

Unfeigned Love

Pastor Derek Melton www.pryorcreekcommunitychurch.org

1st Peter 4:8

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

One of the hallowed beauties of the early church was the tangible richness of love the brethren had one for another. Insomuch they were willing to yield their possessions, land, and finances for the common good of the body of Christ. In and through their personal awakening these men and women were gripped by a sovereign love that transcended ordinary explanation.

These spiritual pioneers had tapped into a divine artery flowing deep from within Immanuel's bosom, liberating them from individualistic motives and materialistic bondage. This transformation manifested itself through the actions of redeemed men who mysteriously began to prefer their brethren more than themselves.

It was this love in action that led ordinary men to sell tracts of personal land and to joyfully lay the proceeds at the feet of the apostles for distribution to those who had need. Moreover, it was this love in action that compelled a zealous young man named Stephen to preach with holy passion to an angry mob of rebels; and it was this love exemplified that besought their forgiveness, with eyes bent towards heaven, as the rocks they hurled sent him to a martyr's grave.

The power of this love displaced righteous men into dark dungeons bound by steel chains and rusty fetters in their divine conquest to redeem lost mankind. This love also acted as a sovereign bond between the ranks of the redeemed, rendering personal possessions common good.

The bountiful display of love was the hallmark of the early church and it was the secret of her success. Her beauty and attractiveness was projected to lost humanity by the enveloping shroud of Christ-like love emanating from her members. Paul's soaring words: "Love never fails" illuminates the secret of her success. They overcame in all situations, triumphed through every tragedy, simply because they never moved away from the passionate love they embodied.

The revelation of these truths illuminates the looming weakness and tragic lack in the modern church. Many of the stains tainting our garments and tarnishing our crowns are wrought by individualistic ideologies promoting personal achievement and attainment vs. that which benefits the common good.

It was this ideological absurdity that transformed the beauty of the anointed cherub's {Lucifer} former estate into the wretched ugliness of a hell's devil. I'm afraid this germ has infiltrated the church infecting her with the same disease that afflicted the anointed cherub with chilling morbidity.

The underlying cause to this dilemma is the reversal of the object of love illuminated so incandescently in the early church; the love of God vs. the love of self. Paul warned the modern church of this infectious idiopathy saying: "...in the last days - men shall be lovers of their own selves..."

The only inoculation available to cure this malady of the soul is a deep-inner awakening to its inward existence and subsequent deliverance from its devilish grip through godly sorrow and repentant re-genesis.

The modern church will never acquire the beauties nor possess the authority of the early church until she sheds the inordinate mantle of self-love and embodies the self-denying love of God that prefers and embraces others before self.