

Love

Advent

has passed away being willing to allow the body, the shell of our soul, to be used for research and transplants so someone else can live. I believe that is real love that can only come from one's true love for mankind. We may ask ourselves, "Is the body needed after our soul has passed away?" This question has spawned many very interesting and deep conversations with one's self and with others. It is a situation that each one has to answer for himself.

When my husband was fighting cancer he was asked to be a part of a few different experiments over the years. He agreed because he said the research may someday help one of his grandsons to fight cancer through the learning that would be done. Unfortunately he received the placebo twice, but he was willing to give just as so many others you may also know who also thought of others. I know that my husband had a very deep faith and he has received his eternal reward but he was willing to give so that others could maybe beat cancer. He is just one of so many who gave and so today we have many people who are being healed because others sacrificed.

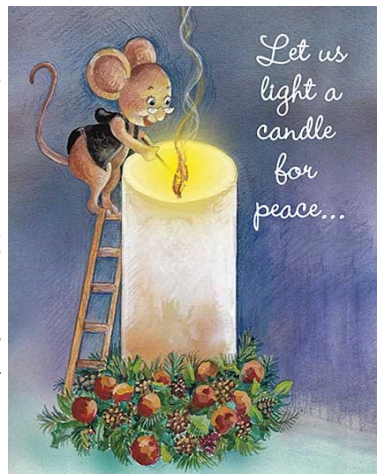
Many people, military and civilian give their lives every day in the line of work. The ways of giving are endless and many people give of themselves willingly as parents, teachers, and the list goes on, but it is not easy. There are so many unanswered questions. And, as we always say "That is why it is called Faith." I cannot imagine facing each day without faith that God is in control even though I don't always understand.

When Jesus was talking with his disciples one time, he told them he was going to be leaving them and going to prepare a place for them so they could go to be with him. I think I would have thought that meant it was going to be fairly soon. They had questions.

Thomas asked "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Christ answered "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (See John 14) He doesn't tell them "You must believe in me." as Johns 3:16 says, but yet, he does. They have to believe that he is going to prepare a place for them and will come again for them, just as he will for us, but it is so hard for us to comprehend with our finite minds!

There is an inner peace that comes to each of us as we accept Christ as our Savior. Many think that is the beginning of eternal life. Thousands of pages have been written by many learned scholars to try to explain what Christ has said. There are many different opinions. Only one voice matters when we listen in faith. Yet, we all want to know more.

But as we examine Scripture we can strengthen our faith or sometimes question more until we love and believe.



John 3:16-17
"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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

This candle is sometimes referred to as the Angel's Candle because God sent the angels to tell of God's love and his sending peace into the world with the birth of Christ. We speak of love in a very causal way at times. What does love really mean. Acceding to this Scripture God cared enough about us to send his son to us to be crucified. While he was here before people decided to get rid of him, he taught enough people about real love that we have Salvation today. That is some kind of love. I am constantly amazed at people who give a lung or another body part to someone they don't even really know. The transplanting of organs gives life to so many people through the family of a loved one who

We need the love that will not perish and *“have everlasting life.”*

There is a wonderful conversation between Christ and a man named Nicodemus who is only mentioned a few times in the Bible. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He was very important and a member of the Jewish ruling council, well educated, and very influential. He was one who was supposed to object to this man Jesus, who was telling people about God and performing miracles. Many Pharisees had approached Christ as he was preaching and tried to trick him, but Nicodemus went to him at night and quietly acknowledged his faith by saying. *“Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”* (John 3:2)

Nicodemus had heard Christ preach. He had seen miracles being performed, but he was a Pharisee and he was not supposed to be “fooled” by this itinerant preacher. Christ realized he was seeking an answer and told him he must be *“born again.”* Nicodemus responded: *“how can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”* (John 3:4) Nicodemus must have been as confused as we would have been. He soon realized though that Christ was not talking about a physical rebirth.

We must all have this “rebirth” as difficult as it is to comprehend. Just as the Pharisees were so dependent on their own power and knowledge, we also have a difficult time understanding a spiritual transformation through the love of a



God that we cannot see and touch (Or can we?). When we are “born again” in a Spiritual way, we are not physically born, but we accept that we cannot grasp the mysteries of the kingdom of God or understand the fullness of his love.

God has given us love and he has given us the power to love Him and to love each other. What a wonderful gift. We hear the cliché that *“Love came down at Christmas.”* Yes, it did, but it has always been there since the beginning of time and will be available to each of us until the end of time. We cannot control it in others, but we can accept it as a gift from God and give it to each other.



Prayer: Lord, thank you for loving me. Thank you for your amazing grace to love me as I am and yet want only the best for me. Help me to be loveable. Help me to feel your love and the love of those around me and be willing to pass the blessings of love on to others through your grace and compassion. Amen

1. Are you God’s friend?
2. Do we sometimes have a difficult time loving? Why?
3. Are there degrees of Faith? Of love?
4. Can we sometimes have difficulty loving someone who we feel does not love us?
5. Can you feel love from someone else?
6. What is unconditional love, or compassionate love or agape love?

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“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

John 15:13