



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – July 23, 2023

Heart to Heart...

The words "*because of you*" are powerful words. They can bring joy to a heart or sorrow depending on how they are used. I received a note from a man sometime back telling me that he was a deacon in the church where he attended "*because of you*" and the word of the Lord he was pointed to. What a joy to hear. I know that the power of God to save anyone is not in us but in the gospel of our salvation.

But those same words "*because of you*" can be condemning and cutting. ***"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written."*** (Romans 2:24) In this context, the words "*because of you*" are heart withering and pointed. Paul is speaking to those who were boasting of their faith in God and a relationship to Him. They claimed to know His will but their lifestyle became a curse in the eyes of others. That tells us how easy it is to deceive ourselves in thinking we are alright in God's eyes but our examples are not. The true result is God's name is maligned, blasphemed.

Earlier in Romans, Paul expresses: ***"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteous of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."*** (Romans 1:18) That should catch our attention to know that one can suppress or hold down or hinder the truth with unrighteous behavior. Maybe we need to ask ourselves: is it possible that "*because of us*" in actions/language that we have given God a bad name? Became a hinderance to His saving gospel?

We need to inspect ourselves in light of "*because of you.*" That speaks to our mates, our children, our neighbors and acquaintances in our daily life. What are we presenting to others about God and His saving message? Think about it!!!

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