

For Such a Time as This

A Daily Devotional

Monday, Nov. 20, 2023



From Romans 12

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

This is one of my favorite passages from Paul's Letter to the Romans and I'm sure you can see why. It may well be one of your favorites or it might become so after having read it through just now.

It is immediately relatable to us; especially that first short, but brilliant sentence: Let love be genuine. We have all had our fill of love that is fake or fraudulent; love that claims big things, promises high hopes, but only comes to disappoint when the pressure is on and our need greatest.

Sentimentality is a kind of this false love – when we think we feel strongly about someone or for something and then the reality of life comes stumbling in and we find just how shallow our feelings (or someone else's) are. It is akin to infatuation I suppose, but we can often excuse infatuation from the young for they haven't quite learned about the depths of love. No, real, genuine love is what is wanted not just by us; not just by Paul – but by God as well.

Paul seems to me to be saying that God calls us to a love that is demonstrative towards other human beings by being more than kind feeling and good thoughts. Love, to be genuine, becomes true, ethical action on our part for the sake of others. Here's how Karl Barth put it in his commentary:

We are familiar with the honor paid by one man to another according to the form of this world. But in all the removing of hats and paying of compliments men do but honor themselves. If, on the other hand, the honor we pay to another is to be an ethical action, it must be an unconditional, genuine preference, which expects nothing in return. Only so can it represent the honor which we owe to God; for it is ethical only in type. When, however, it is thus understood, the honor we pay to others is a genuine respect for the holiness for men; and without if society is naught but a collection of imbeciles.

Of course, Paul still said it best and simplest: Let love be genuine. Amen and amen ...

Prayer for the Day: (From *The Valley of Vision*)

O Lord Jesus, come to me, O Divine Spirit, rest upon me, O Holy Father, look on me in mercy for the sake of the well-beloved. Amen.

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