

# THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Volume 60, Number 6

Editor ~ Wade Stanley

Publisher ~ Doug Twaddell

June, 2018

## Love is Patient and Kind

*Steve Wright*

*“Love is patient. Love is kind” (1 Corinthians 13:4).*

The first three verses of **1 Corinthians 13** focus on the emptiness produced when love is absent. In **verses 4-5**, we find the most comprehensive biblical description of the fullness of love. Paul shines love through a prism, and we see fifteen of its colors and hues – the spectrum of love. Each ray gives a facet, a property, of “agape” love.

In most English translations of this passage, adjectives are used to round out the description. Interestingly, however, in the Greek original, forms of all of those properties are verbs. They do not focus so much on what love is, but rather on what love does and then follows that with what love does not do. “agape” love is active, not abstract or passive. It does not simply feel patient, it practices patience. It does not simply have kind feelings, it does kind things. It does not simply recognize the truth, it rejoices in the truth. Love is fully love only when it acts. *“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).*

Paul’s prism is not meant to be seen as a technical analysis of love, but it functions to break love down into smaller parts so that we may more easily understand and apply its full and rich meaning. As with all of God’s word, we cannot truly begin to understand love until we begin to apply it in our lives. Paul’s main purpose here is not simply to instruct the Corinthians but to charge them to change their living habits. He wanted them carefully and honestly to measure their lives against these characteristics of love. To use another metaphor, Paul is painting a portrait of love, and Jesus the Christ, our Savior, is sitting for the portrait. He perfected in his life, all of these virtues of love. This beautiful picture of love is a portrait of Him.

### Love is patient.

Love practices being patient or long-suffering, literally “long-tempered” (Greek, *makrothumeo*). It is a common word in the New Testament and is used almost exclusively of being patient with people, rather than circumstances or events. Love’s patience is the ability to be inconvenienced or taken advantage of by a person over and over again and yet not be upset or angry. Chrysostom said: “It is a word which is used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself but will never do it.” Patience never retaliates.

Like “agape” love, the patience spoken of in the New Testament was a virtue only among Christians. In the Greek world, self-sacrificing love and non-avenging patience were considered weaknesses, unworthy of the noble man or woman (e.g. – Aristotle taught that the great Greek virtue was refusal to tolerate insult or injury and to strike back in retaliation for the slightest offence). Vengeance was a virtue. This is nothing new: the world has always tended to make heroes of those who fight back, who stand up for their welfare and rights above all else.

Robert Ingersoll and Theodore Parker are two examples from our own country. Well known Atheist Robert Green "Bob" Ingersoll (August 11, 1833 – July 21, 1899) was a Civil War veteran, American political leader, and orator during the Golden Age of Freethought, noted for his broad range of culture and his defense of agnosticism. Ingersoll would often stop in the middle of his lectures against God and say, “I’ll give God five minutes to strike me dead for the things I’ve said.” He then of course would use the fact that he was not struck dead as proof that God did not exist.

Theodore Parker (Lexington, Massachusetts, August 24, 1810 – Florence, Italy, May 10, 1860) was an American Transcendentalist and reforming minister of the Unitarian church. A reformer and abolitionist, his own words and quotes that he popularized would later influence Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. Theodore Parker said of Ingersoll’s claim, “And did the gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of the eternal God in five minutes?”

Since Adam and Eve first disobeyed Him, God has been continually wronged and rejected by those He made in His own image. He was scorned by His chosen people through whom he gave the revelation of His word: *“Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2).* Yet through thousands of years, the eternal God has been eternally long-suffering. If the holy Creator is so infinitely patient with His rebellious creatures, how much more should His unholy creatures be patient with each other?

### Love is kind.

Just as patience will take anything from others, kindness will give anything to others, even to its enemies. Being kind is the counterpart of being patient. To be kind (Greek, *chresteuomomai*) means to be useful, serving and gracious. It is active good will. It not only feels generous, it is generous. It not only desires others’ welfare but works for it.

When Jesus commanded His disciples, including us, to love our enemies, He did not simply mean to feel kindly about them

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but to be kind to them. "And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles" (Matthew 5:40, 41).

The hard environment of an evil world gives almost unlimited opportunity to exercise love's patience and love's kindness.

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## Who Was Jesus of Nazareth?

John Morris

"Jesus of Nazareth is easily the dominant figure in history...the historian disregarding the theological significance of his life, writes the name of Jesus of Nazareth at the top of the list of the world's greatest characters."

~ H. G. Wells

Few can say that they have never heard of Jesus Christ. In a 2010 TIME magazine article entitled, "Who's Biggest? The 100 Most Significant Figures in History," in which the authors attempted to rank "historical figures just as Google ranks web pages, by integrating a diverse set of measurements about their reputation into a single consensus value," Jesus came out first. Loved or hated, the name of Jesus Christ is a "household name," and has been for centuries. Everybody's heard of Jesus.

But hearing about someone and knowing who that someone is are very different things.

So many people say so many different things about Jesus Christ. But what's the real story? Who was Jesus of Nazareth, really? A good teacher? A moral visionary? A revolutionary, perhaps? Or was he something else altogether? What's the truth? Well, the truth is out there, and in this case, we can get it straight from the source.

### "I am the Son of God."

It's been asserted over the years that Jesus never claimed to be "the Son of God," that it was others who claimed this for him. But Jesus tells us differently. On one occasion, after being informed of what the crowds were saying about him, he asked his disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus' response to this? "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:15-16). A ringing endorsement. On another occasion, when Jesus was speaking to a Jewish gathering in Jerusalem, he referred to God as "My Father." At

this, his unbelieving hearers prepared to stone him for what they supposed to be blasphemy (speaking words that denigrate or defame God). Jesus responded to them by asking, "[D]o you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" (John 10:36). He had said it; they just didn't believe it. Yet again, the night before his crucifixion, Jesus stood before the Jewish high priest and was asked directly, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" His answer was unequivocal: "I am" (Mark 14:61-62).

So Jesus stated that he was the Son of God. But what did he mean by it? To understand that, we must first understand the beliefs of the first-century Jews, beliefs based on their reading of the Old Testament. There, they found this prophecy: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel [literally, God with us]" (Isaiah 7:14). They also found this one:

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

These prophecies shaped what the Jews understood "Son of God" to mean. For centuries, they had believed a "Son" would one day appear, a man who had been miraculously born of a virgin (hence, the son of a woman, but not of a man – God would be his father), and who would actually be God in human form ("God with us" "Mighty God")! Any Jew who claimed to be "the Son of God" would have been claiming to be the fulfillment of these prophecies.

This is, indeed, what Jesus was claiming, and the Jews did not miss his meaning. As they were preparing to stone him in the aforementioned instance for his supposed blasphemy, they said to him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make Yourself God" (John 10:33). On another occasion, when Jesus had again called God "My Father," we read:

"Therefore, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

One must be a human to be equal with a human, and one must be God to be equal with God. Jesus was, in terms clear to his hearers, claiming to be Divine ("God" in the sense that he is part of "the Trinity" – three in one). Amazing, but true. And this claim was emphasized by other actions of his.

Jesus said and did several things that make sense only in the context of his being God. For example, he referred to himself as "I AM," a designation of eternal, self-sufficient existence that God used of himself when speaking to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58). Jesus also allowed people to worship him. Eight times, the gospel accounts record him accepting worship (Matthew 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25,

**28:17; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; John 9:38).** This is very significant, since both he and those worshipping him believed that worship is only for God. The Scriptures taught and he himself had said, *"You shall worship the LORD your God and Him only you shall serve"* (**Matthew 4:10**). Furthermore, Jesus forgave people of their sins—sins they committed against God. Only the offended can forgive the offender. Those who overheard him doing this understood the significance of his actions; they said to one another: *"Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* (**Mark 2:7**). Finally, Jesus said that he pre-dated the world, a claim that only God (who made the world) can make: *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory I had with You before the world was"* (**John 17:5**).

Jesus' words and works cried out who he was: *"God... manifested in the flesh"* (**1 Timothy 3:16**), the prophesied "Son of God." And in revealing his identity, Jesus also revealed his authority. For Jesus, the Son of God, has the Divine right to tell us what God requires of us. And he did.

**"No one comes to the Father, except through Me."**

This may be one of the most controversial statements Jesus ever made. Not because it's hard to understand, but because it's hard to swallow. Our culture teaches that there are many paths to God, that what's "true" for one person doesn't have to be "true" for another, that we can just choose the way we like best and access our preferred highway to heaven. But Jesus' words teach us something very different: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (**John 14:6**). To a world that is seeking to be ever more inclusive, Jesus tells us he is actually exclusive. He promises that anyone who is willing may come to God (*"If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved,"* **John 10:9**), but that he alone is the way. In another passage, he puts it this way:

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them into the fire, and they are burned"* (**John 15:5-6**).

So not only is Jesus the Son of God, but he has told us that he is also the sole savior of the human race!

These two realities probably help explain why Jesus' name is the best known in the world. God does not come to earth with the only blueprint for salvation and it goes unnoticed.

The Divine Son of God and Savior of humanity came into the world 2,000 years ago, lived among his creation for about 30 years (**Luke 3:23**), died as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (**John 19; 1:29**), raised from the dead (**John 20-21**), and then returned to heaven to be with the Father (**John 16:16; Luke 24:51**). What an amazing reality! And the best news of all? He has left us a sure way to follow him there.

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## Glory to God!

The Riverside Road (**Ozark, MO**) congregation is pleased to have **James, Shela, Maverick, Malichi, Mikale and Mundan Welte** as new members.

The church which meets on **Union Hills in Phoenix, AZ** gladly received three sisters as members of the congregation: **Whitney Wyche, Susan Sheets, and Brenda Seligman.**

The church in **Martensdale, IA** rejoiced when **Ciera Marshall** was buried with Christ on April 29.

The angels rejoiced with the church in **Eldon, MO** when **Lily Huff** was baptized for the remission of her sins on May 6.

## Blessed Are the Dead

**Alyce Ann Dennis** was born on December 28, 1928, and passed away on Friday, April 27, 2018. Wife of evangelist and former editor of this publication, **Tom Dennis**, Sister Ann was known to many of us throughout the brotherhood. Her kind and sweet disposition, her good humor, and her lovely alto voice will be missed by all. Sister Ann was a member of the church in **Nixa, MO** when she passed. She leaves behind Brother Tom and a host of family and friends.

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*Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

~ **Revelation 14:13**

## Special Meetings

The church in **Martensdale, IA** plans a Ladies Day for June 2. **Trinity Davis, LuAnn Woody, and Callie Barringer** will be relating Esther, Ruth, and Hannah/Abigail to the Proverbs 31 woman. **Sarah Morris, Bethany Morris, and Megan Stevens** will offer small devotions before each speaker on "What does a Godly Woman look like to you?" More details will follow in future issues.

The brethren in **Bolivar, PA** invite you to a special meeting during the week of June 10-15 with **Evangelist Steve Wright**. The theme of the meeting is, "Creation vs. Evolution and the End Times." Brother Steve will speak on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. A one hour Bible study will be held in the



***Please check your expiration date!***

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mornings at 10 a.m., Monday-Friday with a thirty minute question period to follow. Brother Steve will also speak Tuesday - Friday evenings on various topics related to the covenants recorded in the Bible.

The brethren who meet at **Old Lamine** (rural Blackwater, MO) invite you to their annual Family VBS to be held on July 21. This year's theme is "Stand Strong or Stand Wrong." Classes and activities will be offered for both kids and adults.

The church which meets on **Murray Road in Lee's Summit, MO** has been working hard to plan their **Two Weekend Meeting** scheduled for **July 21-27**. To register for the meeting, see the schedule, or find either relevant information, you may navigate to:

<http://murrayroadcoc.org/2018meeting.htm>

Informational packets will also be mailed to congregations. Please let your editor know if your congregation does not receive the packet of information and he will contact the brethren at Murray Road on your behalf. Thanks to our brethren in Lee's Summit for their hard work on the Lord's behalf!

## 2018 Meetings

June 2.....	Ladies' Day, Martensdale, IA
June 9-10.....	Vandalia, IA
June 10-15.....	Bolivar, PA
June 16-17... Young People's Meeting, Excelsior Springs, MO	
June 18-23.....	Shaver Lake, CA
July 2-6.....	Midwest Bible Campout, Eminence, MO
July 21-27.....	Murray Road, Lee's Summit, MO
August 26.....	White Oak (rural Ethel, MO)
September 1-2.....	Pleasant Hill, IA
September 22-23.....	Martinsville, IN

The church in **Martinsville, IN** plans a Ladies' Day meeting led by **Sally Garbi** on September 22. On September 23, **Louis Garbi** will offer morning and afternoon lessons. Please make plans to join them on September 22-23!

*"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).*

## Here and There

Your publisher, **Doug Twaddell**, will be moving. As of **June 1, 2018**, all correspondence concerning subscriptions should be sent to

**1700 S Ann Court  
Independence, MO 64057**

His email and phone number will remain unchanged.

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**THE GOSPEL MESSAGE** (USPS:576-040) (ISSN:1054-7991) is published monthly for \$7 per year by **THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**, 711 N. Broadway, Beloit, KS 67420. Periodicals Postage Paid at Beloit, KS. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **THE GOSPEL MESSAGE**, 711 N. Broadway, Beloit, KS 67420