

LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS

Colossians 1:4 “. . . we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints.”

Every congregation and every Christian have a reputation. Based upon what people see and hear concerning you or your congregation becomes your reputation. Note in Colossians 1:4 the reputation of the Christians who belonged to the church at Colossae. They were known for their “faith in Christ Jesus” and “the love they had for all the saints.”

Is this your reputation or that of your congregation? I pray it is. But there are many Christians and Christian congregations who are not known for their love for all the saints. Satan has found ways to lead Christians into forming cliques, being unfriendly, judgmental and a host of other negative behaviors toward others.

The reason Colossians 1:4 first speaks of faith in Christ Jesus before mentioning love is love is born from the faith you receive in Jesus Christ. Remember the recent devotions that emphasized that the faith you have been gifted by God in Jesus unites you with Jesus. By this faith Jesus lives in you in order to touch the lives of those with whom you come in contact. Because you are now filled with the love of God through Jesus, John writes, “We (you) love because He (God) first loved us (you). . .” (1 John 4:19)

“. . . this is love, that we walk according to his commandments.” (2 John 6) Jesus taught that “love” is the summary of the Ten Commandments. Jesus summarized them with these two commandments, “Love God with all your heart . . . and love your neighbor as you love yourself.” (Mark 12:30-31) Your love of God is the foundation of your love for one another. Without God loving you and in turn you loving Him you are unable to love others.

Your love for fellow believers is the work of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:22) Your Christian love for all the saints is in effect your imitation of God’s love for them. You can think of your love for fellow believers as the love God has poured into your heart filling it to overflowing so that His love overflows from your heart to the hearts and lives of others. Your love for others flows from what Christ has

done for you. So, Jesus says, “ . . .as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Prayer: Thank You, heavenly Father for Your love. Send Your Spirit to fill my heart with Your love to overflow into the lives of those among whom I live. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Lord of all nations, grant me grace to love all people, ev’ry race;
And in each person may I see My kindred, loved, redeemed by Thee.

Break down the wall that would divide Thy children, Lord, on ev’ry side.
My neighbor’s good let me pursue; Let Christian love bind warm and true.

Forgive me, Lord, where I have erred By loveless act and thoughtless word.
Make me to see the wrong I do Will grieve my wounded Lord anew.

Give me Thy courage, Lord, to speak Whenever strong oppress the weak.
Should I myself the victim be, Help me forgive, rememb’ring Thee.

With Thine own love may I be filled And by Thy Holy Spirit willed.
That all I touch, where’er I be, May be divinely touched by Thee.
(LSB 844)