



Loving Our Neighbor

Elder Charles Moore

We have for the past few months examined some of the ways that we express our love for God. **And he (Jesus) said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment." (Matthew 22: 37-38)** We saw that to love God is not to "have good feelings about Him," for true love involves the will as well as the heart. We found that we can express our love for God through worship, praise, prayer and obedience.

The rest of the passage makes clear that our love for God cannot be divorced from love for our neighbor; **"And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22: 39)** Here Jesus is quoting Leviticus, **"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19: 18)**

When the Bible says to love your neighbor as yourself, it is not referring to the

emotional, self-oriented love that is prevalent in our society. Biblical love is always related to meeting needs. To love our neighbor as ourselves is to be as concerned with the needs of others as we are with our own needs. How very important the last two words are. They are the key to the whole meaning. If we want to know how we are to love our neighbors, then we must ask a prior question: how do we love ourselves? When we catch sight of our faces in the mirror first thing in the morning, the word 'Ugh' might come instantly to our lips; immediately we take that revolting face to the bathroom, we wash it and tend it and make it as presentable as nature will allow. And so it goes on through the day: loving ourselves means providing loving care and attention. This is the model on which we are to base our relationship with our neighbor. Everything conspires today to define "love" primarily in emotional

terms. Scripturally, love is to be defined in caring terms, for the love that is owed to our neighbor is the love we expend on ourselves

Why love our neighbor rather than love all people? I can love "all people" in the abstract. It is the person next door that I hate. I can be sweetness and light to those that don't get too close. It is the gossip across the street that makes me mad. I can love anybody from afar. It is the bully on the next block that I abhor. A neighbor is someone that is near, someone that I have to rub elbows with, and get my hands dirty with. They see me for who I am and I see them for who they are. Neighbors are hard to live with sometimes but that is exactly who God calls us to love.

Jesus goes on to say, **"On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22: 40)** The command to love God summarizes the first table of the Law and the command to love my neighbor summarizes the second table. All the Old Testament develops and amplifies these two points: love for God and love for others, who are made in God's image. If we have a right relationship with God, we will

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have no problems with His commandments. Love is the basis for obedience. In fact, all of the Law is summed up in love. If we love God, we will love our neighbor; and if we love our neighbor, we will not want to do anything to harm him.

Romans 13: 8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. It seems that Paul goes even further. Galatians 5: 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, " You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:13 ends: **but through love serve one another.** Christian freedom is not freedom to do as I please irrespective of the good of my neighbor. It is freedom to approach God without fear, not freedom to exploit my neighbor without love.

Indeed, so far from having liberty to ignore, neglect or abuse our fellow human beings, we are commanded to love them and, through love, to serve them. We are not to use them as if they were things to serve us; we are to respect them as persons and give ourselves to serve them. We are even through love to become each other's 'slaves' not to be one master with a lot of slaves, but each to be one poor slave with a lot of masters, sacrificing our good for theirs, not theirs to ours. Christian liberty is service not selfishness. It is expressing love for my neighbor in tangible ways. We will explore those ways in the coming months.

Free Trip to heaven. Details Inside!

Cyberspace News

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September was just a continuation of summer this year. The last week of the month brought fall. School month is a big change from summer relaxing.

I got school news and pictures from Arizona first as they start early. Scott Lane has to drive to school alone this year as big sis is starting college. SheaLyn has moved to a dorm even though it is only 45 minutes away. Her mom Bertie sees that she has every necessity I am sure!

The Vaughn family had an early September get-away with the whole Vaughn clan. They rented a cabin and enjoyed a week of fun and games. Dan (Lynn and Rob's youngest) moved right afterward to Arizona for 6 months for his job at Google. He sure will enjoy some warm weather. Lynn and Rob flew to Florida for a week to be with David and Ruth Charles at the end of the month.

Peggy Charles had an accident at work this month and broke her ankle. She is wearing a boot and hobbling around at this point. It does not keep her from her job as she spends most of her time at a desk. Get well quick, Peg!

Seth Begeman announced his engagement to Abby Silvestri. There was a lot of celebrating in all the Begeman households as she is much loved already.

Last month I reported that Jerome Ripley was having a big birthday this month and to please remember him with cards. He shared with me that many responded and he enjoyed the cards very much. He is to have hip surgery this month so please pray for him and for Norma as she nurses him back to health.

Dorothy Layton's grandson Justin has joined Job Corp training group and has moved to Kentucky. Please remember him in prayer that this will be exactly what he needs to obtain a job and for his spiritual growth.

Jon Lane flew home from Phoenix to be at his Mom's 80th birthday party. Jean was so happy to see him and enjoyed every minute of his visit!

May God bless each of you and keep you in the hollow of His hands.

Come in and pray today. Beat the Christmas rush!

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore



Ah, September! The month of the Harvest moon. In the days before tractors and streets had lights, the Harvest moon was especially helpful to farmers and their families working hard to bring in their crops for the year. As the sun's light faded in the west, the full moon would rise in the east and light up the fields, allowing them several more hours of work. Who hasn't been struck by the moon's brightness and size at this time of year? September is also the month our teachers and students returned to elementary, middle, junior and high schools and colleges. Kathy Smeltzer will be teaching at Monroe County Community College as well teaching along side her husband Joe at Jefferson High School.

Dale and Geneva had a wonderful trip, as per usual, to the Gospel Quartet Convention in Louisville Kentucky this year and brought back tales of helpful strangers, great music, and time spent with Monroe area friends, Ann and Gerald Thompson. Geneva shared with the church an inspirational story from a book by the Freedom Singers called The Price of Freedom about how they left Romania to come to the Western world. Dale Begeman has had more difficulties walking in recent days and so now has a state of the art electric scooter. Because of its weight and bulk, son Jeff and daughter in-law Melinda lent them their van with a special ramp. There were only a few occasions when a helpful stranger wasn't available to help with the loading process but in any event, Geneva mastered the in's and out's and they had a great trip.

Tim and Diane Begeman were happy to share the news this month that their son Seth is now engaged to Abby Sylvestri and will marry September 2011. In ad-

dition to getting engaged, Abby also has gotten a new job at a YMCA where she is the Director of Sports and Outreach. All in all, some exciting developments for the young couple. Congratulations.

Members of the church enjoyed a truly wonderful fall clean-up day, mostly because the day was sunny and there were no major jobs to do, like putting on a roof or tarring the pavement. Just a nice day of sprucing up things in preparation for Fall retreat.

Charlie and I were greatly blessed when we went to a conference for pastors and their wives that was sponsored by Answers in Genesis in Kentucky and which was recommended by Kathy Smeltzer. We came back with a wealth of information and inspiration from all we learned about God's marvelous role in creation and quite a bit of science too. We highly recommend a visit to the Creation Museum in Petersburg Kentucky as well, if you haven't had a chance to visit it yet.

Jon Lane came to town for a visit for his mother's birthday. Mom, Jean, couldn't take her eyes off of Jon during his time with her and she was supremely happy just holding his hand. It was great to see Jon and visit with him at church as well.

Several people we know have been struggling with health issues. Don Daniels continues to experience severe and unrelenting pain in his back. Rox-Ann Brugman tripped and broke a toe two days before starting her college classes and getting her children situated in school. Vicki Velasco, was recently hospitalized for a sodium problem in her blood. Please pray for each of them to come to a full recovery.

Until next month, may you be aware of God's loving presence all around you.



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Oh, to Be a Kid Again

Decisions were made by saying "eeny-meeny-miney-mo."

Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming, "Do over!"

Catching fireflies could happily occupy an entire evening.

It was magic when Dad would "remove" his thumb.

It was unbelievable that dodge ball wasn't an Olympic event.

Having a weapon in school meant being caught with a slingshot.

Scrapes and bruises were kissed and made better.

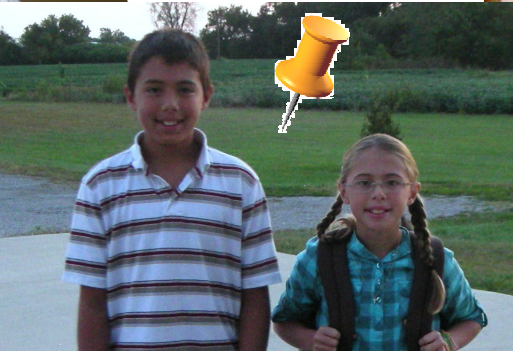
Getting a foot of snow was a dream come true.

Abilities were discovered because of a "double-dog-dare."

War was a card game.



Katie Begeman



Gabe & Riley Vargas



Drew & Jack Begeman



Shay Pinhey

David Begeman



Tommy & Sydney Begeman



Scott Lane



Jon, Jean Lane