

## FROM THE PASTOR

I know February is the month when we're supposed to think about love. Of course, the subject should be ever present in our minds and hearts. I think because it's not, love gets commercialized with "reminders" in our stores and over the media. "Reminders" is a kind way to say we're barraged with material gift suggestions. Don't forget to buy a card, to purchase that gift, to make those reservations. The message is it will "show" your love. The motivation behind these reminders is your remembrance will make us wealthy.

Christians can do better than simply react to reminders from the store or TV. By His Grace, we know God who is love. (1 John 4:8,16) Love is the core aspect of God's character. The Bible tells us, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus) that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) It also says He (Jesus) came unto His own, and His own people did not accept Him. (John 1:11) Admittedly, not everyone is receptive to love; but, that didn't deter God. "But God proves His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." In Christ we have the perfect example of love. His love is sacrificial, purposeful, unconditional and endless.

I want to encourage the Christians related to FCCB not to settle for buying the card, getting the gift, and making the reservations. I want to encourage all of us to go beyond a token "show" to our intimate or significant others this month. I want to encourage each of us to measure our love for all others whether they accept it or not, whether they reciprocate or not, by the measurements the apostle Paul gives us in 1st Corinthians 13:4-7

"Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things. Believes all things. Hopes all things. Endures all things."

This is a tough standard to keep, but it's how God in Christ loves each of us, and how we are to love others. "This is my new command that you love one another AS I HAVE LOVED YOU." (John 13:34) Is it possible? Yes. God empowers us by cultivating this core aspect of His character in those who believe and trust in His ways through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. (Galatians 5:22,23)

So this month, this year don't settle for a commercialized reminder. Take the biblical challenge to love.

Blessings,

Pastor Ron