



Valentine's Day

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8

This month, stores are putting out Valentine's Day items. People are wondering what will I get my significant other.

This year, Americans are expected to spend \$18.2 billion on Valentine's Day. The five most common items purchased on this day are a box of chocolates, diamond earrings, a dozen roses, dinner for two, and a bottle of champagne. Approximately 180 million cards will be exchanged today. And an estimated 14% of women will send flowers to themselves! All of this will be done in honor of St. Valentine.

The history of Valentine's Day – and the story of St. Valentine – is murky. The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine, all of whom were martyred. One legend says that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and children, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine might have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and punished. According to one legend, while Valentine was imprisoned he sent the first “valentine” greeting after he fell in love with a girl who visited him in jail. It is said that he wrote his love a letter before he died signed, “From Your Valentine,” an expression still used today.

We will probably never know the whole truth about St. Valentine. But one thing these various legends have in common is that Valentine loved others sacrificially. The stories differ, but the bottom line is the same: Valentine stood up for justice. He risked his life...eventually losing it...demonstrating his love for others, and for what was right.

Micah 6:8 tells us that there are three things the Lord desires from us: To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him. Is this the type of love that is being celebrated today? Unfortunately, in many cases it is not. The world celebrates a love that is self-centered and dependent on feelings that come and go. Biblical love stands in stark contrast to that love. Godly love is patient, kind, honest, and sacrificial. It is rooted in God and not in self. It seeks to serve rather than to be served.

This Valentine's Day, think about how you love others. Is God honored in the way you love?

God, thank you for the love you have demonstrated through Your Son, Jesus. Help me to love others sacrificially and biblically, so that my life brings glory to Your Name. In Jesus' name, Amen. — Pastor Bert