



FEBRUARY ~ 2024
HUG IN A MUG! Vol. 93

*And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love.
But the greatest of these is love (I Corinthians 13:13 NIV).*

Greetings Sisters & Brothers as we face off to the February
“Hallmarkian Holiday” of the centuries: **St. Valentines’ Day!!**

It honors many martyred Saints, so they say, and this date has survived for centuries now on and around world calendars! In our lifetime, it remains synonymous simply with LOVE. So, I’m here today to pose this question, in my quirkiness:

Really? Do we need to learn to be loved? Or reminded we are loved? Really?

Think for a moment... Mankind was made in the image of God; God IS love. By the grace of God, we’ve become people driven by love, responding to His love, and obeying God in love. Jesus Christ is the primary subject of the Bible, and LOVE is that ongoing theme. The greatest act of love in history was when Jesus Christ died to pay for the sins of the world. What a gift to be given and passed on, on Love Day-February 14, 2024.

Surely this drove Paul in his exhortations to the Corinthians, a simple plea “to be one in faith and love, to see Christ as our salvation.” This past month, my congregation has tiptoed weekly through Baptism as a means of Grace. I have learned so much in the finite, material gift of Water & Word, that I came away bathed in sheer joy and the comfort of believing in Christ and His gift of Grace. It truly is the peace that passes all understanding.

LOVE is mentioned 419 times in the KJV; that’s 364 verses, in 53 of the 66 books. We are commanded to “love one another” 19 times in the New Testament alone! Often, we feel the love and comfort in: Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Solomon, to name a few, and certainly The Love Chapter in I Corinthians. ***Really? Do we need to be reminded to love? Really?***

But it comes with a mandate, the privilege, a certain clear and crafted message to act on it, in our faith walks, to reflect our joy in hope to others...And to find a selfless act of love....in His footsteps. (Even my worn-out, 1555 pages/Webster, has a synonym for love: “concern over the wellness of another, as in a neighbor.”) That sealed it for me!

We are the church In Mission! And seeking mission opportunities even closer to home when we honestly reflect. We should focus on kindness to church family at the core: Latin for “heart.” And focus on prayer and concern for others: nations, villages, islands, tribes, the isolated, the orphans, even those in penitentiaries, or victims of wars.

Paul could be in fact writing to us today... with that same urgency! We’ve only to look through the scriptures and have searched and learned in and through The Word.....to tell of Christ and proclaim the love of Jesus. Love supersedes all three gifts and will and must contribute to the building up of the body. Surely, we do know we are SO loved!!

Yours in the light of Scripture: ***the Lord delights in those...who put their hope in his unfailing love (Psalm 147:11 NIV).***
Sincerely, ~ Pat Reck, HUG Author