

## A Blocker to Love

*Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 13*

Can you imagine the following scenario? Somebody went to the store and lifted the store. You know, what we call shoplifting. When he went home, though, his heart smote him and he repented of what he did. He decided to go back into the store and drop back the thing he had stolen. He didn't tell anybody. But he came to church, and because the gift of God is without repentance, when he came to the congregation, and especially having just repented, the Spirit of God moved upon him and he gave a word. But while he was pilfering, you were around the aisle in the store, and you saw him. "I won't hear anything from that man," you said. And you came in the church and told your best friend. But it so happened that your best friend had a best friend, and your best friend told her best friend and her best friend had another best friend and the best friend... until the whole congregation had been told. So when the man got up and the Spirit of God spoke through him, everybody dropped the curtain, refused to hear him. Who lost? You lost, because you listened to the voice of slander.

That is why Paul called the voice of slander *diabolos*, devils. It is just like the demons that go from one place to another carrying evil. You are ordained of God to carry good tidings. You are not ordained to carry negatives. If the brother stole something and you saw him, go to God and pray to God and say, "Lord, help that brother." And you take him to one side and say, "You know, I saw you when you stole that thing and pushed it in your pocket." Then the brother would be able to say, "I am sorry, but I repented and took it back." But if you never said anything to him and went and scattered it, then you destroyed the work of God by the power of hate! If that brother had been your natural brother, you would not have told anyone.

Hate is a blocker to love. If you find out that you cannot love God's people as you ought to, it is because you have allowed their wrong deeds to affect you and you hold it in your heart. Can you understand that? Love thinketh no evil. How could love think no evil when there is evil? You say, "But I saw the evil." Love thinketh no evil. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity (I Corinthians 13:5-6). That is, the person gets hit because he was wrong and you said, "He had it coming to him." That is not love. He had it coming to him, but you are sorry for him. If it were your child, you would think of him differently. Why do you think that your children do so many wrong things? God is trying to teach you how to deal with children who are rude and do wrong things. God is trying to teach you how to deal with the people of God. You love them just the same. They do a lot of wrong things but you love them just the same and you conquer them by love.

*"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." (I Corinthians 13:1-2)* Don't you see how God separates the gifts from love? "I have great gifts. I can preach. I can teach. I can do this." You are nothing. God help you. God help us.

I just want to tell you that love lifts us up out of the darkness into the light. Just begin to love and God will lift you up.

There was a man, Brother Smith, who wrote the last verse of the song, *"The Love of God."*

*Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth (all the grass you see around) a quill and every man a scribe by trade.  
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky."*

That is not an idle dream. Those are the last words he wrote and died. They found them in his prison cell. Do you know what happened to him? He was a rich man; he had a lot of money and he began to talk about the love of God. His children committed him to the asylum because they wanted his riches, but he loved them just the same. He loved them just the same. Praise be to God. Let us be the children of love.

There is love that we are supposed to have for one another. The scripture translates it as bowels of compassion, that you have a feeling for the person. You feel it way down in your heart. God is talking about love. You can't be mad with the people you love. If you have love, you don't get mad with the people. You will get sad when you see them doing wrong things, but you won't get mad with them. May God help us to be the children of love.

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*Thought for today:* The love lifts us up out of the darkness into the light. Just begin to love and God will lift you up.