



May 27, 2022

### **The Sabbath, Day of Pentecost, and Love for His Children**

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Last Friday evening I ended my letter with "*Time marches on. Lives move forward. People age. We learn as we live.*" How true. But, are we "learning as we live"?

One week from this Sabbath, we will be celebrating a double Sabbath if you will, with the weekly Sabbath and Day of Pentecost next weekend. Honestly, this year is kind of like a blur to me, and it seems we were just observing Pentecost, and it's already been a year!

I reflect on how it's such a blessing to participate in the holy convocation that God commands us to be part of on His weekly Sabbath. We assemble to come before the Lord of the Sabbath and seek His words and instruction. We also come together to fellowship with one another and renew the bonds of brotherly love and concern. We as called out Disciples of Christ share the wonderful treasures of truth that have been given to us and we reinforce the understanding of them on the Sabbath.

As I often mention, we see how the apostle Peter writes of the truth and the love we need to have. "*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever*" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

I realize that the phrase "born again" derived from the Greek *anagennao* might be better translated. There are various analogies used in the Scriptures, but we realize our ultimate "born again" experience will take place at the resurrection

when we are changed from mortal to immortal.

Peter also compares us to newborn babies. *"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:1-2)

Peter directs disciples to get rid of those attitudes and actions that are contrary to loving one another. Peter addresses the elders of the church in chapter 5 and includes himself as a fellow elder. He does not try to elevate himself by referring to his apostolic calling and authority. *"Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock"* (1 Peter 5:2-3)

There's been way too much focus on titles, and position over the years, and one has to wonder if, as I mentioned in the beginning of this letter, "we learn as we live". Have we?

Peter had affirmed his love for Jesus and we see in Peter's letter that he took to heart the admonition by Jesus to him to sincerely take care of the sheep entrusted to him.

Throughout his letter, Peter encouraged the disciples to care for one another. *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."* (1 Peter 3:8-9) *"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."* (1 Peter 4:8)

Do you and I care for each other? Do you and I have this love naturally? There is a level of love that humans can demonstrate by themselves. But, there is a higher level of love that is only made possible by the working of the Holy Spirit guided also by the instruction in the Word of God.

The first characteristic on the list of the Fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5 is *love*.

Paul also focuses on the subject of love in 1 Corinthians 13. These are some powerful and descriptive instructions and they set the bar very high to achieve the qualities of love that Paul describes. It is humbling to examine these qualities and observe how I still need to grow in implementing them. Of ourselves, we can't fully achieve them. We need the working of God's Holy Spirit in our minds and motives and hearts.

I pray that you and I can grow in these qualities and that we all can open ourselves to the working of God's Spirit to examine the instructions in this chapter and own and exhibit them.

This coming Day of Pentecost, next Sunday, we will reflect as we are taught, congregate and fellowship, the importance of yielding to that Spirit of Love and growing in grace. We'll talk about how powerfully changing that Spirit is, as it lives in us.

Will we change? Will we be different? Will we continue to care for each other? Will God's faithful servants truly serve His children? Some thoughts to sincerely examine and consider for us all.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.



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