

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”
John 15:13

REACHING FOR THAT GREATER LOVE

by Craig Marlatt

Did you ever wonder why Jesus Christ chose to live the type of life that He did when He was upon the earth? I believe that Jesus came into this world not only to redeem mankind but to show us how life in this world ought to be lived. The most outstanding thing about the daily life of Jesus is that He seemingly lived entirely for the benefit of others. In fact the only mention in the Bible of Jesus doing anything for himself is when He withdrew from the people for prayer. Even this was so that He could fulfill his Father’s will or receive power to minister to the people around him. Yes it would be safe to say that Jesus Christ lived a selfless life. Eventually He even died for the benefit of those other than himself.

Today we are living in the ‘Me Generation’. Taking care of self and insuring ourselves of all the benefits and pleasures of life seems to be the general trend of the day. One of the more popular media slogans tells us that , “[We] deserve a break” , and another one declares, “After all, I’m worth it”. No doubt about it, man today lives primarily for himself. That should certainly come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the Bible.

As is the power of Madison Avenue much of the philosophy which they propagate has found its way into the Church. As sad as it really is, many of the current Bible teachers who maintain popular support teach a self-exalting, man centered theology. It is almost as if God exists entirely for the benefit of man. We have principles that guarantee us that we will never have to suffer or experience any of the negatives that life has to offer. We can float through life on a cloud of blessing and never have to deal with the reality that exists around us, but is this God’s desire for His Church? Is it not rather to be like Jesus who “though He was equal to God did not think that it was something to cling to” (Philippians 2:6)? Did He not instead choose to become a servant, and to lay down his life for others?

Certainly real love is a decision, just as self love is. There can be no doubt that the Kingdom of God calls us into a life of power and blessing, but it is the responsibility of each individual Christian to decide what he or she will do with that power and blessing: whether to live for oneself, or to live for the benefit of the Kingdom and for our fellow man.

Surely God is not going to cast Christians into hell if they come to the wrong conclusions, but a self life for a Christian produces only the empty shell of religion. And which of us would want to stand before the throne of Him who gave his all and have nothing to lay at his feet but a party hat instead of a crown? Not me my friend! How about you?

These days we hear much about the various gifts of the Spirit, and Paul encourages us to “covet earnestly the best gifts.” But immediately following that exhortation is the challenge “ and yet I show unto you a more excellent way” (I Cor.12:31). And from there Paul goes on to expose us to that more excellent way in Chapter 13.

Love is the pinnacle of all that is Godly. Wrapped up within its folds are all the commands that God ever gave to man. The highest form of love was expressed when God gave His own Son as an offering for sin. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends".

What about you? Are you living in this greater love experience? Are you, like Jesus, laying down your life for others? If you are, I want to exhort you to not be weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not (Galatians 6:9). You may have felt the urging to go out and get what can be yours as a "Kings kid", but I would encourage you instead to seek new strength in your prayer closet. Your Kingdom is not of this world!

If you're not living in the power of this greater love I want to ask you something: Why? After all Jesus has done for you is there anything that you wouldn't do for Him? I know that you may be afraid to touch the lives of others but ". . .God has not given [you] a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind!" (II Tim. 1:7)

If God is for you who can stand against you? Fear is the opposite of faith. Repent of your fear and God will give you faith. Turn from your own selfish desires and God will give you a new vision for the Kingdom. Come to Jesus seeking His greater love. I assure you won't regret it.