

Thank you, Chuck Scull!
Speaker for today

Love in “Our Best Interest”...*Agape*

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

No July Birthdays

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Indio Informer

Vol. 35 No. 29

July 21, 2024

“Love is the Perfect Unifier”

By Kevin Cauley

The title of this article is my translation of the last part of Colossians 3:14. The English Standard Version translates it thus: “*And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*” The New King James Version says, “*But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*” The New American Standard Version renders the verse: “*Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*” The Christian Standard Bible says: “*Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*”

Does God’s word lie? Or is it true that love is the perfect unifier? All disagreements, disputes, differences, and disunities could be resolved with a healthy application of love. We don’t love each other enough! We would rather split apart to preserve our own prideful opinions than to value someone else more than our own alleged intelligence. How intelligent are we really? Not very, if we are willing to sacrifice relationships for our own pride. Lack of love is the culprit. When I look at another person, what do I see? Do I see someone made in the image of God? Do I see someone for whom Christ died? Do I see a soul that will spend eternity in either heaven or hell? Many simply see other people as means to ends: “You are only as good as what you can do for me” they think. This is not loving people. This is using people for our own selfish purposes. People are ends in and of themselves. They are worth sacrificing ourselves for. God certainly thought that, and Jesus demonstrated it (Romans 5:8)! Don’t cast aside relationships like they are just toys for your amusement. Repent, and love people more.

Talk About Surreal...

By Bruce Evans

Noted football commentator, Frank Gifford in his book, "The Whole Ten Yards" touches on a most unique pairing. In 1976, during a broadcast of a Monday Night Football game, both John Lennon and Ronald Reagan were both inadvertently invited to appear at halftime in the broadcast booth. After being interviewed, both stayed in the booth as the game resumed. In the book, Gifford describes how he looked over and saw Reagan's arm over Lennon's shoulder as he explained each play in detail. Lennon on his part sat enthralled and seemed to appreciate the attention and information being provided. An interesting combination to say the least.

Try to imagine the scene. Two men, seemingly polar opposite from one another, culturally and ideologically; arguably two men furthest apart from one another on the planet. Yet, they were able to come together and for a brief moment in time were able to act almost, dare we say it, like father and son. Amazing that something as simple as a football game could bring people together from such diverse back- grounds and perspectives.

Using this unusual occurrence as a backdrop, think about how those who have put on Christ have been brought from diverse backgrounds and share an exceptional closeness. In the example of Lennon and Reagan, the equalizer was a football game and would seemingly last only as long as the game itself. But the bond that brings one together with others in Christ is not caught up in a moment of time, but ide- ally grows day by day.

Drink in what Peter writes in his first epistle, chapter one, verses eighteen and nineteen, "*knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*" Notice closely the word "precious", as it conveys the meaning of highly esteemed or cherished. Because of the preciousness of Christ's

shed blood, it draws together those who obey the gospel, into a most precious relationship that none should take lightly.

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many." (1Corinthians 12:13-14)

"For as many of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for one are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:27-29)

Only in Christ can we find the great "equalizer". Regardless of our background, ethnicity, gender or whatever, once Christ is put on, we become one with those of like precious faith. There is a sharing of a common unity. "*No longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*" (Ephesians 2:19) The commonality we share is Christ and thereby enjoy a blessed unity with one another.

The key to that relationship is to keep focused on Christ. Once that focus is diverted the bond that holds us together is lost. The operative for each and everyone who are in the body of Christ is to maintain an inseparable kinship with Deity. "*If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things that are on earth.*" (Colossians 3:1-2)

In due consideration of the closeness that is found in Christ, is it any wonder then why Paul wrote the following as seen in Romans, chapter fifteen, verse seven. "*Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of the Father.*" Amazing isn't it what can bring people together from such a diversity of backgrounds. In Him the barriers are indeed broken down.
