

## Theme for 2021

### **WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT; WE ARE ONE IN THE LORD!**

#### **‘They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love.’**

*“I have commissioned them to represent me just as you commissioned me to represent you. And now I dedicate myself to them as a holy sacrifice so that they will live as fully dedicated to God and be made holy by your truth.” “And I ask not only for these disciples, but also for all those who will one day believe in me through their message. I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to become one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me. For the very glory you have given to me I have given them so that they will be joined together as one and experience the same unity that we enjoy. You live fully in me and now I live fully in them so that they will experience perfect unity, and the world will be convinced that you have sent me, for they will see that you love each one of them with the same passionate love that you have for me.”*

**John 17:18-23 The Passion Translation (TPT)**



#### ***This Week’s Thought – February 28, 2021***

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*“But I tell you this: love your enemies. Pray for those who torment you and persecute you—in so doing, you become children of your Father in heaven. He, after all, loves each of us—good and evil, kind and cruel. He causes the sun to rise and shine on evil and good alike. He causes the rain to water the fields of the righteous and the fields of the sinner.”* **Matthew 5:44-45 The Voice (VOICE)**

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**“We’re ALL in this TOGETHER.”** In Matthew 25, Jesus tells His disciples that when He is again in heaven, He will separate people like sheep on His right and like goats on His left. To the sheep He’ll say, *“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”* (verses 35-36) Confused, the people will ask when they did those things for Him, and He’ll tell them, *“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”* (verse 40).

His conclusion is stunning: those who care for others in practical ways care for Jesus—and they will be blessed. Our acts for “*the least of these*” show our love for Jesus because we see Jesus in them. Seeing Jesus in others changes the way we view them—no longer as distractions, problems or interruptions but as human beings deserving of our love and care. What we do for others is a direct reflection of how much love we have for Jesus. If we decide to love other people the way we love Jesus, we’ll see them through new eyes—eyes of love. Real love sees Jesus in others.

Perhaps more than anything, prayer is what helps us cross the bridge from annoyance to love. It’s not uncommon for us, any point in time, to catch ourselves thinking poorly or negatively about another person, and sometimes we might even get angry with someone for their insensitivity toward us or someone we love. But when we start to pray for them, the anger and annoyance begin to melt away. We can then begin to see the bigger picture—how their hurts have caused them to act the way they do—and then we can pray for the healing of those hurts rather than stewing on how we think they’ve offended us.

Prayer is a game changer. It helps us let go of our hang-ups and lift up others’ needs. When we pray for people who are hard to love, it becomes hard not to love them! Prayer for those hard to love helps us begin to really understand others and see the best in them.

**Application:** Whom do you find difficult to love? Replace judging with loving. Look at that person through eyes of compassion and concern. When we try to really understand people we find difficult to love, it becomes hard to hold on to our negative feelings about them.

**Prayer of reflection and response you might pray this week: “Father, I have to thank You for looking beyond my faults and for loving me unconditionally. Forgive me when I fail to love others in the same way. Give me eyes to see the needs of the difficult people in my life and show me how to meet those needs in a way that pleases You. I await Your Voice. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate Name of Jesus, Amen!”**

**Yours in Christ, Pastor King**