



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – August 1, 2010

Heart to Heart...

I do not mean what I am about to write as offensive to anyone. That's not my heart's intent. I want to illustrate different attitudes and knowledge people have in their relationship to the Lord. Sometimes what many think they are doing in the name of the Lord may be really choking out the life of Jesus.

Jesus came to give us life and to possess His life abundantly (John 10:10). His life is the "*light of men.*" (John 1:4) His life is what allows us to rise above the standard of the world day in and day out. When Paul came to Corinth, he made it abundantly clear: "***For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.***" (I Corinthians 2:2) We need to know Jesus and hold to His life.

Sometimes brethren respond to His life in ways that could be destructive. Some like the numbers game. They like to see how many they have in attendance and try for a goal setting day. It might be a "*bring your friends day*" or another title but it seems the focus might be wrong. When brethren focus on such, they prove that on that day we have the capability of reaching that many and the Lord will hold us to that standard from that point. Why have that only one day a year? Should we not be doing it each and every time? Read Revelation 2:1-7 carefully and see that the Lord knew the standard of love the Ephesians' could do and they had backed off of their proven love for Him. It can choke the life of the Lord out.

Sometimes brethren aren't concerned about numbers but spend their efforts teaching: "*how right we are and how wrong everyone else is!*" Pride swells in the hearts and an attitude of self-righteousness begins to surface. The teaching becomes about "them" verses "us." The word of God is applied to "them" while "we" just sit and shake our heads in agreement. After a while, people become empty, cold and the life of Jesus is lost. The assemblies become a shell and the heart senses become dull while suspicions are put on high alert.

Sometimes brethren ask nothing of anyone. "*Let's all be nice!*" is the mind-set. Their lives work off of socializing and having fun together rather than the life of Christ. These brethren are so nice, they have no concern for the lost and the truth is not a real standard. Their bottom line is, don't offend!!! The life of Christ has been lost and the word of God is only for the "*nice*" who think like us!

Brethren, I write these things to help us see, help me see, that when we start relying on things, programs or social events to keep people interested and coming to assemblies, something is missing. If we have to create an environment to excite people or stir people, something is wrong. To use the assembly of the saints to "beat up" others or promote ourselves is to miss the Lord Jesus Christ. Where is the life of Christ in all of this? Why can't Jesus motivate people? We need to tie our lives and the lives of others to Jesus. Here is a good test: take away all the "*programs*" and things mentioned above

and see if brethren get upset. “We aren’t doing anything!” What does that say? What are their lives depending on? The goal is to save people and only the life of Christ can bring us to that goal. While Paul sat in his prison cell as a criminal having done no wrong, what source did he draw from? Think about it!!!

Brent