

A Community of Mutual Love

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Easter Services - 7, 8:30, & 10am in Sanct/gym.
- B. Slide3 Women's Retreat - April 17-19. CCCConf Twin Peaks. Maureen Schaffer/Shannon Quintana.
- C. Slide4a Aspire Women's Conf - Mark Calendars. Conf here May1st, 7:30pm. Tickets on sale soon
- D. Slide4b Children at Risk - 3-5pm in new room.

I. Slide5 Intro: A Community of Mutual Love

- A. The **Christian's life** seems to be sketched out in its bearing on the believer's relations with other people. Wycliffe
 - 1. Slide6 Picture a Child's coloring book. With a *black & white outline* of a person on the page. Each of the topics he's about to mention are like different *crayon colors* filling in the picture.
 - 2. As we go through these make a mental note, *how filled in your picture is, or what colors are missing?*
- B. Slide7a Here the writer starts his *Epilogue* (vs.1-17).
 - 1. He moves from **general** admonitions to **specific** ones. **Then** he covers his **personal comments** & his **farewell** (18-25).
 - 2. The specific admonitions are broken up into **2 categories**:
 - a) **Moral Directions** (1-6). **Religious Directions** (7-17).
 - b) Duties to **God** & duties to **humanity**.
 - 3. How are **you & I** going to influence a *secularized society* w/the **value & power** of Christian truth?
 - a) **Not w/our teachings** necessarily...**but** by **our lives**.
 - b) Where does the *lackadaisical attitude* come from that promotes, "as long as I'm saved" or "belong to a church"...I'm fine? What happened to **divine duty**?
 - c) **Who said, How we live doesn't matter?**
- C. Slide7b We'll start ch.13 from its launch from 12:28 (read).
 - 1. How do we serve/worship/love God acceptably?
 - a) W/reverence & godly fear & the reminder that **our God is a consuming fire**.

2. Again, if we 1st have a proper **love for God** *then* we'll have a proper **love for His church & His world**.

a) **Slide8a** The life of *brotherly love* constitutes an essential aspect of the **worship** which Christians must render **to God**; *without brotherly love, there is no authentic worship*. This connection is confirmed explicitly in v.16.

D. **Slide8b Outline: Loving, Caring, & Valuing People not Things**.

II. **Slide9 LOVING (1)**

A. Important points of morality & ethics.

1. **Slide10a** *Morals describe what people do; Ethics describe what people ought to do*.¹
2. So he starts with giving us *moral* directions: we are to show personal kindness to our **brothers, strangers, & prisoners**. *Then* he reminds us of **sexual purity**. *Lastly*, teaches us *we might have a little on the monetary level...but we have The Lord...and His help*.

B. **Slide10b BROTHERS (1)** [φιλαδελφια- brotherly love]

C. Jesus Himself said **this** would be the mark by which true Christians would be able to be identified...**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another**.

1. Not a love based on **personal liking**, *but* based on **shared relationship**. *All Christians are members of one another because we share the life of Christ*.
2. *Practically*, Christians can check on other members to see if they are **in need**, & see to it their **basic needs** of **food, shelter & clothing** are provided.

III. **Slide11 CARING (2,3)**

A. **Slide12a STRANGERS (2)**

B. Not only Philadel**phia** *but* also Philo**Xenia**. [φιλοξενια- hospitality]

1. Not only a love for the **brethren** *but* also a love for **strangers**.

C. **Inns** were often times miserable places.

¹ R.C.Sproul

1. **Slide12b Aristophanēs** (446-386 BC) a comic playwright of ancient Athens, wrote *The Frogs*, *Dionysus asks Hercules if he can tell him, which Inn has the fewest fleas.* **Theophrastus** puts inn-keeping on the level of *running a brothel*.²
 - a) **Thus** inns were not friendly **or** healthy places for Christians. **Thus** the need for Christian *hospitality*.
- D. **Slide12c** Some OT saints were rewarded for their warm hospitable ways who ended up *entertaining angels w/o knowing it*.
 1. **Like Abraham** who extended hospitality to 3 strangers.
 2. **Like Gideon** who encountered an angel under the oak of Ophrah.
 3. **Like Manoah** who extended hospitality to the man who brought his wife wonderful tidings about the birth of a boy/Samson.
 4. The writer was showing how God **prizes hospitality** **not** saying, *you might **luck out & get an angel***. *Paul said, to be **given to hospitality***.
- E. This isn't our modern practice of *repaying entertainment by **one's friends***, which isn't wrong, it just isn't what this is speaking of.
 1. It's more like what Jesus said in Lk.14:13,14 **But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.**
- F. **Personal Application:** God places a great premium on opening our **homes & lives to others**.
 1. In someone's home is where you **really** get to know them. **How** they treat their *kids; pets; guests; each other*. **How** their siblings get along...**or** don't. **And**, whether **Christ** is **in** their home...**or** **what place** He is given in their home.
 2. If one of your pastors made a drop by visit, what temperature would he feel when he stepped into your home? [Icy? Warm? Hot? Nuclear?]
- G. **Slide12d PRISONERS** (3a)
- H. This verse contains 2 further exhortations, each followed by a motive for action.
- I. This was referring to the believers like Paul that found himself in prison often.
 1. This is to feel **empathy** for them. **Feel what the prisoner or the mistreated would feel**. (i.e. Shame, hurt, loneliness, hopelessness)
 2. **Identifying** with them as if you were **bound** right to them.
 3. **Slide13-15** Christian persecution is taking place in 40 countries right now.

² Kent Hughes; pg.209

J. **VOM** - A **widow** in India who was **imprisoned for 15 days** because of her **evangelistic work** has died of an **apparent heart attack**, leaving behind an 8-year-old daughter. **Vani**, 31, accused of kidnapping a teenage girl and forcing her to convert to Christianity. While in jail, Vani witnessed to more than **70 women**, **14** of whom became Christians. *She returned to the jail every two months for a regular court appearance, using her afternoons there to pray for the police officers and prisoners. A guard at the jail came to faith in Christ and invited Vani to her house to pray for her.*

1. **Pastor Umar Mulinde**, who was severely burned in a **Christmas Eve 2011 acid attack by radical Muslims**. He continues to wear specialized bandages on his face and will require more follow-up treatment and surgeries at a hospital in Israel. Pastor Umar lost his right eye in the attack and underwent extensive facial reconstruction.

K. **Slide16a MISTREATED/ABUSED** (3b)

L. **Physically** abused, knocked around, assaulted. **Emotionally** harmed, injured, wounded. **Sexually** taken advantage of, molested, abused. [some trafficked, some prisoner in their own home]

1. **You have a body**, you can **empathize** with them.

M. **Slide16b** Even the **enemies** of Christianity have noticed the practice of these virtues among Christians.

IV. **Slide17 VALUING PEOPLE NOT THINGS** (4-6)

A. **Slide18a MARRIAGE** (4)

B. They were in a society in which chastity & honor in marriage were commonly disregarded. (no different today)

C. **Marriage** was dishonored in **2 extremes**: Celibacy & New Morality.

1. **The idea that Celibacy is better than marriage**. (regarding holiness)
 - a) We've seen in our worlds headlines far too many times that **Celibacy** is **not** a safeguard against immorality.
2. **Traditional Marriage is Archaic**, **thus the New Morality** is in vogue, which is **no morality at all**.
 - a) Termed now...*recreational or casual sex, or friends w/benefits*.

D. **Slide18b Remember**, **God** was the One who conceived of sexual intimacy **not Hugh Hefner**.

1. God created it for the marriage bed...*and it was good*.
2. **The Father** gave it to Adam, **Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**
3. **The Son** honored marriage by performing His 1st miracle at a wedding.
4. **The Holy Spirit** furthered honored it in Eph. 5 by using it to portray the relationship of **Christ & His church**.
 - a) Thus marriage should be honored by ALL.
 - b) *The marriage bed, the sexual relationship should be an altar, where a pure offering of a couple's lives is made to each other & to God.*
 - (1) **The bed undefiled**: Its not just for *procreation* but also **pleasure**.
 - (2) Anything that is a **loving act, a giving act, an agreed upon act** is thus pleasing & acceptable to God.
 - (a) If you have sexual relation issues, may it become an *altar of prayer* for you & your spouse.

E. **Slide19** Sexual **purity** is one of God's **absolutes**.

1. (msg) **Honor marriage, and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband. God draws a firm line against casual and illicit sex.**
2. **God views infidelity as serious.** [Note: He covers **ALL** immorality in 4b]
3. **We Christians are to be outrageously pure.**
4. *Christian sexual morality was unique* in the pagan world, it made it **a source of wonder**. *May it become that again today.*

F. **God will judge...**both **now & later**.

1. Make no mistake...*to take up an adulterous lifestyle & remain unrepentant is to secure ultimate judgment.*
 - a) Judgment in the **Future** at the white throne.
 - b) Judgment in the **Present**: **Physically** w/potential diseases. **Mentally/emotionally** w/guilt, shame & remorse. **Relationally** w/alienation, estrangement, hatred. **And, Societally** as it degrades a society, it's jungle ethics, it often results in illegitimate children, or worse abortion.³

G. **Slide20a MONEY** (5,6) (or *not money loving*)

³ Ibid; pg.218,219 *adapted*

H. **Creflo Augustus Dollar, Jr.** An American televangelist, pastor, and the founder of the non-denominational World Changers Church International based in Fulton County, Georgia. Last year, Dollar's private jet ran off the runway while landing in a UK airport. Fortunately, nobody was seriously hurt. But to replace the old jet, Dollar launched a fundraising campaign to get his followers to pay approximately \$60 million for a new Gulfstream G650 jet. The jet he wants is the "fastest plane ever built in civilian aviation." But after receiving immediate and intense backlash, Dollar ended his fundraising campaign.⁴ [By Carlos Rodriguez, Happy Sonship blog, God is in a good mood, let's join Him]

1. *The problem is not wealth. The problem is the love of money. I love money. So I have a problem with wealth.*
2. **But** I still want to judge him (and I have Bible verses to support those judgments) **Yet**, to judge him is to bring judgement on myself.
 - a) It might sound ridiculous that Creflo "**needs**" a 65 million dollar airplane to preach the gospel. **But** it might also seem ridiculous to a father of 12 in Niger that I would "**need**" an iPad to preach my sermons, or an iMac to write my blog, or shoes to go for a walk.
 - b) I don't know where the line is, **but** it might be somewhere between people going to bed hungry **and** pastors going to bed inside their own aeroplanes.

I. The writer here is not forbidding wealth, **but** *the love of \$*. **Covetousness**.

J. **Wealth has its disadvantages**: **If** it possess you, instead of you possessing it.

If you trust in it. **If** you focus your **thoughts & interests** on it.

1. **Slide20b** Eccl 5:10 **Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.**

K. **Slide21a** True **contentment** comes from resting in God's care.

1. Which spills us into vs.5b...which can be interpreted, *never, under any circumstances ever, will I leave you.*

2. Which pours us into the **praise** of vs.6.

3. **So what facts about God help to keep you from loving money?**

- a) **Slide21b** God has promised **never to forsake us**(5b) God has promised **to be our helper**(6)

L. **So, Christian be content...because you...have...God.**

M. **Next section**, after *Moral directions*, is **Religious directions**.

⁴ <http://www.happysanship.com/judging-creflo-dollar-for-being-just-like-me/#more-4032>