

Saturday, April 4

When Faith Is Dangerous

by Pastor Hank

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 (1 Corinthians 13:2).

As a teacher in Japan, I once taught a Bible study on love for new Christians. When we arrived at 1 Corinthians 13, Paul's great teaching on love, I told them to close their Bibles and listen as I read the chapter to them.

When I got to the end of the chapter, I read verse 13: "Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is _____? _____." I asked them to fill in the blank. Out of a class of 22 people, two voted for hope; another two voted for love. When I asked if faith was the greatest, the other 18 hands went up.

In their defense, remember these were new Lutheran Christians who had learned well the core Lutheran idea of the centrality of faith, the idea that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works.

I then passed around a picture I had cut out of the *Japan Times*. It showed several soldiers standing around their still smoking rocket launcher, raising their hands to heaven to thank God for the successful completion of their mission. The caption to the picture noted that the rockets they had fired had landed in a kindergarten and killed 23 children.

Then I reread 1 Corinthians 13:13: "Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love;" not faith but love. For you see, faith without love is the most dangerous thing ever loosed upon the face of the earth.

Whenever we, as people of faith, think about how our faith is working itself out in all the places where we live and work and play, it might be helpful to keep that old Tina Turner song in mind and ask ourselves: "What's Love Got to Do with It?"

Prayer: Loving God, today, in all that I do and with every person I meet, let my faith be a mirror of your love. Amen.