

February, 2017

A Special Kind of Love

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8.

February is always a very busy month for teachers. We have Presidents’ Day, the 100th Day of School, and Valentine’s Day. It is typically a month where hearts and love are emphasized. My second graders make Valentines for each other and look for ways that they can demonstrate “love.”

One year we made a “kindness castle” out of boxes. The students were told to write down any kindness done to them by other students. At the end of the week we would take out the notes and read aloud any kindness that was done. It started out very well and I was pleased how my students would look for opportunities to help another. But soon the “kindness castle” turned into an “unkindness castle.” Many of my students started complaining that their classmates did not recognize or write about a kindness that was done by them. They did not want to write about someone else’s kindness if their classmates did not reciprocate. They started picking on each other and arguing about who was the kindest.

Adults also have a similar problem of understanding that love should not be conditional or boastful. Our sinful nature tends to put the focus upon ourselves and what people can do for us. “If he/she loves me, then he/she would” We tend to put “love and getting” together, instead of “love and giving.”

Examining the “love chapter” in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, helps us understand that love is not about “me,” but is looking at God’s example of undeserved, unconditional love and trying to follow His example in our relationships with others. It is not a love that we can accomplish on our own. It requires more strength, endurance, and self-control than we possess. The Holy Spirit empowers us to love sacrificially. Romans 5:5 states “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” We can (with God’s help) pray for those who make life difficult – the parent of a student that continually challenges you, the student whose problems keep you awake all night, the student that disrespects you daily, the friend who seems to have disappeared, and the list goes on. We can forgive and love those who have hurt us to the core, but only through our new “nature” given to us through faith rooted in God and His mercy and grace.

It is written in John 13:35, “By this (love) all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” The world observes us and the way that we Christians demonstrate love. God uses our hands, our feet, and our mouths to represent Him here on earth. Our students, our students’ families, our neighbors, and others are watching us.

Several years ago the letters WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) was very popular. My students had bracelets that they wore every day for a week. My students were very good at pointing to their bracelets when someone in the class demonstrated a need to be reminded of Jesus’ perfect example. I

was not above reproach as well and it was humbling, but needed. Deeply hurting the feelings of a student who was not listening to me was not “what Jesus would do.” I did apologize to that student and the class for my behavior. I knew that God gave me the strength and wisdom to demonstrate His kind of love.

1 John 4:8 states “The person who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” His love has always been and always will be. We don’t have to worry or be concerned about the past, present, or future because we can trust that “nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38)

What a great message to share this month and every month!

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank you for your all encompassing love and forgiveness. You are there when we are sad, happy, scared, and through everything that we encounter in this sinful world. Please help us to demonstrate to others the kind of love that you have for us so that they also may be secure in your promise of eternal life and everlasting love. What joy your love brings! Thank you for such a great Valentine! Amen!

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