



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
12500 E. 183rd St., Cerritos, CA 90703
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April 25, 2010

Theme: The Fruit of the Spirit Is Love

Text: Galatians 5:22-23

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 that three things abide: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love. This may be why Paul puts love and the beginning of his list of the fruit of the Spirit. God wants us to know His love first of all; but then He wants us to share His love which each other. He wants love to be at the essential core of our being—just like love is at the essential core of God's being. God wants us to love those who are easy to love. God wants us to love those who are difficult to love—and everyone else in between. How do we go about receiving and giving God's love?

The first thing we need to know about God's love is that God is holy. When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of God's throne, he saw and heard two mighty angelic beings crying out, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of His glory!" God's holiness means that he is sovereign over every created thing. There is no one and nothing like Him. His holiness also means that God is entirely untouched by evil and sin. His holiness requires that sin and evil be judged and punished. Fortunately for us, Scripture also says that God is love. This means that love is the essential core of God's being. This in turn means that God's love is a holy love. His holiness requires that sin be punished. His love dictated that love would be punished in the person of His Only Begotten Son. That is why John writes, "This is how God showed his love among us: He setn His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." Again John writes, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." So the first step in receiving God's love is to believe that God loves us because of the cross. The cross is God's stamp on the world that says, "I love the world."

The love of God is a proven fact. It is also a demonstrated action. Both of these truths are expressed in the cross. Christian preachers, including myself like to emphasize this truth because it is true. But I want to stress, on the basis of Galatians, that love is also something we feel. God's love is something we feel as well as something in which we believe. God's love is a love that we feel at times. Unless we have had the experience of feeling God's love, it may be difficult to love others as God has loved us. If I try to love others, but never feel love towards them, my love may seem artificial. Paul writes of God's love to us: "And hope does not disappoint us, because the love of Gold is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who is given to us." This implies that God's love is something we feel—at least at times.

The next step that we must take to receive God's love is to see God's love in action. Throughout the ages, God showed His love to His people in many ways and through



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many messages—often to be rejected. Finally, He wrapped up His love in a person—Jesus Christ. Our text reveals God’s love in three ways: (1) "God sent His one and only Son into the world in order that we might live through Him." That God was willing to send His Son into our world to live and work among us was a powerful demonstration of His love toward us. But this is not all. God sent His son to be an "atoning sacrifice for our sins." This means that God asked His Son to pay the death penalty for our sins—and He agreed to do it. Finally, God "sent His Son to be the Savior of the world." The world represents the unbelieving portion of humanity. In order to love others, we must believe in the fact of God’s love and receive it into our lives through the Spirit.

Finally, as we have already implied, we must pass God’s love on to other human beings. John writes in verse 7 of our passage, "Beloved, we must love on another. For everyone who loves, is born of God and knows God." The central response to receiving God’s love is to pass it on in return. The word love is mentioned 16 times in this passage. Every time, the Greek word that is used is the word, "agape." This kind of love, loves others even when that love is not deserved. Agape love loves without counting the cost and expecting nothing in return. Agape love loves the unlovable. It loves without restrictions. Agape love is not only a love that is moved by feelings and emotions. It is motivated primarily by an act of will. It is the only kind of love that can be commanded. Agape love reaches out to meet needs when it sees them—just like God reached out to meet the need of our sin when he saw it. Receive God’s love and pass it along to others. This is God’s intended result of our receiving the fruit of the Spirit which is love.