

2014 June 15
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The Seven Arrows of our Christian Economy

Welcome to OIC. We are glad you are here!! Today we conclude our seven message series called The Seven Arrows of our Christian Economy. If you haven't been with us, arrows 1 through 6 help us identify the fact that we need to be more than just AT church, we need to BE church.

#1 we should be a church where we value the necessity of prayer

#2, we should be a church where we are encouraged

#3, we should be a church where we are not judged unfairly

#4 we should be a church where we practice biblical stewardship

#5, we should be a church where we are growing spiritually

#6 we should be a church where we embrace our faith.

Arrows 1 through 6 have all been instruction on how we should conduct ourselves as Christians but even as the Apostle Paul said, "without love, everything else is just a noisy gong".

I Corinthians 13:1

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

My personal goal for our church is that our church should be a place where we are loved and where we experience God's love. Our church should be Christ-centered and Bible-based. When it is, experiencing the love of others and God's love will come naturally to us and we will grow spiritually and numerically. I'll say this again. We cannot just be AT church, we must BE church. Everyone pulling together for the cause of Christ. Why do we use arrows?

Isaiah 49:2,3

² He has made My mouth like a sharp sword,
In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me;
And He has also made Me a select arrow,
He has hidden Me in His quiver.

³ He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel,
In Whom I will show My glory."

Now today, the seventh arrow.

Arrow #7 We should be a church where love abounds.

Our support text is I John 3:11-16.

I John 3:11-16

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

¹² not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

¹³ Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren

The book of I John is full of love. The word “love” is found 31 times in the book of I John. Most of the references refer to the love of God and the love that God gives through us. The Greeks identified love using many words: **eros**, sexual passionate love, **phileo**, brotherly love and **agape** the love of God that we can share with others. Also they used the word **storge**. this may be new to many of you but this is the type of love found within your family. The mother, father, children, the family unit. The type of love found there is **storge**. A good example in Scripture is the type of love that Mary and Martha had for each other and their brother Lazarus. Those are further definitions of love. Today I want us to look at a broader perspective. I’m going to show you 3 kinds of love that I find in Scripture and I trust we can all find application for our lives as we examine these.

#1 Christ’s love

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ’s love is unconditional. He came and gave His life for all of us. I’m glad He didn’t pick and choose who He died for. It would be awful if it was like the children’s game of elimination that we played, where we all stuck our toes in the center of a circle and someone determined who was ‘out’ and who was ‘in’.

SLIDE

As we take a closer look at ourselves it doesn’t take long to discover the truth. All of us are sinners, Romans 3:23 reminds us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. As a show of hands today, how many here have never told a lie? Would you please raise your hand? How many here have never taken something that didn’t belong to them? Would you please raise your hand? Those very acts separated us from God because they put our sin on display. But Christ, in His atoning work on the cross, changed all that. Christ demonstrated His love for us when He came to earth. To live as a man but still be God. His ways will always be higher than ours. In spite of our sinfulness, Christ came.

Luke 19:10

¹⁰ For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

He came because we were lost in our sins and the father of lies, that’s Satan, was leading us astray. The greatest of Christ’s accomplishments on our behalf was demonstrated at the cross.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus paid our ransom and set us free. I have another question for you. Who was the ransom paid to? It was paid to God. Why? Because God would let nothing unclean in heaven and because we are all sinners we needed someone to pay for the price of our sinfulness to God.

Revelation 21:27

²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those ^[a]whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Mark 10:45 confirms that.

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

You see, if Jesus paid the ransom to Satan, the father of lies, he would have told us he didn't get it. God's love is unconditional. God does not stop loving us, regardless of the number of times we seem to turn our back on Him. So first and foremost none of us would be where we are without Christ's love.

#2 Christian love

The second type of love I see in Scripture is Christian love. Love for our brothers and sisters in Christ should be so ingrained in us that it should automatically portray itself in the way we treat each other.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

We also see it in I Thessalonians 4.

I Thess. 4:9

Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another

I also enjoy when Jesus has told us that we should even love our enemies. That sometimes seems like a hard pill to swallow but that further demonstrates our Christian love, even to the world around us.

Matthew 5:44

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

I could never imagine a church where the sisters and brothers did not love and care for one another. Jesus also told us that loving one another is a new commandment He is giving us and it is yet another way to distinguish ourselves as Christians.

John 13: 34,35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

This command He gave them as He was about to leave them. Jesus gives us a very sure way to distinguish us from other groups and that is that we love one another. Our love for each other is decisive evidence that we are like our Savior. It should be a deep, genuine, tender and affectionate love. Here's another Scripture to back it up.

I Peter 1:22

²² Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart

Loving each other with a pure heart means we have no self-centered motivation to care for the brethren. Pure love is a selfless love. It puts the other guy first. Christ showed us that He loved us by giving of himself sacrificially. He expects the same of us, that we give of ourselves and love each other sacrificially. So, so far we have seen Christ's love for us and also Christian love.. that's how we love each other. And finally today, I want us to explore another type of love and that is chastening love.

#3 Chastening love

Hebrews 12:7

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Chastening or correcting sounds like a negative experience to us. Because often those who are doing the chastening are not doing it in a loving way. I remember taking a typing class when I was in the 9th grade and my typing teacher had a less than loving way of chastening us. She would walk behind the rows where we were sitting at the typewriters and as she gave us typing drills she would watch our fingers very carefully. She also carried a rather large book that contained these typing drills and if we made a mistake she would hit us on the back of the head with this book. I still cringe today when I type the letters A S D F.

Chastening love from God may also involve some pain. It's designed to destroy our selfish pride and at times it may cause us embarrassment. Most often, God does not do the chastening Himself. He uses other people in our lives. You see, sometimes we get on a pedestal and crow about our accomplishments. God will knock us off that pedestal because He loves us. One mark of a maturing Christian is that when we are applauded, we turn every accolade back to the cross. Chastening comes in many forms. Sometimes it's life lessons learned the hard way. I remember each summer I would work at my grandfather's farm and I can remember the first morning my grandmother called my brother and me at 5:45 to get up because there was a lot of work to do. Now, we were from the city. We were teenagers. We never got up before 10:00. About a half hour later, my grandmother came and told us we should get up now because she was putting the milk on our breakfast cereal. We laughed. And went back to sleep. About 9:30 she came again to get us. And we finally got up. We asked "What's for breakfast?" And she said "It's here on the table. It's been ready since 6:15 and you won't get another bite of food until you eat what's been prepared for you." Well, you know what happened. The next day, we both got up at 5:30. We were ready to be fed and get to work!

I'm glad that God loves me enough to correct me and draw me back to Him. I am a much better person for it.

Conclusion

Again, let me remind you of the 3 types of loves I find in Scripture. Christ's love, Christian love and chastening love. Have you ever recognized God's love? And are you showing Christian love? There must come a time in our lives when we have that "stand still moment" when we recognize how much God loved us that He sent His only begotten Son. When we do, we will recognize our sinful state and take Christ's love and begin the process of loving each other as Christians and accepting the times when God chastens us to help us grow.