

Continuing in Passion

John 15:9

Sunday Morning, January 17, 2010

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Introduction: The church of Ephesus left their first love. They had many good things in the church, but they were missing the key ingredient. In fact, when they missed this one thing, they no longer had what God considered the one thing to allow them to continue as a church. If they did not regain their first love, He was going to remove their candlestick out of its place, (they would cease to exist as a church). God holds us accountable for our passions. He expects us to retain, to continue to love Him and to love the things He loves. It is the one necessary ingredient to enable God to bless us.

Love is not momentary. It is continual and continuous. We need to guard our hearts so that we continue to love Him and to continue in His love for us. There are many books written about Christian experience, and there are many books written to help you in your walk, but this is the most important thing, we must continue to love the Lord!

Passion cannot be past tense. It must be now! I went to Haiti five years ago and had a compassion for those people, but compassion is never what you did. Too many couples live their life based upon what they have done for the other. When the Bible says,

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

We must understand that this verse and so many others like it are found in the present tense. Loving in word is past tense. I said this. I told her this, but love is more than words and love is more than promises. When Jesus gave the great commandment, the scribe that he was talking to answered,

Mark 12:32b Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Obviously it was a good response for the Lord told him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Loving the Lord is more than sacrifice. All the sacrifices in the world can't compare with one who loves with all their heart, soul, and strength. We live in a world of tangible things. We think that sacrificing an hour a week and giving fifty dollars a week equals love. But continuing is more than an event or a thing. It is who we are. It is giving ourselves and our desires to the Lord.

There are four points in this message. We must love Him, we must continue in His love for us. We must continue to love the brotherhood and we must continue to love the lost.

1. Continue to Love Him

De 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy

heart and with all thy soul,

Ps 145:20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

A. We love Him because...

There are a couple of reasons why I believe that our love for the Lord needs to continue. First, we read in the first epistle of John, that we love Him because He first loved us. If God stops loving us, then perhaps we are permitted to stop loving Him. We are to love Him because He first loved us. Since He continues to love us, we must in turn continue to love Him. Though it is true that He died once, and that death showed his love to us, the Bible says that now he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

He has an ongoing ministry with his church. He ever liveth means that he will never stop living for this purpose. He continues as long as we need intercession.

B. With all our heart...

Secondly, the greatest commandment in the Bible is to love the Lord our God. If it were a one time event, He wouldn't include the idea of "all our heart, soul, and mind." That leaves nothing left over for other passions. Our entire heart needs to be given to Him. Once it is given, we have nothing left to give.

C. Practical love continues

Third, the Bible tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Husbands are not to stop loving their wives. They are to continue to love them as long as Christ loves us. That presumes that Christ will never stop loving us! Hence we are to continue to love Him.

We have stated that Christianity has degenerated into events. There are several special events in the life of the Christian. Some churches have holy communion. Some have confirmation. Some have baptism. Some churches give certificates to show that you have completed these events. They show that you have a relationship with God. Christianity is not about an event. It is not a time period. It is on going. It is abiding with Him. To understand the word abide, notice what the Lord says to us,

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

The father and the Son will come to those who love Him and they will make their abode with them. This means that they will set up a permanent residence with us. It is not a visit. It is not an event. It is a total change in our life to have someone move in with us. They change their address with the post office. They now abide, remain with us permanently.

The word in this verse is the word *monai*. It comes from the same root, *meno*, to abide. The word is only used twice in the New Testament. The only other place that it is used is in John 14:2 when we read, "in my Father's house are many mansions." The word literally

means an abode. The translators saw this abode in heaven as a beautiful place that God specifically prepared for us, a mansion. John 14:23 is also talking about a specific residence, a beautiful home that God prepares not in heaven, but in our hearts. It is beautiful for the same reason our mansion is beautiful in heaven, our Lord lives there. We live in His presence and He lives in our present. It is that same thought that interprets how we are to continue with Him

God's word says,

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

The word abide is the same word as the word abode. It is a permanent dwelling. It is missing in most believers. They have dated God. They have dated the church, but they have not yet fallen in love with Him and made our residence where He dwells.

Picture the first disciples. They had their own homes. But one day when they were listening to John, they heard him exclaim, "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." They heard that testimony and so they followed that one. Jesus saw them and turned and asked them,

John 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

Jesus answered them, "Come and see." We read,

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

That was the beginning. They came to stay with Him that night. They began to live where He lived, and then they began to love what He loved. For the next three years, they walked where He walked, they went wherever He went. They slept where He slept. They became His disciples. You can't be a disciple without going where He goes. One man wanted to be His disciple. Jesus said to Him,

Mt 8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

That verse doesn't mean much in 21st century Christianity, because we can always go home to our own lives. We come to see Him, and then we go from Him to do our thing. We don't have to go without a place to sleep simply because we belong to Him.

Let me ask you, "How do we show Him that we love Him?"

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

God wants us to love Him. He wants us to obey Him. If our love is to be continuous,

then our obedience must also be continuous. It is not enough for us to keep the commands that are easy. It is not enough for us to keep the commands that we are able to keep. Love for Christ means that we have His commands, and we keep them.

How many of you have a Son who if he purposely disobeys you, would accept a word from Him that says that his disobedience was to show you that he loved you. You say, "Son, get up and shovel the driveway. He gets up and goes to watch tv. And he says to you when you come in, "Dad, I want you to know that even though I didn't come out to help, and even though I am watching TV, I still love you." We would say, "So, you have a funny way of showing it. Your disobedience does not show love, in fact, it shows just that opposite."

Yet, there are men and women who are married and who for one reason or another choose to hurt the other by a wrong relationship with another of the opposite sex, and then choose to say "But I still love you." I am sorry, but you have a funny way of showing it. Love is out to protect the one loved, and love is designed by God to support the will of the one loved.

2. Continue in His love

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

Joh 17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them

Continue in His love. God's attributes continue. Grace is not just for salvation. It continues day by day. God's love is not just at Calvary. It continues day by day, every moment and every second of every day. But the fact that Jesus asks us to continue in that love indicates that even though Jesus love continues for us each moment of every day, not all believers experience that continuance. We so desperately need to be loved, to feel that love, But most only know about an event of His love, not the continual love that He has for us. We see God's love as past tense. We see that He did love us, but the reality of His present and continual love escapes us. He wants us to remain in that love, to live in it. To know it as a present tense reality.

Paul prayed for that church in Ephesus. He said,

Ephesians 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Notice that this love is not something you can teach. It is not a doctrine that you can put on paper. You can't explain it to anyone else. You can only understand it by knowing it first hand. Paul knew it and it was his prayer that this church also know it. And for a time they did know it, but in the end, they left their first love. It did not continue. It needs to continue for us to worship and to serve Him.

Again, this is a major weakness in the church. We do not know, we do not comprehend the love of Christ. It can't be gained through reading or studying. It can only be gained by knowing Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. It is only known firsthand by knowing Him.

And, even if you know it, it does not mean that you will abide in it continually. We

can lose sight of that first love!

3. Continue in Brotherly love

Hebrews 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

We need to continue in brotherly love. Brotherly love is not a word. It is not a deed. It is a way to live as stewards of God. Now this is important. How does this show stewardship? We are stewards of God's grace and of God's love. We receive from God and we give it to others. God's love in us is what we give to our brothers.

A. We love them as we are loved by God.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

This is a comparison and an illustration. But it is more than that. It is a simply continuation. God does not give his love to us so that we can take it in and enjoy it for ourselves. He gives us a gift of His love so that we in turn can use that to love others. Let me give you the illustration from John 17. Jesus received from the Father. If it ended there, then His love would be given for us to hold onto. But we read concerning....

1. His words

John 17:8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;

2. He is sanctified, and so desires them to be sanctified.

John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

3. God gave Christ glory, and that glory he has given to us.

John 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

4. It was His desire that the love that God gave to Him (Christ) might be in us.

John 17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

If there ever was one who deserved to take God's glory and keep it for himself, it was Christ. If there ever was one who had the right to take God's love and keep it for Himself, it was Christ. But He does not hold onto God's gift of love, or God's glory. He passes all of God's fullness on to others.

The meaning of this is beyond our ability to comprehend. But the Bible says that in Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily" (Col 2:9) Now, we are not God and we are not equal with God, but because we love Christ, we find,

Ephesians 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

He holds nothing back. All that He has been given He shares with us. Therefore, when

we receive the grace of God, we receive it not in vain. It does not end with the reception. It does not end until we give it to another. When we receive the love of Christ, we do not hold it and have it end in our hearts. We are to give that love to others, to love others AS HE HAS LOVED US.

4. Continue to love the Lost

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I want you to look at this verse from a different perspective this morning. I do not want you to see it as an event of the past. I want you to see that the giving of His Son is still being offered because He still loves the Lost. That has not changed. John 3:16 is in the Aorist tense. That means it is a once and for all action that God demonstrated to this world to show His love, but when we read that “God is not willing that any should perish.,” that is not past tense. That is present tense. God at the present wants men to be saved. In 1 Timothy, we read,

1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Again, the verb is in the present tense. He wants right now, at this moment, on this day all men to be saved, He wants them to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It is so difficult to give the gospel to people. It is hard. We have to tell them about how much He loves them and How He sent His son to die for them. I want you to know that it is not difficult to witness. There are a few things in this world that I love to talk about. I love talking about cars and motorcycles and boats. I love to talk about basketball, but I also love to talk about my family. You want to please me, talk with me about my wife. I love to talk about her because she is so incredible special and important to me. It is not difficult to talk about something you love. Listen to me. It is especially not difficult to talk about something you love to someone you love. We make Christianity so difficult. We make it into a chore that we have to do. It is an event that we dread. If we could continue to abide in His love, it would change the way we witness to people. It would naturally flow out of us because we love to talk about it to anyone who wants to hear.