

Love Series III

**MY
LOVE
INTEREST**

Love Series III
MY LOVE INTEREST

Feb. 21, 2016

Sermon in a sentence: Every decision I make and every action I take must be for the benefit of those I love, not just for my own personal benefit.

Congregational reading: Philippians 1:3-11

Scriptures: Phil. 1:3-11; Phil 1:27 – 2:4; John 13:34-35

Phil. 1:3-11; Phil. 1:27 – 2:4 NKJV I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; ⁷ just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. ⁸ For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. ²⁷ Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of

perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.

Phil. 2:1 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

[Slowly and meditatively read through the highlighted sections of the scripture above.]

Every decision I make and every action I take must be for the benefit of those I love, not just for my own personal benefit.

Running for his life from King Saul was certainly not David's first choice of things to do. Yet, in the middle of his personal disaster, he took time to mentor, train, feed and protect all who came to him for help (1 Sam. 22:1-2).

Agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane and enduring death on a cross was certainly not Jesus's most preferred activity. Yet He served food to His betrayer, washed his feet and called him 'friend', re-attached the ear of one of the officers who came to arrest Him, and prayed for the acquittal of His killers (John 13:2-26; Matt. 26:50; Luke 22:49-51; Luke 23:34;).

Sitting in a Roman prison cell was certainly not Paul's favourite place to be. Philippians 1 informs us that he was likely there, in part, as the result of Christian brethren who were seeking to rally persecution against him. They had political agendas and selfish ambitions against him that caused them to act in very hurtful ways. In spite of this, Paul's concern was not for himself.

- **He was thankful for his fond remembrance of the saints (v. 3)**
- **Despite everything that was going on, he was confident that God's work of grace would continue in their lives (v. 6-7)**
- **He prayed that their love for each other would abound and that their fruits of righteousness would bring glory to God (v. 9-11)**
- **He encouraged them to stand fast in one spirit and one mind, in spite of suffering (v. 27-29; Ch. 2, v.2)**
- **He instructed them never to act out of selfishness or conceit, but to actually see others as better than themselves (2:3)!**

We are the body of Christ in the Earth today. One body, many 'members in particular'. The spiritual blessings we have enjoyed prove that God loves us, cares for us and will give us anything we need to live powerful, overcoming lives. In truth, He wants to give us far more of Himself than we even desire, but with a very important caveat. He wants to give Himself to those who will love others as He loves us (John 13:34-35).

Our "Love Interest" must be the same as His! His body, His church, His bride.

Hollywood has made billions of dollars with a very simple formula. Whatever genre of film it may be, there has to be a love story. The main character must have a 'love interest'.

Every songwriter, music producer or popular writer knows that love sells. The vast majority of songs and novels speak of love in some way, shape or form.

Everyone is seeking after love, and so is our Lord! His love interest is His church, His bride.

Jesus said that love should be the chief characteristic that identifies us as His disciples. He wants life-giving love to flow like blood through His body, *from* every member and *to* every member of His body.

How do we make this happen?
So glad you asked!

Let us consider the following two suggestions, neither of which is new nor revolutionary:

1. **Acknowledge everyone we come in contact with.** How many times have we passed by someone in the church without making eye contact or saying hello? We have spoken before about the 'Marriott rule'. If someone is within six feet of us, we acknowledge them. Very simple. We make eye contact and ask how they are doing. And we are willing to listen if they have more to say than "Fine thank you." We will stop, look and listen to them.

This is the easy first step in showing love: a simple acknowledgement that our fellow human being exists and is worthy of our attention.

And what would it really take out of us to acknowledge a guest of our church who comes to sit in a seat within six feet of us. Do we really need to wait until visitors are asked to stand before we acknowledge them, smile and shake their hand? They could be beside us, in front of us or behind us. What would it really take out of us to acknowledge them and make them feel welcome?

2. Share a snack, meal, coffee or whatever you may choose with a brother or sister, outside of the church building. It could be in *your* home, in *their* home, at the mall or in an ice cream parlor. Anywhere that we can take the time (or *make* the time) to fellowship with our brethren and show that we love them and care for them.

We don't do this nearly enough!

Our love interest must be the same as Jesus' love interest. His church. His bride. Our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our spouses. Our biological families. Our friends. Our neighbours.

Every decision I make and every action I take must be for the benefit of those I love, not just for my own personal benefit.

"I love You Lord, and I will love all whom you love."