

# Channels of God's Love

Dear Friend,

The pain, loneliness, anxiety and depression that this world throws at us on a daily basis can frequently seem overwhelming. As this happens you and I must be fully persuaded that, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he (and she) who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:4, 5). The fact that Jesus took our sins upon Himself and, on the cross conquered death through His physical resurrection, is what equips us to not only overcome the world, but let the love and power of God flow through us.

As I get older it becomes increasingly critical that I am fully persuaded that God has the power to do what He has promised. Moses had to learn this as he was called forth at the age of eighty to deliver the children of Israel from captivity. Abraham had to accept the fact that God was able to make him the father of a great nation when he was over ninety years of age. Romans 4:21 says that Abraham was, "fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised."

If I am going to accomplish that which God has called me to do I must be fully persuaded that God has the power to do what He has promised. I must accept and act upon what Paul declared in Eph. 3:20 when he stated, "now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us."

In order to do this I must allow myself to be a channel through which God's power can flow. An example of this took place in the 1930's when King George VI of England made an important speech at the opening of a disarmament conference. This speech was to be broadcast by radio to millions of waiting listeners. In the middle of his speech someone tripped over the wires stretched across the floor, tearing them loose and interrupting the signal. When the chief engineer saw what had happened he quickly grabbed the broken wires in his bare hands, providing a channel through which the signal could flow. For twenty minutes the current passed through him while the King finished his speech. The engineer's hands were burned but through them the words of the King flowed. Without the engineer's willingness to be a channel for the King, the message would not have gotten through.

Like that engineer, you and I have been called to let God's power and love flow through us. Sin has broken the lines of communication of the King of Kings, the creator of Heaven and Earth.

Now God "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son He loves, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13).

By letting the love of Christ flow through you, as you continue to live in Him, you will be like the engineer who picked up the broken wires and strengthened in the faith you will overflow with thankfulness as God's power flows in you. This involves trusting God even when you don't fully understand what He is doing. It means rising above the circumstances and placing your faith in God's word and not limiting your faith to what you can see. As you do this you will discover the peace, power and purpose only Christ can give.

In the book of Colossians, Paul clearly points out that the longing within us can only be filled when we let the love of Jesus flow through us. He is not only equal to God, but He is God. “He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Col. 1:15-17).

Martin Luther explained what being a channel of God’s power and love is in the following way. “Behold from faith... flow forth love and joy in the Lord and from love a joyful, willing, and free mind that serves one’s neighbor willingly and takes no account of gratitude or ingratitude, of praise or blame, of gain or loss. For a man does not serve that he may put men under obligations. He does not distinguish between friends and enemies or anticipate their thankfulness or unthankfulness, but he most freely and most willingly spends himself and all that he has.”

How do we love that son or daughter, father or mother, husband or wife, neighbor or fellow employee who returns insults, condemnation and hostility for love. What do we do? Do we give up emotionally or declare it’s impossible to love those that would despitefully use us and persecute us with their nasty attitudes and constant insults? There certainly has to be a better way than to engage in fight or flight when it comes to interactions with difficult people. Often when we try to love the unlovable, we fail time and time again. Then all we are left with is guilt and frustration.

The problem is that we are trying to love them ourselves when we should be receiving our love from Him so we can love them. The secret to loving the unlovable is to let God fill our love account with His love. “We love, because He first loved us” (I John 4:19).

What power to love the unlovable exists in this verse. I have discovered that when I want to be more loving I must accept my place as a child of God. Eph. 5:1, 2 says, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us.”

We cannot live a life of love unless we know that Christ loves us. When this happens we are free to forgive. If we don’t forgive a root of bitterness will start growing in us. At moments like that we must remember that we have been forgiven. When we do this it frees us to forgive the one who has hurt us. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

I know from years of experience that when I am hungry, angry, and lonely or tired I must immediately go to God’s bank of love and make a big withdrawal of His love or I will be the irritable or unloving person. Sometimes I am more successful at that than at other times. If I don’t halt and make that withdrawal of divine love, small incidents can blow up into world war III. After all, doesn’t Jeremiah 17:9 say that “the heart is deceitful above all things” and if this heart isn’t filled with God’s love, disaster will be the result.

When we try to love without drawing from God’s bank account of love it is like writing a check without adequate funds to cover that check. I John 4:9, 10 explains to us further how God made the deposit in our love account in order that we might have sufficient love funds to love the unlovable. “God showed how much He loved us by sending His only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. This is real love. It is not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.”

John then tells us in verse 11 to write a check from this divine bank of love. “Dear Friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.”

The secret to being a channel of God’s love is to let “your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love.” We have that opportunity as we work daily with the homeless and hurting. They need food, water, clothes and shelter but even more so they need the true love of Christ displayed to them in a deeper level than the material things we are providing them. Some have bitterness deep within their soul that only the grace of God and the healing, atoning blood of Jesus can heal. We may at times find ourselves caught up in the midst of their pain because we feel helpless, yet they actually feel hopeless. It is then we can pray for them and not only tell them of Jesus but show them through sharing the unconditional love we receive from God’s love bank.

God gives us the privilege of praying for those in need. As we do, they will experience the presence of the Almighty God right in their midst. We can ask the Lord to help us show the hurting and homeless the heart and love of Christ through us as we visit them.

When we see the angry look or the one sitting on the side looking frustrated, we must know that they are probably experiencing hopelessness and helplessness. Often times the simple thing to do is offer them a sandwich or a fan or other assistance, when deep down they really want to see the true love of Christ working in us. The hurt and ungratefulness you see displayed is actually a deep seeded pain that can be dealt with as they come to know Jesus.

Those in need are just like you and me. Some have a larger degree of pain and life experiences that have been made them respond the way they do and yet we can love them the way Christ loves us as we daily draw from God’s love account.

I have experienced years of working with the homeless and hurting people. Certainly there have been times when it would have been easy to give up. Yet Jesus doesn’t give up on me, so I can’t give up on them, God’s creation. He promises he will never leave nor forsake us, yet working with those who are hurting and in pain is not always an easy walk. It forces me to deal with my uncertainties, fears, and disappointments as I try to help them. As I reach out I must always remember that “the Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love” (Ps. 103:8).

In spite of the fact you may feel that your expectations for that person weren’t met, your life has still touched them in a good way. It is written in Isaiah 55:11: “so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it”.

Perhaps the Lord has allowed you to see the depth of the pain of those in need in order that you may continue to pray for them. Mother Teresa wrote: ‘the poor are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things’. She saw the true condition of those she was helping and as we help the less fortunate we are an extension of the love of God and hands of Jesus. Though the things you did for them seemed to not be appreciated at that moment, know that you have shown them that God loves them and is providing for them through caring people who are meeting their needs in a very tangible way.”

Many people have a very difficult time receiving real love. Real love is a love drawn from God's love account and involves genuine concern, compassion, and a desire to see the best for the other person. When it does come, it's sometimes hard to believe it's the real thing, particularly if one has been hurt in the past. As a result, many go through life never really receiving love nor giving it. They settle for passionate affairs that leave them feeling empty and ultimately alone. Real love ultimately comes from the source of love—God. After all, love is not just one of the characteristics or attributes of God. For 1 John 4:16 says, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."

How satisfying it is to read the Word (the Bible) and the works (creation) of God daily. In the promises of Scripture and the wonders of creation we see God's goodness and how we can be effective channels of God's power and love.

God will meet every need as we take into one hand a broken sin stricken world and in the other, the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then as we let His love and power flow through us, we can as ambassadors for Christ, be instruments of healing and hope. After all "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know Your name will trust in You, for You, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You" (Ps.9:9, 10).

We have the assurance that we can be channels of God's love by knowing that, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph.2:10). Each day He gives us so many opportunities to fulfill our God-given purpose, as channels of His power and love. This is demonstrated by our acts of kindness, caring and sharing with those in need. We will see God do the miraculous through us if we will give Him our lives and not our excuses. This means surrendering and letting the Life and Love of Jesus flow through us. Jesus said, "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

In conclusion let's think about the life of one man who took serious these words of Jesus and let the love of God be channeled through him and then compare him to another who concerned himself with only having his needs met. The first man, Paul, spent much of his time in prison, praying and letting the love of God flow in his letters and preaching. The other man, Caesar, lived in a palace for himself and his own glory. Today almost 2000 years later people recognize which of these two men, by being a channel for the King, made an eternally important contribution. Their realization causes them to name their children after the prisoner Paul, and their salads after the emperor Caesar.

As you let his love and power flow through you reach out in word and deed daily to a hurting world.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Rice". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Larry Rice