

An outreach of the Rockwood Community Church of Rockwood, Maine
Week of February 14, 2004

The Log Chapel

“The *Heart* within the Heart of the Moosehead Lake Region”

□
“Celebrations of Life and Ministry”

Prayer:

O God,
You are the well-spring of life.
Pour into our hearts the living water of Your grace,
that we may be refreshed to live this day in joy,
confident of your presence
and Empowered by Your peace,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Book of Common Worship

Reflection:

A few days ago, my daughter Candace was making Valentine Day cards with her son, Alexander. He asked her, “Why do we make these pretty valentines?” She responded, “Because, we send them to people who love us and whom we love.” He spoke right up and said, “Well then, I would like to send one to God!”

Now I don’t know what his father, Louis, who is the Associate Pastor of the Gettysburg Presbyterian Church thought. I don’t know whether he thought that is preach able, but Grandpa sure did! So last Sunday’s sermon was “A Valentine for God!”

“And you should love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and strength. . . .” These words get their start a long way back in the book of Deuteronomy where they are part of the creed of the Jewish faithful. Jesus picks up these words and uses them in giving ample emphasis in the New Testament as to the importance and necessity of our love for God. □

We are to love God with all our hearts. The “heart” in Scripture is the center of our emotions. It is the center of essence and being. We were made to be lovers of God. It is our birthright and our destiny. It is to share the most intimate of feelings with this one who loves us. “My Jesus, I love you. . . if ever I loved Thee, my Jesus is now.”

The second part of the verse in our Valentine for God is the instruction to love Him with all of our minds. This is not flippant, superficial or casual emotion. We are talking cognitive commitment! We are to affirm and appreciate God with our intellect and reason. This requires depth and dedication. As in the first instance, we might wrap our arms around God, in this case we are to wrap our minds around Him in our attempt to know His Truth, as did our teachers, St. Augustine, John Calvin, and so many other great minds.

Thirdly, we are to love God with all our soul. This is where we who have been created in the image of God can love with abandonment the One who knows us so well that He knew us when we were being formed in our mother's womb and has counted the hairs of our head. He is so intimate with us that we share the same soul print. He knows our every sigh even before they are ever stretched out into sentences. We don't have to say anything. Like true soul mates, we can sit in silence with one another communicating and almost finishing one another's thoughts and sentences. It is like two hearts sharing the same body. Henry Drummond once suggested that St. Paul had Jesus in mind when he wrote the Love Chapter: "Jesus is patient and kind. Jesus is not jealous or boastful or rude. Jesus is not arrogant or rude. Jesus does not insist on his own way. He is not irritable or resentful. Jesus keeps no score of wrongs. Jesus rejoices in the right. Jesus bears all things. Jesus believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Jesus will never fail you." Don't those words just resonate in your heart and stretch your soul? Jesus is God who became like us, so we could become like Him! Wow! That's Good News?

The last part of the verse in our Valentine for God reminds us to love Him with all our strength. We are to love him with energy and passion. Our love for God is not to be lukewarm in the slightest! This love is to be a powerful and passionate love which demands the total strength and effort of who I am and who you are! Thomas Merton, the wonderful Christian writer of just a few years ago once wrote:

Love is, in fact, an intensification of life, a completeness, a fullness, a wholeness of life. We do not live merely in order to vegetate through our days until we die. Nor do we live in order to take part in the routines of work and amusement that go on around us. . . life is not a straight horizontal line between two points, birth and death. Life curves upward to a peak of intensity, a high point of value and meaning, at which all its latent creative possibilities go into action and the person transcends himself or herself in encounter, response, and communion with another. It is for this that we came into the world – communion and self-transcendence. We do not become fully human until we give ourselves to each other in love. . . Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone—we find it with another. . . The meaning of our life is a secret that has to be revealed to us in love, by the one we love. We will never be fully real until we let ourselves fall in love—either with another human person or with God.

There you have it! A Valentine for God! Is there anything more important?

Let us Pray –

Lord, forgive me when I say "I love You" and yet impose limitations. Help me learn a limitless love which like an eternal "Yes" reverberates across the heavens, dances in my soul, and sends me singing, living, being, and giving with energy, excitement and expectancy! Let my love for You, O God be that special "something else" that my grandson believes it is suppose to be! In Jesus Name.

Dr. Robert L. Veon

Prayer Concern List: □

Jackie McCourtney who is having surgery on Feb 18th; Ann Loiselle recuperating at home with heart concerns; Deborah Butzbach, and her husband Phil, as they struggle with a difficult pregnancy. Peace in the world.