

## Divine Love

*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" (John 19:25-28 NKJV)*

The phrase "I love you" has become rather trite in the culture that we live in. Perhaps it is because our affections have become so fickle. After all it is common to hear someone say they love their car, or their new dress, or perhaps even a plate of food. We are encouraged to love ourselves and forgive ourselves, or even in the words of a 60's song writer, "love the one you are with" But divine love is so much more than all of this. It is so deep and sacrificial that it exceeds human comprehension. The pinnacle of human love is the act of a divine being who took on flesh and died for the very ones that He created! Nowhere was that love more clearly demonstrated than at the foot of the cross. Jesus while suffering the most brutal death known to man, took time to meet the needs of His mother. "Woman behold your son!" and to his beloved disciple, "Behold your mother!" Listen to what author Kent Hughes has to say about this;

"Christ's care for us may come in the form of responsibility. We would like to think that the more we love God, the less he will ask of us, and the lighter our burdens will become. But that is not necessarily so. If we love Jesus, he will make use of our love. Jesus' care for John came in the form of a burden, but that burden was a blessing. Not all the pressures we bear come because we love. Many are simply due to our own sin and stupidity. Unique responsibilities, however, are placed on those who possess great love for the Lord. Some of our burdens are, in fact, blessings."<sup>1</sup>

When Jesus calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves, some believe that He is saying that we are to love ourselves. That is a false assumption. The truth of the matter is that His is assuming that we, by nature already do! Remember these two commandments were given to disciples who were not yet indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the love that they were called to demonstrate, as noble as it was paled in comparison to the love HE demonstrated on the cross. On His way to the cross Jesus called His Disciples to a measure of love that only He could accomplish when He said; *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35 NKJV)

This kind of love is an act of grace that supersedes human love and comprehension. That is why it is the identifying mark of the true believer. So if God the Father is calling you to a seemingly impossible degree of love, it is because only Christ in you, in the person of the Holy Spirit can accomplish it. Don't cower in magnitude of your responsibility, but choose to glorify God in it.

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, R. K. (1999). John: that you may believe (p. 447). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.