



Happy Valentines Day

by Rev. Cynthia A. Burns

There are many stories about St. Valentine's Day. Some have said it was created by the greeting card companies in order to sell more cards, candy and flowers. Others have thought that it was a made up holiday to help spark romance in couples relationships.

The truth is that Valentine was a real person who lived under the Roman Empire and was a Priest and Physician who suffered martyrdom during the persecution of Christians by the emperor Claudius II Gothicus. He was killed around 270AD.

St. Valentine was martyred at the age of 94 simply for performing marriages in secret ceremonies which was deemed against the law by the Emperor. This all took place during a great persecution of Christians. ***The Feast of Saint Valentine*** was established by Pope Gelasius I in AD 496 to be celebrated on February 14th in honor of Saint Valentine of Rome, who died on that date in AD 269.

It is important to note that Valentine's Day is not a biblical holy day and has no spiritual meaning. For true Christians, everyday is Valentines Day as we experience God's love and share it with others. Obviously Valentine's Day has a very long history that has lasted over 1500 years.

Yes, this month of February is the time when the world takes a day to celebrate the love they have for another person. In reality, if this is the only day you make a big deal about the person you are supposed to love, then you truly do not understand love. Believe me, I'm not saying I have all of the answers to maintain a lifetime of love; but I know the one who has the answers and knows how to love.

If we allow Jesus to love through us, then we can truly love our spouse, children, and friends the way God intended. *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, then to lay down one's life for his friends."* **John 15:12-13 NKJV**

As a young girl I was taught about *the dream of Prince Charming and the happily ever after*. What I wasn't taught is that the road of relationships to *happily ever after* is also paved with rough patches of tears, failures, and do overs. It's those times when love is about commitment and not so much about your feelings. Many times people do not pass this stage; they leave and quit before they can pass the stage of hard knocks to an even greater love and commitment.

This last week a dear friend and congregant went to be with Jesus. He was such an anointed singer, kind gentleman, and sweetheart of a man. The one thing that stands out in my mind is how much he adored and loved his wife of 50 plus years. I always told them that they should teach a course on how to stay in love throughout the years of a marriage. I would ask them for the key to their love for each other.

One statement his wife told me always stood out in my thinking. They had made a commitment when they first got married to be kind to one another and to not speak harshly to one another. They had kept that commitment to each other. These two were still *"in love"* with each other after 50 plus years. Being kind to one another in word and deed is vital to being and staying in love.

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35 NKJV

There must be something to being kind and tender with one another, even Paul mentioned it in his writing.

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32 NKJV

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;” Romans 12:10 NKJV

Be **kind**, **forgiving**, **tender**, **affectionate**, **honor**, and **prefer one another**. The real key to a lifetime of love is shown to us in those 6 simple guidelines. According to Strongs Concordance and Greek definitions, the meaning of these words can make a difference for individuals and couples.

Kind - useful in manner and morals, gracious, easy, better, and cherishing.

Tenderhearted - full of compassion

Forgiving - freely give, to grant, gratuitously, to pardon or rescue.

Affectionate - cherishing, fondness, and fraternal to other Christians.

Honor - value, precious, esteem one another to the highest degree, dignity, and priceless.

Prefer - lead the way for others.

Ask yourself; what is your commitment to a real lifetime of love? Are you willing to love like Jesus? *A commitment of being and speaking*

kindly, being tender hearted with one another, forgiving each other for wrongs, preferring and honoring one another over your own interest, and showing these attitudes will reap you a lifetime of love.

It truly is your choice!

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