

"THINGS WE HAVE IN COMMON"

Exodus 3:7-8

" I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. And I have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters. For I am aware of their suffering. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians. And to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land -- the land flowing with milk and honey. When God appeared to Moses, he said, I know your sorrows. He knows it because he is certain. It is an unlimited knowledge which God has of all of the sorrows, of the heart. Now this sorrow, may have been long continued. Deeply oppressed, widely experienced. But God comes down and says to Moses, I know for certain your common afflictions. I know what you have in common.

And (another thing) when God came down, he said I am going to help you. He delights in helping. I am going to deliver. Now this is a form of human speech. I am going to bring you up out of that land - a large and a good land - flowing with milk and honey.

This is going to be the inheritance of the church. And God said to Moses I have seen all of the things that you have in common. After reading that text, one cannot help but think - just what do we have in common? What things are there today in the midst of all who are here - that you have in common.

We all - we might be able to list some of the things that we have in common. For one thing, we all have weight problems. We have this in common. Some people are

worried because they have too much of it. Others are worried, because they would like to put a little more on.

We all have a death problem. That is everywhere. That is common with man.

We all have a judgement problem. This is in common - we'll all face the judgement. The end of the world is something we have in common - we are all moving toward that.

The Gospel is something that we have in common.

A conscience is another thing that all of us have in common. Whether we are young or whether we are old - a man or a woman, we all have a conscience.

Today we have noise in common. Did you know that ours is a noisy age. Everywhere you go there is noise. You get out on the street or highways, wherever you go, there is a loud, loud noise. I was standing in a store the other day listening to two Negro women talk about the situation of noise. They were talking without being embarrassed about anybody hearing it. And she was talking about her daughter, she said, my daughter is ruining her ears. And there is nothing that I can do about it. She says, you know you get in the car. And she has that radio tuned into a rock station, and she says, the car windows in the car are going like this. And she demonstrated with her hands. How they were moving. Finally, she said, we got her a

head phone. And she can ruin her own ears. So she sits around with a set of head phones and listens to noise. Noise, this is something that we have in common. What does Henry Kissinger, Phyllis Diller, Moses, and you might include yourself - have in common.

Have you ever taken a real look at Henry Kissinger. He is short, he is very stout. His hair is cut very close to his head. He is always wearing dark-rimmed glasses. And has a dark suit on. And his voice is very deep and he speaks in a monotone. And gives you the appearance of being a great scholar. Being a man of great, keen intellect. And he knows how to relate to great leaders in our world.

Now consider, Phyllis Diller. She looks like an accident - going somewhere to happen. Her hair always appears to have been pressed recently, by a hot iron. If you were to meet her in the dark, you would probably have a heart attack.

On the surface these people - Kissinger, Diller are different as winter and summer or day or night. But however, they have one thing in common. They have that which is in common with you and with Moses, they have a need, to love and to be loved. That's the same need Moses had. The ditch digger out here on the highway, needs that. The man who drives a taxi-cab out here on the streets - up and down the streets of this city needs that. The person who works in the shop - that is his basic need. To love and to be loved.

God came down to Moses - the people of God and he said, we are going to begin a great adventure. And I am going to meet that need that you have to love and to be

loved.

Now mark this down, God cannot meet that need if you are unwilling for him to meet it. In the New Testament, the book of Mark, Chapter 12, Verses 37 and 38 - we find that the common people heard him gladly. Who were the common people. What did they have in common. They were largely sheep without a shepherd. They were people who needed God. Now, it was not just poor people, wealthy people, working people, but the whole of humanity. And the Scripture says they heard him gladly. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was made for man - and they received it - because Jesus treated them fairly. He respected people. He spoke to them very plainly. He talked to them just as individuals. And he had great sympathy for them. His heart was in what he had to say. And this is powerful language. And because of his teaching, he knew what was in man, and his words were abundantly fitted to meet man's need. He knew that there was sin in man - but he knew that the Gospel would absolutely fill that need. And Jesus spoke with authority. And no wonder these common people heard him gladly and they cried out - Hosanna.

Now let us see what our text really is saying to us.

I. A UNIVERSAL FACT

If there is one fact in all of this universe, it is that all men have one basic need. // To love and to be loved. //

I read the story about a little girl sitting on the floor playing with her dolls.

After a time, she put the doll down, and crawled into her mother's lap. Her mother asked what was wrong - the child replied. I enjoy loving my doll but my doll does not love me back.

I really think that God has so created us that we find ultimate meaning and we are able to love and to be loved.

Let me say that if you are going to be able to cope with life, you must have this universal need met.

What if this need is not met. Well, men resort to all kind of strange and harmful behavior. You remember Gary Gilmore - the mass murderer - in the Utah State Prison that was executed. In the trial, Gilmore informed the world that he wanted to die. Well, several Doctors interviewed him. And they said it was the truth - that he was announcing that he wanted to die. They contended that the attention of the news and the media made him feel important. T. V. cameras took his picture. Newspapers put his face across the first page. And in some sort of way, Gilmore said, why this is the love that I have been looking for.

→ As a child, Gilmore was abused. He grew up believing that I'm not o.k. And this causes him to look at other people and say, you are not o.k. either. There is something wrong with you. Even in killing, he was trying to fulfill that need in his life. He'd kill a person and he felt important. This way he was getting the attention of others. His experience reminds us that the greatest need for love - when it is not met, the Devil can enter in and twist the mind and cause it to be sick.

Take another illustration, for example, of the 21 American prisoners in China after the Korean Conflict who decided not to come home. They were evenly divided between the white and the black. Their I. Q. ranged from 95-145. The men were from all sections of the United States. A few of them had been reared in poverty. A few had a wealthy background. Most of them were middle-class folks. However, in the research that was done on this group of men, do you know they had one thing in common. That one thing was this -- they were from broken homes. Could it be that these men were easily brain-washed because the great basic need for love had never been met in their personal lives.

Some years back in a movie on P. O. W. - it was about a P. O. W. who cracked under the investigation of the enemy. His capturers discovered that he felt his father had never loved him. His father was a stern military man who did not believe in an open display of affection. The demanding, unyielding father reared a disturbed young man. Once the enemy exposed his emptiness - why the young man became like putty in their hands.

Dear friends, we do ourselves - we do our family - we do our loved ones a grave injustice when we do not believe in open displays of affection. This is a universal act of a basic need. Gilmore did not get it - and he could not cope with life.

When the need for love is fulfilled - why you can cope with almost anything. I think one of the greatest modern stories today on this - is Corey Tin Boom. Because her family protected Jews in Holland during World War II - Tin Boom family was subject to harsh treatment by the Nazi's. Corey and her sister were sent to a concentration camp. But even there - their story was one of victory. Ministering to those around

them - they were able to bring the light of God into the depths of Hell. Because of the great love they had experienced within their family - and their abiding faith in God's love - they were able to cope where others gave up in despair. Now Corey's sister died in the camp. Corey was spared and continued to give great witness to God's love. You remember, some of you have seen her on T. V. Some of you have seen the movie, produced about her life.

A great deal has been written about men who have survived prison terms, days of war, our prisoners who were locked-in. One common thing continues to appear. That through all of this ordeal, many of them said they were loved by their families and by God. And that gave them courage to live. Love is a powerful course. When a man walks within its walls - he finds courage to conquer.

Now I have said that here is a universal fact - that every man needs love.

II. FOUNTAINS FOR FULFILLING THIS NEED

Now, I've stated that it is universal- we need it. But now where can this need be met. Where can we get this love and be loved. Where can we fulfill this basic need.

I have not time to phantom all of these but I want to say that one place is God's love.

2
Second, a loving family.

3
Third, loving friends.

Now a person can probably make it in life when he only has one level being met. However, when one is loved in all three of these places in which we have mentioned - he can experience the highest and the best.

Now there is no way that I can determine how your family is going to treat you. I can say to you this, with deep assurance, that you are deeply loved by God. The Bible proclaims that God is love. I John 4. The Scriptures go farther and say, in that this is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation- that his mercy seat for our sins. I John 4:10.

We all remember Luke 15 - the Parables in which God's love for us is stretched. When Jesus was asked why he associated with sinners, he gave these beautiful Parables.

First, he described the Shepherd Searching for a lost sheep. He reminded them and he reminds us, that God is the Heavenly Shepherd who is always seeking us.

Second, he told of a Father receiving a rebellious son. Who had wasted his life

in sinful living. Now this was his way of reminding us that God's love is extended toward sinners.

Many years ago, a sailor was trying to measure the uncharted sea. Each time he threw out his line - he was unable to touch the bottom of the ocean. With every cast of the line - he would write in the depth chart - it is deeper than that.

Now if we were going to say something like that today, we can say that God's love - it is deeper than we can ever understand. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.

One of the fountains for meeting this love is going to be met in your home and your family. And it is going to be met by your friends.

And then another place where love is a real fountain, and this need can be met is in the church. To love and to be loved - is the function of God's people. God's understanding of man and his great need. Is that he has sought him through his son and through his church.

Men and women everywhere need to turn to the church and hear that they can find love. A young woman wandered away from the church in bad company and had gone into the depths of despair. She said I am going to do something desperate. I'll get drunk, commit suicide, or go to church. Then in a serious moment, she said, why did I

say I'll go to church. That is exactly what I'll do. Once I went to church. And I fed my soul and my mind on the great thoughts of God. I had peace. So she went to church the next Sunday. Listened to the music and the Word of God. And she was captured. She went out not to suicide but to commit her ways unto the Lord. The church is the place where people function with God's people.

What did Jesus say was the greatest commandment. You shall love your Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the greatest and the foremost Commandment.

And he said, the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
Matt. 22:37-39.

By loving God and being loved by Him, we find the fountain and the resource to love ourselves and to love others. And Jesus said by this, all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35. The Bible says, as believers, we are the body of Christ. And the way we express and this body works - it is through love.

You remember that old story in the Old Testament about Ruth. When she said, entreat me not to leave Thee, or to turn away from following after Thee. For wherever Thou goest, I will go. That was the most wonderful pledge any person had ever made. Now I have used that sometimes while performing a ring ceremony. And it is a tremendous decision that Ruth made.

Listen to her - entreat me not to leave Thee. Or to turn away from following after Thee. For where Thou goest, I will go. Isn't that wonderful. She says, don't tell me to go back. Where you will go - I will go. I am going with you. I have made a decision like that - I will go. And where thou lodgest, I will lodge. And now, I am not using you as a past to get into the land or to get out of this land. I am going to stay with you - you can count on me. I'll live with you. And Thy people shall be my people.

My, (what a decision.)

Ruth said your people - may not accept me. But I am going to accept them. They are God's people. And when you become a child of God, you have to love God's people. Some of them are not so lovely. And some are more lovely than others. But you have to love God's people. And Ruth said - your people are going to be my people now. And your God my God.

Her decision was a (decision for God.) What she was saying was - where Thou diest, will I die. And there will I be buried. When I read that statement - I thought that was practically nothing. What does that mean to us today. And then a little research helped me to understand. It meant everything to an Israelite. And it reveals to me some great instruction because every Israelite wanted to be buried in that land. Abraham wanted to be buried in that land because God had promised him that land. Jacob way down in Egypt said - don't you bury me down here among these mummies. You take me up and bury me with my Fathers. Gen. 47. Joseph took an oath that he would bury his father and there was hope.

I've got a different hope, you've got a different hope. The Lord Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place, I will come again and receive you unto myself.

You remember when Joseph, before he died, said be sure now when you come up out of Egypt - that you take my bones.

Ruth knew that and who told her that. Why, it was the family of Elimelech that had instructed her. And she said, where you are buried, there I will be buried. For that is my hope. I have that hope too, she said, but someday I will be raised in that land. What a marvelous thing and what a pledge. Isn't that glorious - that her love was so deep and moving - that she wanted to be in that land of honey on the day of that resurrection. And the two of them went and came to Bethlehem and people looked at Naomi and they said - is that Naomi. She is so changed. They actually did not recognize her. This woman had paid a tremendous price. She had lost every one that she loved. Her sons, her husband. But now she was returning with a little foreign girl that loved her. She went away full, but she is coming back empty - they said. Now I do not know much about what is full. But I know a lot about what is empty. And it was along the way that this woman's life had been emptied. But when she came back, she had the love of Ruth. And she had the love of God. And what a wonderful story and illustration. We have some things in common.

Years ago in Chicago, a young boy was walking along through the snow on his way to church. He had been walking a long way. He was only half-way to the church. He stopped under the shelter of the doorway and a stranger asked him, where are you going my boy. Oh, he said, I am on the way to Mr. Moody's church. Realizing that the young boy had passed a number of churches, and would pass some other churches, to

reach Moody's church. The stranger said, why are you so willing to walk so far.
The boy's response was a classic.

Because they really know how to love a fellow down there.

That small boy had a need. And the need was for love. And the body of Christ at the church where Moody preached. Knew how to meet that very basic need.

Lawrence Riley, who was 80 years old, who lived in Amery, Miss. Before he retired he was an associate Pastor of a large Baptist Church, up in central Miss. He decided to develop the ministry. He picked out several nursing homes in the area. He visited them weekly. He'd go in, talk to the folks, read some Scripture. Have a prayer, and in one home was a lady. Who had not spoken to anyone for several years. Her children and the administrator of the nursing home said she had lost her mind.

She spent her days lying in bed. Staring blankly. Brother Riley, always made a point to stop in her room and visit. Like others before, he would talk. But he would not get a response. This went on for several years. One day while sitting in her room by the bed, Brother Riley decided he would do something different. Instead of talking to her - he said, I believe I'll sing.

He began to sing - Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. In the middle of his singing, the lady turned to Brother Riley, put her arms around his neck and said, Brother Riley, I know Jesus loves me. Because you do.

The dear lady was not insane - just needed to know that she was loved.

To love and to be loved is the basic need of every person here.

In the beginning of the Bible, God created. First, he created a man. And God in his own words said, it is not good for this man to live here alone. He created a wife.

God's next declaration was - you two be fruitful now and multiply, so that there will be love for you. For those you produce and for me.

2 Tim. 4:9 - the old man Paul, had spent many days in prison. And he was writing to young Timothy. And he said, make every effort to come to me soon. Paul needed some of that love.

When people love, their lives are changed. And God is glorified. And Heaven is richer because you have found your way into the Kingdom.