

Responsive Reading

Taken from John 13:34-35 and Colossians 3:12-17

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

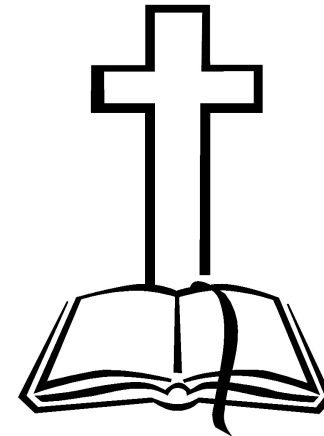
Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering.

Bear with one another, and forgive one another, even as Christ forgave you.

But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Worship Service



Standing In Love

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"Standing in Love"

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"I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go"

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Savior, Like a Shepherd Page 11

Closing Prayer

I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go

Mary Brown, 1st stanza; Charles Prior, 3rd & 4th stanza

It may not be on the mountain's height

Or over the stormy sea;

It may not be at the battle's front

My Lord will have need of me.

But if by a still, small voice He calls

To paths that I do not know,

I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,

"I'll go where You want me to Go."

Perhaps today there are loving words

Which Jesus would have me speak;

There may be now, in the paths of sin,

Some wanderer whom I should seek.

O Savior, if Thou wilt be my Guide,

Tho' dark and rugged the way,

My voice shall echo the message sweet.

I'll say what You want me to say.

There's surely somewhere a lowly place

In earth's harvest fields so wide

Where I may labor thro' life's short day

For Jesus, the Crucified.

So, trusting my all to Thy tender care,

And knowing Thou lovest me,

I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere,

I'll be what You want me to be.

"Standing In Love"

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, help us to open our hearts to Your Word today. May we be pliable in Your loving hands as we seek to heed what You have to say to each of us. Thank You for Your presence with us. Amen.

Devotion:

Text: *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.* Colossians 4:12

There are many wonderful examples of prayer in the Bible. Our text is a very short description of the type of prayer that a Christian minister named Epaphras prayed. He was from Colosse, a small town in Asia Minor and his prayer was for his fellow believers who lived there. Look at what he asked God to do for his brothers and sisters: that they "may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Wow! How would you like to have a Christian friend to pray their heart out every day for you to be able to do this? Do you reckon God heard the prayer of Epaphras?

Many may ask, "What is the will of God for me?" We can safely begin to answer that question with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: **"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another"** (John 13:34). God wants His children to love each other. To be more specific, we can look around the room at our friends here and see exactly who the Lord wants us to love: all our neighbors who live and work here in this home. Isn't it easy to see what a great challenge this idea of doing God's will is? No wonder Epaphras prayed hard every day for the saints at Colosse. But he did not just pray for them to squeak through on this; he prayed that they stand, that they not fall but be thoroughly mature in their constant obedience to do God's will.

When the nurse is in a bad mood. When your neighbor plays the TV too loud. When that one who knows how to push your buttons sits next to you at lunch. When your family doesn't visit as often as you would like. **Then! Then love.** Not just when you feel warm and fuzzy about these folks during the Bible study...but when they get on your nerves...**then** love them! This is maturity in love. This is standing. This is the will of God for you.

This kind of "standing" - with tenacious love - brings to mind the experience of the 27th Regiment of the English army in the battle of Waterloo. They had marched 51 miles in two days in the rain with very little to eat,

"Standing In Love" continued

stopping only twice to briefly catch their breath. They arrived near the battle at 11AM and were allowed to rest for a few hours. They were called into the middle of the battlefield at 3PM. The 750 tired, hungry men of the 27th Regiment marched to their assigned position and stood there in military fashion in easy range of French cannon and musket fire from hidden skirmishers. For four hours they stood there, in the midst of the terror and carnage of battle, though not directly engaged in the conflict. If they had to relieve themselves they did so where they stood. Canon balls and hot musket fire plowed and whizzed through their ranks constantly. 450 of their comrades in their regiment were killed or wounded as they stood there...for four hours! But every one not hit by enemy fire stood there...to a man...they stood there until ordered to join a general advance at 7PM.

As God's child, desiring to love others according to His will, you are in a battle. Aren't you?! Sometimes we may feel like a soldier in the 27th ...getting fired at relentlessly with anger, loneliness, depression, sadness, anxiety, fear and doubt. But our General, Jesus Christ, has asked us to stand in love, with patience and kindness. "But," you may say, "the Colossians had Epaphras to pray for them. Who's praying for me?"

Wherefore He [Jesus Christ] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus Christ Himself is praying for you! Set your sights on the goal of always standing up for Jesus as you grow and mature in your love toward others. Let God help you. Call on Him in the thick of battle, when you struggle to be kind and patient. He will never leave you. **Together, with Him, you can stand in love.** When you mess up, ask Him to forgive you. He will. He knows what you are going through and He understands. He loves you the way He wants you to love others! He is your example. And He will help you be stronger to stand in the next battle to love.

Closing Prayer: Holy Father, how weak I feel in the face of how tall an order you have given me to love! I can only do this in Your strength. I ask you to increase my determination to obey Your will - to love others even when it is hard. Thank You for loving me in my weakness and my faults and for helping me to mature more and more in loving others in their weakness and faults. May I be an example and an encouragement to my neighbors for them to stand in Your love too. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.