

## LOVE is what REALLY matters

In my over 35 years of walk as a Christian I went through various phases and met various groups. From Greek orthodox to wild Pentecostals, I can say I have seen most of it. What I observed unequivocally is that very rarely somebody would openly admit that he has only part of the truth and others may have another part. It is always like we have it all and the others have it only to the degree it agrees with us! I have also seen an obsession with theological matters, to the point that many groups get polemical against other Christian groups concerning these matters. But really my brothers and sisters after all these years I can tell you that these things do not matter much and may be not matter at all, in comparison to what it really matters. **And what really matters is loving one another.** What's the point of having it all right theologically but not having love? What does it matter to believe in God, but deny loving your fellow men? As James said:

### James 2:19

"You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!"

Do you believe in God? The demons also believe in God! This is not what makes the difference! What I have found that makes the difference is LOVE. Loving one another is the heart of Christianity, its very essence and identity. Remove it and all that you have is another religion. Yes in that religion you believe in God and Jesus but if that was all, it makes us no different than the demons. They believe too!

As apostle John tells us:

### 1 John 3:14

**"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."**

How do I know that I have passed from death to life? By only confessing, sometime somewhere, Jesus as my Lord? By going to the church every Sunday? By keeping all fasts my denomination prescribes? By speaking in tongues? No, not any of these. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren"! Love of the brethren is the real test! Nothing else! And John continues:

### 1 John 3:15-18

"He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Love is what matters! Therefore we should not strive to gain an argument over theological or other matters. What we should strive is to love. For even if I'm right about my theological view but I do not love, I'm nothing.

Let's see what that passage of 1 Corinthians 13, a passage you definitely know, says. Let's get it verse by verse and let sink in what it says:

### 1 Corinthians 13:1

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."

Some denominations do not believe in speaking in tongues. Others do. They clash against each other, offering countless of arguments for and against. Let's say that I found the truth and let's say that I speak in tongues of men and angels. Let's say, to make it clearer, that I speak in Chinese though I never learned Chinese. If I have no love, so what?

I'm nothing! Zero! For God I'm just somebody who is mumbling. Even though I perform a miracle, speaking in another language I never learned, I'm a big zero! Now to take it the opposite way: anybody who has even a little of love is BETTER than me who performed such a miracle. The little kid, who shared his lunch with another kid who had no lunch, is better than me!! Do you now understand what I mean that what matters is only loving one another, and it is that love we should try to excel in any way possible? Let's move on to verse 2:

### 1 Corinthians 13:2

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

Let it sink in my brother and sister! Let's say I'm a miracle worker. I have such a faith that I can speak to the mountain and will go away!! Furthermore I'm a prophet, knowing all mysteries and all knowledge. You can come before me and I could tell you your past and future, revealed by God! Well, if I have no love I'm NOTHING! A zero! Nobody! I'm the least in the Kingdom. I'm of those that will come last and not first! A woman whose heart was moved with compassion about her old sick neighbor and she cooked a meal for him, is infinitely better than me, the prophet, miracle worker, mountain mover! She will be of the first in the Kingdom, which I will not even make it in! Not even make it in? Yes, because it is faith who is lived in love what saves and not just a mental faith, which also the demons have! But you may say "come on; do not exaggerate. Anybody who does such miracles will be in the Kingdom of God!". Oh really? Let's have the Lord answering this:

### Matthew 7:21-23

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. **“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’** “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Miracles, prophecies, speaking in tongues etc. are no signs that we have passed from death to life. What is the sign is doing the will of God, and foundation of that will, is loving one another. As the Lord said:

#### Matthew 22:35-40

“Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ “This is the first and great commandment. “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

And as Paul says in **Galatians 5:13-14**:

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Love to God and to fellow men is what really matters. Take away this and you have NOTHING! But let's go on, in the next verse of 1 Corinthians 13:

#### 1 Corinthians 13:3

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

Obviously what is meant here are actions done without love and compassion. Now you may say: "how can I distribute everything to the poor or give my body to be burned and have no love?" Well, it is possible. For example, what if I give my body to be burned, knowing that I will be declared a "saint" and honored in generations to come? What if I give my goods to the poor, knowing that they will spread the good news of my acts and I will be honored by everybody? Or that if my name will be written in a stone, for generations to see and honor my memory and my great acts? Or if I simply do this, in order to tick it off my list – thinking – that I buy like this God's favor? Let's add here any other things we may consider great: our fasts, our tithes, our Bible memorizing or I don't know what else. None of these will help me! Because my motivation is not love! The only motivation behind everything I do has to be love. If I'm not motivated by love and only love then what I do has no value. Let's not forget that the Pharisees tithed and tithed everything! But they had no love! Tithing did not make them anything, because the love was absent. And when the love is absent I'm, regardless of my miracles, faith, giving and acts of heroism, nothing!

And here is what is love:

### 1 Corinthians 13:4-13

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I

know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. “

My dear brother and sister, the greatest of all is LOVE. There is no Christianity without love. You have passed from death to life, to use the phrase of Apostle John, if you have love, even though you may err theologically in many things. But if you do not love, you still abide in death, even if theologically you are a genius and you have everything correct. Even if I have everything right doctrinally, even I prophesy and do miracles, even if I give my body to be burned, if I have no love I'm a big round zero. Let this truth sink in, let us put aside theological arguments and let us excel in what really matters: LOVE.