Our Dedication

07/31/16

As many of you realize about me, I am not enamored with politics. I will use politics as a teaching tool, but I don’t like watching it on television or reading about it; I don’t like discussing it. I won’t offer my opinions, and quite frankly, I don’t want to hear yours either. The only things I know about politics are fed to me by the media, which is sorely lacking in impartiality. I like CSPAN because I can listen to the real thing and not have some pundit tell me what I should take away from what I just heard.

Having said that, over the last couple of weeks we have lived through the two major party’s conventions and we have learned what their platforms are. It is critical that we know what the various groups we associate with stand for; what their guiding principles are.

But more important is to know what our guiding principles are; what do we -- as an individual and Child of God -- stand for?

I wish to read what I believe to be one of the simplest and best delineations of Christian duties ever written. It is the 12th Chapter of Romans. For some of us, it has been too long since we’ve read these words and felt the significance of these principles. This is the Christian platform.

Romans 12

*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

*9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

*19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

These paragraphs describe in detail how we should behave as someone who claims to hold the Christ dear to us. They explain how we are to think, act, and speak; this section describes a Christ-filled attitude and how to live an exemplary life. They are all a part of Christ’s simple command: Love each other.

The ideas in these words don’t need interpretation; they don’t need explanation. They need our inerrant application and our unremitting dedication.

What is dedication? It means to devote our time, energy, effort, and ourselves to a task or purpose. It means to commit, pledge, vow, allocate, give, surrender, and sacrifice. It involves creating an image in our minds of our purpose and plan: a mission statement.

So what is our mission statement? Have we devoted ourselves to God? Are we committed to allowing God’s plans for us to develop? Are we dedicated to God’s Will being done through us? Have we offered our bodies, souls, minds, our lives and all that we are physically and spiritually as a living sacrifice to the Christ within – to serve and to love and to be led? Are we responsive, receptive, and ready for the words and nudges … for God’s call to move into loving action? Do we offer our consciousness and hearts to our God humbly, intimately, and sincerely in prayer?

Are we holding dear to the valued Spirit-filled principles of our Christian platform? For where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. Where there are political platforms, parties, pundits, and Presidents – they too shall pass. When all else fades into forgotten obscurity, what remains is faith, hope, and love.

And this love includes the love of God working through us. I read a couple quotes that I liked. One read, “You can’t expect to see change if you never do anything differently.” Our dedication to God requires that we do things differently than the world has suggested that we do.

Another quote said this: “The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world – are the ones that do.” Our dedication to God requires that once we have taken hold of God’s vision for us we don’t stop until we have attained that vision – whether it is an object, a lesson, an attitude, or a frame of mind.

Many years ago, Mary and I had the pleasure to hear Les Brown, a powerful motivational speaker. He wrote a statement that he shares at most of his events. It is entitled: If You Want a Thing Bad Enough.

If you want a thing bad enough to go out and fight for it,

to work day and night for it, to give up your time, your peace

and sleep for it… if all that you dream and scheme is about it,

…and life seems useless and worthless without it… if you gladly

sweat for it and fret for it and plan for it and lose all your terror

of the opposition for it…if you simply go after that thing that you

want with all your capacity, strength and sagacity, faith, hope, and confidence and stern pertinacity…if neither cold, poverty, famine, nor gout, sickness nor pain, of body and brain, can keep you away from the thing that you want…if dogged and grim you beseech and beset it, with the help of God, YOU WILL GET IT! – Les Brown

Last week I spoke of the blessings we receive as we direct our lives in service to God. May we commit to fulfilling Colossians 3:17: *whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*.”

 It is my continued prayer that we move into the Presence of God so frequently that we can easily dedicate our lives, our being, and all that we are to God in service, and as a vehicle for the Will of the Divine through us.

Let us pray….