

TO LOVE AT ANY COST...

by Herb Montgomery
Director | Speaker



At this time I find myself on an airplane, once again, flying home. I've spent another weekend preaching and I must admit that I'm coming to truly understand what Paul meant when he wrote of the “foolishness of preaching.” In his letter to the Corinthians he wrote “. . . It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:21)

Preaching? Really? Studies in our twenty-first century have proven that the worst method for teaching or communicating ideas for lasting change is *preaching!* Naturally, some questions rise in my heart, like “Why did God choose this method? To what have you called me? What am I doing? God, what are you thinking?”

I experienced the answer to these questions this past weekend. Even given the weakest, most ineffective method of communicating, God's voice of love can still be clearly heard. It's as if He is saying, “My love is so great, so selfless and so self abandoning that My decision to save humanity at any cost to Myself, revealed through the darkened hours of Calvary, will still turn the hearts of the most bent, the most self centered, the most broken.”

This past weekend I watched 265 grown men encounter Calvary as never before. I watched them get up out of their comfortable chairs and come forward to sell out to God as He had sold out for them. I stood there with this mass of people around me, not an indiscriminate mass, but a mass of souls for which God had given His all. My heart was broken by the joy that must have been surging through the very heart of God who came “running.” (Luke 15:20)

This is what we are called to as a people. He longs for us to be willing, earthen vessels, jars of clay, given to Him to shine forth the wonders of His heart unfurled. Yes, I know there is no such thing as love that doesn't come at some cost to the lover. Yet He has given so much to love us. Can we not give our lives, regardless of the cost, to show forth His love for others? Can we not give all for the salvation of our fellow brothers and sisters of humanity, irrespective of the personal cost to ourselves?

“But before the crown must come the cross... Bearing the weakness of humanity, and burdened with its sorrow and sin, Jesus walked alone in the midst of men... He was in loneliness of spirit, in a world that knew Him not. Even His loved disciples, absorbed in their own doubt and sorrow and ambitious hopes, had not comprehended the mystery of His mission. He had dwelt amid the love and fellowship of heaven; but in the world that He had created, He was in solitude. Now heaven had sent its messengers to Jesus; not angels, but men who had endured suffering and sorrow, and who could sympathize with the Saviour in the trial of His earthly life. Moses and Elijah had been collaborators with Christ. They had shared His longing for the salvation of men. Moses had pleaded for Israel: “Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.” Ex. 32:32. Elijah had known loneliness of spirit, as for three years and a half of famine he had borne the burden of the nation's hatred and its woe. Alone he had stood for God upon Mount Carmel. Alone he had fled to the desert in anguish and despair. These men, chosen above every angel around the throne, had come to commune with Jesus concerning the scenes of His suffering, and to comfort Him with the assurance of the sympathy of heaven. The hope of the world, the salvation of every human being, was the burden of their interview.” (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 422) †

Thoughts to Ponder—

“Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

Phil. 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor.”

(Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 224)

MINISTRY UPDATE

Armona Adventist Academy Armona, CA

Last month I was given the privilege of speaking to some of the most remarkable young people I have ever encountered. We took four days to look at three topics. First, our desperate need to see God as He truly is. Next, if God is so loving, why is there so much pain and suffering on a planet which He claims to be overseeing? Finally, the greatest subject mortals can contemplate—the Cross. I watched as the hearts of these young people opened as a flower turns to the warmth of the sun.



“As a flower turns to the sun, that the bright rays may touch it with tints of beauty, so will the soul turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that heaven’s light may beautify the character with the graces of the character of Christ.” (E.G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 468)

The memory which will haunt me the longest is an encounter with a precious heart who has suffered so much. (Please don’t worry. I won’t mention who you are. Your secrets are safe with Jesus dear one.) I watched as this student’s heart, which had been so severely damaged by the pain this world can dish out, opened before the love of her Savior. For the very first time things began to make sense. For the very first time she felt “loved.” God became real and His heart began to be understood. Dear sister, in the precious love of our Savior, if you happen to be reading this, I am so happy for what you experienced this week. He loves you more than you could possibly ever fathom. Remember, nothing would make Him happier than for you to spend eternity with Him allowing Him to unfold His endless love to you. Keep your eyes on Him. You are the apple

of His eye. No grief touches your heart that does not also pierce His. I look forward to witnessing you and Him there, together, forever.

Marlinton SDA Fellowship Marlinton, WV

I can say this because I’m from West Virginia. There are few places in this great nation that provide such unique challenges to evangelism as my home state. I am so encouraged to see what God’s grace is accomplishing in the little town of Marlinton, WV. Renewed Heart Ministries intentionally does not charge seminar fees, even for our evangelistic series, because we have a burden for all to hear, regardless of the size or financial ability of a church. Marlinton is no exception. If you were to come down the valley into this small town, at it’s heart you would find a small Episcopal church being rented by 10 to 15 “Sevies” every Saturday morning. It’s referred to as a “fellowship”, which is small, but has a large passion to reach the world around them. RHM spent ten days working in cooperation with this little group to put on the Life Unlimited series for the community that surrounds them. We saw lives changed as we worked together. Souls advanced in their journey of being drawn deep within the veil, deep within the heart of the One who defines Himself as love. Thank you for the opportunity to do evangelism along side you. Please don’t hesitate to call on us if we can be of any further help to you in the work you are doing in this small West Virginian town. †



The Glad Tidings, p. 115-117

By E.J. Waggoner

“Love is not a substitute for the keeping of the law, but is the perfection of it. “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” 1 John 4:20. If a man loves his neighbor, it must be that he loves God. “Love is of God,” for “God is love.” Therefore love is the life of God. If that life is in us and is given free course, the law will necessarily be in us, for God’s life is the law for all creation. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” 1 John 3:16, KJV.

Since love means service, the doing of something for others, it is evident that love takes no thought of itself. He who loves has no thought but of how he may bless others. So we read: “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.” 1 Corinthians 14:3, 5.

It is just on this vital point that many make a mistake. Happy are they who have found out their mistake and have come to the understanding and practice of true love. “Love seeketh not her own.” Therefore self-love is not love at all, in the right sense of the word. It is only a base counterfeit. Yet most of that which in the world is called love is not really love for another, but is love of self.

Even that which should be the highest form of love known on earth, the love which is used by the Lord as a representation of His love for His people, the love of husband and wife, is more often selfishness than real love. Even leaving out marriages that are formed to gain wealth or position in society, in nearly every case the parties to a marriage are thinking more of their own individual happiness than of the happiness of the other. In proportion as real unselfish love exists, there is real happiness. It is a lesson that the world is slow to learn, that true happiness is found only when one ceases to seek for it and sets about making it for others.

Here again is a test which shows that much that is called love is not love. Love never ceases. The statement is absolute: never. There is no exception and no allowance made for circumstances. Love is not affected by circumstances. We often hear about one’s love growing cold, but that is something that can never happen to true love. True love is always warm, always flowing; nothing can freeze the fountain of love. Love is absolutely endless and unchangeable, simply because it is the life of God. There is

no other true love than the love of God, therefore the only possibility for true love to be manifested among mankind is for the love of God to be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Sometime when a declaration of love is made, the loved one asks, “Why do you love me?” Just as if anybody could give a reason for love! Love is its own reason. If the lover can tell just why he loves another, that very answer shows that he does not really love. Whatever object he names as a reason for love may sometime cease to exist, and then his supposed love ceases. But “love never ends.” Therefore love cannot depend upon circumstances. So the only answer that can be given to the question as to why one loves is “because”- -because of love. Love loves, simply because it is love. Love is the quality of the individual who loves, and he loves because he has love, irrespective of the character of the object.

The truth of this is seen when we go back to God, the fountain of love. He is love. Love is His life. But no explanation of His existence can be given. The highest human conception of love is to love because we are loved, or because the object of our love is lovable. But God loves the unlovely. He loves those who hate Him. “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; but when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us.” Titus 3:3-5. “If you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?” “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:46,48.

“Love does no wrong to a neighbor.” The word “neighbor” means whoever dwells near. Love therefore extends to everything with which it comes in contact. He who loves must necessarily love everybody.

Since love does no wrong to his neighbor, it obviously follows that Christian love (and there is really no other true love, as we have seen) does not admit of wars and fightings. When the soldiers asked John the Baptist what they should do as followers of the Lamb of God to whom he pointed, he replied, “do violence to no man.” Luke 3:14, KJV. An alternative rendering of John’s answer is, “Put no man in fear.” It would be a very mild war in which this command was followed! If an army were composed of Christians, true followers of Christ, when they came in contact with the enemy, instead of shooting them they would find out what they needed and supply their wants. “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:20, 21, KJV.”

TESTIMONIES . . .

"It just blows me away that God, Himself, paid for my sins. I don't think we humans will ever understand completely the relationship between Jesus and the Father - God and God! But that's okay with me. Just part of the difference between The Magnificent Creator and His little creatures. I continue to keep my eyes on Jesus as He teaches me how much my God loves me and how valuable I am to Him. How awesome is His never-ending, unmerited grace! How valuable everyone I love is to Him! Thank you for allowing Him to use you Herb!"—KM

"You really poured your heart out this weekend at _____. I am not going to let this information escape my brain this time. I study and pray each morning, but I haven't been feeling that deep connection with God. My problem is that I am focusing on the behavior (works) of doing these things and not the on-going daily relationship, humble dependence on God. My nature is to try and control it myself and I can feel God

telling me to give it all to him. God is working through you in ways that I have never seen before and I am thankful for that."—DG

"...How awesome is His never-ending, unmerited grace!..."

"I came to _____ for a "shot in the arm" and instead got an operation. Thank you, Herb, for showing me how to "see" God and understanding more about His love for me. I will pray for you and your ministry. GOD IS LOVE!!"—RA

"I was at the _____ last weekend. I thank God for your ministry."—LM

"Last weekend at Leoni was awesome - thanks for helping ME to see Jesus through new eyes!"—HF

"To Jesus Christ be the glory. Most importantly, I have a relationship with Jesus Christ for the first time. I truly saw the love of God from a sermon by

Herb Montgomery. You know, I still remember when I had the encounter with Christ last year...Praise HIM!"—B
"Clearest I've ever heard on the topic."—Anon.

"This gets deeper every time...I truly believe God loves me. Thanks Herb"—M

"You bring a fresh perspective and a necessary revelation of the grace of God and the desire He has for a deeper relationship with us. Don't hesitate to remain bold. Stay Connected. Thank you."—LG

"Dear Herb, I just wanted to say thank you. I was blessed by what God has given you. I pray that this experience will translate to my family. Jesus touched my life this weekend with the message of God's love. May God keep blessing you."—B

"Your message really resonated with me and helped crystallize my picture of God. Especially God's choice in relation to my own. I am truly grateful to have heard your message."—MB †

CALENDAR

May 2-3, 2008

Christian Men's Retreat
Leoni Meadows Retreat Center
Grizzly Flats, CA
209.951.3693

May 9-10, 2008

Durant SDA Church
Durant, OK
580.924.4019

May 25, 2008

Mt. Vernon Academy Graduation
Mt. Vernon, Oh
740.397.5411

May 31, 2008

Glenview Adventist Academy Graduation
Glendale, AZ
623.931.1846

June 1-8, 2008

Iowa/Missouri Camp Meeting
Centralia, MO

June 13-22, 2008

Weaverville / Trinity Lake / Hayfork
Hayfork, CA
530.623.5037

July 17-27, 2008

Soquel Camp Meeting
Central California Conference
(559) 347-3000

August 31-September 5, 2008

Rio Lindo Academy
Healdsburg, CA
707.431.5100

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