



Required Love, Isn't Love

By Pastor Jason Triplett

Two verses of the Bible have been used lately to question Christian response when a crisis happens.

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13 (ESV)

&

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 29:39 (ESV)

In a world of pandemic healthcare emergencies, feared government over-reach, and biomedical mandates, concerns arise as to what is truly good and true in responding to other people's needs. It's been nineteen months since the first stay at home order from COVID. Has COVID-19 gone from pandemic to endemic? Is it safe to return to a regular flow of life? What unintended consequences could happen from an expedited set of vaccines and the mandates now emerging for certain pockets of society to get one?

The people in our culture reel from questions like these. Christians have debated, we've unfortunately even condemned each other and now see division in the body over what we believe are "good responses" to COVID. These beliefs are not only in reaction to the disease itself but to a countless number of responses to mitigate it.

I've heard the verses above cited as a rebuke to Christians who refuse to do things like wear a mask, mask their children, socially distance, obey a quarantine order or take a vaccine.

The basic logic goes like this:

It's loving to care for your neighbor and lay aside your own life for their good.

Mitigations to diseases like COVID-19 are intended to save lives from a real threat.

Therefore, refusing to follow mitigations to things like COVID-19 is unloving and "unChristian".

Sadly, these verses have been used to denounce Christian people on social media, in local communities even within

Churches. Even though this logic seems sound and Biblical, it's forgetting one beautiful truth of the Christian faith. We find this truth in the words of Jesus in John chapter ten.

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

John 10:17-18 (ESV)

Christianity is a faith system where belief in Christ stands unforced by the leverage of an institution. The Church doesn't force you to believe. Being a part of a local Church is volunteering to be present and to love others. All aspects of Christian faith; giving, singing, praying, or serving are all voluntary. In this passage, Christ is talking about the death He will endure and His resurrection that will take place afterward. Note how the love of the Father comes to Jesus partially for His willingness to lay His life down for His people. The voluntary nature of Christ's death parallels with the "laying down" of our lives for others and loving our neighbors. Christ chose to die. He wasn't leveraged to do so or mandated by God to do so. It was a "charge" given Him by His Father and He willingly went to the cross.

Are we commanded to love others by God? Absolutely! There are many places in the Bible where God commands love. Matthew 29:39 is, in fact, a commandment. However, it is a commandment from God and not from any human group or institution. The command to sacrificially love is pressed upon human consciousness by God's Spirit and through God's Word. This commandment doesn't come from human beings, but from the Lord that we worship. Thus, the decision of what is loving and when to be loving is discerned from an interaction between the believer and the Lord. It's impressed upon our awareness and enacted as worship. The message to love may come through human messengers, but the decision to act comes from the conviction placed on us by God's Word and through God's Spirit.

It's not that diseases like COVID aren't dangerous or real. It's definitely not that Christians who are cautious about compliance are being unloving. And all those who've chosen to comply aren't necessarily wrong. It's the fact that the freedom of giving yourself up for another is no longer love when it's leveraged by centers of power. We've learned from history that forced compliance by human authorities can become fertile soil for unspeakable acts of hate. Love is best enacted voluntarily by those who in their hearts and by their consciences before Almighty God have decided to do so.

merry CHRISTMAS

RCC'S ADVENT SCHEDULE

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Advent Sermon Series
"Christ the Lord"
Begins Nov. 28th

Special Music
Presentations
Throughout December!

GIVING

The Angel Tree
Project

Begins
November
28th!

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

"Behold" Gatherings
6-7pm

Music, Prayer & Reflection

"Behold" Worship Leaders:

- 12/1 Cody & Dianne Stinnett
- 12/8 Josh Billingsley
- 12/15 The Nortons

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Friday December 24th @ 6pm



Send
Good News
and
Great Joy!

Samaritan's Purse
Operation Christmas Child

Shoeboxes and Instructions available at RCC or Family Dollar

Collection Week Nov 15 - 22

To volunteer with collections Contact Caryl Lasswell 309/338-6262

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAYS

5:00 - 6:30 Middle School

6:00 - 7:30 High School

**We will be filling OCC
Shoeboxes on Nov 14th**

Hudson Andrew Trone

Born 10/7/21 to Mike & Britney

Congratulations!

Sutton Elizabeth Howard

Born 10/29/21 to Ethan & Lizzy

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord

TO CONTACT PASTOR JASON
(309)331-0200 (talk/text)
jasontriplett99@gmail.com

TO SUBMIT NEWS CONTACT
Mindy Crum (217)473-3473
Or Email to RushvilleCC@gmail.com

Prayers & Praises

Updated: 11/1/2021

Church building need & search for additional Minister

Farmers still getting crops out

Leaders of our country & military

Unity in Schuyler County

Family of Rick Ashcraft

Thelma is Post Chemo & everything is looking good!

Nancy Longwell Stroke

Lindsay Booth health

Praise Gene Cunningham's Covid recovery

Family of Eldon Lashbrook (Veronica's father)

Ava—daughter of Jessica Davis - recovery from broken clavical

Twin girls & family of Michael and Megan Barton, Pioneer Bible Translators

Families affected by governmental mandates of vaccine

Brian Ralston health

Nathan Ralston

Garrett Collins - Cancer

10 year old James Pax (Thelma's cousin's grandson) has Stage 4 Cancer

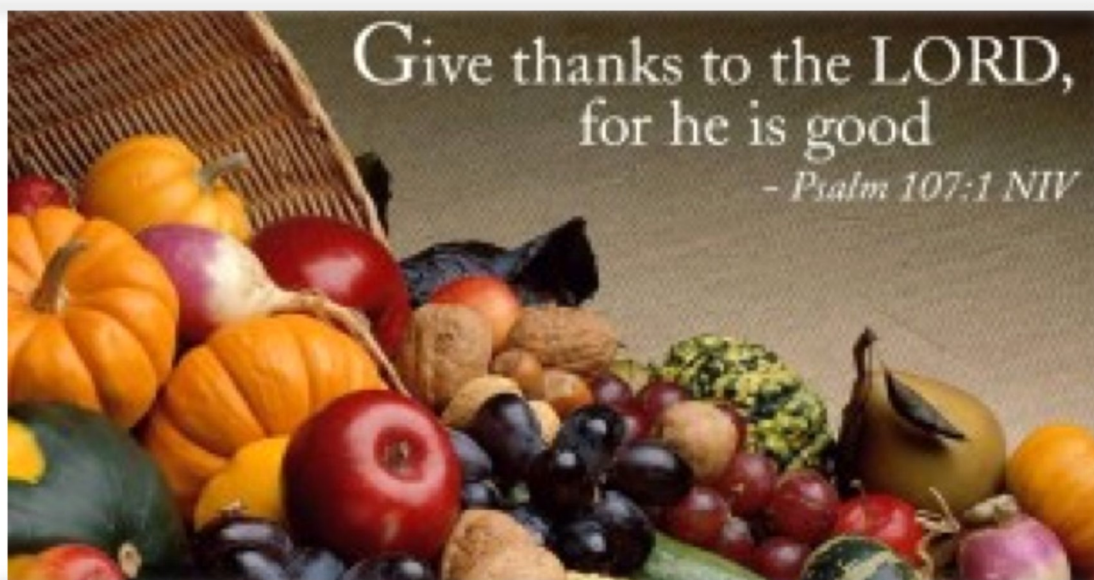
Janet Detrick - Cancer

Alisha's grandmother - Cancer

Kailey Orwig - stationed at Ft. Campbell, TN

Abigail Norton - is HOME!

Dan Norton - stroke recovery



OCTOBER OFFERINGS:

Oct 3	-	\$ 4987.67
Oct 10	-	\$ 2059.12
Oct 17	-	\$ 2608.14
Oct 24	-	\$ 2769.39
Oct 31	-	\$ 2310.64

SPECIAL GIVING:

Youth \$300.00

Prayer Requests can be submitted and updated through the online Prayer card. Find it at rushvillechurchofchrist.com

