

Monday, May 18, 2020

Owe no one anything but this

Pastor Hank French

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:8-10).

Those of you who read these devotions, listen to my sermons or have attended Bible studies that I have led have probably noticed that, more often than not, my devotions, sermons and Bible studies focus on love as the way of God that Jesus lived and taught.

You have probably figured out that I agree with Paul who declared: "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and *the greatest of these is love*" (1 Corinthians 13:1-2, 13).

I agree with Paul who also declared: "The *only thing that counts* is faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6).

And then we have the text from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome for today's devotion—"Owe no one anything, except to love one another." Think of the world we live in with all of its outrage and anger, all of its hatred, all of its bigotry, all of its revenge. Paul dreams of a different world. One in which we owe no one outrage and anger; one in which we owe no one hatred; one in which we owe no one bigotry; a world in which we owe no one vengeance. Paul dreams of a world where we owe no one anything but love—and what a lovely dream.

But can such a dream come true? In an imperfect, finite world, never perfectly. But, if enough people of faith own the dream, they can change the world for the better.

Walt Disney once reportedly said, "If you can dream it, you can do it." First comes the dream; second comes the conviction that the dream should become reality; third comes sharing the dream with others; fourth comes working with all you've got to make it so.

The 18th century German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, once wrote: "I hold to faith in the divine love — which, so many years ago for a brief moment in a little corner of the earth, walked about as a man bearing the name of Jesus Christ." Christians who bear the name of Christ should, as best we can, follow his example.

Prayer: Holy God—you who are love—today and every day strengthen my faith in your love and empower me to follow Jesus who lived and taught the way of love. Amen.