

LOVE LIFTED ME!

By: Phillip Hayes

The title of my message is the title of an old hymn first published in 1912 by English-American James Rowe. It is said the hymn's lyrics were inspired primarily by the 14th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, wherein the Twelve Apostles, when caught in a storm, see Jesus walking on water. In the account, Saint Peter begins to walk toward Jesus on the water, but begins to sink. The writers thought was the Love of Jesus reaching out to save Peter from sinking. Rowe plays upon the idea of sinking in water to sinking in sin and that Jesus can lift us out of despair to salvation.

I heard this song countless times in my youth and we still sing it from time to time in our church. It's a beautiful song! The first verse is, "I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more; But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, now safe am I." The chorus is, "Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me."

His Love lifted me out of an ungodly life and placed me on a solid Rock! It's a great experience to sing about! Love lifted me! Praise God!

Not only did His love lift me out of the depths of sin, He placed His Love in me by the Holy Spirit. You

see, God is Love and if God's Spirit is in you, Love is in you! Not carnal, human love, but God's love!

His Love never fails! His love is unconditional and unfailing! His Love is called Charity in the Bible.

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" [1 Corinthians 13:8].

Charity NEVER FAILS! This is God's Love that we receive in our inner man when we are born again! As each of us journey through life on this earth, we are faced with many trials, tribulations, temptations, and heartaches. Though you be a saint or a sinner, life in general is hard. But Christians have the advantage if they walk in the Power God has given them.

Everyone makes mistakes. In most cases restitution and reconciliation is attempted, sometimes with success, but most times without success. But what makes the difference? I am convinced it is love that will always make the difference. But, it takes love on both sides of any issue to be able to resolve differences.

Where does love come from? Why do people fall in love? How do you get love? And, why does it escape so many?

From all my experiences as a Christian, a minister, a husband, a father and a grand father, I have come to some conclusions about love. If I can somehow communicate what I have discovered, I believe it will be a tremendous help to all that read this article.

First of all, I want to address the greatest problem within the church as a whole and that is a lack of real love for one another. Most simply do not walk in what God has given them!

Since I was a child, I have witnessed many horrible things that have happened among Christians. I have seen many churches split and countless men and women disillusioned with Christianity in general. I have seen ministers attack one another with a vengeance that would shock anyone. Why does all this happen to a people that are supposed to be examples of love?

As I understand the Bible, God's only commandment to His church is that we love Him and one another! Jesus said it this way: *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* [John 15:12-13].

The Apostle John reminded the church about this commandment in his first epistle: *"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another"* [1 John 3:11].

John is called by many, "The Apostle of Love" because he wrote so much about the love of God and the love we should have for one another. John knew a great secret and that is love never fails, and love will always resolve any dispute. When you have the love of God in your heart, you will walk in forgiveness. You may not understand why things have happened in your life, but you will walk in love.

There are many scriptures that describe what godly love is. First Corinthians chapter 13 gives several definitions of love: *"Charity (LOVE) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" [1 Corinthians 13: 4-8].

We also find that perfect love will cast out fear and that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but love! Love comes from God, for God is love!

It was God's love for us while we were yet sinners that He gave His only begotten Son that we might be saved. God loved us and forgave us while we were still sinners! Therefore, if we have the love of God in us, we should forgive those that trespass against us and mistreat us, or talk about us, even though they continue to do these things. Did not the Lord Jesus command us to walk in this kind of love?

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" [Matthew 5:44]. And then He went on to say, *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

There are many that want to be perfect because they believe that they will then have the same power that Jesus had, but you will never attain unto perfection unless you walk in God's love.

Many Christians today cannot get along with one another for two or three services a week, let alone love one another on a continual basis. It is shocking how saints of God will attack one another most times over nothing. Let a rumor start, and I guarantee you that before the day is out, it will be broadcast all over the country. And usually by the time the rumor is told by three or four people it is so twisted that it does not resemble in any way the first story told. The Bible has a name for people that do these things: Backbiters, Gossipers, etc.

However, if you have the love of God, you will not rejoice in iniquity, you will not think evil of your brother or sister, you will not be easily provoked, you will be kind and long suffering, you will pray for them that despitefully use you, you will do good to them that hate you, and you will love your enemies. Oh, love of God! This is what we need children of God!

Can you imagine a body of believers coming together with this kind of love?! The enemy wouldn't have a chance to destroy anyone! Our love for God and for one another would never allow the enemy to destroy our unity.

Look at yourself today. Do you still have trouble forgiving someone that has done you wrong? Oh, you might say, "I have forgiven him or her." But have you really? Do you still love that person? Do you still talk to that person or do you avoid that person? We must forgive and we must feel that forgiveness in our hearts and we must demonstrate that forgiveness. Remember, Jesus said, *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* [Matthew 6:14-15].

Several years ago, the Lord spoke to me and told me that His people would have to come to the place that they loved each other as much as they loved Him, for this was His commandment. I believe that now is the time!

We are all being tried! You will have enemies! You will have people that lie about you, and use you. You will have people that will cheat you, rob you, and attack you in every way. But remember, these things must come! How can you ever enjoy the power of forgiveness if you never have anyone to forgive?

Love is the only resource you have to draw forgiveness from! Without love, you will never be able to forgive! Without love, you will always be the one that the enemy can use to destroy others.

So many times over the years, I have seen the enemy tear apart an individual all because of a lack of love on someones part. We talk about one another and run one another down because we don't love one another. Ministers attack each other because they have a lack of love for one another. LOVE IS THE KEY! Possessing Godly Love is perfection! If you possess it, you will, the fruit of it cannot be denied! You will be like Jesus! Love is the well from which we can all draw from to find forgiveness, contentment and peace.

Let's look at one another for a moment. Many of you have known me for years. You have known me from my personal appearances, written articles, preaching tapes, etc. I am your brother. I am your minister. You know me by the spirit that God has chosen me to this ministry. But I am not perfect. I have many faults. I have failed God many times over the past 52 years, but God has never failed me. No doubt you respect me because of the ministry that God has placed in my life and I appreciate that very much. But, if you saw me in a fault would you pray for me and forgive me, or would you attack me and try to destroy me? Now let me look at you. I have met many of you through the years. I have counseled many of you that had marital problems, family problems, drinking and drug problems, and all sorts of terrible troubles. I can honestly say before God, that none of the things that happened to you, which I knew about, caused me to lose any respect for you or to attack you because of your weakness. I prayed for you believing that God would deliver you, and placed

the things that had happened to you in the past as what is forgiven, must be forgotten. This is the way we must be, as this is the way God is. God forgives and God forgets! God does not bring up your past and accuse you with it! Neither should we! That is the work of the enemy!

Over the years, I have been asked, "Didn't you see that spirit on such and such a person? Why did you let him preach, or him or her sing?" Sometimes the question would be, "Don't you know he or she has been married before and now they have married someone else and living in sin, why did you let them in your pulpit?" Children of God, many times I knew that a person was going through great personal difficulties, but somehow my heart would just go out to them and I wanted them to know that I loved them regardless of whatever they were going through. Yes, I have allowed countless men and women in the pulpit that I knew were having problems. Casting people out of the church or not allowing someone to be used of God because of a personal battle is not the way to demonstrate forgiveness. I thank God that I have never kept anyone from our pulpit because they had back-slidden, or were divorced and remarried. If they had repented and were anointed to do a work for God, they were still anointed. God knew every mistake or sin they would commit before He called them, but He called them anyway!

If you have ever went through something horrible in your life I can guarantee you that you needed someone to love you. When you are down physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally; love is the only thing that can bring you out. When a person is going through difficulties and you know about it, show them the love of God! Don't run them down and try to destroy them. It is in their trials that

they need someone to reach out to them and show them kindness and love.

I have found that love will conquer every situation. It will bring peace to you if you will walk in love. You may be in a situation where there are several people involved in a dispute. I am not saying that if you walk in love the situation will be resolved, but what I am saying is that forgiving and demonstrating the love of God will give you peace. Hopefully, when others see your forgiveness, patience and love, they will also come around.

Remember, love is of God and everyone that loves is born of God. The enemy wants to steal away your love. I have seen many saints let a root of bitterness grow in them to the point that they hated instead of loved. Hate will destroy you! Envy, strife, bitterness and hatred are all works of the flesh that the devil uses to destroy churches, ministries and saints. Flee from these things! Love one another!

The Lord has anointed me many times to preach about how a kingdom divided can't stand. Many times I would tell the people that any marriage, family, or church that was divided was doomed to failure. This is why the enemy works so feverishly to bring division between a man and his wife, or in the family, or in the church. The enemy knows how to destroy and he uses men and women that don't walk in love to accomplish his ultimate goal. As I said before, if we all loved one another as we should the enemy would never be able to destroy a church, a ministry, or a home for that matter.

What is really sad is that it only one person filled with bitterness or hatred to accomplish what the enemy wants! So many times, I have seen one person destroy a whole church! The reason is many people will give their ears to the one that is starting trouble.

Once he or she has an ear that will hear them, the ball gets to rolling and soon you have a church filled with turmoil, all because of one person. What you should do when approached by such a person is say, "listen, that is our brother or sister you are talking about and I do not think it is God's will for you to talk about them. Let's pray for them right now." Oh how the enemy hates that! Satan doesn't want you praying for anyone! He wants you to accuse, rebuke, slander and ultimately destroy your brother or sister!

The greatest words than can ever be spoken is, "I FORGIVE YOU." Children of God, it is time for us to forgive one another and accept one another as brothers and sisters. God has saved us, and has forgiven us for all our sins. *"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" [1 John 2:1].* The Lord will forgive you! But, we must learn to forgive one another, and just as important, we must learn to forgive ourselves.

Wives love your husbands. Husbands love your wives. Don't let a day go by that you fail to tell one another of your love for each other. Never let a night pass that if you are upset with one another that you fail to make up. Demonstrate your love every day! Love never fails!

Before closing I must share the following verses concerning the benefits of walking in His Love. They need no interpretation. *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" [James 5:19-20].* And again, in First Peter, *"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" [1Peter 4:8].*

I truly hope you see why the devil loves to cause misunderstandings among God's people. Because it ultimately leads to bitterness and then hatred, and then un-forgiveness!

Jesus warned the love of many would wax cold. Don't let it happen to you! Don't let a spirit of betrayal grip your heart. Stop judging and condemning one another! Lift someone up with your love! Satan is out to destroy you, your marriage, your home, and your church. Love is the weapon that will defeat him!

His Love has lifted me!

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