

AN EXAMPLE OF LOVE FOR OTHERS

Ephesians 5:2

Introduction: Everyone loves someone at one time or other but sometimes people "fall out of love" also. There are limits to just how far some will go in expressing love but Jesus has set the example for us all in the matter of love. He came to restore people to the likeness/image that God created Adam with full fellowship with God and had to go through tremendous suffering, pain and agony to do that. Christians are *"...to be followers, or imitators of God, as dear children..." (v1)*. Through Jesus, God has been brought closer to us, so that by stepping in Jesus' steps we can learn how He thought and why He did what He did for others.

I. JESUS WAS THE SACRIFICE TO GOD FOR OTHERS

1. The sacrificial system instituted by God through Moses was to point to Jesus.
 - The guilty, sinful person brought an animal to be killed and the blood of that animal was used to cleanse, make atonement for the guilty person.
 - That is exactly what Jesus Christ did for guilty, sinful mankind, everyone.
2. God's prophets spoke about Jesus Christ dying for the sins of man.
 - *"...He bare the sins of many..." "...on Him were laid the iniquity of us all..."*
- Isaiah 53:6, 10, 12)
 - What good did the prophecies do if Jesus didn't do what they said He would do?
3. John the Baptist pointed Jesus out as the "One"
 - Lambs were offered at the morning and at the evening as sacrifices for the sins of Israel and when Jesus appeared, he pointed to Jesus and said, *"...Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world..."*
 - Was John the Baptist wrong? If Jesus' death was not the sacrifice for mankind's sin, then John was mistaken.
4. Jesus declared that He had come to be a sacrifice.
 - More than once Jesus stated that *"...He came to give His life as a ransom for many..."*
"...that His blood should be shed for the remission of sins..."
"...being lifted up on the cross, He would draw all men unto Him..."
5. The Apostles agreed as one that Jesus was mankind's redeemer.
 - Jesus redeemed by His blood and offered Himself as *"...a propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world..."*
"...He bare our sins in His own body on the tree..."
"...He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

II. JESUS' LOVE AND SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS IS AN EXAMPLE TO BE FOLLOWED

1. Although *"...no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him..."*, nevertheless our love like His should be totally unselfish, expecting nothing in return.
 - It is impossible for us to add anything to what Jesus has done for everyone, and what He did, He did out of His love for others.
 - Like Jesus' love, we should not expect others to "love" us back or be rewarded in some manner.
 - We should show love in every possible way, without the least bit of desire for anything in return or that anybody else should know about it.
2. Our love, like that of Jesus, should be generous.
 - Who did Jesus withhold His love from? Not even those who beat and crucified Him.
 - Perhaps we cannot change the ones we show love to, nevertheless we should still show our love to them by trying to provide for them physical, bodily things and help for their soul.
3. Our love, again, like that of Jesus, should be self-denying.
 - Jesus *"...emptied Himself of all the glory of heaven..."* and then endured God's punishment for sin, becoming a curse in order to deliver others (mankind) (us) from the curse which our sins deserved.
 - What did Jesus refuse to give up for others? Jesus gave His ALL.
 - Who are we to deny our love and concern for others for "self" reasons?
4. Our love, as Jesus' love should be constant.
 - *"...Whom our Lord loved, He loved to the end..."*
 - Jesus' disciples didn't always do the right thing and often He had to "shake His head" at some of their actions and attitudes but Jesus never *"...withdrew His mercy from them, or shut up His loving kindness in displeasure..."*
 - Of course there will be times when we are displeased with certain people but we should never under any circumstance withdraw our love from them.

CONCLUSION:

1. How worthy are YOU of Jesus' love? What have you done to deserve Jesus' love?
 - *"...for it was when you were yet enemies, that He died for you..."*
 - Does Jesus love you?
2. How can Christians (us) not follow Jesus' example of unconditional love for all people?
 - What possibly can anybody do to you that hasn't already been done to Jesus?
3. NO, none of us are Jesus and YES, Jesus was different but nevertheless God tells US to follow Jesus' example in all things. With the Holy Spirit living within us, we have the potential to live as Jesus did. Do you want to? How much?