

## Pressed into Perfect Love (Part 2)

God's love often comes to us in disguise. This is one of the ways He teaches us not to trust in appearances, not to believe our soulish reactions. This is an important lesson for many reasons, premier of which is that neither is a route to Christ-likeness. Only faith in the God of full and perfect love, the One from Whom are all things (Ro 11:36), the One for Whom all things are His servants (Ps 119:91), the One Who can be trusted in all events, is adequate for such transformation.

Like Mary, God's love often comes as an "uninvited angel" (Craig Barnes) with earth shattering news that will never allow us to go back to life as it was. In these moments He calls for complete surrender - "may it be done to me according to Your Word" (Lk 1:38). Sometimes God's love seems like a "thorn", a chronic handicap that God means for eternal advantage. Like Paul, such "gifts" cause us to let go of dependence upon our natural abilities and to embrace weakness and dependence as God's way to keep us strong. Every now and then, like Martha or Mary, we are face to face with a "tomb" - something has died and we can't resurrect it no matter how hard we try. In such moments, the love of God requires us to let go of trying and to embrace trusting Him in order to see God's glory (Jo 11:40). When called for, the love of God will "chain" us to a limiting, confining set of circumstances that appear to block our objectives. (Fill in this blank, "If it only weren't for \_\_\_\_\_", and you've identified your "chains".) In these places, God is lovingly exposing us to a confession of unbelief, "Greater is he who is in the world than He Who is in me". He then invites us to repent and embrace thanksgiving and rejoicing, because even though I may be chained, the Word of God is not. (Phil 1:12-14; II Tim 2:8-10)

And you can count on this - at least once in your life God will hand you a "cross" as a gift of His love - His love for you and for His world. You will become the "lamb" at Isaac's sacrifice, you will pay the price so someone else will get to go free. (There is nothing "fair" about a cross, but when from God, they are very loving and very Christ-like!) In that moment, we may freely embrace our role as intercessors, our opportunity to be life for others.

Let's see - surrendered, dependent, trusting, thankful, joyful, intercessory, living for others...sound like somebody you know? You said you wanted to be like Jesus - and God believed you! If God were to protect us from uninvited angels, thorns, tombs, chains, and crosses, wouldn't He be withholding His best from us? Wouldn't His love be less than full and perfect for us? Never see any of these coming from any hand but your Father's... Who is always coming to you in love!



- **Tax-deductible contributions** - may be made to *One In Christ, Inc.* by mailing your gifts to the address above.
- **Messages and sermons by Steve** - can be listened to or downloaded at [www.stevepettitmessages.com](http://www.stevepettitmessages.com) or may be requested on CD by mail at the address above.
- **Conferences and events led by Steve** - can be arranged by contacting Steve at the telephone number above.
- **To receive this newsletter electronically** - email your request to [OICnewsletter@Gmail.com](mailto:OICnewsletter@Gmail.com)

## *Praise Reports & Prayer Requests*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# GREETINGS



# CALENDAR



In Florida, it's harder to do almost everything in July. Walking to the mailbox can be a draining experience. Getting into a car parked in the sun all day takes great courage. Thinking of cutting the grass is well, unthinkable. We have to engage in a fair amount of "self-talk" to overcome in July and August down here (Not unlike what many of you have to do in January and February up there!)

And that is not unlike the spiritual discipline (necessary for us year round) of talking to our souls. I learned this from the Psalmist. After life's draining experiences, distressful events or unimaginable losses, the Psalmist would talk to his soul - "Why are you in despair, O my soul?" Or, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." And, "Praise the Lord, O my soul."

You and I may not be able to keep our souls (and bodies) from talking to us - "not fair", "relief", "ice cream!" - but they do not have to get the final word. Sometimes, the more we authorize our soul to tell us what we ought to be doing, the less we are able to see and hear what God is doing.

Talk to you soul - tell it the truth. Give spirit ascendancy over soul and body. It's time to grow up!

## AUGUST

1 UF Fellowship of Christian Athletes  
7,14,21,28 CCF  
9 Alachua Study  
30 Ocala Study

## SEPTEMBER

4,18 CCF  
\* 6 \* **\*NOTE CHANGE to Alachua Study from 2nd Tuesday to 1st Tuesday\***

11-16 Glorietta, NM  
23-25 Binghamton, NY (607-625-4612)

**OCT 13-16** Baton Rouge, LA (225-769-8844)

**NOV 3-6** San Antonio, TX (210-490-2827)

## ♥ PRAISE & PRAYER ✝

♥ Three more grandchildren on the way:  
Leah & Kevin's 2nd (due in August),  
Rebekah & Jeremy's 2nd (due in November),  
Joshua & Audry's 1st (due in January)

♥ God's gifts of peace and joy

✝ To see the love of God at work in "all things"

✝ Our school teachers and new classes

**One In Christ, Inc.**  
13820 NW 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Alachua, Florida 32615

*ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED*

NONPROFIT  
US POSTAGE PAID  
ALACHUA, FL  
PERMIT NO.11