

I invite you to open your bibles this morning to today's scripture text which can be found in 1st Timothy, the 1st chapter, verses 1 – 7. This is our final week of a three-week series exposing the most important thing in life we can experience, God's Love; and what that love looks like; this week will be Love, from a sincere faith.

1 Ti 1:1-7

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

2 To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work — which is by faith. 5 **The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** 6 Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. NIV

when the church loves with intent... The world sees Jesus

(The most important thing, Love! From a SINCERE FAITH)

In our last two weeks, the biblical truths of how love is generated in our lives with a pure heart and a clean conscience was revealed through Paul's letter to Timothy; two of the three gospel dynamics for allowing the agape love, the characteristic term of Christianity, of God, to occur in our lives. Agape Love, the essential part of God's nature revealing the high esteem which God has for His human children and the high regard which we, in turn, should have for Him, other people, and the world in general. From the heart "flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23). "Out of the abundance of the heart [the] mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). The heart is the factory of our soul that generates all desire, thought, emotion, and action. Our heart determines our identity, and that is why in order to become a believer we need a new heart and new spiritual influences upon it (Ezekiel 36:26–27).

Paul gets specific in this text. He says that love will flow out of a *pure* heart — that is, a heart that has been cleansed; one that has no defilement. Wholehearted, life-encompassing love for God expressed in radical love for neighbor, only possible where sin is forgiven and offense is pardoned. God-honoring lovers are those who cherish Jesus — who recognize their sin and cling to the cross, the only place where God's wrath against sin is satisfied. May we say with Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost." The pure heart is not haughty because it recognizes the depth of its own depravity apart from Christ. The pure heart empowers one to love even those who are most difficult to love because it has experienced the sin-overcoming love of God itself. In fact, if we are in Christ, our failure to love others is a sure sign that our heart is not relishing enough the wonder of our salvation. Love flows from a cleansed, purified heart.

Our love of our neighbor giving witness to the world the outcome that springs from our discipleship with Christ, and our faith. God is the personification or embodiment of that perfect love, demonstrated in His gift of salvation and a new covenant through the atoning blood of His one and only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ on the cross. Revealing the perfect truth about God's grace, offering forgiveness of our sins through repentance, resulting in our redemption, a redemption designed by God, not the vane janglings of false doctrines and teachers; the redemption that results in the purification of our hearts and a cleansing of our conscience, bringing our justification through faith. Giving Christ the glory for the life change we will experience through his new covenant.

Love is also fueled by a "good conscience" (1 Tim 1:5) In the Bible, the conscience urges right and hinders wrong; it passes judgment on a decision or action; and it produces guilt or commendation in the heart. For Paul, a conscience can be "good" or "clear", but it can also become "seared" or "defiled" when someone turns from the faith and rejects Christ.

Love is birthed in a heart that is free from guilt and that enjoys pure motivations. Paul recognized fully his own sinfulness, but he ministered with a good conscience because he had met the wrath-overcoming, mercy-displaying, joy-bringing Christ. As he says in 1 Timothy 1:14, "The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." Jesus alone can clear the conscience of a sinner and enable right motivation, and therefore Jesus is the ultimate source for the life of love.

The last means Paul supplies for seeing love birthed in one's life is a "sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5). By "sincere," the apostle appears to address the *type* of faith — it was authentic, genuine, the real deal (2 Tim 1:5) The opposite or antonym of this kind of sincerity or genuineness is "insincerity" like that mentioned in 1 Timothy 4:2. Beginning in 4:1, Paul says, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared." Paul is looking for an un-hypocritical faith, in contrast to a hypocritical faith.

FAITH - the Greek word used here (peace' teece) **pistis** TRUST, CONFIDENCE, BELIEVE. A *belief in* or a *confident attitude* **toward God**, which involves **OUR commitment** to **His will** for our life. We must understand the type of faith he is revealing here. The **sincere** faith, a faith **unfeigned**, or that is a faith without concealment of our thoughts, feelings, or character. A faith without **hypocrisy**. Our sincere faith must take off the many masks of humanity that we are so prone to wear.

According to Heb 11 it is by *Faith We Understand* (vrs 1-3) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Faith was already present in the experience of many people in the Old Testament as a key element of their spiritual lives. In this 11th chapter of Hebrews, the various heroes of the Old Testament; Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses: are described as **living** by faith.

In addition, the Old Testament itself makes the same point. Abraham "believed in the Lord" (Ge 15:6) *6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.;* the Israelites "believed" (Ex 14:31) *And when the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.;* and the prophet Habakkuk taught that "the just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4) *4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.*

In the New Testament, "faith" covers various levels of personal commitment. Genuine sincere faith is a personal attachment to Christ, best thought of as a combination of two ideas: **reliance on Christ** and **commitment to Him**. Sincere faith involves personally depending on the finished work of Christ's sacrifice as the only basis for forgiveness of sin and entrance into heaven. But sincere faith is also a personal commitment of one's life to following Christ in obedience to His commands: *"I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day"* (2 Ti 1:12).

Faith is part of the Christian life from beginning to end. As the instrument by which the gift of salvation is received (Eph 2:8-9), faith is thus distinct from the basis of salvation, which is grace, and from the outworking of salvation, which is good works. The apostle Paul declared that salvation is through faith, not through keeping the works of the law (Eph 2:8,9).

The aim of all gospel proclamation is to see love birthed in the hearts of hearers, for love magnifies the greatness of God. We love God because he first loved us. And we display our love for God through radical love of others. Our love for God is to be total and all-inclusive — a wholehearted, life-encompassing, community-impacting, exclusive commitment to our God. And this kind of love will naturally overflow in love for neighbor. Living in the joy of the blood-bought gospel sparks radical love that springs from a pure heart, a clean conscience, and a sincere faith.