

# A Single Act of Love

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4-6-08

John 1:5

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My day started last Tuesday morning with a feeling best described as blah. I had no desire to go to the church. I didn't want to stay home either. I just wanted to go some place where I could be alone with God. Well, shortly before 8 o'clock I realized that there was a Pastor's Prayer Breakfast that morning and so my heart began to cheer, a bit. With the first hints of enthusiasm, I headed off to the restaurant.

When we gathered, I began to hear about the terrible things that are happening in our world. Stories were told about how evil continues to encroach against the church. Well, the conversation continued along that route, throwing me back into that depressed feeling of hopelessness. And I left that time together with my fellow pastors thinking that the task of overcoming evil in this world was next to impossible. The enemy is so cunning. What can we do? Is there no hope left for the church; for Christianity?

On my way home, though, I stopped in at the Guardian Angel bookstore; a name so fitting in light of what happened next. While waiting in line at the check out counter I noticed a small display of smooth stones engraved with words to help us focus on God. Cute little pebbles I thought. I wonder if I could put one in my shoe to remind me of all that seems wrong in this world. Now mind you, when I first glanced at them, I mostly saw the word "pray". But when my hand reached in to fiddle with one of these stones, the one I grabbed said "love".

Maybe it's because I'm a glass half full kind of guy, but does the Bible not say that **"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it"**.<sup>1</sup> (John 1:5) Now I know it seems we are fighting a losing battle here, but is not our Lord and Master Jesus the Messiah? Has He not said **"My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's**

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<sup>1</sup>*The Everyday Bible : New Century Version*. 2005 (Jn 1:5). Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

hand.”<sup>2</sup> (John 10:29) I know it is tempting to think that the church will be destroyed as evil and wickedness increase, but Jesus has also promised us that “upon this rock (Peter) I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.”<sup>3</sup> (Matthew 16:18) And what’s interesting is that we know these things are true because of His incredible demonstration of love.

Jesus defeated evil with a single act of Love. Think about what Jesus did to the forces of darkness that Easter morning so many years ago. Was evil not dealt a fatal blow by His death on the cross? And has there ever been a greater demonstration of love when this Jesus laid down His life for you and me “While we were yet sinners”?

My friend, do you want to know what this evil cannot tolerate? Evil hates it when we love others the way Christ first loved us; when His followers transform this world through demonstrations of His supernatural love; when we decide to love instead of standing before a crowd of people who are not saved crying “sinner”. Jesus declares that we too can overcome the darkness. “You are the light of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.”<sup>4</sup> (Matthew 5:14). You and I can defeat evil through the power of a supernatural love that flows from all who are called by His name.

Maybe evil is gaining strength because most of the time we simply identify evil. So maybe it’s time the church started learning how to love those overcome by this evil. No, I’m not saying tolerate. We still need to stand firm in the truth, but I fail to realize what difference it makes to walk up to someone, tell them they are a sinner, and do nothing to help them feel what it’s like to be loved by God. I believe the church needs to remember that since Jesus died for you and me while we were yet sinners He also did the same for those who still are.

Think about the scene with the Demon possessed man who lived among the tombs. Jesus and the apostles climb out of the boat and this sinner runs up

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<sup>2</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (Jn 10:29). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.* "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mt 16:18). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>4</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.* "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mt 5:14). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

screaming at the top of his lungs. Instead of turning to His apostles and pointing out this man's sin, Jesus reaches out to him with tenderness and love. And by that love, evil is sent packing. So I can't help but wonder if we might have the same success against evil by practicing that kind of love.

I want you to watch this video about a man who was shown love instead of being labeled as a wicked sinner. Look at the difference love made in his life . . .

The truth be told, had most of us been in the situation where a group of kids broke out the window of our church, we would have called the cops and spread the word about how evil and wicked the teenagers in our town have become. We would have looked upon them and identified them as evil. We've become so good at identifying evil in this world but really have no idea how to overcome this evil. Sure it's all around us, but what can or what will we do to be that light that shines in the darkness? How will we respond to an opportunity to demonstrate a supernatural love?

Next week we will be having a series of special services that are designed to bring revival. But I want that revival to start with us. And I want us to realize that revival first begins here, in us. A revival that goes way beyond helping us identify what's wrong with this world but a revival of our love for this world. To learn that God's answer to evil in this world is found in His Son; that Jesus overcame evil through His demonstration of that love on the cross; and that you and I have been called to tell this clueless world about that love.