

## Real Faith Produces Love



Carter Conlon October 17, 2020

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah 61:1, saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (NIV).

Jesus stood in the synagogue, opened the Scripture, and essentially said, “The Spirit of God is upon Me for you, and you, and you, and you ...” There was no other reason the Spirit was upon him except to alleviate human suffering and for the redemption of fallen humanity. Jesus’ desire was to bring a fallen people into the knowledge of God and, ultimately, back to living with God for all eternity.

I’ve always believed it is impossible to say that “Christ is mine, and I am Christ’s” yet remain self-absorbed. The apostle Paul, writing in 2 Timothy, warned that perilous times will come. “Men will be lovers of self,” he wrote (2 Timothy 3:2, NASB). That self-love would be the underpinning of everything else he was about to write. Loving ourselves and giving ourselves preeminence in life automatically means that our relationships with others are a form of religion that lacks the power of God. Paul ultimately says turn away from self-serving religion. Any faith based on the life of Jesus Christ within us must be lived for the benefit and the sake of other people.

We can know in large measure the heart of God for people. Mark 8:23-26 records the story of Jesus leading the blind man away from the village of Bethsaida in order to restore his sight, which I think represents leading people away from a culture that confines and even tries to hijack the love of God and give credit to humankind for the things that God does. It’s all about me, myself, and I, with no room left for God.

This blind man’s sight was only partially restored at first. It wasn’t until God touched him the second time that he saw clearly. That’s how it often works in our walk with God. He continues to touch our eyes and our hearts as often as needed until we see clearly and love willingly, sincerely, and genuinely.

Carter Conlon joined the pastoral staff of Times Square Church in 1994 and was appointed Senior Pastor in 2001. In May of 2020 he transitioned into a continuing role as General Overseer of Times Square Church, Inc.

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