

There has already been much said about the various facets and features of love at this convention. Wonderful words of life. Obviously after 5 prior discourses on love, it will be amazing if I actually say anything much different. But we shall see. We have a slightly different focus in our assignment. As with the other speakers, MUCH of what we have to say today – is not only from the Scriptures and the words of our Master, Jesus Christ – but from the pen of Pastor Russell whom we greatly respect as the 7th Messenger. Not worship – but greatly respect – for the authority he was given by our Returned Lord. Rev. 1:16

“Abounding in LOVE. It has been said that “Love” is the very ESSENCE of the Divine Character and RESONATES throughout his divine plan for man. It’s God’s “crowning attribute”. And the highest statement of the divine Law.

The ROYAL LAW of LOVE – along with God’s attribute of JUSTICE – is the gravitational force that keeps everything in ORBIT and in harmony – in the entire UNIVERSE. Now and in the future. I believe a majority of people on this planet THINK that they know what love is. But to me most people have a love that reflects relative elements of selfishness and advantage in some way or another. HOWEVER, a wise man once said: “He who loves merely at a time when it will be to his advantage to love – KNOWS NOT LOVE”. But we understand that the Divine love has the capacity to love – even those that are difficult to love – even those who are blinded by sin by the God of this Present World. Even those who are filled with hate and selfishness and pride. After all, the Bible says that GOD LOVED FIRST. I John 4:19

There is NO selfishness in Jehovah’s love. God’s love is SUPER-ABUNDANT and OVERFLOWING – even to the UNJUST and UNKIND. In fact, God SO LOVED the world (that what?) “that he gave His ONLY begotten Son.” So loved the world – that he gave the most precious object in the whole Universe up – to be crucified for US – and gave the most monumental sacrifice of love that any being could ever give – for those whom he loved. This was THEE most LOVING – superabundant – sacrifice that a LOVING GOD could give. And it “overflowed with agonizing MERCY.” Jehovah could not possibly have given more.

The scripture in I Thess. 3:12 directs US, the new creation, to have this SAME superabundance of love. In fact, in the Greek the word “abound” has that very thought and definition of “super-abundance”. The Apostle Paul, who HAD this super-abundance of love, in speaking to the Thessalonians stated: 1 Thess. 3:12-13 “And the Lord make you to increase and ABOUND IN LOVE - one toward another, and toward all men, even as WE do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in HOLINESS before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

So it’s not just LOVING; but rather, it’s “ABOUNDING in love.” SUPER abundant. It’s a very affectionate AGAPE love – that’s a disinterested love, a love void of selfishness and explodes in generosity. And the MORE we see the true love of God and respect this glorious divine character – appreciating the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of His divine personality – the MORE our love will abound not only toward HIM, but toward His dear Son, the Lord Jesus, who is the express IMAGE of His divine father. And as the Apostle Paul tells us to be “imitators” of God – he will be pleased to see us striving diligently to emulate HIS character – and have that same Agape Love that overflows with abundance – EVER INCREASING in our daily efforts. AND – not just to our brethren especially – but to ALL PEOPLE. THIS is the goal. GOD’S love, manifested in OUR hearts. THIS IS – the “chief test” of our NEARNESS to GOD.

Dear Sr. Ruth Cunningham once wrote in Facebook, “Live in a manner – that you are LIVING PROOF – of a loving God.” I like that. It’s like saying we should continually be making daily efforts to REFLECT the same kind of love – that we see – in our Father above. And yes, certainly our Master, Jesus Christ – as well. 1 Tim.1:5 “But the end (or final result) of the commandment is LOVE out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned (or SINCERE).

So why is it so CRITICAL to our graduation to “abound in love”? Well, don’t you want to CO-HABITATE in the same place as the divine family some day, don’t you? Well, won’t God and Jesus and all the holy angels and Church class feel more comfortable with your presence IF you have striven to attain and resonate this SUPER-abundant, God-like love? And won’t this God-like resonating love be also something that we will want to teach humanity some day in the Kingdom – so that they will be happy, at peace with each other, and live in unity on this planet earth in the “Ages to Come”? Don’t we all have to learn this FIRST - before we can teach it to others. Don’t we? Have you ever seen a piano key “resonate” across a room and make a stringed instrument RESONATE? Someday the whole world will be resonating in love with each other.

As one dear sister in our class use to say, or at least kind of similar, we want to pour love in the cup and have them drinking from the saucer! An “overflowing love” – one to another.

But it’s relatively EASY to “SAY” you love someone. Or even that you have a “superabundance of love for them.” But what are some PRACTICAL WAYS this is developed and demonstrated in the Home, in the Ecclesia, with our NEIGHBORS and the PEOPLE AT WORK or SCHOOL? Even for our ENEMIES. Let’s weave together the PRACTICAL with the THEORY.

Now WHERE does this love begin? LOVE BEGINS IN THE HOME – doesn’t it? We must care for – provide for and LOVE – in abundance – FIRST to every member of our family, showing them daily, the love of God that GLOWS in our hearts. We cannot justly love our brethren – and others OUTSIDE the home, and neglect this abundant love with our family members.

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Acts of KINDNESS to them – acts of GENEROSITY – acts of COURTESY and UNSELFISHNESS – “Please, Thank-you, “Why don’t you go ahead first” - should radiate more and more, as this ABUNDANCE of GOD’s love is more and more appreciated in our mental and emotional understanding. We should be sensitive to each family members needs within the boundaries of our consecration vows, to show thoughtful considerations – with greater gentleness in our manner and tone. “Honey, I’m not sure that would be the BEST way to do it.”

We should be careful that THOUGHTLESS words of too MUCH praise – might germinate the seeds of JEALOUSY in the young vulnerable heart of a sibling – in OPPOSITION to the parental goals of love in all the family members toward one another.

Recall, when King Saul heard the words, over and over, of “Saul slayed thousands, but KING DAVID his ten thousands,” the SEED of JEALOUSY germinated into “vicious acts” of ENVY and hatred toward David. So too, our words in the home should be mindful and loving to point out the fine qualities the parent sees in EACH of their children. Words like: “Why can’t you be more like Jimmy, or whomever, should never come out of a parent’s mouth.” At least – that’s the way I see it. And I’ve SEEN how JEALOUSY has been manifested in my own children.

But on another level, we should be careful about too much praise towards ONE brother or ONE sister in the ECCLESIA as well. “WHY can’t you be more like Brother A is – or why can’t you be more like Sister B.”

BRETHREN are not totally exempt from the seeds of jealousy either – even though they want to be. LOVE more ABUNDANT – would guard such words and “too much adoration” of any individual in the home OR the ecclesia; and recognize the dormant seeds of jealousy – the weaknesses - that may still exist in the struggling heart of the under-confident and vulnerable.

If we are justly angry with a family member – where principles seem to be involved – what we might call a “righteous indignation” – we should try to remember – that words or actions are not always what they APPEAR to be. Words can be taken many different ways. Actions can also. Perhaps a few carefully worded questions could be asked FIRST to be sure. But when clear, absolute proof is demonstrated, we should still be very careful to not SIN - with our words - nor our HEARTS toward the individual. Let our words be more and more “seasoned with salt” and the loving GRACE of God’s wisdom, God’s methods and God’s instruction in the Bible. Col. 4:6 There may be times when we need to be firm, almost to sternness or inflexibility on points of principle, but may God’s examples of parental instruction and behavior – as well as Jesus example – mark the course of action for our response to the infraction. Look how Jesus “lovingly and thoughtfully” responded to Peter’s denial of him three times. “Lovest thou me, Peter?” By at least the third time, Peter knew what Jesus was getting at. Personally, I can also only think of ONE time that Jesus ever displayed a temper; and that was at the hypocrisy of what was going on with the money changers in the temple. So if we ever show anger – it should be the very exception, and not “the rule”. And do not expect “perfection” from your spouse or any family member – UNLESS you YOURSELF are perfect. Apologies and a humble heart should manifest itself as a standard or BASIS of relationships and practice in the loving Christian heart. Set the example. Forgive others – as YOU yourself wish to be forgiven by God. That is GOD’S standard. Matt. 7:1-2

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An “abundant love” will show as much leniency and benefit of the doubt as you wish for others to show you. And MODEL for your children - the self-control over temper that you wish for them to manifest to your grandchildren, as well as your child’s future spouse . Often that temper will be passed on for generations – which you pray will NOT be the case. “He that ruleth his spirit – is BETTER, than HE that taketh – a city.” Right?

Let us all – reflect mere and more – God’s abundance of love, grace and mercy – amongst each of our family members wherever possible. Let us strive to give daily sermons in our actions - to the glory of God – to the very best of our abilities in our everyday display of the character of Christ. And YES, we ALL come short of that glory and abundance of love. I do probably more than you all; but that’s no excuse for not improving on our efforts day by day. We must ALL “wage a good warfare” over our fallen human nature – and MORTIFY the “Philistines of our flesh”. We must ALL learn to “bridle our tongue” at times - with our children or spouse. And experience has taught me that: “He who flies off the handle – SELDOM makes a good landing.” Let’s NOT end up “off the runway” – of love....in “the ditch of shameful regret.”

THIS in part - will show our desire to our father of having an “abundance of love” – a “passing from death unto LIFE” – not only because we love the brethren – but because we love our families.... because we truly LOVE, FORGIVE and demonstrate a “benefit of the doubt” in the many words and actions toward our families - and of our brethren.

Is this always EASY. No. Will we have to teach it to others someday in the Kingdom. Yes. Let us always internalize this fact – We have to EARN the PRIVILEGES of participating in the Kingdom“ ministry of reconciliation.” ALWAYS REMEMBER this: that we are a “people for a purpose.” We are being trained in part to

teach the world someday HOW to exercise God-like principles of righteousness and love and forgiveness amongst themselves in the Kingdom. We're going to be teaching many OTHERS the various elements and BENEFITS of having a HEART of GOD-Like character. A heart of gold. THAT is the ONLY way they will pass through the TEST of the Little Season. Matt. 25:32-46. Therefore, it is IMPERATIVE that from whatever walk of life and hereditary weaknesses that God has called us; we absolutely NEED to show God our perfection of INTENTION to learn and INTERNALIZE these very principles we hope to be teaching all of humanity someday. These overcoming efforts over our FLESH will become in part, our CREDENTIALS for becoming part of this Melchizedek Priesthood – the BRIDE of Christ. In FACT, NONE of us will ever become part of the BRIDE class – that do NOT develop this super-abounding love.

Now let's look at having a "super-abounding" love with our dear brethren.

In some or all instances, our ecclesia becomes "an incubator for divine beings". A "small microcosm" of various personalities – that the LORD has selected to be instrumental in this future AT-ONE-MENT between God and man. And in a way God challenges us - to demonstrate that we really have what it takes to bring out the best in people and help them to GROW in LOVE. Help them to someday "walk up the highway of holiness". Isaiah 35 and chapter 42:6 – 7.

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Consequentially, God has so arranged things that often we find ourselves in an ecclesia of people – with a LOT of LOVE, but who are also "broken" in some particular way. Maimed by heredity and environmentally acquired human weaknesses of sin or personality impairment. Character impairment. We call it "Adamitis".

These dear brethren, perhaps "like ourselves", do not always SAY things perfectly the way they might like to, nor do they always THINK or ACT in a Christlike manner. They are ALL "a WORK in Progress." JUST like we are. We are ALL, "A work in progress." Therefore, we MUST factor in certain allowances wherever possible – at least, as much as we WISH for them to factor in with OUR weaknesses and imperfections. Yes, there may be times when we have to confront them "in love" with non-judgmental questions, in a TONE that is LOVING and GENTLE – "non-assuming" in presentation. And this should definitely be OUTSIDE the hearing of any other person. Definitely NOT in a meeting break session where others can hear and misinterpret actions or reactions. Perhaps your abundant love for them has compelled you to "overlook" these personal infractions many times before; but you simply cannot push away the evidence any longer that so consumes occupying your sleepless nights and moments of the day. It's gone beyond the benefit of the doubt and you've prayed over it many times in days past. It MUST be confronted properly or it could fester into a deadly wound.

Step ONE of Matt. 18 is forced upon your heart to resolve the inner turmoil that threatens your love for someone that is running the same racecourse. Does it take courage? YES. Does it take the proper "tact" and "timing" and "prayer". YES.

The principles of an abundant love are seated on - The PRINCIPLES of RIGHTEOUSNESS. People WILL someday say, "You asked ME to forgive, but how did YOU forgive those who hurt YOUR feelings and trespassed against you." Did YOU demonstrate an abundant love? How hard did you try? You ask ME to be patient and loving with others, but how did YOU demonstrate that in your own walk of life. "You ask ME to be merciful and humble and practice SELF-CONTROL, but how did YOU demonstrate that - in the many circumstances of your ecclesia life when YOU were human like me?" Did YOU factor in the personality disorders and "quirks" of some of your brethren in your ecclesia? Did YOU allow for those fighting the broken aspects of ADD and Bipolar and Asperger handicaps – or where some might have had a "hyper-reactivity" issues like with a "borderline personality disorder" or "BPD?" Maybe you knew nothing about these things.

Did YOU overlook them, forgive them and demonstrate mercy in your thoughts and actions towards them – KNOWING that they struggled against these problems – but they ALSO were called by God to forgiveness, repentance and the promises that He would transform their lives – if they JUST put forth the effort and the CONFIDENCE - that HE had the power to do just that – if they would submerge themselves completely into His will and training. Hebr. 12:4-13

People will be strengthened to know that “we were IN their shoes” at one time. And as they struggle to CHANGE and be transformed into the perfection goals of the Kingdom and make heroic efforts towards loving and then ABUNDANTLY loving their fellow man, they will learn of those of us who climbed the ladder of character transformation by the POWER of God’s spirit – and ultimately proved WORTHY to become the Bride of Christ.

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Dear brethren: NONE of us deserve this high honor of running for this unspeakable prize of the High Calling. But the “abundance” of God’s love that transforms us in the school of Christ – transforms our heart - will help us to fulfill the theme of I Cor. 1:26-33. THIS is how we can become to the “praise of HIS glory.” CONFIDENT, that GOD is both WILLING and ABLE to finish or COMPLETE the work that he has started in us. Just as he had the ability to make the “stars”. In this case – the “stars” of the Abrahamic Promise.

Listen to the Apostle words in I Cor. 1:26-31, from the PHILLILPS translation.

“For look at your own calling as Christians, my brothers. You don't see among you many of the wise (according to this world's judgment) nor many of the ruling class, nor many from the noblest families. But God has chosen what the world calls foolish to shame the wise; he has chosen what the world calls weak to shame the strong. He has chosen things of little strength and small repute, yes and even things which have no real existence to explode the pretensions of the things that are - that no man may boast in the presence of God. Yet from this same God you have received your standing in Jesus Christ, and he has become for us the true wisdom, a matter, in practice, of being made righteous and holy, in fact, of being redeemed. And this makes us see the truth of scripture: 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.'” That “no man may boast, in the presence of God.” Brethren, this passage is talking about US. From the world’s perspective, WE are the foolishness of God. WE are those of little strength and small repute. We ARE those that are broken – but “glued together” by the “super-glue” of God’s abundant love.

Now let’s look at the passage of thought in I Cor. 12:12-27 Grasp the thought of the NECESSITY of EACH and EVERY member, of those that GOD has placed into your ECCLESIA. Remember, YOU and I are not doing the choosing. GOD is. HE hath set the members of that body together – “as it hath PLEASSED HIM.” Not necessarily as it hath pleased us. Right? But it’s not for us to choose. Let’s just be glad that He even chose US – to be part of this incredible Body.

Verse 12: “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?”

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which SEEM to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which WE THINK to be less honourable, upon these WE bestow more abundant honour; and our UNCOMELY parts have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given MORE ABUNDANT HONOR to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have THE SAME CARE one for another. And whether one member suffer, ALL the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, ALL the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

So perhaps you see my point – and the point of the Apostle.

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IF we are abounding in love with our brethren – we are NOT just loving those that are EASY to love – but loving those also that are weak or feeble in some way. Those who struggle with personality issues and that may not be as COMELY as others. We are to love those who are LACKING or “broken” in some ways – and need our patience, need our understanding, need our forgiveness or “over-looking” their “blemishes of imperfection.”

But GOD says we need ALL of these. And MORE than this – we should give even MORE ABUNDANT HONOR to those brethren that lack some of the social graces, of gentleness, patience and love. Give them time and room for growth. Isn't THIS the way that God is looking and dealing with each of US?

THIS is the way that GOD has TEMPERED or ordered the Body of Christ. And that we should have the SAME CARE for each of our brethren – even if they are sometimes unintentionally abrasive or *socially dysfunctional at times*. Jehovah – our God of loving abundance – wants us to GROW AS A BODY – because that's what he wants the WHOLE WORLD to do some day – to GROW AS A BODY. A global body with ABUNDANT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER – especially as they walk up the “highway of holiness” together. Not one creature in heaven or earth, will EVER have everlasting life – without this abundant love, IMBEDDED in their hearts. The WHOLE of humanity, will have this in the “Ages to Come.” An abundant love does not expect PERFECTION from their brethren.

WE as body members – need to be “KNIT together in love” the way that Jonathan and David were knit together in love. Remember? Recall in I Samuel 20:17 where it says that David LOVED Jonathan “as his OWN SOUL.” What a picture of abundant love there is in this unique relationship. What an incredibly LOVING relationship they had – that superseded even the natural love that a man has for a woman, according to David's own words in 2 Samuel 1:26

Here we have the son of a king, King Saul, who had MUCH to lose if he were selfishly ambitious. But instead, would rather see David sit in the throne of Israel – than he would have for his own self. Pure, loving UNselfishness. Why? Because of the strong bond of abundant love and respect he had for David. A love that would rather see your brother “shine in the spotlight” – than receive the praises yourself. Jonathan and David BOTH demonstrated an abundance of love that first desired to honor the name of Jehovah. A mutual appreciation in what they perceived in each other to LOVE Jehovah, with ALL of your HEART, with all of your

SOUL and with all of your MIND. This love between them was similar to what ours should be, that we should be willing to lay down our very lives for one another. "Take a bullet for a brother" as they say. I John 3:16

Jonathon's love never "surmised evil" in the intentions of David – as did his father, King Saul. Jonathan never impugned evil motives or questioned the loving intentions of his brother – but gave him an abundance of leniency and mercy of understanding in respect to his brother. Evil surmising – like evil speaking - is a SIN. Let that sink down. R 5266 and I Cor. 13:5. Perhaps we've all fallen into this trap from time to time. I know I have. And then ashamed of our thoughts or actions, pleaded for forgiveness at the throne of heavenly grace and mercy. And God promised us, that "IF we CONFESS our sins, he is faithful and just to FORGIVE US OUR SINS, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Page 7

The question is: Have WE demonstrated the same to others? DOES our abundant love demonstrate a God-like mercy of forgiving others – like HE does with US – as far as the EAST is from the WEST?

You wish to PRAISE GOD? This is one way of doing it. By IMITATING his super-abundance of MERCY and FORGIVENESS to others. 1 Peter 2:9 "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should *shew forth the praises* of him who hath called you out of darkness into HIS marvelous light:

You wish to GLORIFY GOD? Bear this abundant fruit of love – and ALL the fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23. Then John 15:8-12 tells us: "HEREIN is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; SO shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love....THIS is my commandment, That ye love one another, AS I have loved you. THAT'S the super-abundant love required for our graduation. Volume 6 pp. 369-378 God expects our BEST intentions – and efforts to do so.

Now what about our neighbors, our non-consecrated friends, and even our enemies? How can the ABUNDANT LOVE OF CHRIST AND OF GOD demonstrate itself to these others – EVEN to our enemies? First of all, people need to see us practicing unselfishness – practicing honesty – even when it hurts. They need to see our humility and not a boasting attitude of our own achievements – and our GENEROSITY of genuine love towards our fellow man – and especially of our own families. An "overflowing generosity" in our thoughts – as well as in our ACTIONS.

People need to see our loving KINDNESS toward others, our sincerity in our words, and gain our trust in respect to all of our dealing with other people and in our affairs of life. They will admire our patience – even when under adversity. And most of all – we will attract them to our God – if they have the proper heart - by our FAITH in all of His exceeding great and precious promises. A resolute and humble faith and TRUST or FULL confidence in His words of Biblical Truth. In our praises of HOPE also for the kingdom blessings in store for man. That beautiful VISION of HUMAN Restitution. And our JOY in having the TRUTH... should overflow in our characters.

People will see ourselves "decoupling" from evil speaking and slander about others – so prevalent in the world that they often see with their many other friends. They will feel and SEE the effects of an abundant heart of love that wishes no harm to another's good name – and refrains from saying UNKIND things about another – even whom they might "perceive" to be their enemy. Titus 3:2 and Matt. 5:44-45 LOOK – God never said this walk would be easy.

They will see how our attitude of gratitude for God's grace and forgiveness has manifested itself in the ability to even "love our enemies". They will find great interest in just HOW we are able to overcome these natural feelings of disdain or resentment – because we have learned how to SEE PEOPLE the way they will be in the KINGDOM – and realize that it is the SIN in this world and the Great Adversary that has contaminated the "hearts of man." Hebrews 12:1-2 Because we understand the "Permission of Evil" and understand the Divine Plan of the Ages, we SEE people differently – for what they will become – and how badly they will feel about their unfair treatment of us and others, in God's holy kingdom. Lev. 5:14-19 Tab. Shadows p. 99 How we lovingly "yearn" for the day when sin is obliterated from the hearts of man's stony hearts, and God gives them a "heart of FLESH" a heart of genuine, unselfish love, when they accomplish "the purpose" of the New Covenant arrangements. Jer. 31:31-34

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We presently have a compassion, a "pity love", for the sinner because of the general degraded surroundings that has "warped" their judgement and morals. God's abounding love, expressed in part through THE CHRIST of 144,000 – will make all men's lives, more precious – than the golden wedge of OPHIR. Isaiah 13:12. But MUCH of our own lives is now to experience the struggle against the "tentacles" of SIN and develop the COMPASSION learned from that struggle – and how difficult it is to break free from its tenacious hold. Rom. 7:23-24

SO – if we are to become more abundant in love, we must also *study carefully just* how this love was demonstrated - in the life our dear master, Jesus Christ. His mercy toward others, his gentleness and sensitivity – his unselfish and sacrificial disposition of service to not only his Apostles – but to all men.

As we become more and more "abundant" in our love – we become more FORGIVING and more AFFECTIONATE and more considerate of others. Remember how affectionate the Apostle John was to our Master. *Appropriately* affectionate. As we said before, We practice more and more the "self-control" over *our tempers* and do not intrude ourselves upon others; like Jesus refrained when on the way to Emmaus with Peter and Cleopas in Luke 24:28. We strive to become more and more obedient to our scriptural commandments and divine expectations. We definitely work on "purity of heart" – to be "easily entreated" – and to be without any hypocrisy of pretending TO HAVE OR TO BE something we have NO INTENTION of becoming or achieving. James 3:17 Our abundant love also expresses itself in having no prejudice or partiality in people, like Jesus demonstrated in calling the tax-collector, Levi; also called Matthew, to become one of his 12 Apostles. We love God supremely and we are COURAGEOUS in our commission to preach the Kingdom message to others. Our "abundant love" for God compels us to share the "good news" of the Kingdom with many others in our daily walk. Isa. 61:1-3 As Christians we should all be "clothed with humility" towards one another – TEACHABLE – and willing to be corrected where necessary, like Peter was by Paul in Galatians 2:14. I Peter 5:5

Our abounding hearts of love should be demonstrated in the temporal as well as the spiritual affairs of the ecclesia – from writing discourses to writing cards of comfort for the isolated and the ill. We should be FAIR, even "more than fair" in our interaction with our brethren. We can at times, even sacrifice our "preferences" in business meetings – if there is no principle involved. WHY? Because we love our brethren MORE than we love ourselves. We can pick up brethren and bring them to the meetings, or give them an encouraging call. We can also prepare ourselves more in reading for the studies, so we ADD to the study and blessings of the brethren and not always be just a TAKER of the blessings of study from other brethren. Then there are the technical services and sacrifices of those that set up the meetings and those that perhaps get the microphone

ready or the podium set up – or maybe do the clean-up of the hall, bathroom or the home so it will be more pleasant and helpful for the Lord’s people. Some print or distribute helpful booklets or write helpful articles or write discourses of Scriptural edification. These and many other ways we can show our “super-abundance of love” towards HIM and HIS. We can perhaps “set aside a little money” for brethren who have a special need for assistance or bake a dinner dish for brethren with illness or the aged or use our ART skills or IT skills for transmission of the Truth. You can teach a Children’s Bible Class – or play the piano for hymn singing.

Some brethren “stuff envelopes” with Truth literature, sacrifice hours and hours of time for Christian Question podcasts. Or sometimes you can even “dig a literal ditch” for a brother – like my brother-in-law, Dan Ledwinka did for me one time – when I desperately needed some help. In other words, “bottom line” of a super-abounding love, will mean you will be “consumed in zealous service and sacrifice - in as many of ways as you have time, opportunity and physical health. Be ye DOERS of the Word, and not just HEARERS only. James 1:22

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It generally takes me roughly 60 hours to prepare a discourse. In MY book, a SISTER who cleans her house some 60 hours over a period of time, for the meetings, because of her “abundant love” for God and for the brethren - might very well receive the very same reward from God, given the same heart motivation.

“WHATSOEVER they hand findeth to do, do it with thy might....”

You know, JESUS, never did a single selfish thing for himself – did he. But he rather SHOWED us - that HIS love in US would be measured by how much WE desired to wash the feet of our brethren – in as many ways that we could think of – and have the TIME and energy to do so. Br. Larry Young is a “prayer warrior” in my Orlando class. Some of you know this dear brother. Some of you - are “PRAYER WARRIORS” also – and serve by the many hours of prayers that go up on behalf of your brethren. God listens – and smiles, at your abundant love for your brethren – expresses from your many prayers on their behalf. I need to set more time aside for that purpose myself. It takes making a special effort.

In CONCLUSION dear friends, we read from the Pastor, that in the measure of CHARACTER, we are to PUT LOVE FIRST, and to consider it the CHIEF TEST of our “nearness” to the Lord...that it is the very SPIRIT of our begetting to the new nature. The measure of our appreciation of the DIVINE Love – will be the measure of our FERVENT ZEAL in “conforming” our characters to the Divine Pattern. And how VERY abundant that is. He continues: “Whether I am something or nothing in God’s estimation is to be measured by my love for HIM, for His SON for our brethren, for HIS CAUSE, for the WORLD in general, and EVEN for my enemies – RATHER than by my KNOWLEDGE, or fame, or oratory. When God measures a man – He puts the measuring TAPE around HIS HEART – and not around his HEAD. For out of the abundance of the HEART are the ISSUES of LIFE.”

JESUS love was the FINEST human example there ever was of a “super-abundant love”. The Apostle Paul and others emulated HIS incredible love. I believe from everything I’ve learned, Br. Russell, one of God’s seven messengers of the Gospel age, had MUCH of this very same love.

FINALLY, 1 Thess 3:11-13: “Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and - ‘abound in love’ - one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you: To the end - he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming, or presence, of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Our dear Jesus conveyed this heartfelt prayer of abundant love in John 17:23-26 "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, "AS" thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love - wherewith thou hast loved ME - may be in THEM, and I in them.

Let us ALL – INCREASE more and more of this God-like "super-abounding love – and therewith – "*glorify*" our *father* – which is in heaven.

As a teacher one year - a little third-grade girl named Sarah, gave me a wooden plaque for Christmas. She knew her teacher was a Christian. I opened the beautifully decorated gift, looked at her and smiled; thanking her for such a lovely gift.

What it had inscribed on the wooden plaque - were these words:

"I asked Jesus HOW MUCH – he loved me. He opened up his arms wide and said "THIS MUCH" – and died.

Dear brethren – BOTH Jesus and God gave us all – the super-abundance of their unspeakable love. A love that OVERFLOWED in mercy, generosity, long-suffering patience, forgiveness, unselfishness and unmerited favor. Let us reciprocate with our reflections of appreciation for such boundless grace – by also opening our arms "as wide as WE can" in abundantly loving sacrifices; services of energetic ZEAL, patience and efforts of transformational changes in our characters. Let us "stretch-forth" with heroic efforts – towards the "MARK" of perfect love, with the STRENGTH of God's spirit, the IMPUTATION of Christ's merit, and the VISION - of breaking through the "finish line" of our spiritual racecourse. And finally, INTERNALIZE the words of Apostle Paul in Phil. 3:14, "I PRESS toward THE MARK for the PRIZE of the high calling of God - in Christ Jesus." To the praise of His glory.

Amen