

Thursday, July 30, 2020

**What's love got to do with it?**

**- Pastor Hank French**

*The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words (Romans 8:26).*

This is a comforting text—difficult but comforting. Are there any among us who have never been in a situation where we didn't know what to do and, consequently, didn't know how to pray? Are there any among us who have never been faced by circumstances that we didn't know how to cope with and, consequently, didn't know how to pray about, didn't know what to pray for?

Are there any among us who have never known others in need, others in a difficult situation, others facing tough circumstances and didn't know how to pray for them? Forty-five years of pastoral experience have convinced me that there are not many, if any, people of faith who have not known, from time to time, how to pray for themselves or how to pray for others.

At times, our understanding of the situations and circumstances we—or others—are facing is so limited that we can't see our way through, and we don't know how to pray. But, as Paul assures us, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness," and when we just don't know how to pray, the Spirit prays for us.

Over and over again in his letters to the early churches, Paul reminds us that the Spirit of Jesus lives within us:

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us (Romans 5:5).

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6).

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God (1 Corinthians 6:19)?

And the Spirit of Jesus within us prays for us when we don't know how to pray or what to pray about, "with sighs too deep for words," which means "with deep compassion and love." That's Jesus—a man of deep compassion and love, and if you believe in the resurrection—and you wouldn't be a Christian if you didn't—and if you believe in the continuing presence of Christ in the community of faith—and you wouldn't be a Christian if you didn't—then you believe in compassion and love.

There is comfort and courage in the belief that his Spirit is with and within us, praying for us when we just don't know how to pray for ourselves and others.

So, when you don't know how to pray and what to pray for, just ask God—in the words of Tina Turner—"what's love got to do with it?" and trust that that is exactly what the Spirit is praying about for you and for those others you want to pray for, and trust that, sooner or later, you will know what to do. And trust that it will have something to do with compassion and love.

Prayer: Loving God, that is all I really want to know—in all the situations and circumstances of my life, what's love got to do with it. Amen.