

"What True Love Is and Does," Part 1 - 2 Corinthians 13:1-3 – May 21st, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part one of a series I've titled, "What True Love Is and Does."
- As we just read and as we're about to see, the Apostle Paul is writing about what will be his third visit to the Corinthian church.
- Paul's first visit took place when he planted the church and stayed there for what would end up being about a year and a half.

Acts 18:9–11 (NKJV) — 9 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

- Sadly, Paul's second visit was very brief and it was after he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians and prior to his second one.
- The reason his visit was so brief is that it was riddled with conflict mainly because of the carnality on the part of the Corinthians.
- This is one of the reasons Paul says what he says in advance of his third visit and it's also the reason that Paul is so harsh in it.

- The question this raises is why? Why is the Apostle Paul so blunt and harsh with them, and why does he want to visit them?
- The answer in a word is, "love." Paul loved these Corinthian Christians so much, in spite of the fact that it wasn't reciprocated.
- Love is the only answer that explains why Paul would even bother writing them, let alone visiting them. If he didn't, he wouldn't.

- I suppose you could say his love for them was the real deal and as such, he was willing to do anything to get through to them.
- I would suggest that Paul wasn't concerned about whether they liked him or not, his chief concern was their spiritual growth.
- Even if it meant that they despised Paul for being so blunt with them, he was still willing to do the hard thing in his love for them.

1. True love speaks truth to others (Verses 1-3)

- v1 Paul quotes Deuteronomy 19:15 saying on his third visit, everything must be established by testimony of two or three witnesses.
- v2 He says he's already warned them twice and when he comes he will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others.
- v3 He says since you're demanding proof that Christ speaks through me, I will not be weak in dealing with you, I'll be powerful.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most dismissed and disobeyed truths in the Bible, this would have to be it.
- Namely, that of our unwillingness to warn that brother or sister in Christ, concerning their sin, especially if they sin against you.
- The reason for our unwillingness to do this is because we simply do not care enough or love them enough to tell them the truth.

Proverbs 27:6 (NKJV) — 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Proverbs 27:17 (NKJV) — 17 As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

Matthew 18:15–17 (NKJV) — 15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Titus 3:10–11 (NIV) — 10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. 11 You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV) — 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 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, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—16 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.

Galatians 6:1–5 (NIV) — 1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load.

- I'll bring it to a close by posing two questions both of which I also ask of myself as it relates to my willingness to speak the truth.
- First do I, in self-love, care more about the other person still liking me; than I do about them and the destructive path they're on.
- Second, am I willing to offend someone into heaven, or am I instead only flattering them into hell because I won't confront them.

A.W. Tozer said it this way, "I preach to my congregation week after week. And I pray that I may be able to preach with such convicting power that my people will sweat! I do not want them to leave my services feeling good. The last thing I want to do is to give them some kind of religious tranquilizer – and let them go to hell in their relaxation. The Christian church was designed to make sinners sweat. I have always believed that, and I still believe it. The messages preached in our churches should make backslidden Christians sweat. And if I achieve that objective when I preach, I thank God with all of my heart, no matter what people think of me."

Mid-East Prophecy Update – May 21st, 2017

- For today's prophecy update I want to address Trump's trip abroad, which commenced with his visit to Saudi Arabia yesterday.
- From Saudi Arabia, Trump goes to Israel, then to the Vatican, and then to Brussels in Belgium, where he will meet with NATO.
- To say this Presidential itinerary is as strategic as it is prophetic would be a gross understatement because of what's at stake.

- Yesterday, Special Report on Fox News dubbed Trump's trip, the "Trump Religious Pilgrimage," which is what I believe this is.
- The three major world religions are represented by way of Saudi Arabia-Islam, Israel-Judaism, and the Vatican-Catholicism.
- As such, mixed messages abound and it's led to the consternation of many who are now uneasy with Trump concerning Israel.

According to The Times of Israel, the pro-Israel right here in the U.S. is starting to feel unease with Trump. Quoting the Times, "The Zionist Organization of America launched two broadsides against a Trump administration it has ardently defended, signaling a growing unease on the pro-Israel right with the president's Israel policies. The ZOA, the flagship for the conservative pro-Israel community, slammed President Donald Trump for retreating from a campaign pledge to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. ...Also troubling for the pro-Israel right has been Trump's warmth toward the Palestinian Authority leadership, particularly P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas, whom Trump welcomed at the White House earlier this month and with whom he will meet in Bethlehem next week. "I'm disappointed he brought a guy who rewards terrorists who murder Jews to the White House," Klein said, referring to PA subsidies for families of jailed and killed terrorists.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/pro-israel-us-right-starting-to-feel-unease-with-trump/>

Perhaps this aforementioned unease with Trump concerning Israel is well founded by virtue of this Jerusalem Post report in which the White House map of Israel actually nixed the post-67 lines. According to the Post, the White House on Friday published a map of Israel at the pre-1967 lines in the latest in a series of mishaps that has marred US President Donald Trump's first visit to Israel. The 54 second video called "Photos Abroad" promotes Trump's five stop trip in eight days. A red line set to upbeat music shows how Trump will travel from Washington to Saudi Arabia and on to Israel. But the white map, set against a blue background excludes east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, which are part of sovereign Israel. It also does not include the West Bank, including Area C, where all the Israeli settlements are. ...Right-wing Israelis welcomed Trump's election, hopeful that he would support their vision of broader Israel. This includes a united Jerusalem as Israel's capital, retaining the Golan Heights and understanding that Area C of the West Bank would be within Israel's final borders. But a number of small incidents in the run up to the trip, have clarified that Trump's White House is hesitant to make those policy statements. This includes the White House's inability to state that the Western Wall is part of Israel when quizzed by reporters at a press briefing in the White House. To underscore the point the White House will not allow any Israeli officials to accompany Trump when he visited the Western Wall. Last, administration officials have clarified that while Israel Trump won't announce that he is moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. That issue they have said will only be decided upon once the President returns to Washington.

<http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=492250>

For further evidence that said unease is well founded, we need look no further than to this Times of Israel report about how Trump told Abbas that he'll be able to reach a deal within a year. Quoting the Times, "The Palestinians are taking seriously Donald Trump's efforts to help resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict, a minister said Thursday, ahead of the US president's visit to the region next week." ..."Abu Mazen stressed Trump's seriousness in settling the Palestinian issue" after they met in Washington this month, said the minister, referring to Abbas by his Arabic nickname. "The US president assured him he will be able to find a settlement within one year," he added. Trump hosted Abbas at the White House on May 3, pledging to help end the decades-old conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. "It is something that I think is, frankly, maybe not as difficult as people have thought over the years," the US president said at the time. Trump's visit to Bethlehem in the West Bank on Tuesday is expected to last a few hours. It will be part of his first trip abroad since his inauguration in January.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinians-taking-trump-peace-efforts-seriously-minister/>

Then there's this Jerusalem Post article in which the question is asked, "What has changed that Israel went from ecstasy over Trump to near-mourning?" On November 9, the day after the presidential election in the United States, Education Minister Naftali Bennett released a statement congratulating Donald Trump on his victory. "The era of a Palestinian state is over," Bennett glowed at the time. "Trump's victory is an opportunity for Israel to immediately retract the notion of a Palestinian state... This is the position of the president-elect, as written in his platform, and it should be our policy, plain and simple." Other members of the cabinet joined the celebrations. ...Looking back at what Bennett and other ministers said in November, it seems a lifetime ago, or more accurately as misplaced wishful thinking. Their comments in November came before Trump decided that he wanted to reach the "ultimate deal" between Israel and the Palestinians, before he decided not to move the embassy and before his administration decided that it couldn't even refer to Jerusalem as part of Israel. So what happened? Why the change? What happened to the Trump of the campaign? The article goes to present possibility's as to what happened, saying, The more likely possibility is what has happened to countless politicians before Trump – it is one thing to make a campaign promise; it is another to be president.

<http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=492215>

- Subsequent to Trump winning the Presidential election I had mentioned that it may in fact speed up the fulfillment of prophecy.
- This for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that Trump touted pro-Israel and with it pro-Christian campaign promises.
- While the jury may still be out concerning Trump, there's no question about what the verdict will be when finally been reached.

- Suffice it to say, it's not a matter of if, but when and perhaps more importantly how soon and by whose hand it finally comes.
- By that I mean we don't yet know whether or not it will come by Trump's, or his son-in-law Kushner's, hand, but it's coming.
- The reason we know is because of prophecies like Daniel 9:27, Zechariah 12:1-3, and Joel 3:2, which I'd like you to turn to.

Zechariah 12:1-3 (NKJV) — 1 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: 2 "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3 And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

Daniel 9:27 (NKJV) — 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Joel 3:2 - I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.

- Here's the bottom line in closing, everything we're told in Bible prophecy will happen, is already beginning to happen even now.
- So much so that the time has now come to wake up and look up as we see very specific prophecies beginning to come to pass.

John 14:29 (NKJV) — 29 "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

Romans 13:11-14 -- 11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

- Lastly, let me say that if you've never called upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved, I would implore you to do so today.
- I'll explain how, by sharing with you what one has called the ABC's of Salvation. The A is for Admit. Admit that you're a sinner.
- The B is for Believe. Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord. The C is for Call. Call upon the name of the Lord; you'll be saved.