

Giving and Receiving Love in a Chaotic World

These past few weeks have had their share of personal disappointments and frustrations. I have undergone two cataract surgeries, the second of which required some extra steps and is healing more slowly than anticipated. The nightly news tells us of daily shootings in the triad, the threat of another global virus, outlandish price increases, and continued conflicts involving two of the world's most populous countries. It is easy to be overwhelmed with the gloom and doom that seems to constantly bombard us.

Think back to the chaos of Jesus' time. Jesus faced persecution throughout His ministry. Rulers were envious of Jesus' popularity. Religious leaders were unbending to their rigid and impossible laws and had no love in their hearts. Yet, Jesus loved the world, including those who would eventually put Him to death. "He demonstrates love when it is as hard as a wooden cross and as cold as a metal nail."



Love is a commandment – the greatest commandment of all. Jesus said, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another (John 13:34)*. To quote a recent devotional reading, "Jesus models this love for us in prayer for those who persecute Him. Jesus shows us how to follow the command to love even in uncertain times." There is no doubt that we live in uncertain times.

Love is both redemptive and healing. "Hatred condemns, rejects, discourages, and robs people. It steals the gift and closes us off from the blessing of God."

At the time when I was most feeling down because of the slow healing of my right eye, my granddaughters rushed through the door to give me big, heartfelt hugs. I experience love every day from my wife and extended family. We live in a chaotic world, but there is love all around us.

The Bible reminds us that we have a responsibility to love one another. In the book of Ephesians, Paul calls on Christians to be like God. *Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (Ephesians 5:1-2)*. "Love is like a muscle that needs to be exercised." You will grow stronger the more you express your love. "Jesus loves us from life, through death, to life. Jesus loves us through blood and pain. By loving us to this extreme, He shows us what it means to love one another." His love is unconditional and sincere.

We need to give and receive love. Share God's love with others. Like my granddaughters rushing through the door to give us hugs, your love will bring a ray of sunshine to people who need it at that moment in time. Your expression of love provides relief from the bad news of this world. You can help others to manage the stress and sorrows they face. We welcome the privilege of showing Jesus' love to all those around us.

The Bible Says: *May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance (2 Thessalonians 3:5).*

Question: Who do you know that needs some love today?

Prayer: Dear Lord. We are Your faithful servants whom You love, and with gratitude, we have the privilege to love others. Amen.

Quotes are from Portals of Prayer, a publication from Concordia Publishing House, August 20, 2022 devotion.