

# God's Love in Action

02/12/17

Romans 5:5

*God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.*

Tuesday is Valentine's Day. It's a day that we have been celebrating since we were children. Yes, it is a day for married folks and sweethearts, but even more, it is a day where God calls each of us into action: to express the love of the Christ in this world regardless of appearances.

Children are good examples of this. Little children love Valentine's Day. When I was a child I remember enjoying giving and receiving the little notes we would write for each other in the classroom. Today, many teachers are aware enough to instruct their children to bring a Valentine for everyone in the class. But when I was a kid the most popular children got the most Valentine cards; the less popular only received a card from our best friends. As children we were learning lessons. Some lessons were not intended: that some people were going to receive more recognition and be more liked by others.

Still, as children we were beginning to learn that we are loved and that we can love others – a lesson that many adults have failed to master over the course of their lives.

But a boy named Chad new this lesson.

Little Chad was a shy, quiet child. One day he came home and told his mother that he'd like to make a valentine for everyone in his class. Her heart sank. She thought, "I wish he wouldn't do that!" because she had watched the children when they walked home from school. Her Chad was always behind them. Others laughed and hung on to each other and talked to each other. But Chad was never included. Nevertheless, she decided she would go along with her son. So she purchased the paper and glue and crayons. For three weeks, night after night, Chad painstakingly made 35 valentines.

Valentine's Day dawned, and Chad was beside himself with excitement. He carefully stacked them up, put them in a bag, and bolted out the door. His mother decided to bake him his favorite cookies and serve them nice and warm with a cool glass of milk when he came home from school. She just knew he would be disappointed and maybe that would ease the pain a little. It hurt her to think that he wouldn't get many valentines - maybe none at all.

That afternoon she had the cookies and milk on the table. When she heard the children outside, she looked out the window. Sure enough, there they came, laughing and having the best time. And, as always, there was Chad in the rear. He walked a little faster than usual. She fully expected him to burst into tears as soon as he got inside. His arms were empty, she noticed, and when the door opened she choked back the tears.

"Mommy has some cookies and milk for you," she said.

But he hardly heard her words. He just marched right on by, his face aglow, and all he could say was: "Not one. Not a one."

Her heart sank.

And then he added, "I didn't forget a one, not a single one!"

Chad knew what many of us have forgotten: the joy of love is in the giving.

*In 1 Corinthians 14:1 we are given this simple edict: Make love your aim ... let love be your highest goal; pursue love, follow after love.*

Although the joy of love is in giving, the ego only feels joy by getting – receiving gifts, receiving attention and recognition, getting the most Valentine's cards, getting the guy or girl, getting the most – whether it is money, possessions, or glances.

As we watch our thoughts and words, our attitudes and reactions, we may realize that we can be more loving. Some of us have allowed our focus to slip. We have forgotten that love is an attractant. Through the Presence and Love of God we attract all the good things that we need into our lives. It is a lesson the ego does not understand.

God's love draws to us the ideas we need, the vigor and stamina we need to maintain a perfect body. God's love within us attracts opportunities for expression that assures us a satisfying

productivity and abundant supply. Love sees the best in people and situations.

An interesting fact about Saint Valentine is that not only is he invoked for love, but for healing – especially in children, and especially regarding epilepsy. Valentine is thought to protect against fainting and seizure disorders – and rightfully so: I believe love is the greatest healing force we have available to us.

As God’s love flows through us we attract our highest good. Love opens the way for happy experiences and frees us from fearful thoughts. By allowing God’s love to express we invite harmonious, happy relationships into our lives. Love attracts our own to us and fulfills the longings of our soul.

In Psalm 107:9 we read that God: “...satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.”

Victor Hubert said it this way: Life is the flower for which love is the honey.

We are the beloved of God, and God will see to it that we have everything we need to see our way clearly. Through God’s love the darkness of doubt, difficulty, and despair yields to the light of truth and transcendence. When we love others, God can use us as a beacon of hope and support in other’s lives.

When we are open to love, the right and perfect people enter our lives at the right and perfect time. Sometimes these people will be our own beloveds and become our partner or spouse. There may or

may not be a romantic interest, but they are there for us, drawn to us by reflections of the love we express.

These are the dearest Valentine's Day recipients. They are our special and closest loved ones.

Maya Angelou wrote: If you have only one smile in you, give it to the people you love.

Yet the love of God is constantly asking that we expand our 'dearest ones' list. Just as God holds each of us as dearly close as any other Child of God, we are being asked to continually hold others around us dear, as well. I believe the Christ within is challenging us to more freely share our compassion and love with a broader spectrum of people.

From the wilderness of our hearts, from the depths of our souls comes the gentle whisper: God loves me, so I will express love to someone today. When we express the pure love of God we bring light to the dark.

We bring the love of God to life through our thoughts, words and actions. We are God's love in action. Whether they are plans with a sweetheart, reminiscing with a lifelong friend, encouraging someone through a difficult time, expressing empathy, listening deeply to another, and being compassionate are acts that invite love to grow.

To paraphrase a quote mistakenly attributed to John Wesley, we are being called by God to love as many people as we can, by

every means we can, in every place we can, in every circumstance we can, for as long as we can.

No valentine card can ever be as beautiful or wonderful as the message that comes to our hearts from the heart of God—“My beloved child, I love you”; and the greatest gift we can give another is to shower them with our love.

Little children love Valentine's Day. My prayer is that we will enter into the spirit of Valentine's Day with a childlike heart, a childlike joy, and a childlike trust, and be available to God ... to be willing to share the love in our hearts with all we meet; to dare to make a difference in a life, as God does His work through us.

As the Christ said in John 13:34: A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you.

Let us pray....