



EDITORIAL: THE LOVE OF GOD

Love is a term that seems difficult to explain and our descriptions sometimes limit the emotions that we experience of being loved and expressing our own love for another. But love is more than a feeling—love is a choice. God—whose nature is love—provided the masterpiece of love in His Son, Jesus. God made a choice to love us as humans and sacrificed His Son to redeem us from sin. God’s love for us, is so beautifully expressed in the words of the song by Frederick Lehman entitled *The Love of God*. The history of this song tells that some of the words were found scribbled on the wall of the room of an insane man where he was kept at an asylum. This piece of information is a simple revelation of the height, length, width and depth of God’s love—that even in our lowest state God’s love reaches to where we are. Here is an excerpt of the song:

*The love of God is greater far, than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell.
O love of God, so rich and pure! How measureless and strong,
It shall forever more endure, the saints and angel’s song*

As we celebrate Valentine’s Day this year I pray that we will be reminded of God’s love for each of us; that this knowledge will cause us to express our love to God no matter what state we may find ourselves; and this understanding of God’s love will guide us in our own expression of love for self and to our fellow brothers and sisters.

*Dahlia Palmer
Chairperson, Communications*

Breathing

I have been told by females who have had the experience of giving birth that breathing through the contractions requires discipline. During the intense labour pains there is the tendency to want to hold breath but it is at that time that the doctors and nurses require the soon-to-be mothers to breathe—and not just breathe but controlled breathing.

There are many moments in our lives when the ‘contractions’ of life seem unbearable and endless; when trials seem to hit us in the face left, right and centre and tear our hearts and souls apart. It is at these moments that the spiritual discipline of trusting God, helps us to breathe through each “labour squeeze.” It is during these moments that we need to exercise faith-breathing.

Just as the expectant mothers learn to control their breathing during labour, as Christians we too can learn to control our breathing during our trails. We learn to breathe when we implement spiritual disciplines in our lives such as reading the scriptures, praying, fasting, meditating and listening keenly to God’s direction for our lives. These spiritual disciplines will help us breathe through the difficult situations that we face.

The struggles of life are always pregnant with pain and the contractions of life will hurt us but God allows us to go through these trails to refine our faith so that we will turn to the Source of our breathing—Almighty God.

Breathing in God takes discipline. We may not always feel like turning to God because the situations seem overwhelming but breathing in God is not just about feelings—it is a knowledge that when we faith-breathe God will give us the emotional, physical and spiritual resources to cope through the struggles. And, as in childbirth, there will come the time of deliverance where what is birthed into joy is directly the result of the very pain that we have gone through.

FEBRUARY REMINDERS

- February is Black History Month
- 12th Tract distribution (Paggee)
 - 12th Pre-Valentine’s Day Dinner (Zion Hill)
 - 14th Valentine’s Day
 - 17th Open Air Meeting (Paggee)
 - 22nd Ash Wednesday
 - 22nd Prayer & Fasting
 - 22-26 JBU 162nd General Assembly

February Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|------|
| Angella Salmon | 4th |
| Alva Jackson | 9th |
| Lurline Israel | 10th |
| Annette Tracey | 11th |
| Codi-Ann Campbell | 11th |
| Gwendolyn McPherson | 13th |
| Janet Corey | 14th |
| Jossett Burton | 17th |
| Audrey Gabbidon | 19th |
| Noel Johnson | 22nd |
| Jheanell Plummer | 22nd |
| Hazel Allen | 23rd |
| Violet Sewell | 23rd |
| Mekelia Hibbert | 28th |
| Sherlette Whilby | 28th |
| Inez Graham | 28th |

Remember to pray for and visit ... the sick and shut-in members of the church and in our surrounding communities. Here is a list of our sick and shut-in members:

- Sis. Audrey Maxwell (Port Maria Class); Sis. Emma Scarlette-Grant (Port Maria Class); Sis. Inez Graham (Trinity Class); Sis. Percess Scott (Trinity Class); Bro. Thomas Bennett (Mason Hall Class); Bro. Archibald Henry (Stennett Street Class); Bro. Jeremiah Dalhouse (Stennett Street Class); Sis. Daphne Reid (Galina Class); Sis. Georgina Peart (Cox Street Class); Bro. Lucan Scott (Cox Street Class); Sis. Adassa Reddie (Cox Street)

Black History Celebrations

Can you think of another race of people fortunate to have a whole month designated as a time to celebrate and reflect on our history?

Black History Month is a time for us to remind ourselves about our rich heritage as a race and the many life-changing and positive contributions we have made to the world.

God has kept us as a people of Black origin and we must always pause to reflect on this fact and give thanks to Almighty God for having kept us as a people.

Celebrate BLACK—our history!

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. Lent is a forty-day devotional preparation for Easter. Ash Wednesday is a day to set aside time to re-commit ourselves to Christ. Let us pledge to stay true to the covenant we made with Christ and commit to kneeling before Him with penitent hearts. Let us discipline ourselves to pray each day. As we spend time in prayer it will only serve to strengthen our relationship with God and help to enrich our interaction with our brothers and sisters.



FIVE WAYS TO MAKE EMMANUEL BETTER

Be Committed: One of the ways to make Emmanuel better is to be there - consistently and faithfully. Your regular attendance makes a statement to the world that God's called-out assembly means something to you. It makes a statement to the devil that you are standing with Christ and His body. And it makes a statement to yourself that church is more important than anything. Being committed not only relates to attendance at church but also to being committed to your place of service. If you have been elected or have volunteered to be a part of a ministry, be there when you say you will be. The church is depending on you.

Be On Time: This seems to be a small thing but it is really a big issue. Yes, you are committed to being at church but you must also commit to being at church on time. Get up early and be at church on time. Punctuality at church makes a statement about how much we care about the Lord. If we were as punctual at work as we were at church, many of us would have lost our jobs. Getting to church early and on time helps the church become the church God intends it to be.

Be Positive: Come to church with a smile – not a plastic smile – but a genuine one; leave the super-critical eye elsewhere. The smile on your face will draw others to share their cares and concerns with you; the smile will create a sense of warmth and love where people do not need to wear a mask to hide their hurts and pains. Come to church intending to be positive—to give back to the body with your gifts and talents. Come intending to be fed the Word, but also disciple and encourage others. Come ready to love and forgive and hug and forbear. Come to church ready to forgive small and big slights. Greet visitors warmly, advance the church goals and ministries with a smile and be positive!

Be Prepared: You can prepare with prayer. Before you walk in the doors of the church, say a special prayer. Pray for the Spirit's presence to be strong in the service and in the preaching. Bathe the entire church body in prayer. Think of some of the neediest members in your church and commit their needs to prayer. Most of all, before you walk in the church doors, pray that God will use you to impact someone's life for the Kingdom. Church is not something to simply cross off our list of things to do. Church is the expression of Christ in the world. You are the church. Be the church. Pray that God powerfully uses you to change lives. And pray that through the preaching and worship and prayer, hearts will soften to the gospel and the membership will become more like Christ. You can also prepare by preparing your own heart with Scripture. Be a person of the Word and doctrine so that your heart is ready to soak in the teaching on Sunday. Nurture your spiritual life so that the soil of your soul is ready to be changed for God's glory.

Be Solution-Oriented: Help your church to be gently discerning. If you see an area of improvement, make a note to try to be a difference maker. You can solve the problem or simply ask the person in charge of that area if you can help solve the problem. In other words, rather than complaining about a dirty bathroom or a broken seat, politely and kindly bring this to someone who can effect change and offer to help in the solution. The pastor and officers do not see everything. They sometimes need some help from committed members on the ground level who can give them some critical feedback on services in the church.

Be in prayer and support the
JAMAICA BAPTIST UNION

162nd General Assembly
FEB 22-25 (BOULEVARD BAPTIST)
FEB 26 (NATIONAL ARENA)

under the theme
*"Being God's People in
God's World: Living in Peace"*



Thought :
**Take time in
prayer today, to
thank God specifi-
cally for his
LOVE to you!**

We welcome your ideas
and suggestions

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