



"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 – June 19, 2011

## ***Heart to Heart...***

A 45 year old man approached me to discuss some difficulties he was having. His opening statement was, *"I am having a mid-life crisis!"* He and his wife had been married for 23 years and he began relating how their relationship had changed and felt very unfulfilled. In his final statement he said, *"I really don't love her anymore! Am I free to move on with my life and be happy? I'm not happy."* I realized what he wanted to know from his last question and statement. I replied, *"Is she in Christ?"* He responded quietly, *"Yes."* I stated, *"She is also your sister in Christ. Would you love her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her?"* (Eph. 5:25) He winced. I could tell he didn't want to hear that. *"That's so hard! I'm not sure you understand."* (This is the statement made when someone doesn't want to do the right thing.) I asked, *"Would you love her as a sister in Christ?"* He looked down. *"Why are you making things so difficult for me?"* I spoke again, *"If you don't love her as your wife or won't love her as your sister, would you love her as your enemy and pray for her?"* (Matthew 5:44-45) Silence now ruled. His unhappiness was tied to his love for the Lord and commitment to His love not his wife.

So often married couples say they have "fallen out of love for one another." Bickering, sharp tongues and bad attitudes begin to take over. A Christian in the true sense concerns themselves with the will of God. God's will is to love on every level! The world speaks loudly, *"Leave your mate, find another so you can be happy and get on with your life!"* You can hear the tone of the devil. People seem to embrace this teaching. God speaks for the Christian husband to love his wife just as Christ loves the church. We, the church, aren't the loveliest of people sometimes are we? What if Christ said, *"I just don't love you anymore!"*? How would you feel? Is that what you want Him to do with you? Jesus speaks to the Christian wife to love and respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33/Titus 2:4). **These aren't suggestions by God, they are commands.** Love is a choice. It's a sacrificial love that seeks the highest good of another more than itself. It's the love that He loved us with by investing His life as an offering and fragrant aroma to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:2)

Why do those in Christ fall "out of" love with one another? Because they **refuse** to practice the love of God. The one that does not love does not know God which places them in death (1 John 3:14). Dead people cannot love. When a husband or wife finds themselves struggling with one another, if they would look to Christ, put on Christ Jesus and start walking in His love, they will find the very love they were missing and desiring all those years. True happiness will be the result. If one refuses to practice the love of God for their mate, their lives will head down a path of more and more frustrations with one another, more defeats and struggles and eventually death will consume them and bury their lives. Their only conclusion: follow the path of the dead world. God's ways are always the best and righteous which leads us upward into Him. Which way are you headed? Think about it!!!

Brent