

Devotional Thought

Month of: April 2009

THOUGHT: Precious in His Sight

In our world we are often caused to face pain, disappointment and sorrow but we should never forget that God's gift to us is salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This is a blessing we must never forget as we tend to become discouraged. In the beginning, "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27). When sin entered the world and man became separated from God, "He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

This is the greatest love story in all history; "While we were still {lost} sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). He died for you and me, and also all those other lost sinners scattered throughout the world. Jesus Christ, "who being in very nature God" (Philippians 2:6), was born in a dirty stable with the animals; "He made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). He lived His life with the single purpose of dying so that all who believe could be eternally restored to the Father; "the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Romans 5:18).

God loves us very, very much! And He doesn't just love those who love Him in return or faithfully serve Him - He loves all. Yes, He hates sin and will one day judge with an eternal damnation all who fail to believe; but His love - His offer of salvation - extends to all ... even to our noisy neighbor and difficult co-worker, to our obnoxious family members and the disrespectful kid who wears his pants down around his ankles.

God's love is so much a part of who He is, and of who we ought to be, that Jesus commands us by His example: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). We are to love as Jesus loved; and as if this was too difficult a concept for our finite minds, we are commanded to love in terms we can all understand. "The entire law is summed up in a command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14).

God wants us to love others primarily because He loves them and wants His love to be expressed through us! He clearly demonstrated this love, but He also gave us a natural capacity for love. When we are hungry we feed ourselves; when we are hurt we care for ourselves; and when we are down, we pray for God to lift us up. This is love - the same love God desires us to show all of His creation.

Let's evaluate our thoughts, words, and actions in terms of their effect on others. Are we encouraging or adding burdens? Are we building up or tearing down? Are we bringing others closer to Jesus or pushing them further away? Are we as loving to others as we are to ourselves? Let's be His hands, feet, and voice of love in the world around us. Let's begin to see others as through His eyes and remember ... we are all precious in His sight.

Rev. Dr. James E. Russell, Jr.
Presiding Elder