things about me — all I can do is make sure they are not true....

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

~ The fruits in verse eleven are those of righteousness; and they can only ever be produced by the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling us, living

through us, and working in us. Of course, they are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Well, Paul is emphatic about them. See, when the church at Philippi learned Paul had been arrested, they sent a message to him; and I am sure it went something like this: *".... Dear brother Paul, we're so, so sorry and we feel so sorry for you. We know that your great missionary ministry of taking the entire Word of God to the entire world has now been curtailed by them wrongfully throwing you in prison."* Well, Paul is answering them by saying, in essence, *"....I want you to know that the Gospel is still going out just as the Lord intends for it to."* The problems Paul was having weren't happening to harm the cause of Christ; no, friends, these things were happening to *advance* the cause of Christ! That is a very, very, very difficult truth to fully learn and process.

Two very definite ways of furthering the Gospel are revealed by Paul. One, Caesar's court was hearing of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The top officials likely would have never heard the Word of God if Paul hadn't been chained up there. We're told in Acts chapter twenty-eight verse sixteen, *".... and when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him."* Actually, these patricians were members of Caesar's household. At Paul's conversion, he was told by the Lord he was to appear before kings and rulers of the earth. He was also told God was going to show him great things he must suffer for His Names sake! Secondly, Paul hadn't yet appeared to the top echelon; only to the common, ordinary, vegetable garden variety official in the Roman Empire. At the time in which we are studying, Paul has, of all things, members of the government literally chained to him. The arrangement doesn't get any better than that. Imagine a preacher having the congregation chained to him. I can only imagine how the guards were relieved when their shift was over.

So, as our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God, Paul is accomplishing the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul wasn't asking for anyone's sympathy; no, he was just doing the Lord's work — the Lord's way. Being incarcerated in a Roman prison was a tragic and horrifying experience. It was filled with constant,

excruciating suffering, debilitating loneliness, and unbearable pain — both physically and mentally. It definitely meant beatings within an inch of ones life. Paul was even beaten in Philippi by the Philippian jailer — who was converted that same night. So, this church knew exactly what Paul was talking about as he writes to them here.

Paul even told the Corinthians, in second Corinthians chapter six, beginning at verse four, *“.... but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged....”* Job could say, *“.... though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust Him.”*

We tend to pass over these deep truths and, thereby, totally miss the message for us. It is a cruel lie of Satan to tell people that, if they are suffering — or just not having a high old time in life, that they are not in the will of God. Some people go so far as to say that if there is *any* trouble whatsoever in the life of a believer, then that person must not even be saved. Well, there are some dear, sweet, sincere, genuine saints suffering through a very rough life right now as I type this report, and you read it. The one writing to you just happens to be one of them. Even where I am as I prepare this report — in one of the last bastions of freedom — there are signs of a very wicked and cruel storm brewing. Christian rights will most definitely disappear from the face of the earth.

Many people reading right now are suffering; not necessarily from persecution, but from things such as poverty, loneliness, disease or other sickness. The mental anguish is almost unbearable for them — and for me,

friends. I am not speaking from a theological philosophy. I am speaking from direct life experience now. I know what it means to feel as if the Lord has forsaken you. I know what it means to feel like this is something that should never happen to a man. I know what it means to question that all things work together for good. I know what it means to wonder if God really cares about me. I now know this world could very easily get along just fine without Andrew C. Hunt in it. I now know that I am just not all that important to this world. Well, even so, I can still assure you that God does care for all of us! Learning these things is the only way we can ever learn to rest in and commune with the Lord Jesus Christ in grace at the Throne of our Father in Heaven. That's what's real. The lessons are powerful and humbling. I just happen to know what all of this really means, my dear readers, by experience ~

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