

1.1 Three Important Lessons from the Bible

1. Love God and Love People
2. Don't Be Afraid
3. Jesus is Lord!



**Juul's Pearl with Monarch Butterfly
Leatherwood Dahlias
Maggie Valley/Waynesville, North Carolina**

1 Corinthians 13:13

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

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1. LOVE!!

On the night of the Last Supper, just before Jesus was arrested and put to death by crucifixion, Jesus spoke to his disciples and revised the well-known Ten Commandments of the Jewish people of that day.

“A new command I give to you: Love one another! As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13: 34-35.

Since I was blessed to have grown up in a Christian home, having accepted Jesus Christ when I was a child, I can hardly think of this as a “new” commandment. This is the central theme of our faith. However, in Jesus’ day, this was a RADICAL idea. According to the best thinking of that time, the focus was on loving God and our friends and hating our enemies. Now, Jesus comes on the scene with this radical idea: it’s not enough to love our friends--we are to LOVE everybody, even our enemies. Then, on the very next day, Jesus went out and PROVED this teaching, by giving up his own life, so the people he loved—that is, his disciples, and you and me—could be saved from our own wickedness.

In the Greek, there are three different words for love.

1. “Phileo” means brotherly love. This is like the word “Philadelphia,” the city of brotherly love.

2. “Eros” means sexual love, like the word “erotic.”

3. “Agape” is a Godly kind of love. This is the love God has for us. What is different about agape love, it is not just a mushy feeling that we have about someone. It is the decision that we make to choose the other person’s highest good. We choose to do what is best for the other person before our own desires and needs.

Choosing the other person's highest good is exactly what Jesus did the very next day when he died on the cross for our sin, to restore humanity from our fallen nature, back into fellowship with a loving God, who was reaching out to us. This love, expressed in our own lifestyle, will prove that we are genuine, that we really are his disciples!

2. FEAR NOT!!

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

I was talking with one of my teenage granddaughters the other day, and she indicated that she had been having trouble with fear! “But,” she told me, “it used to be that I was afraid to fall asleep at night, afraid that I wouldn't wake up. It's better now. I am able to fall asleep.”

Several thoughts occurred to me. First, young people (and OLD people too!) have a LOT to be afraid of in this world. Second, the topic of FEAR is a major topic in the Bible. Third, clearly a LOT of people today are reading the WRONG books!

Looking at the world today, we have drugs, alcohol, terrorism, none of which have affected my own life so far. Of course, everyone must face the death of loved ones as well as our own death. Many people today are afraid of guns, especially in the hands of terrorists. Some think the answer is to outlaw guns, but then only outlaws would have them. Besides this, even if we somehow were able to keep guns away from outlaws and terrorists, then they would just find some other way to kill, like with rental trucks!!

As I told my granddaughter, FEAR is a major topic in the Bible. There are literally hundreds of places that the Bible says, “fear not”, beginning in Genesis 15, when God spoke to Abram, “Fear not: I am your shield.” This was even before Abram had a relationship with God, who changed his name to Abraham! Continuing to the New Testament, it seems that in every human/angel encounter, the first words uttered by the angel were “Fear not!” Perhaps in today's world, we erroneously think of angels as cute, chubby infants. The angels described in the Bible are very tall, with supernatural powers, many with

HUGE wings. It's understandable that their first words to the human should be "FEAR NOT!!"

One of my favorite "Fear Not" stories is about the prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 6:16. The king of Aram was after Elisha, and he sent an army by night to surround the city and capture the prophet. When Elisha's servant went out early in the morning, Aram's army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Do not be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are WITH us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." When the Lord opened the servant's eyes, he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

So often, in our own daily lives, as we try to do what is right, we find ourselves vastly outnumbered. We say to ourselves and to those around us, and we ask God, "Oh my!! What shall WE do?" Remember what Elisha said to his servant, and what the Lord has said on so many occasions, "Do NOT be afraid!**" Then we pray that the Lord will open OUR eyes and reveal the spiritual forces that surround us. There is so much that we cannot see with our natural eyes. Indeed, the "hills are full of horses and chariots of fire!"**

Remember that when Lucifer led his rebellion in heaven, he was only able to persuade one-third of the angels to go with him. This means that for each wicked angel in rebellion against God, there are TWO good angels who remained faithful--not that the numbers really matter! Heaven is NOT a democracy, where the majority rules! In Heaven, God RULES, and Jesus Christ is LORD--which brings us to Lesson #3:

3. JESUS IS LORD!!

"Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2: 9-11

Who was and is this Jesus Christ? Was He really a figure of history? Was He a great man, a prophet of God? Was He more, or was He less? What did He do that caused us to define history with "b.c." and "a.d.", or to remember Him

2000 years after His death? From this scripture, Jesus is exalted to the HIGHEST place and His name is above EVERY name in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth!!

Since the scripture above begins with the word “therefore,” the reasons for this position of highest honor may be found in the previous verses. Beginning in verse 3, Paul is exhorting the Philippians to be like Christ having the same love, being in one spirit and purpose with Him. **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place . . . ”**

According to this and other scriptures in the Bible, Jesus was God who humbled Himself to become a man who was crucified and died on a cross. In His death, by His own blood He paid the price for the sins of mankind, reconciling us to God the Father. By His resurrection three days later and several appearances to His disciples and to crowds of people, He proved His own deity. At the crucifixion, the disciples (except for John) scattered in fear. After the Resurrection and His Ascension back to heaven, these same disciples, fearing not for their own lives, turned the world upside down.

What caused these disciples once who trembled in fear, to rise in power, fearlessly proclaiming the message of Christ, each believer willing to die martyr’s deaths? I believe there were two reasons. First, the disciples and other believers witnessed the resurrection of Christ. Second, these believers were empowered by the Holy Spirit, that was promised by Jesus prior to His death and resurrection.

This change in the lives of these believers has been repeated in the lives of thousands, yea millions of believers and more from all over the world whose lives were radically changed by the message of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit!

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