



## They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. . . There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:7-8, 11-12, 18)

It is all too easy to forget what God taught about love. It is also easy to try to limit his intended scope for loving. Jesus also taught:

You have heard it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

Finding reasons for labeling people or nations 'villains,' to justify saying they are enemies and killing them in war, is an all too familiar human trap. Wanting to get rid of villains; to see them 'pay' for their wrongs; makes it easy to steer people into this trap to take their minds off of other things – abuses of power; the wrongs 'we' are doing; economic problems; all manner of issues those in power would like the people not to notice. War is so costly and devastating that it is the ultimate distraction device. This country has never gone to war without the help of false information or misleading claims by those in favor of war to help convince the rest of us to go along with the idea and support a war effort. Not the least of such misinformation has been covering up atrocities 'our side' commits while highlighting those committed by 'their side'. Glorifying those who take part in war, no matter what they did, also encourages war.

When there are cries for war, it is a particularly important time to remember what Jesus taught about love and loving enemies. War always comes at an astronomical cost that can never be recovered for everyone involved. Settling differences peacefully is hard work but it empowers all sides for a better future.

### ***This week pray for:***

- **India** where religious persecution is a growing problem
- May 15 is **International Conscientious Objectors' Day**. It is a time to remember those who, because of their faith, moral, or ethical beliefs, put their lives on the line to take a stand against participating in war. Some have faced torture, prison, the loss of their civil rights, and even death for refusing to kill another human being. Some are facing such consequences right now for taking this stand.



## They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. . . There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:7-8, 11-12, 18)

It is all too easy to forget what God taught about love. It is also easy to try to limit his intended scope for loving. Jesus also taught:

You have heard it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

Finding reasons for labeling people or nations 'villains,' to justify saying they are enemies and killing them in war, is an all too familiar human trap. Wanting to get rid of villains; to see them 'pay' for their wrongs; makes it easy to steer people into this trap to take their minds off of other things – abuses of power; the wrongs 'we' are doing; economic problems; all manner of issues those in power would like the people not to notice. War is so costly and devastating that it is the ultimate distraction device. This country has never gone to war without the help of false information or misleading claims by those in favor of war to help convince the rest of us to go along with the idea and support a war effort. Not the least of such misinformation has been covering up atrocities 'our side' commits while highlighting those committed by 'their side'. Glorifying those who take part in war, no matter what they did, also encourages war.

When there are cries for war, it is a particularly important time to remember what Jesus taught about love and loving enemies. War always comes at an astronomical cost that can never be recovered for everyone involved. Settling differences peacefully is hard work but it empowers all sides for a better future.

### ***This week pray for:***

- **India** where religious persecution is a growing problem
- May 15 is **International Conscientious Objectors' Day**. It is a time to remember those who, because of their faith, moral, or ethical beliefs, put their lives on the line to take a stand against participating in war. Some have faced torture, prison, the loss of their civil rights, and even death for refusing to kill another human being. Some are facing such consequences right now for taking this stand.