

Melva's Corner

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

October 23, 2006

(Luke 6:32-36)

Central Truth: The most obvious demonstration of the Spirit's presence is a lifestyle of love.

Most Christians would like to be more loving. Our intentions are good, but our follow through is often lacking. The real issue is power. We recognize the finite and mortal limits of our will, strength, and courage to love others like Jesus has loved us. But God promises us His power to do what He has called us to do. You are to appropriate that power and turn it loose in your life.

On the outside, from the very human view of things, we cannot and will not approximate the love we are called to give others. We're going to have to be bigger on the inside than on the outside. But how do we do that?

Our answer is found in the power of the Holy Spirit. The most obvious demonstration of the Spirit's presence is a lifestyle of love. We must learn not to interfere with His work at producing love in us. We must open ourselves to His power to make love blossom in our hearts and our habits. The Bible gives us several practical ways to enable His power to love in ways beyond our own power.

Our first step is to focus our hearts on God's redemptive love in Jesus.

We are taught to love by God. We are taught what love is by God. As we focus on God's example of love in Jesus, the Holy Spirit is at work to transform us to be like Him. As we focus on Jesus' example of love and read the Gospels about His loving care for others, we are changed by the Spirit to be more loving.

The Spirit also releases His enabling power to love in our lives when we do loving deeds of kindness to others. Like the Nike slogan says: “Just do it!”

The Bible does not simply say God loves us. Instead, the inspired writers include an example of God’s love when they speak of His love for us. Jesus’ love and compassion always led Him to action. From God’s point of view, love is something you do, not just something you feel.

We are to do loving things whether others deserve it, we feel like offering it, or even if we have the desire to do it. By acting lovingly first, we’re demonstrating our faith that God will supply the power necessary to love as He loves. We are then filled with the Spirit when we submit our will and serve others lovingly. Paul says we are to be filled with the Spirit and lists five ways to do this: speaking to one another, singing, making music in our hearts to God, giving thanks, and submitting to one another. In plain old English, when we do loving things to honor Christ, the Spirit gives us the power to do what we cannot do on our own.

Prayer also releases the power of the Spirit to enable us to love. We are strengthened with God’s power to be loving to each other.

God continually pours out the Holy Spirit into our lives. The Spirit is like an inexhaustible, ever flowing stream of God’s power. The Spirit then becomes the source of God’s endless supply of love. While that supply of love is always with us, we tap His power through prayer. Incredibly, the Father then shares that love with us.

Finally, the Holy Spirit enables us to love by moving us and convicting us to respond in love to others’ needs.

To live and be led by the Spirit means our lives are shaped by the character the Spirit produces. The cardinal virtue of the Spirit’s presence is love and the Spirit’s fruit is displayed in loving actions toward others. When we find ourselves moved at the physical needs of another or the need of the lost for salvation, we must recognize this as the work of the Spirit and respond. The Holy Spirit longs to empower our love to meet the needs of the lost and broken in the name of Jesus!

The Holy Spirit is the power of love. This is not a passing, whimsical, emotional love. Instead, it is the power of God. Let's release it by:

- Focusing on God's redemptive love demonstrated in Jesus
- Acting decisively and lovingly to others to honor God; trusting Him to empower us to do what we cannot do on our own
- Praying for God to release His love through the Spirit in our lives, our families and our churches
- Responding with loving action when we are prompted, convicted, and led by the Spirit to help others

The Holy Spirit dwelling in us, enables us to be "bigger on the inside" so we can serve in ways bigger than we are capable on the outside. That's the power of God's love at work in us and that is "What Love Has To Do With It!"

Scriptural References:

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:32-36)