

Sunday, May 23rd, 2010

Living Hope EFC

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Be Devoted in Love to those in the Church? (Part 2) Rom.12:10-13

ILLUS: Gordon Johnson's grandson, age 26, killed in car accident.

- Marcella's death this last week, age 84.
- **Marcella was the last of that generation of my dad's family.**
- My cousin, Duwayne, talked to her about trusting Christ, last week.

Solomon said: "A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, because **a sad face is good for the heart**. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure." **Ecc.7:1-4**

¹ A good name is **better** than fine perfume,
and the day of death **better** than the day of birth. ² It is **better** to go to a house of mourning
than to go to a house of feasting,
for death is the destiny of every man;
the living should take this to heart.

³ Sorrow is **better** than laughter,
because a sad face is good for the heart.

⁴ The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

- It is in the house of mourning that we reflect upon life, its brevity, its purpose, our friendships, our coming death, and eternity.
- We never know when our last day will come. *But it will come!*
- We live better - when we consider death. *How are we living today?*

Quote: WW. "The most important thing in our Christian lives is not how we look in our own sight, or in the sight of others – but how we look in God's sight," 100. - **We will** all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

NO BOOK IN THE NT better HELPS US know how to live God's will!

Rom.12:9-21 – Paul describes what a transformed life looks like.

- 12:1-2 = Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and will.
- 12:9-21 = Love one another as I have loved you!
- *What loving God looks like when it is applied to relationships.*

1 -VERSE 9: Love without hypocrisy – sincerely, genuinely.

POINT: Christian love is to be like God's love; true & honest. God never pretends, never lies or says one thing then acts another way. **Jn.13:34-35**

- *It is love that is known as doing what is right & best for another.*

2- Hate evil, cling to (be glued to) what is good. (13:8-10)

In Paul's thinking, love & doing good are two sides of the same coin.

3- VERSE 10: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

φιλαδελφια εις αλληλους **φιλοστοργοι** = Love one another with family affection, affectionate fondness. – 1 Pet.1:22

POINT: God expects both kinds of love in the church; agapa & filew.

4- Honor one another. Lead the way, outdo one another in honor.

The result of true affection, loving one another, is honoring them.

- Instead of everyone scampering for his own position, show honor.
- Be as good at honoring one another **BEFORE** death, as we are **after**.

NOTE: Every Christian is worthy of honor because he is God's child.

- BTW: What does this thought do for your expectations in heaven?

5-VERSE 11: Not lacking in zeal, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord

In zeal - not lazy, idle, irked by the demands! Boiling & fervent in spirit

- The true Christian life will experience Satanic opposition, disappoint- ment and tiredness. Paul – knew first hand, the need for fervency!

EXAMPLES: *Becky's Dad (At 80 taught SS, nursing home) Dave Niquette*

NOTE: If we get lazy in our relationship & commitment to the Lord, it will adversely affect our ability to love one another. 12:1-2 = is daily!

- **We must remind ourselves: Gal.6:9-10; 1 Cor.15:58.**

Galatians 6:9-10

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time **we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.** ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, **especially** to those who belong to the family of believers.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. **Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord**, because you know that **your labor in the Lord is not in vain.**

6- VERSE 12: Be joyful in hope. Joy and Hope are twins.

If one dies, the other follows. If one grows, the other follows.

- Titus 2:13, we wait for the blessed hope. Rom.5:3, ours is the hope for the glory of God. This is the hope of our calling, Eph.1:18 Col.1:27.

APPLY: **Our generation of Christians has (is) losing this HOPE!**

- *Dr. F. Wm. May* – one of CBC's founders, to his dying day believed Christ would come before he died. *Becky's Dad* is the same way. Paul too!

WHY is our hope diminishing? How much do we think about heaven?

- It seems that in different generations the church focuses on different doctrines. Today the pendulum has swung too far away from eschatology. We do not hear much about the last days or heaven.

ILLUS: James Stockdale – Vietnam **POW** -Green, 194-195

In 1965, navy pilot James B. Stockdale became one of the first American pilots to be shot down in Vietnam. He was a POW for 7 years, during which he was frequently tortured in an attempt to break him & get him to denounce the US involvement in the war.

- He was chained for days at a time with his hands above his head so he could not even swat **mosquitoes**.
- Today, he still can't bend his left knee & walks with a severe limp from having his **leg broken** by his captors & never reset.
- One of the worst things done to him was that he was held in **isolation** – away from the other American POWs & only saw his guards & interrogators.

How does anyone survive 7 years of such treatment?

- As he looks back on that time, **Stockdale says that it was his hope that kept him alive.** HOPE of one day going home.
- That **each day** could be the day of his release. Without hope, he knew he would die in hopelessness, as others had.

HOPE of GOING HOME gives strength & stamina of living on earth.

- **Heb.12:2-3**= Our joy & hope is in the unseen, eternal dimension of creation. Jesus realized His joy, and so will we! **Rom.8:18-25**.

Hebrews 12:2-3

²Let us **fix our eyes** on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who **for the joy set before him** endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

- **1 Tim.6:17, Heb.6:19** HOPE is the anchor of our soul!

ILLUS: Marcella died last Sat.

- When a relative or friend dies what is our first concern? Our comfort?

Q: How do we revive our HOPE & JOY when it subsides? **Rom.15:4,13**

⁴For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the **encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

¹³May **the God of hope fill you with all joy** and peace **as you trust in him**, so that you may **overflow with hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"In this world you will have trouble. **But take heart! I have overcome the world.**" - John 16:33

7- Patient in affliction/ pressures.

How difficult it is to walk with God patiently, when under pressures & trials. We want a way out.

We want to quit. –**Heb.10:32-37**

Heb.10 ³⁵So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶*You need to persevere* so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷**For in just a very little while,**

"He who is coming will come and will not delay.

³⁸But my righteous one will live by faith.

QUOTE: Piper "Pastors and their people must suffer. 'Through many tribulations we must enter the KOG' (Acts 14:22)..."

- The Lord disciplines those He loves, and chastises every son he receives" (Heb.12:6). The afflictions suffered by the family of God are from the heavenly Father for our good....

- *Brothers We are not Professionals*, 137-38

He whose heart is kind beyond all measure
 Gives unto each day what He deems best-
 Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,
 Mingling toil with peace and rest. - *Day by Day*

Tozer: Trials and Pain (A reminder of God's work through trial)

The devil, things and people being what they are, it is necessary for God to use the hammer, the file and the furnace in His holy work of preparing a saint for true sainthood. It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.

- *The Root of the Righteous*, 157

In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. --John 16:33

We are all idealists. We picture to ourselves a life on earth completely free from every hindrance, a kind of spiritual Utopia where we can always control events, where we can move about as favorites of heaven, adjusting circumstances to suit ourselves. This we feel would be quite compatible with the life of faith and in keeping with the privileged place we hold as children of God.

In thinking thus we simply misplace ourselves; **we mistake earth for heaven** and expect conditions here below which can never be realized till we reach the better world above. While we live we may expect troubles, and plenty of them. **We are never promised a life without problems as long as we remain among fallen men....**

What then are we to do about our problems? We must learn to live with them until such time as God delivers us from them. **If we cannot remove them, then we must pray for grace to endure them without murmuring. Problems patiently endured will work for our spiritual perfecting. They harm us only when we resist them or endure them unwillingly."**

8- Faithful in Prayer. – Persevere, hold fast to it. **John 16:24**

Prayer – keeps our focus on Almighty God, not our needy condition.

- There are times we feel so unworthy, weak, useless. It is in this very condition God tells us we can come boldly to Him: **Heb.4:14-16.**
- Remember Dr. Walvoord's story of the mother who prayed **60 yrs.**

9- VERSE 13: Share with God's people in need. Practice *Hospitality*

Κοινωνεω: To share with, fellowship, participate, have in common.

"Pursue **φιλοξενιαν – hospitality**, =(love of strangers). Here & **Heb.13:2.**

- It was primarily in entertaining traveling believers. Open your homes.
1. Christian Hospitality appears within the context of expressing brotherly love & Spirit-filled living as dedicated Christians.
 - It is a beautiful **expression of our transformed lives** offered to God

2. *Hospitality* (φιλοξενία) is related to the φιλεω word group.
- a. φιλημα = Kiss. b. φιλια = Friendship. c. φιλος – Friend.
 - **1 Peter 4:9:** “Practice Hospitality Cheerfully.”

CONCLUSION

A QUESTION:

What would happen if we really dared to live this way?

APPLY: There are many who want to push Christianity aside as being outdated, archaic, feeble, “a crutch,” **not relevant in the “real world.”**

Christ, The Prince of Peace, is the **ONLY** answer to man’s great desire for peace, unity, forgiveness, & the end to war.

- Christ turns killers into Apostles, prostitutes into pure women, thieves into citizens of paradise, fearful – into martyrs, enemies into friends.

A REMINDER:

“The most important thing in our Christian lives is not how we look in our own sight, or in the sight of others – but how we look in God’s sight,” - **We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**

My daughter’s email (regarding Marcella):

“This makes me so sad. All the memories I have of visiting Wisconsin have a part played by Aunt Marcella. Its funny, I don't even remember her being negative. The rose-colored glasses of childhood I guess. I just remember her being full of energy...Even though I haven't seen her in years I still thought of her & especially every Easter remembered the baskets she made Karen & I...I hate this part of growing up - losing people you love. The older you get the more you cherish loved ones & the harder it is to lose them.”

Death is a cruel reminder that something is badly wrong with the order of "life" as it is.

- **God so loved** us that He wanted to give us LIFE – forever, together.
- **Jesus took the cause** of death upon Himself, sin, allowed sin to carry out its consequence, death, **then raised from the dead**, overcoming sin, to give us new resurrection life.
- Receiving His resurrection life enables us to LIVE forever with Him and with one another, all our friends and family members.

“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever...You have been born again not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” 1 Pet.1

So I'll end with another word of Solomon's wisdom:

"Remember the Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.' ... Remember Him - before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and spirit returns to God who gave it.

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." **Ecc.12**