



Glyfada Christian Center



20/10/2024

Preacher Brian van Deventer; Stavros Antoniadis

Series The Holy Spirit

Service Sunday Service

Passages Hebrews 2:4; Romans 5:5b; Hebrews 10:24

The Holy Spirit and Love

Pastor Gail – Opening and Prayer

1. Please remain standing. Open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13:1-4. If you need a Bible, we have Bibles we can pass out. Vary familiar passage of Scripture. “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but do not have love, I gain nothing.”

2. Let’s pray together. Feel free to lift your voices. Father we thank You today for the beautiful glorious graces of being able to come before Your throne with grateful hearts. Thank You Lord. Thank You Lord that You’re always there, that the door to Your throne room is always open. Lord, we thank You God, You teach us about love, we pray oh Lord that because of who Jesus Christ is, because of His great love, that He gave us life and now lives

oh God, with You and is at Your right hand. We pray oh Lord to know You more, more than we've ever known You before. Lord, we pray that Your love will grow in us and out of us, God. Hallelujah, we pray for an anointing of the love of God, that's what the world needs. We need Your love oh Lord, the love of God that breaks every chain, the love of God sets us free. Lord, we worship You. Lord, we worship You God. Today You are here. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

3. You may be seated. Mary is going to share with us this morning a little testimony.

Mary Kehayas – Testimony

1. Good morning, everyone. By now, most of you know that in April, I was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of lung cancer. I never smoked in my life, by the way, so that was quite a shock to me. After undergoing numerous tests, scans, MRIs, in May, I had surgery early in June. They removed about a third of my one lung, and a whole bunch of lymph nodes. And I went home.

2. And all this time, up until 3 weeks ago, I was undergoing various tests, scans and what have you. At my last visit with my oncologist about 3 weeks ago, he said that everything was OK, that I don't need any treatment. His words were, 'You don't need any treatment for now.' And I am believing that the 'for now', is 'forever.'

3. I want to thank my whole family, my church family, for their love, their support, their prayers, especially our pastors, Leto, Evy, Christina. A day didn't go by that someone didn't call to ask if I needed something, if they could come clean, if they could come cook. Of course, I have to thank my husband and my daughter who came from Norway and was here for three and a half months. She did absolutely everything, from cooking, cleaning, running me to doctors, waiting around at hospitals. She was an absolute blessing. And of course, the biggest thanks and praise goes to our heavenly Father, for His grace, His mercy, His healing. I could say a lot more, but I would be in trouble with pastor Gail. Thank you.

Pastor Gail

1. Well, you wouldn't get into trouble, but it depends if everybody else wants to stay here all day. I'm happy to stay here all day. It's interesting, there was a season that I didn't hear about cancer anymore, like there was a quiet season, that it wasn't on the move. But of late, in the last year, it seems like we're hearing more and more of cancer increasing again. But that just means that we're going to see God, do greater things than we've ever seen. Amen. God wants to heal and the enemy may stop doing things for a while, but he's always going to try to come again. But God is greater amen. And I'm just thankful for that.

2. We're getting ready to give the Lord our offering and our tithe, and as we prepare for that, I just want to share, most of you know that I've been in the States, on the road a lot. The meetings were all anointed of the Lord, lots of different meetings. I will tell you one thing I'm very excited about though. The Lord has blessed us, most of you may know we have a ministry van there that belongs to our ministry that doesn't belong to our local church, but it looks like an offering has come along, large enough to get a new van, praise the Lord. Amen, I'm excited about that.

3. But another thing that I was impressed with while I was in the US, is we wonder why is God kind of quiet. It seems like we're not seeing Him move like we want Him to. But while I was there and even last week, while pastor Brian was there, we kept hearing about outbreaks of the Holy Spirit and the presence of God on University Campuses, secular Universities, not Christian Universities. I think it was the University of Arkansas, I think it was 15,000 college students, accepted the Lord and were baptized in water immediately. They got saved and they wanted to get immediately baptized.

4. For me, that was encouraging, we've not seen a move of God like that in Greece, but I felt like the Lord said, 'Believe; it's coming, we're going to see a move of God in Greece.' Amen. And when we give our tithe and our offering, I believe it's like saying to God, 'I honor Your Word, and as I do, I know that the windows of heaven are open to release greater blessings than we've ever seen, Amen.'

5. This church here on the southern side of Athens, as we give to the Lord, I believe we're saying to Him, 'We believe for a great awakening in Greece.' Amen. Stavros will you pray for the offering. 'Heavenly Father, we thank you Lord for this love, this wonderful love which continues to come to us in different ways, Lord God. We thank You for all the things that You have bestowed upon us. We thank You in our ways in our turn, to give for Your work, heavenly Father. The amount doesn't matter, but what matters is the attitude of our hearts. Whatever the amount is, let us give with our hearts and giving You all the glory to You Lord God. I thank You for all, in Jesus' name. Amen'. Pastor Gail makes announcements.

Pastor Brian – Main Message

1. Lord You are so good. Look at your neighbor and tell them, 'You are loved of God.' Now, you can tell them, 'And I love you too.' How many of you can remember a singer called 'Meat Loaf'? He used to sing a song I never understood. He said, 'I could do anything for love. But I won't do that.' And I never figured out what 'That' was that he wouldn't do. But today, I love the fact that I have a Savior, who loves without restriction. There is no, 'I won't do that.' Because He literally did everything. Is our God not good? Yeah, you can say Amen to that. Say it loudly and proudly.

2. You can turn with me to Hebrews 2:4. We've been talking about the Holy Spirit, and His work in our life. We're going to continue that today, by talking about the greatest gift that God has given us. If you've never read the book of Hebrews carefully, it's actually one of my favorite books of the New Testament. It explores the nature of the work of Christ. It emphasizes the superiority of Christ over everything else. And this is especially given to us here. "God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." These gifts of the Holy Spirit that come to us, testified by signs and wonders and miracles.

3. Now, understand the situation of the people that this book was written to. He was writing to a group of Jewish people who had become believers, and they are having to struggle with what it means to be a Christian. And they're doing it in the midst of persecution, and societal pressure that was coming at them because of the decision they had made.

4. There are many people in this room who understand what it is to feel the pressure of family and society. And they're having to work through this. And so, the writer reminds them

that Christ is superior to all things. And because of His covenant with them, that was stronger than everything else, they could remain faithful and strong. And he says that this was testified to you by signs and miracles and wonders, that came to them by the gift of the Holy Spirit. These were proof of the Gospel, but they were also manifestations of God's love for His people. Say it again, 'Thank you for the Love of God.'

5. Now, the Holy Spirit, as the third Person of the Holy Trinity, we've been talking about, He holds a pivotal role in our life, so let's remember a few things. Upon His ascension, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, to be a Helper and a Guide, above all to be a comforter. We remember that the presence of the Holy Spirit, is a faithful and continuous link to the love of God. It is through His presence in our life, that we experience transformation. Say, 'Thank God, I'm not who I used to be.' I might make you say a lot of things this morning., I'm going to have you testify to yourself.

6. The Holy Spirit is the Agent of transformation in us. He's the One who convicts us, when we are wrong. I know, that doesn't happen very often, but when it does, the Holy Spirit is there to say, 'Hey, let's make an adjustment here.' And He is the One we have learned, who empowers us. That, because of His work in our life, we are more than overcomers! And the best part of this, is that all of those gifts are wrapped up in His love. And when we feel that love, when we know that love, it compels us, it urges us to give that love. If you don't feel like loving other people, check your relationship with the Holy Spirit. His love is so deep and so abiding, that it moves us to want change in our own lives and it moves us to want change in the lives of others. Not the change we want for them, but the change that God desires to bring to their lives.

7. So, love emerges the most important gift of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Gail read that passage from Corinthians at the beginning of service. You can have all the other gifts, you can quote Scripture with the best of them, you can show off all of your good works, but the Bible tells us that if that is not wrapped up in love, it is nothing! Paul calls it, 'The greatest of all virtues.' So, all of the gifts that the writer of Hebrews was talking about, they are ultimately expressions of the love of God for us. They serve to increase our faith, but they also serve to remind us of the character of God.

8. God has a heart for us. Oh, that sounds good, I like that. God has a heart for you, but He also has a heart for the sea of humanity around you. A heart of grace, a heart of compassion, a heart of deep sincere love. So, love becomes this most important gift of the Holy Spirit, that becomes transformative. And I want us to cling to that word this morning, 'Transformative.'

9. We learn in the Scriptures of all these gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Bible talks about different ways of serving, teaching, preaching, giving guidance, so many different gifts, healings, miracles.

10. But these are just tools. These are tools that express the love of God, outwardly, in practical ways. There is nothing that feels better than seeing the work of God through the Holy Spirit in these gifts. They are outward; they work in practical ways.

11. For instance, the gift of healing, it manifests the love of God, by restoring a person physically, or emotionally, or spiritually. Have you ever been in a place where you saw

somebody healed in a moment. It's a powerful and emotional thing. We loved that testimony from Mary this morning, and it took my mind back to a Sunday, quite early in the years I was here in Greece, when a tiny little woman from Japan, stood here. She had come to Greece for some unsanctioned healing practices – medicine. But she was on her way home, still full of cancer, and I remember praying for right here, and in that moment, she was healed. She went home well, and lived for many years after.

12. Those who were in the room who were here then, we rode that wave for a long time, and in fact I can still see the heads wagging and the amens going, because we know what it means to see that and feel that. The love of God that reached down and said, 'No more sickness.' It's powerful. It encourages, it builds up.

13. Acts of kindness. When the Holy Spirit uses people to encourage other people. These are tangible, they are visible representations of God's love. Mary said, 'There wasn't a day that kindness wasn't shown.' That's a powerful expression. If you've ever been in that position, where you just needed to hear the kind voices of people – powerful.

14. So, in all of these different ways, words of knowledge and wisdom, all kinds of miracles. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are not just some supernatural events, but they are rooted in the love of God, and in His desire for us to love one another.

15. So, this gift of love is outward, but it's also transformative inward. It works in our own lives. The Holy Spirit gives an atmosphere in our spirit for us to be changed; for us to know the love of God at work in us.

16. Romans 5:5b, "...God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." God's love has been poured out into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, given to us. Have you ever found it hard to love another person? I have to admit, it has happened a time or two, where that spirit inside of me, just wanted to resist; 'I don't want to love you. I don't need God to express His love to you through me. This would be a good time for God to find another willing vessel.' My heart of flesh can go there.

17. I received a note yesterday, from somebody I've actually had conflict with. I got over it, actually very quickly, but the situation didn't get resolved. I still don't know that it is. But I received the note, and it encouraged me, because the person wrote, 'God has used you in my life in so many ways and I've been glad to be a part of it.' It didn't say anything else, just very simple. That expression of kindness, touched something in my heart, in part because I knew something was being touched in that person's heart. But the transformative love, brought to us by the Holy Spirit, it has the power to make life different – to change you, to change others.

18. My final thought is this, He transforms us together, into a community of love. This community of faith, sent to function in a certain way. There are probably a lot of people in this room that don't know each other well. I part that in life we look at different people every week. And unless we take time to stick around and intentionally meet people, have coffee after church, or unless we intentionally find people and say, 'Hey, let's have a coffee or a lunch', it's hard for us to get to know each other well.

19. But even in that situation, this community of faith, is meant to function as a body of believers, who are bound together in love. I have the privilege to visit a lot of different

churches, and it's amazing, wherever you go, other believers will be very quick to hug you, in Greece here, maybe give kisses. It's easy because there's something familiar about us. There's something in the spirit that reaches out to the other spirit, and this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

20. The Holy Spirit's gifts that are distributed to us, whatever those gifts are, shout out to those who are in the children's room this morning; shout out to Evy as she goes upstairs to get the coffee ready; shout out to whoever is teaching the children upstairs. Now Lars and Mike don't count 😊. I didn't like the job they did this morning, so it doesn't count. Shout out to Jeremiah; we don't know how long he's going to be here, 4-5 months longer. Pray hard, he's here on an internship. I'm praying that it will turn out to be a job for him, and that the job puts him right here. Victor, Cielo, Phanis. They shout out to Stavros; Leto and Cecilia, who isn't here today, but is always the first one in the building. Shout out to pastor Gail who got off a plane late last night and is still here this morning. Rebecca, Felix, always there to do things that I don't have to think about.

21. That's just the stuff that goes on in here. Anton, thank you for your teaching, thank you for your prayer gift, Henneke. So many in this room who are serving in ministries all over the city. Shout out to Chris at home, who can't be here on Sunday, but still manages to put sermons together and archive them on the web sites. Just in case you don't want to watch the whole video, writes out the points so you can just read them. Shout out to those of you who are serving hurting people. Eva-Lena, working with women who were trafficked; Billy who is working with anarchists. So many.

22. Not part of our immediate family, but shout out to those who serve Jesus where it's hard. None of us put our life on the line here today, unless you count the other drivers on the road. It's a community that's meant to love.

23. Hebrews 10:24, says the following, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds". Everybody, go upstairs to coffee time and say, 'Trudy, go back to Kefalonia and keep doing the good work, but you can stay here as long as you want to.'

24. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, all of them are meant to bind themselves in this one thing, 'LOVE.' I'm saying that as a command, 'LOVE'. Receive love, thank You Lord, for saving my soul. Thank You Lord, for making me whole. Thank You Lord, for giving to me Your goodness, this one amazing, free life. Thank You Lord, that You gave me people to love and people to love me. Thank You that's it's true in the good days, and Lars in the bad days 😊, when I don't care for the work, you do.

25. The love of God, delivered by the Holy Spirit, is absolutely the greatest gift. We could heal somebody here today, that would be absolutely great, or we could experience some other miracle. We could hear a Word of God; we could exercise supernatural faith. These are wonderful things, but not one of them by themselves would send someone a new person home, only the transformative love of the Holy Spirit.

26. So, tell yourself, 'I am loved'. Go ahead and say it out aloud, 'I am loved!' Now, you don't have to look at anybody else but me, and say, 'I love you.' Thank You Lord. Thank You Lord, for the love of God, delivered to us by Jesus Christ, placed into our spirit. Thank You Lord for

the way it changes me. Thank You for the way it changes us. And thank You Lord, that it can cause us to change the world. In the love of Jesus Christ. Amen, amen, amen!

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