

# Love is the Glue That Works

Elders Conference—2012

Lawrence Burchfield—May 19, 2012

When we're preparing to speak to God's people, it always amazes me how a theme—if a person is being led by God's Spirit and is willing to be led—through the sermons, the music, the messages that we hear, all run together and there's a certain theme there.

Roy Assanti, from Australia, admonished us yesterday and said they post on the podium or wherever, a word and then the men, every time that word is used in a speech they mark it down and they ask them how many times is this word used in the meeting that we have today.

So I asked Roy at the break, I said, 'How many times was the word love used?' He said, 'I forgot to count them, but I think it was a lot.' That's what I want to speak about today. Those of us who have been around in God's Church for a long time when you speak third or fourth or whatever, pretty soon everybody's danced around all of your Scriptures. So, you've probably heard most of the message that I wanted to give.

I serve the fellowship group in Tulsa, Oklahoma and God continues to bless that group because when someone comes to that group, and I always point out it's not my group, brethren, it's God's group. I serve those people and I serve with a willing heart. I believe that's what God has called me to do, just as all the elders believe the same thing, that God has called us to teach or to serve in some position in the Church. It really doesn't make any difference to me whether I'm setting up tables, setting up chairs, speaking, washing the commodes or the toilet, or whatever, as long as I'm serving God's people.

We do that in love. Wendell touched on this, this morning, that we support each other and hold each other's hands up when we do it in love. It's my own personal belief <sup>(speculation)</sup> that if we will show love in the fellowship groups that God has provided leadership, those that serve the groups, if that group will provide love for all that God sends, God will continue to add and to build His Church.

I talk to people and I'm sure all the elders and those that were the invitees and men that are serving in fellowship groups, if you would ask them what's the conversation like when somebody calls up and says, 'Can I come and visit,' or 'Can I come to the group that you are serving?' They've been beat up, they've been abused, misused, merchandized. Fred said the same thing. *We have to provide a place where God's people can come, where they can be fed spiritually and nourished,*

taught what they need to be taught. Baptize them and teach them the proper covenant law and the relationship that they're entering into. Because when I counsel people for baptism, I tell them, 'Look, this is the most important decision that you will ever make in your life, because it is not only a lifetime commitment, just as marriage is supposed to be and what God intended, but it is also a covenant that if we endure to the end, as the Word tells us, those who endure to the end shall be saved.'

So, as we are resurrected—'changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye'—then we will all have qualified and be in God's Kingdom. The Apostle Paul said that. He said, 'I've fought the good fight. I have finished my race. I have endured to the end. I have kept the faith.' *That's what we have to do!*

Today I wanted to talk to you about love. We'll look at a number of Scriptures over in John. When John started out, if you remember the story, some people were giving Christ a hard time. John was a little like Peter. When they came out to take Christ, Peter took the sword and lopped off one of the fellow's ears. Christ had compassion on that man and healed him instantly. What did that man think? 'We're going to take You out and we're going to crucify You and here You've healed me and You've shown love toward me.' That's what God expects us to do.

The Scripture that we're all very familiar with, 1-John 3:1: 'Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given us that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason the world does not know us because it did not know Him.' That's true. The world doesn't know us. They think we're foolish.

I have people in a worldly church and good friends that ask me, 'How long is your service?' I tell them two hours. 'Two hours? If a minister can't tell me what I need to know in 45 minutes, I'm out of there!' That's the way they feel about it. They don't understand that we are committed to a 24 hour period of time that we come together because that's the appointed time that God has placed.

He said, 'If you want to worship Me, you come on the Sabbath Day.' That's the seventh day of the week and we know that. There should be no doubt in our minds, because God has called us, we've repented. He's given us His Spirit that allows us to understand what's in His Word. That's the main thing that we understand, that we're able to teach it.

It said over there in Hebrews, Paul admonished those people there, he said, ‘When you ought to be teachers, you have that someone teach you again and give you milk.’ All of us here are 30-40-50 years in the Church; some brand new ones, which we’re real proud of. God—as we prepare and we teach God’s people and God adds new people—brings people with talent. He brings young people because as Fred said, ‘Our place of safety for those who are up 78-79-80-years-old, it’s not going to be Petra. It’s going to be what is called ‘terra firma.’ We can joke about that. We will only be in the grave for a few minutes, a few seconds, because our next thought will be the resurrection and we can fly up in the air.

- What’s that going to be like?
- Do we grasp that?
- What’s it going to be like to be taken with the angels to the Sea of Glass to meet Christ?
- What is that going to be like?

We can’t wrap our minds around eternal life. We can’t wrap our minds around that God and Jesus Christ—the One Who became Jesus Christ—has always existed. There’s never been a time when They weren’t there.

We have a beginning and we definitely are going to have an end. But that end, if we remain true to God’s Word and keep the faith, will only be temporary, because then it will go all out into all eternity and we will be just like the Father and just like Christ—*live for all eternity!*

Verse 2, it says: “Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure” (vs 2-3).

This is our hope, but in order to accomplish these things we have to learn the lessons. God has brought us here, like it says in the Scripture—not many wise, not many noble, not many rich, not many mighty—He’s chosen the weak things of the world. He’s chosen people who are willing to be molded, like the potter. He takes a piece of clay and he molds it. If it doesn’t get just right, he can whack it a few times and then he can work it some more until it becomes what he wants.

A good friend of mine was a deacon in God’s Church, he endured to the end. He had five heart by-passes, 17 heart attacks. He would have a heart attack on Sunday, mild of course, and he would go in the hospital and he would get out on Friday afternoon. Sabbath morning he was in

services, setting up chairs, serving the brethren, encouraging them. He did this for years.

A lot of times I would go up, one time he was in the hospital on the Sabbath, so after services I drove up to the hospital and I told him, I said—and he had a good sense of humor—‘God’s making a diamond out of you. He’s took a chunk of coal and He’s chipping away. Everything it don’t look like a diamond He knocks off.’ He came back and said, ‘He sure knocked a big chunk off that time.’

So in all his trials and all his tribulations, he loved God, he loved God’s people. He exemplified the way of life that we’ve been called to. The Scripture tells us, Christ told the people there that He was teaching, that we are to be a light to the world. We are to let our light so shine that it glorifies God in heaven. We’re not to put it under a bushel and we’re not to hide it. We are to glow and have that glow to where when people look at us they can say, ‘There is something about you that is different. I’ve never met a person like you. There’s something there.’ That’s God’s Spirit and that’s the glow that we have.

I know when I worked in California a man came up to me and told me, ‘There’s something different about you.’ I said, ‘There’s a bunch of other guys out here.’ He said, ‘No, no, there’s something different about you. Your light kind of shines and you set a good example.’ He used to come to me, he was a foreman of the shop, and he would come to me and say, ‘Is there any more people over in your church that would work like you work, set the example that you set? I’ll hire them.’ At one time we have seven people out of God’s Church working at that factory.

I told him, I said, ‘The Feast of Tabernacles come, we’re all going to be gone for eight days.’ We all had a name. They called me ‘Big Larry.’ He said, ‘Big Larry, they work like you, set the example that you set, there won’t be a problem. I’ll take care of you.’ So, until that factory closed—and God blessed the factory because we shipped \$1-million out and the following month it was a \$1.5-million. The next month it was \$2-million, because God blessed that company while we were working there.

I kind of watched and as things kind of slowed down and they went to laying off everybody and the brethren was getting laid-off, the company went downhill. So that’s just an example of how we can let our light shine.

Turn over to Matthew 22:35: “And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master, which commandment is *the* great commandment in the Law?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘**You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all**

**your mind.** This is *the* first and greatest commandment.... [So, we love God first.] ...And *the* second *one* is like it: **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”** (vs 35-39). That’s what we are to do—we are to love each other. That’s the lesson, that’s the theme that I hope that we all understand. I hope that all who receive this will look at their lives, will think, ‘Can I be more outgoing and more loving and more caring?’

We are so scattered today that we can pray and we can show love by praying. We can check on each other. We know lots of people. Everyday that I pray, I pray that God will watch over His people around the world. I pray that those that are sick that I don’t know that He will intervene in their lives. I pray that if there’s a need, that God in some way would fulfill that need. God hears those prayers. He hears them, because His Word tells us. Jesus said, ‘My Father knows what you need before you even ask.’ The Scripture also tells us, it says, ‘Ask and you shall receive. Knock and it will be opened to you.’ That’s what we have to do.

God opens a door for us, like this Internet, Church at Home. I’ve been able to recommend that to a couple of individuals that weren’t quite ready to come to Church. I say, ‘Why don’t you watch Church at Home if you’ve got a computer. You can go in there and download.’ Most everybody today has a computer. They can download a sermon, a sermonette, whatever, a message that Fred’s recorded that goes way, way back.

He was telling us what the number was that’s on there that you can download, that you can read, that you can study. Then we have all these booklets. This latest one that we have out, *The Appointed Times of Jesus the Messiah*, terrific book. It lays it right on the line of what we should be doing.

We’re commanded to love each other. Turn over to John 11; this is a story about Lazarus, you know the story. You’ve read the Bible and studied it. They sent for Christ and He delayed four days, because as Fred brought out one time, under Jewish law you couldn’t be declared legally dead until you had been in the grave four days. When the time was up, Christ came. Mary said, ‘If you had come sooner, my brother wouldn’t have died. You could have healed him.’ The Scripture also tells us that Christ wept and the people there that saw Him weeping said, ‘Look how He loved him.’

And then a little short prayer, John 11:41: “And Jesus lifted *His* eyes upward and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always.... [v 43]: ...And after He had spoken these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’” (v 41-43). He told those

people there at that time, He said, ‘I am the resurrection.’ That should have been a lesson for all those there.

John 14:19, Christ says: “Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also. In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him” (vs 19-21).

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me”” (vs 23-24). Christ is teaching them.

He also told them there at the last Passover, He said, ‘There can be no greater love than a man give up a life for a friend.’ He says, ‘I call you friends if you do whatsoever I command you.’ He also told them, ‘If you love Me, keep the commandments, namely My commandments.’ He also told them at that time, ‘You are My disciples if you have love one for the other.’ So, I would have to ask: If we don’t love each other, maybe we’re not Christ’s disciples. But that’s a sign that we have love for one another.

Where else could you go on a Saturday—God’s Holy Sabbath—and be around a bunch of people from all over the United States and all over the world that are of like mind, that are looking for one thing and that’s the Kingdom of God? Where else could you go? You couldn’t find that in a worldly church, couldn’t find it at all.

When we come together as God’s people, Fred sets up here and he rings his cowbell three or four times to get us to quit fellowshiping and sit down and listen some, to teach us some. God has provided us a good teacher and He is providing elders to serve those whom He brings to the congregation.

I told Fred the other evening, I have a real problem in Tulsa. He kind of perked up because he thought it was going to be bad. I said it’s a good problem. We’re outgrowing our meeting hall. Two weeks ago if everyone would have been there we would have had 42 people there. Some young people are coming there.

But God is adding, so now we’re going to have find a bigger hall. I would ask you all to pray that we can find something where we can have a potluck and we can use the hall and we can have

peace and safety. We can do that because it says, ‘The fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much,’ (James 5).

- we pray for one another
- we love one another
- we care for one another
- we think about one another often

Mr. Armstrong’s favorite Scripture over there in the Psalms was, ‘How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.’ If we don’t like each other, if we don’t get along, then we are not unified. When we’re unified as a body, we can move mountains, we can move God to do things for us through prayer and fasting. We have a lot of power that God has given us—just prayer!

I think if we’re going to do a message on love, we ought to turn over to the love chapter. The Apostle Paul here is speaking, 1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but **do not have love**... [I am nothing. If I don’t love you, what good am I?] ...I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.” I’m just making a lot of noise.

Verse 2: “If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but do not have love, I am nothing**” (v 2). I am actually nothing! I think when God knocked Saul at that time off his donkey He got his attention. Sometimes God gets our attention through a trial. How are you going to handle it?

I know one time my wife and I went through a trial and although she was suffering I was praying hard. I called a minister and I said, ‘What’s going on? I’ve prayed, I’ve called for anointing, the brethren are praying and God’s not healed her.’ He said, ‘He’s teaching you patience.’ So, finally she was healed.

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, **but do not have love, I have gained nothing**. Love is patient *and* is kind; love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up” (vs 3-4). ‘Look at me, I’m some great guy’—*no!*

Verse 5: “Love does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoiced in the Truth” (vs 5-6). That’s what we need to do, brethren, we need to rejoice in the Truth that God has given us.

Verse 7: “*Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **Love never fails**. But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease; whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish

away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside.... [He goes on to say:] ...When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child. For now we see through a glass darkly...” (vs 7-12)—because we haven’t got the whole picture yet, but God is continuing to reveal it to us.

As we continue to grow in love and grace and knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, we keep His commandments, His statutes and His judgments, and we do what He tells us to do through the Scripture and we follow the example that’s in the Scripture, then God will say, ‘Well done, enter into the Kingdom.’ I think that’s what we all want to hear. That’s what we’re all looking forward to. I think we could all look at the song *O How Love I Thy Law*. David said that in Psa. 119. He said it’s a lamp that lights my path. It leads us to God.

So think about that, brethren. As a shepherd of a flock, you could call me a pastor, you could call me a shepherd, you could call me a teacher, but I’m just a servant. I sit on the sidelines like a coach and I make sure that everything goes good. A shepherd doesn’t beat the sheep; he doesn’t whip them; he doesn’t beat them. He takes care of them. If they’re sick, he binds up their wounds. He feeds them, waters them, and takes them out to the green pastures and he leads them beside the still waters. That’s what a good shepherd does.

When the shepherd calls—you can go out there with a bucket of feed and rattle that feed bucket and yell for them—here they come. They’ll knock you down getting to the feed trough. That’s the truth.

We had goats at one time and they loved us and they’d rub up against our leg. And I’d have to pen them up when I went out there to mend a fence or something because they would come out there and they would take my hat off. Or they would pick up one of my tools and run off with it because they knew that I was going to feed them later on. They were showing me love as an animal shows love. You can take your dog and you can whip him and he’ll still come over there and lick your hand. I think there are a lot of lessons we can learn, brethren. *But I think the lesson that God wants us to learn at this time is love one another.*

I’m quite a fan of music; I like music. I also wanted to learn to play the guitar, but the first thing I learned when I was trying to learn to play the guitar was it makes the end of your fingers sore. But Jesse Colin Young of the Youngbloods had a song quite a number of years ago. The song said, ‘Come on

people now, let's get together and let's try to love one another right now.'

- Let's think about love.
- Let's look at the way we present ourselves to the brethren.
- Let's learn to love one another.
- Let's be mindful of each other's needs

The time is coming, brethren, and it may not be too far down the line that we're going to have to depend on each one of us to maybe provide for each other—a home, food, shelter for God's people. Those are things that we can do in serving and helping that we all have a part to do. We're like the coal miners.

One time they asked me when I was in the Air Force, they said, 'You're a pilot.' Everybody thinks that when you're in the Air Force you fly the plane. It takes 18 men on the ground to keep a fighter plane in the air. Each person has their part to do.

We're scattered, but we can pray for one another. As brought out about Moses, we can hold each other's hands up. We can encourage one another. ***Let's do it in love and compassion!***

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) 1-John 3:1-3
- 2) Matthew 22:35-39
- 3) John 11:41-43
- 4) John 14:19-21, 23-24
- 5) 1-Corinthians 13:1-12

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 5
- Psalm 119

#### Also referenced: Book:

*The Appointed Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Fred R. Coulter

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