

# W O R D A T W O R K

## VOLUME XXXII NUMBER IX God's Layered Love II

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Scripture: 1 John 4:7,8

In 1 John 4:7,8 we are told that God is love and if we do not love, we do not know God. The problem with that statement for the church is how love has been defined out of human emotion and by selective Scriptures like Matthew 5:38. The biblical love we have been taught means we “turn-the-other-cheek” and pray for the enemy. But that is a small piece of the panorama of heart-actions defining love! When we selectively choose snapshots of Jesus' actions that fit our preference, while neglecting all the others, we craft a false narrative. The concept of God's love has been falsely crafted. What Jesus did in John 2, where He wove together a whip to remove money-changers who were in the temple, has never been presented as God's love. What Jesus did in John 2 is every bit as much love as “turn-the-other-cheek” and pray for your enemy. But this reality is not accepted in the church. In the Bible, it is clear both sets of actions are manifestations of God's love. For decades, church leadership has only defined God's love as kindness to the enemy. We have made nothing but feeble attempts to show people that Jesus' cleaning house in the temple was every bit as much the love of God as what He told the Twelve to do when they went out to evangelize. If church leaders had set these two manifestations of God's love in their context and allowed them to speak, the church would be in a different place today. Because of our limited and sanitized understanding of God's love, we are in a position of great loss. By emphasizing one layer of God's love in preference to another, we have categorically neutered the church and made it a bastion of retreat and silence in the midst of advancing evil!

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Scripture: 1 John 4:9-12

Every time we see the words “*God is love,*” in 1 John 4, we see shortly thereafter the word “*perfected*” concerning love. There are two declarations of “*God is love,*” both followed by the mention of “*perfected.*” It even says His love has been perfected in us. The Greek Word translated “*perfected*” is **tel-i-o-o** and it means ‘to grow into the place where we can carry our assigned destiny.’ English speakers tend to think of “*perfected*” as never making a mistake. But that is far from the meaning of **tel-i-o-o**. The true concept of this Greek word is that when we understand our assigned destiny, we start to make the changes and take the actions that enable us to grow into the place where we can first shoulder, and secondly carry out, that destiny. We are told in verse 12, “*No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been tel-i-o-o/perfected in us.*” We define ‘loving one another’ from what we have heard emphasized from Matthew 5:38 – we define it as turning the other cheek. As a result, we have a church that primarily knows, practices and functions in only one or two layers of God's love. We have a nation of Christians that practice mostly the first/evangelistic and second/pastoral layers of God's love and do not have the necessary arsenal of application to deal with rampant evil! We have not been taught and have not grown into all five layers and are consequently stuck turning our cheek and forbearing against sin when we could be weaving a whip in prayer, and cleaning house! Do we want to be limited to one or two layers of God's love or do we want to grow into the fullness of what God has for us?

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Scripture: 1 John 4:13-16

Again we find, in verse 16, the statement that God is love. We know that it is in the context of Jesus, Son of God and Savior. We can testify to that and speak to that issue. We can also agree that if there was ever a time for a house-cleaning, it is now! Just like Jesus cleaned the temple, He needs to come into our nation's capital and clean house of antichrist evil! We need a house-cleaning. Not a minor house-cleaning, but a major one. If all we ever do is "turn-the-other-cheek" and pray for our enemies, the enemy consistently advances and prevails because we are misapplying the love of God. There is a layer of God's love that arrests evil and there is another layer that terminates it. Based on circumstance and the leading of the Spirit, instead of automatically turning the other cheek and facilitating the evil, we may be led to pray for termination! But because we only know and are established in the initial layers, we let the enemy advance rather than allowing the Spirit to lead us in arresting his progress. The result is destruction and devastation. It is time we grew up and expanded our definition of love.

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Scripture: 1 John 4:17

1 John 4:16b states, "God is love" and verse 17 follows it with, "Love has been *tel-i-o-tai*/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." What does boldness in judgment have to do with maturity in love? How does being perfected in love release boldness in the day of judgment? The love of God is multi-dimensional. Certain layers release amazing boldness. The revelation of love was released in boldness in the early apostles, as witnessed by Peter, Paul and John. Peter demonstrated God's judicial, protective love for the Body of Christ in the termination of Ananias and Sapphira. Only when we recognize this can we understand verse 17. This verse makes sense only in the context of multiple layers of God's love, where the Lamb slain becomes the Lion who slays! When we transition to walk with the Lion who slays, we will have confidence and boldness. We can prepare to demonstrate the love of God just as the early church did. We can become proficient in not only explaining love, but dispensing it by the power of the Holy Spirit. Anything less strips us of the arsenal required to fight the spiritual battles we face every day. Sometimes confrontation is required to let people know there is potential affliction and termination in their future if they continue to challenge the Living God through blatant evil. The early church had this boldness. The boldness that verse 17 promises is not evident in today's church. It is not there for one reason – we do not have a church perfected in love. We have a church trained and taught to "turn-the-other-cheek" and forbear sin, even when the will of God is to halt evil. In the last fifty years, by misapplying love, we have taught the church to effectively enable evil. Until this ceases we do not have a chance of being perfected in love. God's love arrests evil. God's love judges evil. God's love destroys evil-doers. Isn't it time we made a decision to grow into the fullness of God's love? We need to ask the Spirit of Truth Himself to imprint His definition of love in our hearts.

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Scripture: 1 John 4:18

Verse 18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." If we understand the fullness of the five layers of God's love, fear will depart. The last two layers of God's love involve co-creating with God as we release judicial adversity. The very faith to walk with God in dispensing Layers Four and Five of His love precludes any concern, worry or fear. If we were walking with Peter in the anointing that terminated Ananias and Sapphira and understood that God was the Ultimate Terminator, who would there be to fear? Let's try to imagine ourselves as Peter! Suppose Herod put us in jail, killed James, and was intending to bring us out and kill us too. Before he could do that, the angel of the Lord sovereignly and supernaturally got us out of jail. The guards were killed instead of us. God traded our lives for the guards. And suppose, shortly thereafter, the same angel that got us out visited our persecutor. If we had been there, we would know without a shadow of a doubt that we were free because God's love terminated our

enemies. If we become matured in this dimension of God's love, who should we fear? 1 John 4 was written by the man whom the emperor tried to boil in oil, but his flesh would not boil. Was John around to watch Ananias and Sapphira die at Peter's feet? You better believe he was! Was John around to watch the angel visit Herod? You better believe he was! Where did 1 John 4:18 come from? It came from experience. It came from walking with the God of love. Is it not time we decided to follow in John's footsteps? Is it not time to get matured in that which will save us from being boiled in oil? Should we not develop to the degree that we can pray a prayer that releases an angel to visit a wayward head of state? Perfect love casts out fear. When love puts those trying to kill God's people in the grave, it becomes clear how it removes fear. That is a different element of walking with God. Is it not time we grew into that dimension?

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Scripture: 1 John 2:1-5

In 1 John 2:5, we find this principle, *"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."* The pathway to maturity has already been covered by John in the second chapter, where he tells us the pathway to growth, development and maturity is simply choosing to do what God's Word says. If we are willing to bring our actions into alignment with God's Word, then we grow into maturity in love. The whole path of maturity is not mystical. It is not something that is terribly difficult, but is the simplicity of **doing** what we read in God's Word. When we choose to, we can form our beliefs and actions to His biblical, moral standard – and **then** we are maturing in love. It is not complex. But even though it is simple, resistance does come often. Are we willing to do what the Word says? It takes a choice. A simple, but difficult, choice of submitting our will is where maturity is won or lost. And the battle continues throughout our walk with the Lord. Will we choose to pay the price to mature in love?

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Scripture: 1 John 1:5-7

In 1 John 1:5-7 we are told, *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."* Walking in the light is simply another way of saying we are **choosing** to do what God says. When we choose to do what God says, we have fellowship with Him. When we have fellowship with Him, we grow in maturity and arrive at the place where fear is displaced by love! Because we have fellowship with each other and with Him, we grow to where we can walk in the fullness of what God has ordained. His light shall dispel all the darkness in our lives when we have grown into the place where we can shoulder our destiny. Growing in love is a choice we make every day. If we make the right choices, we will walk with the Judge of all the Earth.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Scripture: 1 John 1:8-10

Verses 8-10 state, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."* Growth and maturity are the result of facing our own personal sin and failure. We face it when we confess it. When we confess it, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us. We can then move on in growth and development. Maturity can only come when a person chooses to acknowledge their own failures as sin rather than trying to cover them up. When we say yes to openness and honesty concerning our own personal failures, we have embarked on the pathway to growth and maturity. And at that stage, our destiny is guaranteed because we are developing a pattern that makes our destiny

possible. Any of us who says he has not sinned is a liar and God's Word is not in him. Openness, transparency and willingness to face our own personal sin is the doorway to maturity and destiny. Let's make sure we walk it!

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48, 10:5

In Matthew 5:43-48, Layer One of God's love is outlined for us. It should be noted that the only time this layer of God's love is an obligation is when we are being evangelistic and are sowing a word of salvation into the life of a person. The only time this layer of God's love is an obligation is when we are being evangelistic and are sowing a word of salvation into the life of a person. This passage does **not** apply when facing a rapist, a group of murderers, or a flash mob of thieves who refuse to repent. If they refuse to turn, they may need the judgment of God on their heads. Matthew 5:43-48 commands us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. But it must be taken in the context of Jesus preparing the twelve and the seventy to go out to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. In Matthew 10:5, Jesus said, *"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans."* They were **only** to go to the House of Israel. Jesus was sending the twelve and the seventy to Covenant Israel because the mission was to finish the Old Covenant where He had to be rejected by the Jewish people in order to fill the cup of iniquity under the Old Covenant. Jesus' rejection under the Old justified the transition to the New Covenant. When we look at the context of Matthew 5 – Jesus is preparing the twelve and the seventy to minister a message that results in a transition from the Old Covenant to the New. Love is far broader than turning the other cheek and praying for the enemy. The "turn-the-other-cheek" definition of love was appropriate for these three and one-half years, but once Jesus took a seat at the right Hand of God, the love of God dramatically enlarged to include other love-expressions necessary for bringing in a harvest. Sometimes the love of God demands the stopping of evil in its tracks. That is every bit as much the love of God as what Jesus taught the twelve and the seventy as preparation for going out to evangelize and finish His mission under the Old Covenant.

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Scripture: John 3:16

John 3:16 is probably the best loved Scripture in the church today. It is foundational to most everything we do. Being able to communicate this core value of God's love is absolutely foundational to bringing in a harvest. While we embrace the full measure of this foundation, we also realize that when pure, unadulterated evil knocks on our door with the intent to kill, rape, pillage and plunder, the love of God operates in a different dimension. We want to be fully established in John 3:16 but we also want to be able to minister judgment if it is necessary. Walking with the Lord means being able to bring the **right** layer of God's love **at the right time**. Love is not a one-size-fits-all robe. But that is how it has been taught. Growing up means growing into the fullness of who God is. He is the Judge and His judgments will be ever-increasing in the days ahead. We can either participate with Him or stand on the sidelines. It is time we prepared for participation!

#### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Scripture: John 3:17-19

John 3:17-19 says, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 'He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'"* Even John 3:16 became a judgment, according to verse 19. When people did not receive the salvation offered, verse 19 says the word of that salvation became their judgment. The judgment was, *"...that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* That takes us back to the choices of 1 John. If we choose to turn, acknowledge and confess our sins, then we do not come into judgment.

But everyone who has ever quoted John 3:16 and did not read on to verse 19 has very likely missed an important fact. Verse 19 reveals that if verse 16 was **not** received, it became a judgment! The very word of salvation is a word of judgment if the salvation is not received. We cannot extract John 3:16 from its context without sacrificing the Scriptural integrity of the passage. Jesus' own words cannot be denied. Ignoring the context of verse 16 is a foolish and dangerous mistake to make.

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-13

Ephesians 5 deals with the same light that John was speaking of. Because God is light, His light exposes darkness. In Ephesians 5:11, we are commanded to, *"...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."* Again in verse 13 they are to be, *"exposed"* by the light. *"Expose"* means 'to confront with the word of truth.' We are commanded to confront with an anointing that no one can gainsay or resist. Loving the enemy can be rebuking their sinful behaviors and letting them know that what they are doing will bring them into eternal death. Turning the other cheek and praying for people does **not** mean accepting a behavior that is condemned as worthy of death. Ephesians makes it clear that the true love of God exposes or rebukes darkness.

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-19

In Ephesians 3:14-19, Paul prays that we might all grow into the fullness of God's love. Fullness has five layers and each one of those layers bring to us an option for action. When facing a situation, we must ask God which layer of His love is appropriate. We must ask Him to show us which layer – and that is how we respond. When we grow to that place we will be walking in the fullness of God. That is the verse 19 definition of the fullness of God's love. Fullness is all five layers – if we only know the initial layers then we can spend our lives enabling evil. We have no choice but to grow up. Evil has been enabled long enough!

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Scripture: Ephesians 3:20,21

As Paul was praying over the church, he said, *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever."* The Lord is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think. But it is according to the power that is working in us. The reason for the prayer concerning the understanding, acceptance and revelation of five layers of God's love is so that the power of the Holy Spirit that works in us will be fully released. *If that power is fully released*, it takes us to a place where God will do exceedingly, abundantly above anything we ask or think. God has five distinct layers for us to grow in and we must make a choice. We must choose to refuse to hesitate and go after God's love in all its dimensions.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Scripture: 2 Peter 3:1-9

We know that Layer One corresponds to the evangelist because we followed **tel-i-os**/being perfected in love from 1 John to Ephesians 4:11-13. We discovered that the assignment of the five-fold ministry was to bring the church into **tel-i-os**. Since there are five layers of God's love, it means that each one of the five-fold ministry carries a specific layer for the church. 2 Peter 3:1-9 illustrates Layer Two of God's love. Verses 8,9 state, *"But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is **longsuffering** toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* Layer Two of God's love emerges in verse 9 as the concept of the Lord being **longsuffering** toward us. It comes from the Greek word **mak-roth-oo-meh-o** and

means 'to be of a long spirit' or simply to 'forbear.' What ministry gift has great, great patience with the saints, giving them space and time to grow? The pastoral job is forbearance.

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-6

The ministry gift that has the greatest patience with the saints is the pastor. The whole purpose of forbearance is the gaining of true repentance. The repentance that John the Baptist preached simply means 'a change of mind.' It comes from the Greek word **met-an-oy-eh-o**. **Met-an-oy-eh-o** is the process of changing our mind or turning around, changing and taking another direction, because we assessed that the path we are on leads to damage, destruction or death. True repentance releases life.

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Scripture: Matthew 3:7-12

Matthew 3:7-12 reveals a second group of people coming to hear John with a very different heart! The first group embraced **met-an-oy-eh-o**, as evidenced by their repentance. The second wave of people concerned John much more because they were the leaders. The leaders were commanded to bring forth fruit worthy of **met-an-oy-eh-o**/repentance. If there is no repentance, there is no maturity. If there is no growth, there is no development. The fruit of development is the fearful expectation of judgment. John was still looking for the change of mind. Repentance was the number one issue. It is mentioned twice in this passage and without it, there was unquenchable fire.

#### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Scripture: Romans 3:21-25

Verse 25 says, *"...whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,..."* **Mak-roth-oo-a-meh-o** is the word that appears here for forbearance. Everyone needs to know that once they have been saved, God gives them the space and time to grow. He will pass over their sin and He will give them time to develop into the full measure of who He is. How reassuring to know that our Father recognizes and allows for the maturing process! The pastoral office facilitates the process. It is critical that every child of God know pastoral love. It is also foundational for our intercession for wayward people and wayward nations.

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Scripture: Romans 3:26

Romans 3:26 says one of the purposes of forbearance is *"...to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."* Pastoral forbearance demonstrates that not only can God forgive sin but He demonstrates how He justifies those who are His. The receiving of His forbearance is justified by the caliber of people they develop into and the character they exhibit. Just because they have had failure in the past does not mean they are doomed to a lifetime of failure. God is their Justifier and He gives them the space they need to grow up. Pastoral forbearance is an awesome gift and one that you and I need to demonstrate consistently wherever we go – when we are dealing with issues of individuals or issues concerning our nation. Forbearance is one of God's greatest gifts – it enables us to become overcomers by guaranteeing the needed time to develop!

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Scripture: Romans 2:1-4

Romans 2:1-4 states, *“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”* Once again we see Jesus in action, demanding that every single one of us sow the same measure of forbearance to others as we want from God ourselves. If we want God to be longsuffering and to forbear in our lives, we are required to sow longsuffering and forbearance to others. The best way to grow in pastoral forbearance is to demonstrate it because we know we need it ourselves.

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Scripture: Romans 2:5,6

Romans 2:5,6 says, *“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds.’”* This verse is a dramatic warning to those who refuse to show pastoral forbearance to others. It illustrates what will happen to them as a result of that refusal. Because Jesus demonstrated pastoral forbearance, He demands that we walk in His footsteps. He requires us to extend the same measure of forbearance to others that He has extended to us.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Scripture: Matthew 9:9-13

Matthew 9:9-13 says, *“As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard that, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”* Jesus demonstrated pastoral forbearance in dealing with people such as tax collectors. His intent was consistently questioned by the Pharisees. Yet we know exactly what Jesus was doing – He was demonstrating pastoral forbearance and offering salvation. He said the reason why He came was not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance for a change of mind. That shows us who pays the price for pastoral forbearance. Indeed, there is a price for pastoral forbearance. That price is shouldered by all of us who have to deal with betrayal, lies, thefts and the devastating cost of the sin of those who have not yet turned. Those of us who have to bear up under the weight of a sinner’s transgression are the ones who pay the price for pastoral forbearance.

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Scripture: John 8:1-11

As Jesus was dealing with the woman caught in adultery, it is obvious that He was demonstrating great pastoral forbearance. But He also ended with a warning. Though the woman was not condemned, she was issued a warning to *“...Go and **sin no more.**”* Jesus demonstrated great pastoral forbearance and forgiveness. Who paid the price? Perhaps it was the person to whom she was married. Who pays the price for pastoral forbearance? Every single one of us who are in relationship with someone receiving the forbearance. It is those of us who have to deal with the fruit and pain that go with the wayward actions of the people we love. Pastoral forbearance has a major price-tag and is paid by every individual who has to bear up under the pain and agony of another’s sin.

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Scripture: Acts 24:22-27

After two full years of pleas for more money from Felix, God finally removed him and Paul got to continue toward his destiny. But there was two full years before the cup of iniquity was filled, and those years came right out of Paul's life. Paul paid the price for God's pastoral forbearance in the life of Felix and, rest assured, you and I will get the opportunity to pay it as we walk pastorally alongside others. But we pay it because we want it from God ourselves. We want His forbearance and therefore we learn to sow His forbearance. That helps us when it comes to praying for cities and nations. Forbearance has to be worked into the lives of the church. Jesus is the Author of it and He is the One who knows how to work it into our lives.

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:8,9

In 2 Corinthians 7:8,9 we are told, *"For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing."* Paul is referring to 1 Corinthians 5 where he had to turn a young man over to satan for the destruction of his flesh. That finally brought repentance, or a change of mind. A change of mind that is a **true** change inevitably equals a change of behavior. And since the whole issue of pastoral forbearance is to gain a change of mind or change of behavior, then we understand that the purpose of pastoral forbearance is to gain a change in thinking that results in a change in acting. All repentance starts with how we think. When we accept and own our mistakes and failures, then we start to make small steps to change. Great change does not generally happen overnight. It often takes a long time, often with warring – sometimes advancing and sometimes retreating. God is the Ultimate Pastor. Forbearance is essential for us to grow and for us to ultimately turn. But turning can require a great deal of time. What we know from verse 9 is that the ultimate goal is a change of mind that produces a change of behavior, which in turn yields maturity of character.

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:10

Verse 10 states, *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."* There is a false repentance and a true repentance. **False** repentance is one that starts when a person gets caught. They usually say they are sorry, but there is no true heart-change. **True** repentance is where the fruit of forbearance begins to show a change of action. It **does not** mean perfection. But it **does** begin with a change of behavior, resulting in character development. Pastoral forbearance gives us space to change our actions. Are we willing to give other people space, encourage them, walk with them and help them change their actions? That is true love. God's love pastors and shepherds others. God's love gives space and time to change. Let's sow it so we can get it ourselves. We all need it!

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:11

2 Corinthians 7:11 states, *"For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."* Verse 11 outlines for us the seven steps of true repentance. True repentance has seven distinctive fruits. The reason why pastoral forbearance can take years is because it often takes years to grow into each of the seven distinctive fruits of true repentance. No one grows into this overnight – it takes time. If we are willing to give ourselves time to grow, then we can accept God's pastoral love and we can go about the business of maturing. When we love God, we change into His image



and His likeness. *Worldly* sorrow is just being sorry for getting caught. *Godly* sorrow produces change. Change number one is called diligence. The Greek word for “*diligence*” is **spoo-day** and it simply means, ‘to be motivated to change and consistently demonstrate it.’ No matter how often we sin, we demonstrate motivation to change in the process. We must keep moving in the direction of righteousness and work at overcoming. Diligence is the consistent application of effort toward change into Christlikeness. The reason it is first is because it is the clearest picture that someone is willing to honor God's Word by really working on change. Diligence involves being both **intentional** and **deliberate** in our commitment to grow. Diligence demonstrates that God is sowing into good soil, because that soil is going to produce Christlikeness.

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Scripture: 2 Corinthians :11

Fruit number two is the Greek word **ap-ol-og-ee-ah**, or “*the clearing of ourselves.*” While it is translated “*clearing of ourselves,*” what it really means is ‘to recover the right path toward our destiny.’ How many times have we fallen? How many times have we gotten back up? When our children begin riding bicycles, we teach them to, no matter how many times they fall, get up and keep riding. We know they will fall, but if they keep trying they will eventually master the balancing of the bike. The second fruit of true repentance is consistently getting back up and deciding to march on. The more we diligently get back up, the better we get at balancing the bike of God's righteousness and the closer we get to riding it in victory. Fruit number three is the Greek word **ag-an-ak-tay-sis**, translated “*indignation.*” It means ‘to be irritated at the sin and to be determined to be victorious over it.’ **Just as Jesus was resurrected from the grave, we choose God's** power over whatever fault, failure or sin that besets us. We choose to say, “God, You are bigger than this captivity. Therefore I trust You to bring me out of it!”

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:11

The fourth fruit of true repentance is the Greek word **fob-os** or “*fear.*” It means, ‘the dread and the realization that anyone can be deceived or overcome by an issue.’ It can happen to anyone. When we understand it can happen to anyone, true humility sets in and Pharisaism is dealt a death blow. True humility accepts God's Word for what it says. When we realize our fallibility we can choose to trust God to deliver us and take us out of our sin. Self-righteousness and pharisaical arrogance falls away because we understand that anyone can be snared. The fourth fruit is a fear that comes from true humility as it is worked into our lives when we realize missing the mark can happen to anyone. The fifth fruit of true repentance is the Greek word **ep-ee-path-ay-sis**, translated “*vehement desire.*” It means ‘the consistent, diligent display of seeking God.’ **Ep-ee-path-ay-sis** is the desire for God above anything and everyone else. He is the only One that can deliver us and we must want Him and Him alone. Repentance has true fruit and we can tell true repentance by the fruit.

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:11, Luke 18:1-8

The sixth fruit of true repentance is “*zeal*” that comes from the Greek word **dzay-los**. **Dzay-los** means ‘to ferment until there is an explosion.’ When Romans says “*...The love of God was shed abroad in our hearts...*,” the word that is used there is ‘poured out’ or “*shed abroad,*” and comes from the Greek word **dzay-los**/“a fermentation until there is an explosion.’ True repentance brings an explosion in a person's life and a determination that they are going to have God and *complete* victory. The seventh and final fruit of true repentance in the New King James is “*vindication*” or **ek-dik-ay-sis**. **Ek-dik-ay-sis** means ‘an act of retributive justice.’ It is the key to prayer in Luke 18:1-8. The stunning thing about true repentance is that it is the thing that ultimately qualifies us to pray judgment over what once captured us. This brings a person full circle. What it demonstrates is that when Jesus delivers us, He turns what was a previous failure into a platform for our future success in ministry. If you were a woman who once had an abortion, true repentance means that you are now the very one who can pray God's judgment over

the politicians who are promoting it. God will hear you! True repentance ends in a judicial victory when we are the ones that ask for God's judgment over the very issues and things that we once violated. It is amazing to consider that God is so redemptive that at the end of true repentance, those who were felons get to determine the judgment on the felony. True repentance qualifies us as to judge our own crimes. Who is a God like ours? Who can touch the Creator of the heavens and the earth? This is our Redeemer! This is the Creator that you and I serve! At the end of the cycle of true repentance, He qualifies us to judge the very area that once captured us. That means that you and I, when we say we do not feel worthy to judge an issue, what we are really admitting is that we have some areas in our lives where we have not come fully through all the steps of true repentance. The only reason that a believer cannot walk with Jesus the Judge is that we still have some areas *where* we have not finished the process. The fruit of true repentance is that we get to pray judicial prayers. Isn't it time to pray some judicial prayers? If there is any unfinished business, let us finish it. Nations hang in the balance!

**DO WE DISPLAY FORBEARANCE  
OR 'WEAVE' A WHIP OF PRAYER?  
BOTH REQUIRE MATURITY.  
IT'S TIME WE HEADED THERE.  
TO BE MORE LIKE OUR MASTER  
OUR SAVIOR, LORD AND KING,  
REQUIRES A CHRISTLIKE HEART IN US  
FROM WHICH GOD'S WAYS WILL SPRING.**

#### ITINERARY

9/1-9/2	Sterling, AK	Ministry of The Living Stones Anchorage, AK 9/1 - 7 pm Sterling, AK 9/2 - 10:30 am	Verissa Walber/Celeste Johnson 907-262-7321 907-344-2263
9/14 – 9/16	Delta, BC Canada	Kingdom Harvest Ministries, Int. Tsawwassen Arts Center 1153 – 56 Street, Delta, BC Canada 71264	Darce & Glenda Dube 604-943-8100