

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: "The Kingdom of God"



Teaching Sermon: "Love in the Kingdom of God"

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Live Tele-service, February 14, 2021

Valentine's Day in the USA is a day when we celebrate relationships and love among families and friends. The Bible speaks of different kinds of love, from family love (*storge*) to romantic love (*eros*) to "brotherly" love (*phileo*) to enduring love (*pragma*) to "agape" or the God-kind of love.

So let's look at love in the Kingdom of God today, and let's allow God's word to speak as only it can. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom over which God rules, a place where God rules. Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, Ruler over the kings of this earth.

Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God with a call to "repent or perish." The Kingdom had come and is now. He separated His disciples from the tag-a-longs with words like this:

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. But to those of you who will listen, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat/spitefully use you...Luke 6:26-28

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Luke 6:35 Berean

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor' and 'Hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.... Matthew 5:43-45 Berean

By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35.

Loving our enemies demonstrates that we are children of the Living God. How do we get there?

Romans 5:5-11: Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. NKJV

Surrender. At a point in time when we were enmity with God, by nature children of wrath justly deserving everlasting punishment for our cosmic rebellion and treason for rank disbelief

and disobedience, we came to the place where the Holy Spirit who is the Life Maker opened our blind spiritual eyes and turned our rebellious hearts and opened our deaf ears to hear this good news. We, by the grace and mercy of God, surrendered our lives, our very selves, in full reliance and trust in Jesus Christ alone for our destiny, both daily and eternal.

Forgiveness. We love because God first loved us. He forgave our sins, paying the penalty for them and doing everything necessary and sufficient to remove all guilt and liability. Jesus sacrificed Himself; He was the atoning sacrifice for our sins and the One who propitiated God's wrath against all that was contrary to His nature and ways. He redeemed us from the pit, from bondage to sin, making the reconciliation and making it possible for us to know God as Father.

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32 NKJV

God's love is an electing love, a compassionate love, an everlasting love, a love without a lie.

Receive. We need to receive this love, believe it and receive it. Let the LORD love you; not so you can manipulate Him and think He's going to just let you have and do whatever you want. No. God's love is the kind that warns. It can be tough love for God jealously guards His own as the Flame of Yah. He separates us from our sin unto Himself. He is holy and His love is holy. When you can receive it, you benefit, for He shines on you and heals you right to the core of your being.

Follow. Who will follow the Lamb? Who will follow the Christ? Jesus calls us to follow Him. The way is narrow, but He is the Good Shepherd. He leads us in the paths of righteousness. He is the King of the kingdom who rules with righteous judgment and who cares for us.

Keep His Commandments.

1 John 2:3-6 NKJV Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

1 John 3:10-15 NKJV In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, **12**not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Love in the kingdom of God is to be without hypocrisy, without putting on the mask. We are called to love one another. There is no fear in love. Dictators generate fear; they need people to be afraid, to fear. Monarchs look for loyalty, for honor. The hallmark of a democracy is freedom of speech.

In God's kingdom, we need a sense of duty and an obedience of faith, a sense of community, a willing submission. God's perfect love casts out fear. God asks questions; He also invites

questions. He is not threatened; He does not tempt anyone to evil. We do the will of the Father with the mind of Christ and the heart of the Holy Spirit who empowers us with grace to obey through faith which works by love.

God's love transcends human and worldly love in loving enemies. His kindness is designed to lead to repentance (Romans 2). His goodness extends to all in some ways. General evil is overcome by specific acts of good. (Romans 12) We're talking about attitudes, appeals in prayer, and actions. God's love is an action kind of love, not soap opera words of empty promises and superficial lapses of self-centeredness. God is not needy; therefore, He is most free to love with perfect love.

1 John 3:16, 17, 23 NKJV By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ... **And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another**, as He gave us commandment.

1 John 4:7-11 NKJV Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God [born out of God] and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Consequences and Reactions. The consequences of Jesus' radical command to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, pray for those who persecute us and spitefully use us, and bless those who curse us; this challenges our reactions to evil done to us and/or to those important to us.

Years ago our house was broken into while I was gone just 10-12 minutes to pick up our children from school and get back home. I had this eerie feeling as I entered the house. It had been robbed. I have never felt such anger rise up within me. The intrusion and obvious theft became visceral. Our home had been invaded. It affected my sense of security and safety. It was so wrong! I grabbed a B-B gun which was not loaded, which was useless, and which I didn't really know how to use, and held it out straight in front of me, walked into the suspected bathroom toward the window of entry planning to do what? What was I thinking? I wasn't thinking; I was reacting. It all made me so mad.

We can talk about love for enemies and get very spiritual sounding about doing good to those who commit acts of evil, but reactions Jesus is talking about come from a transformed heart and renewed mind. Was I there yet? No, not then.

What does it take? It takes courage to love like this. It takes the grace of God sanctifying us. It takes understanding and acceptance of the process of God's sifting and sorting, separating and sanctifying; even stripping. It takes understanding, believing, and trusting the Covenant Lord who smites, who takes vengeance, who vindicates, whose judgments are true and righteous.

It takes embracing the fire of God's holy love.

<https://marycraig.org/NewsViews/EmbraceTheFire.htm>

It takes passing from death to life and walking in the power of resurrection.

<https://www.marycraig.org/NewsViews/LoveThePowerOf.htm>

It takes a sincere love, letting love be without hypocrisy.

<https://marycraig.org/NewsViews/LetLoveBe.htm>

Is this “rolling over?” No. Are we to be “patsies” and “victims?” No. It is a personal [as contrasted with a social] ethic whereby we do to others what we would have others do to us, not compromising who we are in Christ, not rendering evil for evil.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful [merciful], be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8, 9 KJV

The love of Christ, His love for us and our attachment to Him in supreme loyalty, compels us and constrains us.

Paul’s Appeal. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Ephesians 3:14-21.

Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled, and the KOG is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:14, 15) To see this kingdom, you will need to be born again. To enter this kingdom, you will need to be born again. John 3. To repent, you will need God to change your heart first. To believe you must belong. You must be one who is a born-out-of-God one. This takes the Holy Spirit. If He plants in you the seed of life, He is planting in your heart the Life of Jesus. That Life will sprout and grow and live into the ages of the ages, eternal life. It is only in Christ. Do you want it?

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Matthew 25:34 KJV

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