

# W O R D A T W O R K

## VOLUME XXXII NUMBER VIII GOD'S LAYERED LOVE I

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1

Scripture: Galatians 3:1,2

Galatians 3:1,2 states, *“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”* Galatians is quite an interesting book because it has so many parallels with what we are seeing in the church today. Just as the Galatian church was under assault from the legalistic Judah-izers, we find the church today inundated with ‘extreme grace’! ‘Extreme grace’ says there is no more judgment – that it all fell on Jesus. While there is spiritual truth to the fact that Jesus took our judgment and that we are free in Him, we still see that the Ten Commandments are used as God's judicial code in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation. The ascended, seated Christ is still the Judge of all the Earth and He is certainly Judge in the church. In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus is judging the church. Now, just like the Galatians were under assault by the Judah-izers, the church today is under assault by those who claim grace frees us from moral responsibility. The fruit of ‘extreme grace’ is beginning to be seen everywhere to the point that the fear of God is nearly nonexistent in many churches. I believe if Paul were to walk into many of our churches today, he would say, *“Oh foolish Americans!”* To ensure we would not hear that, let us make sure we pursue the **whole** council of God's Word and not just the part that sounds good.

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 2

Scripture: Galatians 4:13-15

Galatians 4:13-15 says, *“You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.”* It is interesting to notice that the whole reason Paul was introduced to the Galatian church was because of a physical malady he was battling. It is amazing that even in the trials of life that come at us, God uses and brings something of value out of them. I remember there was a season of about 3 ½ months in which I had ruptured one disk in my back and herniated two others. I was on pain medication, bed-rest, and trying desperately to avoid back surgery. I had about two hours in each day where I knew what spirit I was of and during that period, the Lord kept dealing with me about converts versus disciples. I ended up with a five-message series and the Lord said He wanted me to develop it into a book. Out of that 3 ½ months of indescribable back pain, God birthed a book. The Lord redeems what the enemy intends for destruction whether in life or death! He can redeem trials and bring good out of them whether in life or eternity. Paul was testifying to that as part of his foundation with the Galatian church. As we face adversity, let us look for the redeeming Hand of God. Jesus is our ultimate example of bringing life out of death!

### FRIDAY, AUGUST 3

Scripture: Galatians 4:16-20

Galatians 4:16-20 states, *“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. But it is good to be zealous in a*

*good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.*" Do we actually become an enemy when we speak truth? I have had that experience in a number of places where the truth God gives finds no receptive ear to hear. In order to discount the Word, people must find fault and accuse the emissary. Galatians 4:19 tells us that Paul labored a second time in birth until Christ was formed. Isn't it interesting that, spiritually speaking, there is a labor for the actual formation of Christ in us? Truth must be assimilated while error is rejected. Just because we attend church does not mean that Christ is formed in us! When Christ is formed in us, He is Lord! That takes a distinct labor for a specific goal. Until that process is complete, God may well have doubts about us and our willingness to walk with Him into the fullness of what He has. When God has doubts, we hear about it by the messages He sends!

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

Scripture: Galatians 5:9-12

Galatians 5:9-12 records, *"A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is. And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!"* Paul was so disgusted with the Judah-izers who were trying to divide and destroy the church he publicly proclaimed that he wished they were castrated because that is precisely what they were doing to the church. Paul was graphic and straightforward. He asked them up front, "Will I become your enemy if I tell you the truth?" Do we allow preachers to become our enemies if they challenge us with painful truth? Are we willing to hear the truth of God? I trust we are.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

Scripture: Revelation 2:18-20

Revelation 2:18-20 states, *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 'I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you **allow** that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."* Jesus made something very clear to the church at Thyatira – passivity in the face of evil is sin! The Greek word for "allow" is **eh-ah-o**, which means to 'tolerate or refuse to restrain.' When sin seduces God's servants by tolerance, God sends correction. The church at Thyatira had been taken captive by the demonic doctrine of tolerance. They apparently believed, just as a number of our churches do today, that certain realms of sexual immorality are OK and God will ignore their sins. Jesus said, "Not so!" If we refuse to restrain evil and tolerate what God hates, then Jesus the Judge says He will show up and be ready to act – terminally. If Jesus were to walk into some of our churches today, would anyone be left standing? God is intolerant of vile sin. Our redemptive Most High God knows that some actions bring irreparable darkness to mankind! God demands that we reflect His intolerance against vile sin. Would Jesus be convicted of hate speech in America today? Some politicians are committed to making God's Word illegal and are doing so through hate speech legislation!

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 6

Scripture: Revelation 2:21,22

Revelation 2:21,22 state, *"And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds."* Is Jesus giving our liberal church leaders who are ordaining homosexual priests, time to repent? What will happen if they do not? Two things Jesus said will happen – first, they are headed for a sickbed and second, they will receive great tribulation – not minor, not moderate but **great!** Jesus has levels of judgment. These levels appear in the New Testament. What happened to grace? The grace that is operational is that He gave them time to repent. He gave them space. But when time runs out without repentance, Level One unfolds – the sickbed. Level Two follows – *great* tribulation. I suspect there may yet be another level. I wonder if there is a Level Three and if it is reserved for vile sin.

## TUESDAY, AUGUST 7

Scripture: Revelation 2:23

Revelation 2:23 says, *“I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”* If anyone ever wonders whether Jesus acts terminally in the New Testament the answer is, He does! What incites Jesus to kill in the New Testament? Does twisted sexual immorality and the tolerance of it reach a termination stage? The answer is yes – in the second generation. Whenever spiritual kids begin to expand the perversion their parents adopt, Jesus says in Revelation 2:25, *“I will kill her children with death...”* He finished the verse with, *“I will give to each of you according to your works.”* Jesus is still Judge in the New Testament. He is the Judge who says, *“Some things will get you terminated!”* Jesus is the Terminator in the book of Revelation and starts out being a terminator in the church before He starts terminating in the world. Can we expect to see Jesus the Terminator show up in church? According to Revelation 2:23, we can bank on it!

## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8

Scripture: Revelation 2:24-26

Revelation 2:24-26 states, *“Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—...”* If we choose to overcome what the enemy throws at us then God gives us the grace to keep those words until the end and gives us authority over the resistance to our harvest in the nations. It is nice to know that God simply asks for spiritual integrity. If we choose to be obedient and walk in spiritual integrity then He says He will give us access to His judicial Throne. Power over the nations is access to God's judicial Throne. Every believer should have the goal of having access to God's judicial Throne. Because once we gain access to that place, then our harvest is guaranteed. No one can stop our harvest if we have access to God's judicial Throne. That is why getting to know the Jesus of Revelation is very, very important. It is the key to our harvest.

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 9

Scripture: Revelation 2:27-29, Psalm 2, Psalm 110:2

Revelation 2:27-29 states, *“‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ — as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”* Probably the most important qualification comes in gaining access to the biblical rod of iron. The rod of iron is the central part of Psalm 2 where we are told that Jesus bought and paid for a harvest and each one of us have a contribution to make in gaining that harvest. Opposition always comes in gaining a harvest. That is why Psalm 2 outlines the nature of the warfare when it says, *“Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed,...”* Psalm 2:6 says, *“Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”* The kings and rulers of the earth **set** themselves against the Lord and yet the Lord says, *“Yet I have **set** My King On My holy hill of Zion.”* What happens when two immovable objects collide? War happens and someone bows! Have we established the holy hill of Zion on the inside of us? If we have then the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is accessible in that place. The promise of Psalm 2 is that we will break that resistance with access to the rod of iron. Revelation 2 shows us how to get there. We either have access to the rod of iron or we do not. If we do not, we had better qualify and get it soon. The rod of iron is absolutely essential to every believer in the last days. The Bible has much to say about the rod of iron. Psalm 110:2 says, *“The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!”* We either have it or we do not. There can be no fooling around – it is essential to access the rod to gain our end-time harvest. We must have access to the rod of iron and understand we are commissioned to strike with it. Unless we cross that tolerance boundary, we will continue in passivity and lose a good portion of what God has assigned for our end-time harvest.

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 10

Scripture: Psalm 2:6-9, Revelation 2:27, 19:15, Isaiah 11:1

If we look at the Scriptures that outline the importance of the rod of iron, we start in Psalm 2:8,9 where we are told, *“Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”* Nobody is going to break their own harvest. The rod of iron is for the **resistance** to our harvest. We are the ones who have to break it – we must dash it! We must use that rod of iron and strike. Most people are very hesitant to pick up God's rod of iron and strike anything, yet that is a key we must learn. Part of gaining and preserving the harvest is the willingness to strike the enemy with the rod of iron **in prayer**. We are not asking people to yell, scream or fight, but to pick up the biblical rod of iron in prayer and to apply it to our opposition, asking God to remove it. Isaiah 11:1 says, *“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”* That is by the Holy Spirit. The restoration of David's tabernacle is the rising of the rod of iron in the church to function spiritually as David operated physically. Revelation 2:26,27 says, *“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’”* Revelation 19:15 says, *“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron...”* The Greek Word for ‘rule’ is the word **poy-mah-ee-no**, but this same word is also the word for ‘pastor’. Are we ready to pastor our harvest field with a rod of iron? If we are not then we do not even approach the biblical definition of a true shepherd. No biblical shepherd allows the lion, bear and wolf to steal their sheep. With a rod of iron, the shepherd defends his flock to the death. Where is that mentality in the church today? Church shepherds protect their flock with a rod of iron. We cannot find a truer shepherd than David or a bigger heart for war than his. David was a man after God's own heart – are we? The question is, are we ready to access that rod and stop playing church?

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

Scripture: Matthew 5:38,39

Matthew 5:38,39 says, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”* Recently I was headed to the airport for a ministry trip and I had a vision. I was taken back to the farm where I grew up and watched a veterinarian de-horn and castrate the bull calves. I watched as these animals were castrated and witnessed them lose every bit of aggression as a result. When this occurred, there was a complete personality change in the animal. Their motivation for exercise was replaced by appetite and all they did was eat and get fat for slaughter. We were told even the flavor of their meat changes and the animals get a name-change. After castration a boar becomes a barrow, a stallion becomes a gelding and a bull-calf becomes a steer. Castration has a dramatic impact on animals and the Lord said to me, *“My church looks to me like a castrated calf and I’ll show you the scalpel that was used in the operation.”* That scalpel was Matthew 5:38,39, *“But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”* When we take Scripture out of context and use it for the wrong purpose, it can have a devastating impact. This passage has been used to define God's love and yet that definition **by itself** equals utter and total passivity in the face of evil. The problem is, if we accept Matthew 5:38,39 as the **total** definition of God's love, we make Jesus a sinner because He did not always adhere to this standard of God's love. That is always how religion works. The Lord is trying to give spiritual manhood back to the church. The question is, are we willing to take it?

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

Scripture: Matthew 4:5-7

Matthew 4:5-7 says, *“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: “He shall give His angels charge over you,” and, “In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.”’”* Jesus said to him, *“It is written again, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.””* God said, *“I am going to show you how I see this passage. The devil took Jesus to church. And then, he preached Him a message.”* We have to notice how Jesus responded. Because satan took the Word out of context and used it for a temptation to presumption, I began to see what overemphasizing a truth

could do! It is possible to take Scripture out of context on a continual basis, and doing that has had devastating effects on the church. We have preached the Body of Christ into passivity by emphasizing Matthew 5:38,39 to the exclusion of all the other representations of God's love. In God's eyes leaders have literally castrated the church and pushed it into passivity. The time has come for God to restore His people!

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 13

Scripture: Matthew 5:40-48

If we had continued to the end of the passage we would have noticed how Jesus balanced the love message, *"Therefore you shall be **tel-i-os**/perfect, just as your Father in heaven is **tel-i-os**/perfect."* "Perfect" is a terrible translation for the Greek word **tel-i-os**. Most of us who read "perfect" immediately think that for us it is too late for perfection. We are not, have never been and likely never will be perfect. We can mentally dismiss this part of the passage as a result. The unique thing about **tel-i-os** is that it does not mean "perfect" as much as it means, 'grow into completion so that we can shoulder and fulfill our destiny.' When Jesus said, *"...be **tel-i-os**, just as your Father in heaven is **tel-i-os**..."* what He was saying is "Love the way your Heavenly Father loves." If we do that, we will find ourselves resisting evil more than we are not resisting evil.

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 14

Scripture: 1 John 2:1-4

1 John 2:1-4 records, *"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."* Verse 3 makes it very clear the process of growth and development in Christ includes foundation stones. One of those foundation stones is very simply, whether or not you and I choose to do His Word and keep His Commandments. Those who choose to do His Word and keep His Commandments have access to the Throne. If someone does not do His Word and keep His Commandments, what makes us think they really know God? If a politician champions homosexuality in the military, what makes us think they really know God? His very actions say he does not know God at all. Verse 4 states, *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."* If we do not keep His commandments, we do not know Him.

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15

Scripture: 1 John 2:3-5

1 John 2:3-5 says, *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is **tel-i-o-o**/perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."* If we keep His Word then we are **tel-i-o-o**/perfected/matured/completed in Him. Isn't it interesting that just doing God's Word means we are growing toward the goal of shouldering the full measure of our destiny in Him? That is what God asks. God asks us to do His Word to the best of our ability. If we keep His Word, then our hearts mature and we know that we are of Him. That is the promise of 1 John. If we love the way Jesus loved then we are going to walk the way Jesus walked. Jesus loved the church enough to protect it from Ananias and Sapphira and loved Peter enough to protect him from Herod. Does the Lord love us enough to protect us from our enemies so we can fulfill our purpose in Him? We had better know that before we go any further. What matured Jesus to clean house in the Temple? Perhaps it was the spiritual condition of the victims! What would Jesus do today?

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 16

Scripture: John 2:13-17

John 2:13-17 states, *"Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's*

house a house of merchandise!' Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.'" Jesus did not turn the other cheek. Is He in sin or is He following the Spirit? He is most definitely following the Spirit. Jesus is following the Spirit and is cleaning house in the temple. Love does that. Love will confront evil to protect the ones we care for. Do we care for our harvest? Jesus cleaned house in the temple. He drove them all out. He poured out the changer's money, overturned the tables, even wielded a whip. Is this love? It is love in action! Love in action saved people from robbers. Will love act today on the robbers of the people?

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 17

Scripture: Matthew 5:38,48, Matthew 10:5-8

When we decide to balance Matthew 5:38 and 48 it has a single unique application to evangelism. Jesus prepared the twelve and the seventy to be sent to very specific audiences. Matthew 10:5-8 says, "These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'" They were told not to go to the Gentiles or to a city of the Samaritans. They were only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They were told precisely what to preach and what to do. "Do not resist an evil person" has definite limitations and those limitations are that you are only supposed to do it when the Spirit leads you in an evangelistic mode. When you are presenting the Gospel to a person, you are not rebuking them about their lifestyle. You are not resisting their evil. You are offering them Savior Jesus and overlooking everything else. Even though they have many hostile mindsets, we cannot deliver them until they accept Jesus. This is the place where "Do not resist evil" fits and it may well be the only place. When it is taken out of context, when it is applied to every situation, it turns the church into a vessel of passivity. That is not acceptable to the Lord.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 18

Scripture: 1 John 4:14-17

1 John 4:14-17 states, "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." Isn't it interesting to note that love has been **tel-i-o-tai**/'brought to maturity in us' when we have boldness in the Day of Judgment? Most of us pass that off until the last days. But if the last part of verse 17 is true, "...because as He is, so are we in this world...", when was the Day of Judgment for Peter – when he was locked up by Herod with the intent of taking his head off? The Day of Judgment was the day Peter needed judgment. It was not the day of the final judgment seat of Christ. The Day of Judgment is the day we need judgment. How is Jesus right now? He is seated at the right Hand of God as the Judge of all the Earth. Verse 17 says, "...as He is, so are we..." If the church ever really stopped to believe that, we would completely and totally act differently. Do we believe, "As He is, so are we"? That means we have 24/7 access to the judgment seat of Christ. That means if we pray it, declare it and decree it, I suspect things would be different. Do we really believe that as Jesus is, so are we in this world? If we really believed that, we would act very, very differently.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 19

Scripture: 1 John 2:28-29

1 John 2:28-29 says, "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." Verses 28,29 are our yardstick for whether we are dealing with truthful believers or casual deceivers. Those who practice righteousness are born of Him. Those who do not are not. Deceivers are those who say one thing but practice unrighteousness. Anytime we find a politician who is saying one thing but practicing unrighteousness, we know he is a liar and deceiver. We cannot trust him in any way, shape or form. Those who practice righteousness have a foundation and a platform for praying judicially and bringing the full measure of God's justice.

Those who do not, do not. Confidence only comes to those who practice righteousness and that confidence is going to be desperately needed in the last days.

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 20

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-17

Ephesians 3:18,19 states, *“Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”* Paul's prayer for the church is a prayer that brings us into the fullness of God's love. We need to be strengthened, we need to enthrone Christ in our hearts and we need to be rooted and grounded in love. That is the prayer that lays the foundation for five different layers of God's love. Each layer has a specific purpose! Are we ready for the multi-dimensional God to live and work through us? It is His goal and I trust we will unite with the fullness of His Spirit!

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 21

Scripture: Ephesians 3:18,19

Paul prays that we will know the five layers of God's love. There is 1) width, 2) length, 3) depth, 4) height and 5) the love of Christ which passes knowledge. The interesting thing about these two verses is that Paul equates the fullness of God with the five layers of God's love. As a matter of fact, that is his definition. Paul defines the fullness of God as us operational in five layers of God's love. Can we say that we see the fullness of God? Can we say we are operational in all five layers of love? When we love the way God loves there are five love expressions. The fullness of Christ implies spiritual maturity where we are equally confident sharing Jesus as Savior as praying a violent sexual offender into eternity by striking with the rod of iron! When it is time to love the enemy we must ask God to give us a number, Layer One through Five, so we know how to respond. Spiritual maturity is responding the way Jesus would from turning the other cheek to praying an Ananias and Sapphira event! Paul prayed for us to catch this understanding! How incredible that this truth of the layers of God's love is woven into one of the most central and pivotal of Paul's prayer passages in the whole New Testament. Is this truth important? You bet it is!!

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-13

Ephesians 4:11-13 says, *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect/tel-i-os man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;...”* Here is the word **tel-i-os** which unites us with Matthew 5:38,39. We are to love exactly the way God loves. According to Ephesians 4, the whole assignment of the five-fold ministry is bring us into each member's respective Layer of God's love. Each one of the five-fold have a different assignment for the maturing of the Body of Christ. That means the layer of love that a prophet carries is different from the layer of love that an evangelist carries. The layer of love that a teacher demonstrates is different from the layer of love that an apostle manifests. The whole assignment of each of the five-fold ministry is to bring us into spiritual maturity so that we can fulfill our destiny. Ephesians 4 defines Ephesians 3. Ephesians 4 makes it clear that God's assignment on the five-fold ministry is to bring us into the fullness of their particular layer of God's love. Each one of them has a different layer of love to impart because they represent a different piece of God's heart! Any church that refuses to welcome all the five-fold giftings retards growth in the congregation.

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 23

Scripture: Ephesians 4:14-16

Ephesians 4:14-16 states, “...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” The five-fold ministry is God's assigned agent for development and maturity in the church so that we can love the way God loves. It is an issue of growth, it is an issue of development and it is an issue of impartation. Do we attend churches that are committed to bringing this level of impartation to us? It is the only way we can reach the fullness of God. It was not man's idea, it was God's idea. God is the One who instituted this and He is the One who parceled out His heart in five different pieces. Paul said he labored until Christ was formed in the Galatians initially and after the Judah-izers, he had to labor again! Each one of the five-fold ministry has a forming job to do in the church. Unless we have each member of the five-fold's input in the area of mature love, we will not grow into the place God wants us to be.

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 24

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-6, 4:15

We need very little help discovering the evangelistic Layer of God's love because it is the only layer where we do not resist evil! As believers we should all be developed in this layer. Evangelists have a specific message. It is a message of acceptance. It is John 3:16, “You are accepted in the Beloved – Therefore, accept the Gospel. Jesus died for you. You were predestined to be adopted by Him. Accept His sacrifice and come into the Kingdom.” The evangelist has the ability to overlook sin, overlook anything a person is involved in and love them into the Kingdom. The evangelist turns the other cheek and prays for his enemy. But that is Layer One of God's love. It is time to grow enough so we can offer at least an initial layer of resistance when appropriate. Ephesians 4:15 says, “...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—...” Perhaps more than any other, the ministry gift that speaks the unvarnished truth is the prophet. Every one of the five-fold ministry has a distinctly different job to do in reproducing their piece of God's Heart in us. The prophet is often the one who, above all else, has a heart for truth and brings it even if it is a hard word to hear. The Bible is full of accounts of prophets giving warnings that, when heeded, saved people and cities from destruction.

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 25

Scripture: Ephesians 5:1

Ephesians 5:1 says, “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.” “Imitators” or “followers” is from the Greek word **mim-ma-tace** and it simply means ‘to mimic, act like, or reproduce as a mirror.’ We are supposed to reflect the Living God who dwells on the inside of us. We can only reflect the layers up to the layer established in us. For most of us that will be evangelistic and pastoral. Are we confident in reflecting the fullness of who Christ is whether meeting a Samaritan woman drawing water at a well or an Ananias and Sapphira who move in deceit? If we have been introduced to and taught all the layers of God's love, then we will be able to perfectly reflect Him, any place, any time and any where. That is the call. Are we moving in that direction?

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

Scripture: Ephesians 5:3-6

Righteousness is very important in reflecting the full measure of the judicial Christ. Unrepentant sin is not an option when representing the Judicial Christ. If we pray judicially then the fire will first fall on us if we have even a semblance of the same sin operating somewhere in our lives. Our New Testament says “...the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience.” Does it? Are we really seeing it? Or is it reserved for a dramatic seasonal change? Did all judgment fall on Jesus and therefore we do not have to see judgment anymore? Tell Ananias and Sapphira that one! Do we see judgment in the churches in Revelation because they refused to turn? Jesus warned the churches of

judgment if they did not turn. When a son of obedience becomes a son of disobedience, then he can expect one or more layers of God's love to come his direction because God is trying to save him from what will ultimately destroy him. Love saves. Love comes at us in five different ways to save. All judgments are redemptive!

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 27

Scripture: Ephesians 5:7-13

One of the things love does in verse 13 is that it exposes. Ephesians 5:11-13 states, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.”* We are commanded to expose the unfruitful works of darkness. Then we are told that all things are exposed by the light. Are we walking in the light? Jesus did. Ephesians 5 basically tells us that if we walk in the light, we will expose evil. It is inevitable – it can happen just when we walk into a room. We offend people because of the righteousness we carry. God's love exposes darkness. It does not overlook it. It does not comfort it, it does not coddle it. It exposes it. Are we there? Are we in that place yet? We have some growing to do!

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 28

Scripture: Acts 13:32-34

In Acts 13:32-34 we are given great promises, *“And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’”* We have the covenant of Sure Mercy. That covenant belongs to us and guarantees that whenever there is a fault or a failure God will restore us if we will turn. If we acknowledge and turn, the Lord will restore us. If we do not, then another layer of God's love can come at us. The next layer may not turn the other cheek but rather place His judicial hand on our throat.

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29

Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:15-17, 8-9

The covenant of Sure Mercy promised to redeem David's sin, four chapters before he ever met Bathsheba. That is redemption in action – redemption before he ever made the failure. That covenant promises to redeem failure if we will repent. Jesus guaranteed the covenant of Sure Mercy in Acts 13. Sure Mercy is the foundation for all five layers of love. It is **sure** because God promised not to take mercy from David as He took it from Saul for disobedience! Sure Mercy is a two-edged sword. The same mercy that cuts away and redeems our own failures will also put an enemy in a grave if they refuse to relent. 2 Samuel 7:8,9 says, *“Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.’”* God said, “I will cut off your enemy.” That is love in action. There is a layer of love that protects us from the enemy and that was God's covenantal promise to David. We have the same covenant. We need to recognize it for what it is and start praying the judicial side.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 30

Scripture: 2 Samuel 15:12-14

David found himself in a place where his own son came against him along with his best friend and chief counselor. It was a major betrayal. We are told in 2 Samuel 15:12-14, *“Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, from his city—from Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number. Now a messenger came to David, saying, ‘The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.’ So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, ‘Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.’”* David had no choice but to flee Jerusalem because he just lost his kingdom to his son.

David prayed his covenant. Acts 13:22 makes David our example of the Kingly heart that God wants us to imitate. To have a heart like David's we need to be willing to pray Psalm 55:12-15. David prayed based on his covenant. God intervened at his prayer. Both Absalom and Ahithophel went to the grave. Does God love us as much as He loved David? God is no respecter of persons so He surely does. There has to be a layer of love that saves us from our enemies. There is! David did not turn the other cheek when his destiny was threatened. David's action was a picture of apostolic love in action. Our covenant guarantees us access to put the enemy where he belongs when he challenges our destiny. Is your destiny being challenged? There is a layer of God's love that fits it! All we have to do is pursue and grow in our hearing of the Spirit so we can identify which layer is the right one. All five layers make up the fullness of Christ as Savior, Judge and King!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31

Scripture: 2 Samuel 17:23, Psalm 143:12

David prayed judicially and he prayed based on his covenant of mercy. Psalm 143 may be the best outline to invoke judicial mercy that exists in Scripture because of its pattern. Verse 12 states, "*In Your mercy cut off my enemies, And destroy all those who afflict my soul; For I am Your servant.*" Are we serving the Lord? If we are serving the Lord, we have a covenant of Sure Mercy that accesses five layers of God's love in order to aid us in bringing in our appointed harvest. The problem with today's church is, at best, most saints are applying only one layer or two when we truly need all five. We should be equipped to subdue evil but we have enabled it! That is the purpose of learning the five layers of God's love – so we can actually fulfill Matthew 5:48. "*Be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*" In context it is, "Love the way God loves." If we are led to evangelize, then we turn the other cheek and pray for our enemy. If we are facing a demonically-motivated politician or government bureaucracy that is trying to destroy our harvest field, that requires an entirely different prayer. Will the day come when the church can say to a demonized politician, "Do not make me ask God to visit you!"? When we are fully complete in God's love we can say, in a pastoral way, "Do not take that course of action. Do not make me ask God to visit you." When the church displays the fullness of Christ, Jesus the Judge will rule! I trust that day is not far off.

God's love exposes darkness,  
Unafraid to take a stand.  
It is full of strength and courage,  
And will war to save a land!

By Jayne Houghton

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