

LAMPLIGHTER

FEBRUARY 2008

THEME: JESUS SAID...

“GOD LOVES YOU!”

JOHN 20:30, 31

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Dear Friends of the Savior,

Valentine’s Day is second only to Christmas in gift giving. Of the estimated \$3.6 billion people will spend on Valentine’s Day shopping, approximately \$730 million of it will be spent online, with two out of three home Internet users expecting to shop online for Valentine’s Day, according to a survey completed by PC Data Online. Men will typically spend \$107 and women will spend \$48 on their significant other. However all of it is done out of love for that special someone in his/her life. What will you do to show your love this Valentine’s Day?

In our text above, God demonstrated His love for sinful man in the sending of His one and only Son. He was not content in leaving and abandoning us in our sin, but His love compelled Him to act, and the cost of that love was dear! Peter says in 1:18-19, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” We were bought at a price, and that price was the life of the God-man Jesus. There could be no dollar value attached to such a sacrifice. What would be the going rate for an innocent life? Jesus says in John 15:13, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” Jesus does exactly that amazing act when He sacrificed Himself on the cross of Calvary.

As followers of the Savior we admit with the Apostle John in his first epistle (1 John 4:19): “We love because He first loved us.” All love comes from God. We could not self-generate love. We would not have any idea what it means to love if God had not first revealed love to us. And still we have the tendency to distort, corrupt, and pollute the purity of God’s love. We want to simply love those who love us, and we certainly would not give an enemy the time of day. However Jesus says in Matthew 5:43-48 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Or John in his first epistle would go on to say, “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” Like Christ we are not to love in words only but also in action.

As we come to not only Valentine’s Day, but every day, let us love not only in word but also in actions. Let us love the Lord our God with all our hearts and mind and soul and strength. Let us love our neighbors as we love ourselves, so that the love of God shines through in our many acts of kindness, patience, gentleness, joy, peace, goodness, self-control, and love. In the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:23, “Against such things there is no law.” Give the gift that costs you absolutely nothing but your time, your attention, and your love. Give the gift of yourself in service to all those around you friend and foe alike.

Close with prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, and Song #76 “Thine Forever, God of Love.”