

# THE GREATEST LOVE

By Keith Greer

Every February 14th we celebrate Valentine's Day. Many flowers and boxes of candy will be given to our "sweethearts" on that day. Why? To show how much we love them! Love is a word with many different meanings. The bible discusses various types of love. Yet, one love stands taller than all the rest.

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you." {John 15:13,14} Jesus gave us the ultimate expression of love, when He gave His life on the cross. Do you have a greater friend than Jesus?

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." {John 3:16} Yes, God loved the whole human race, and gave His most precious gift to man, His Son! "But God demonstrates His love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." {Romans 5:8} Did any love ever sacrifice so much?

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." {Ephesians 5:25} Christ's love was deep and strong for the church, shown by the price willing to be paid for her. Paul was talking with the elders of the church of Ephesus in Miletus telling them of their duty concerning oversight of God's heritage. How valuable is the church to the Lord? "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." {Acts 20:28} Does our Lord still love that "blood bought" institution?

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" {Matthew 23:37} Did our Lord love His own people, despite the fact that they rejected Him? "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." {John 1:11} Love that gave all, and got nothing in return!

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one." {John 17:15} Even while he faced the cross, He was still concerned for His disciples. How did they repay His love? "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled." {Matthew 26:56} Yet, it never lessened His love for them!

The love of Christ is shown in so many ways in our own personal lives. Every gift we receive in this life is an expression of His love, James 1:17. Constant desire to listen to our petitions we make before His throne in our prayers, Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 3:12. Our Lord's willingness to extend grace, pardon and forgiveness when we let Him down by becoming guilty of sin in our lives. Yet, when one humbles himself and seeks forgiveness, God pardons, 1 John 1:7.

In my life, I have been loved and deeply loved others. My wife, my children, my parents, grandchildren, and many dear Christian brethren have demonstrated their love for me. My hope is that I

have returned their love. Yet, when someone questions you concerning the "greatest love", what would your answer be? Love of your wife or husband? Love of children? Parents, friends, or even brethren? Yes, the love of these in our lives bring us great peace and comfort. Truly, one needs to look no further than the cross for no "greater love" will man ever witness, than that death on the cruel cross! God's Son willing to leave heaven and come to this world of sorrow and pain and give His life for the sinner. Paying the ransom price – yes, it's truly the greatest! \*\*\*