

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

#02-0827

MAY 20, 2008

LOVE NEVER FAILS #1

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.... But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13.4-8a, 13 NASB)

As I shared in an earlier issue (#02-0802 January 4, 2008), the word the Lord gave to my heart for 2008 is love. If you have read many of my writings, you know by now that **God is love** is a major theme that I weave through much of what I write. In a day when there seems to be such great emphasis on a vengeful God who is determined to destroy most of mankind, those of us who see that the God of love will restore and reconcile all things to Himself need to shout from the rooftops that God is love. **God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son.** Our God saves! According to Paul, **we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers** (1 Timothy 4.10 CV), but **not** exclusively of believers, for He is **God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth** (1 Timothy 2.3-4 KJV).

We can be sure of one thing, and that is, God will not fail to fulfill His plan to save all mankind. Why? Because God is love and, according to Paul, love never fails. The Greek word for *love* that Paul used is the same Greek word for *love* attributed to God. It is the word *agapē*, which Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* defines as "affection or benevolence," or "a love-feast," and Vine's *Expository Dictionary* states that it is used "(a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, the human race, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude toward one another, and toward all men; (c) to express the essential nature of God." Vine's also states that "love can be known only from the actions it prompts." Interestingly, none of these definitions actually tell us what love is and how to identify it if we see it, that is, what actions display love.

So what is love? We do not have to search very far for the answer, for it is given to us in Scripture. John, the apostle of love, gives us the answer. **We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren** (1 John 3.16 NASB). We know love by the life of the Son of God being laid down for the sin of the world. Notice that John did not say that love is a feeling or an emotion. Jesus obviously had feelings as He headed toward the cross and finally hung on it, but these were feelings of anguish and loneliness of soul. No; love is much more than a feeling; it is an action, and that action requires a death, a death to one's self-interest. This is the key to the love of God. It is selfless and sacrificial for the sake of others as first exemplified in the death of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary. Our Lord Jesus has defined the love of God in His death for the sin of the world and has set the example for all mankind. Through His Son, God has given us not only the definition of true love but also the display of love. We do not have to search for it or even come up with all sorts of high and lofty definitions of love. All we must do is look off unto Jesus and we will see the love of God in action. When we see Jesus, we see a lovely life laid down for all mankind and raised up to give life to all. This is the love of God!

According to Paul, love never fails. When he wrote these words, he was referring to the love of the brethren toward one another. But he could only encourage the saints in this way knowing that the love

that never fails is God's love, not fallen man's distorted view of love. Love starts with God, not with man. **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us** (Romans 5.8 NASB); or as John wrote: **He first loved us** (1 John 4.19 NASB).

It is rather disheartening when one considers how many pastor-teachers of our day do not truly believe that God's love never fails. If this does not get a reaction out of you, then you need some spiritual "caffeine" to wake you up. Many pastor-teachers and preachers have the vast majority of mankind destined to an eternal dungeon of torture that they call *hell*. According to them, most, not a few, but most of mankind are destined to be cast out of the presence of God to live in torment forever and ever and ever with no possibility of escape. If this were true, which it is not, then Paul is a liar, for love does fail, for the love of God will fail to reach the heart of every human being He created to be in His image. Often, unbelievers are told that God loves them, but in the same breath are told that they are "going to hell" if they don't believe. Is this the love of God that never fails?

For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son (John 3.16 CV). The Father loves the world as evidenced by the giving of His Son to the world. The Son loves the Father and laid down His life for the world. He is the Lamb of God **who takes away** the sin of the world! Do you think that God's love failed at the cross? Do you think that God's love in giving His Son will fail to reach all mankind and bring in total and absolute restoration and reconciliation of all things, to undo all effects of sin? I have written much on this matter in my book *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, so I refer you to this book.

I realize that this will be a difficult thought for some who worship the cross, but the real love story is found in the resurrection of the Son. For years, I thought that Christ's death on the cross was the ultimate and only display of love, but I have since come to see that death is only the first part of the equation of love. **Death without resurrection life is not love. Death that leads to resurrection life is God's love in action.** We see this principle in John's words: **We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death** (1 John 3.14 NASB). There can be no love in death because death is the cessation of life. **The dead do not know anything** (Ecclesiastes 9.5 NASB). If Jesus had remained in the grave, then love would have failed. But thank God; love did not fail, for God raised His Son from among the dead so that **in Christ all will be made alive** (1 Corinthians 15.22 NASB).

Resurrection life is the second part of the equation. We rely on **the living God** who is love. It was a shock to me when the Lord revealed to my heart that love goes deeper than the cross, but now I see that this indeed is His truth. Love is deeper than the cross because it brings us beyond death into life. We are to pass out of death into life because only life can love and only in love can new life come forth. Death is merely the pathway to life. Love plunges one into death, but death cannot defeat God's love because love breaks the cords of death and births new life. Love is what led Christ into death, but it is love that raised Him up from the grave to birth the new creation.

The Father loves His Son and raised Him from among the dead. This was, and yet is, the most wonderful display of love, for love always produces life. Think about it! When a couple truly loves one another, this love often produces a new life in the form of a child. Love begets life! Christ laid down His life to bring forth a new creation, to birth forth a one new man in Christ that will rule with Him in the oncoming eons with the sole purpose of bringing all mankind into the new creation.

Thus, we see love displayed at the cross, but we see love triumph in the resurrection.

Dear saints; God is love, and His love never fails. It did not fail at the cross, for He raised His Son from among the dead so that He **will** give life to all. If God's love did not fail to give you new life, do you honestly think that He will fail to give new life to all one day? **Love never fails!**