

THEME OF THE WEEK: Humble Love of Brothers in Faith

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-6). You’ve often heard these verses, but what do they mean? This week we’ll learn that true, Christian love is more than a feeling or what we say about the things that satisfy our selfish desires. True, Christian love doesn’t hope to be seen and praised by others. In humble selflessness, true, Christian love, born of faith, rejoices in

God’s mercy and shows compassion as we have received compassion from Christ.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: Luke 14:1-11 “Which of You...”

It’s a trap! If Jesus doesn’t heal the man, He’d fail to show mercy. If He heals the man, He’d break the Sabbath by doing work. So which is it? Will He love a man or God? What a false and foolish trap! Of course, Jesus healed the man. Which of them would not have pulled their son from a well on the Sabbath? They would have done it for their animals without thinking twice. The first and second tables of the law are not opposed to one another. In fact, we fear and love God SO THAT we honor our parents, provide for our neighbors’ bodies, and protect and defend their possessions and income. From faith we love both God and man. Beware of false dichotomies. *Dear Lord of the Sabbath, grant me an abundance of love for You and my neighbor. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:129-136 (PE) Wonderful Testimonies

Isn’t it wild how much David loves the Word? He loves the law. He loves the gospel. He loves the historically true stories of salvation. He loves it so much that his words confuse our minds that have been weighed down by the troubles and things of this world. When you worry about inflation, politics, and war, there’s little time or energy to devote to the words which give the Light of Life. God be praised that though our flesh is weak, the Holy Spirit fixes our eyes on the beauty and wonder of the Word. Through the Word, the Lord turns and is gracious to us for Christ’s sake. Through the Word, we are redeemed by a promise, gain saving faith, and long to do God’s will. *Make Your face shine upon Your servant through Your Word, O Lord. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:1-6 “Worthy of the Calling”

No matter if you became a Christian in China or in America, no matter if you became a Christian as a baby or an old man, you were called by God from death to life through the waters of Baptism. The same Creed was confessed. The same Lord’s Prayer was prayed. As with all the saints before you, you died to sin and were raised to faith in Christ. Just as you are united around one Lord, and not many, just as you are baptized with Christ’s Baptism and not your own, so should you see your fellow saints as members of the same Body. Love your brothers and sisters as you would love Christ. This is how a Christian walks in a manner worthy of his calling. *Grant me to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, O Lord. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 2:1-10 A Song of Faith in Christ

Did you know this is the first time in history that the “Seed of the Woman” promised to crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15) is called the Messiah? He’s already gained the titles of the Lion of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10) and a Star of Jacob (Num. 24:17). But now He’s called the “Anointed” which is the English translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah” and the Greek word “Christ.” See how God honors Hannah with His grace and blesses her with extraordinary faith. Someday her son, Samuel, will prophesy to David about how his Seed will sit on the divine throne forever (2 Sam. 7). *I praise You, O Lord, that Hannah and Samuel’s prophesy has come true through Jesus, whose blood has raised me up to justification in Your sight. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:18-28 Treating the Law as Law and the Gospel as Gospel

In Christ, the time of fasting is ended and the time of feasting is begun. That’s why the Sundays in Lent aren’t counted as fasting days. In the divine service Jesus comes to His church to comfort and bless her through His body and blood to be eaten and drunk for the forgiveness of sins. That’s why the worst sin we could commit against the Law is to call it Gospel, that by doing it we can be saved. Fasting and contrition by themselves don’t save, despite what some people think. So also the worst sin we could commit of the Gospel is to treat it as a second Law, that Christ came to give us more things to do to inherit eternal life.

Let the Law kill. Let the Gospel of Christ alone raise us up to eternal life. *Grant me to rightly distinguish Your Word, O Lord. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: Jude 20-25 Loving Unity

I often hear that pastors and churches either care about doctrine or about love. I’m tired of false dichotomies. I hate the idea that to show compassion we have to stop caring about the Creed. The Bible plainly teaches that Christian love that unites, as opposed to private opinion that divides, comes from having the same body of doctrine. The teaching is Christ. And if the teaching is Christ, how can it result in anything less than joy of conscience and hearts abounding in the thanksgiving of love for the neighbor. Let’s do away with this false idea and do what Jude commands, building ourselves up in the most holy faith and praying the Holy Spirit. *Grant us to be united by Your Word, O Lord, that we may be perfected in love. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 56 God Is for Me

Powerful people hate Christ and His Gospel. Someday they will surround you and hurt you. They’ll tell lies about you. They’ll wait for you to make a mistake so they can mock you and rob you of your livelihood. They’ll try to turn your own friends and family against you. In that hour remember this psalm. The Lord keeps count of your tossings. He bottles up all your tears. He hears your weeping with a Father’s heart. Your enemies will turn back in the day you call. God will prove Himself to you through His Promise and through His Spirit. He will prove Himself to you through His just judgments and your resurrection. *You have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling that I may walk before God in the light of life. Amen.*

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