

"Love makes the world go round."

"All you need is love."

"All the world loves a lover."

"What the world needs now is love, sweet love."

These snippets of popular culture do emphasize the preoccupation we have with love. Everybody seems to be looking for love and from the continuous supply of new takes on finding love it would also seem that few do in fact find it. Paul addressed this in his first letter to Timothy chapter 1 verse 5, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." Some translations say "An unfeigned faith." But, again, what is the perceived result of most people's heart and conscience and faith? And why?

I think that there has been a terrible misunderstanding of what "Faith" is and is supposed to be. Seeing as how it is true, "What you win people WITH is what you win them TO," then I think we look at the basic call to faith from its beginning and that is generally referred to as The Gospel itself. What IS the Gospel?

The most prominent answer given when asked, "What is the Gospel?" is, "Well, Christ died for my sins. Because of Christ my sins are forgiven." While there certainly is nothing wrong with that statement and we should be glad that people know that is true it is not the Gospel. It is an intricate and absolutely necessary part of the Gospel and indeed what makes the Gospel possible but it is still not the Gospel.

So what IS the Gospel? We need look no further than the Word of God Itself for an explanation and right definition. We read "The Gospel" according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and we see immediately that Christ's own ministry was preaching the Gospel as we see in Mat. 4:23 and 9:35 amongst others. Though Christ did not hide the fact that He would die, be crucified, it was was not the focus of His preaching the Gospel. He did not go around saying, "Hey, I'm going to die for your sins. Because of my death, burial and resurrection you'll be saved." As we see, even at that event Christ's own disciples didn't know what was going on and had to be convinced that Christ did resurrect and it was part of the Gospel they had been preaching. So, again, what IS the Gospel.

As Matthew recorded in chapter 4 verse 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."" Even the afore mentioned verses of Mat. 4:23 and 9:35 say "the Gospel of the Kingdom." The Kingdom! The Kingdom! The Kingdom of GOD is here! That is the Gospel! Either that excites you or you couldn't care less. Christ, of course, preached that the kingdom was "at hand" because He had not yet opened it through His death, burial and resurrection but on this side of those facts we can say, "The Kingdom of God is here!" Again, that is the Gospel.

The Law of the kingdom, the Standing Order if you will, is love. Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Christ Himself said, "This I command you, that you love one another." John 15:17. He also said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." John 14:15. So it is hard to live in a kingdom of love with a King of love who commands love and be devoid of love or not know that you are being loved. Some how this Gospel, this Good News, has been missed.

For those who have missed the Gospel and think any form of worship is OK because Christ died for their sins and whatever feels good is acceptable to God then attending to the things of the Kingdom doesn't matter. For those in love with the idea of being in God's family and participating in the familiar functions of family/kingdom activities pleasing God, pleasing Christ, is priority one.

The greatest of these is the family table. We are invited to, we are accepted at, the table. Christ said in Luke 22: 19 & 20, "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." This is what we do in the kingdom. This is our communion with the King. We love this because we were loved and we are loved. Let us love one another and love God and Christ in this observance. Let us fulfil the Gospel.

In Christian love, DeMilt Morse