

Message for June 14, 2020

I believe that all of you are familiar with this verse:

**Isaiah 55:8-9**

“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,  
Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the LORD.  
“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

This is true for so many aspects of our lives, and we've all encountered circumstances over the years in which we've learned the truth of this declaration from God. How many times have we asked the question "Why?" because we didn't understand what was happening or what He was doing? His ways **are indeed** vastly different from ours and often way beyond our ability to understand. But here I want to focus on just one of those ways of His, and it is the concept of greatness. What does it mean to be great? The disciples had their own ideas and argued over which one of them would become the greatest (see Mark 9:33-34). To them, and the world, greatness was something to strive for, to achieve in order to be above others in terms of power, wealth, influence, or celebrity. That was definitely the world's way of thinking at the time, and nothing has changed in that regard over the last two thousand years. I guess you couldn't really blame them for that kind of attitude. After all, that's what the world system had taught them and they were still early in the process of learning the ways of the kingdom. But it didn't take long for Jesus to set them straight.

**Luke 22:24-27**

**Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.**

For who *is* greater (in the world), he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.”

So we see that in the kingdom of God, servants are valued as the greatest, with Jesus being the perfect example. But what is required for true servanthood? Humility! Scripture tells us that Jesus (God) humbled Himself and became a servant in human form, ultimately sacrificing Himself on the cross for our salvation. But why did Jesus humble Himself to that extent? Because God so loved .....etc. Jesus' servanthood was affirmed through humility borne of love. Looking at it another way, genuine love begets humility, which in turn begets a servant's heart. Therefore the key to greatness is love! Jesus' love birthed the humility necessary for servanthood. And now we see His greatness, how He has been exalted by the Father above all of creation, and His name above all other names. And we are called to be like Him as children of God.

My dear brethren, let us heed God's call as servants of the Most High, and love more! And more, and more! I long for us all to be truly great in the kingdom of God. Love is the way.

Love, joy, and peace to all,  
Pastor Joe

**I Corinthians 13:1-3**

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

**I Corinthians 13:13**

**And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.**

## A FORMULA FOR KINGDOM SUCCESS

IBM founder Thomas Watson said the formula to success is to double one's failure rate because failure is the best teacher.

Jesus tells of a businessman who entrusted his money with servants. One servant hid the funds, fearing that investment might bring loss rather than gain. On learning this, the businessman grew angry.

God calls us to take risks for his sake. Yet we often keep silent about the gospel, fearing that others won't believe us. We stick with familiar congregational fellowship instead of venturing into the uncertainty of community service.

When taking risks for God appears to result in failure, two things are surely at play: We have the opportunity to learn from our experience, discovering new ways to witness and grow stronger in faith. Second, we can trust God to tend the seeds we've planted; they'll sprout in due time, whether or not we see it.

## THE MAGNITUDE OF GOD'S LOVE

It would be spectacular and amazing ... if some king's son were to appear in a beggar's home to nurse him in his illness, wash off his filth and do everything else the beggar would have to do. Would this not be a profound humility? Any spectator or any beneficiary of this honor would feel impelled to admit that he had seen or experienced something unusual and extraordinary, something magnificent.

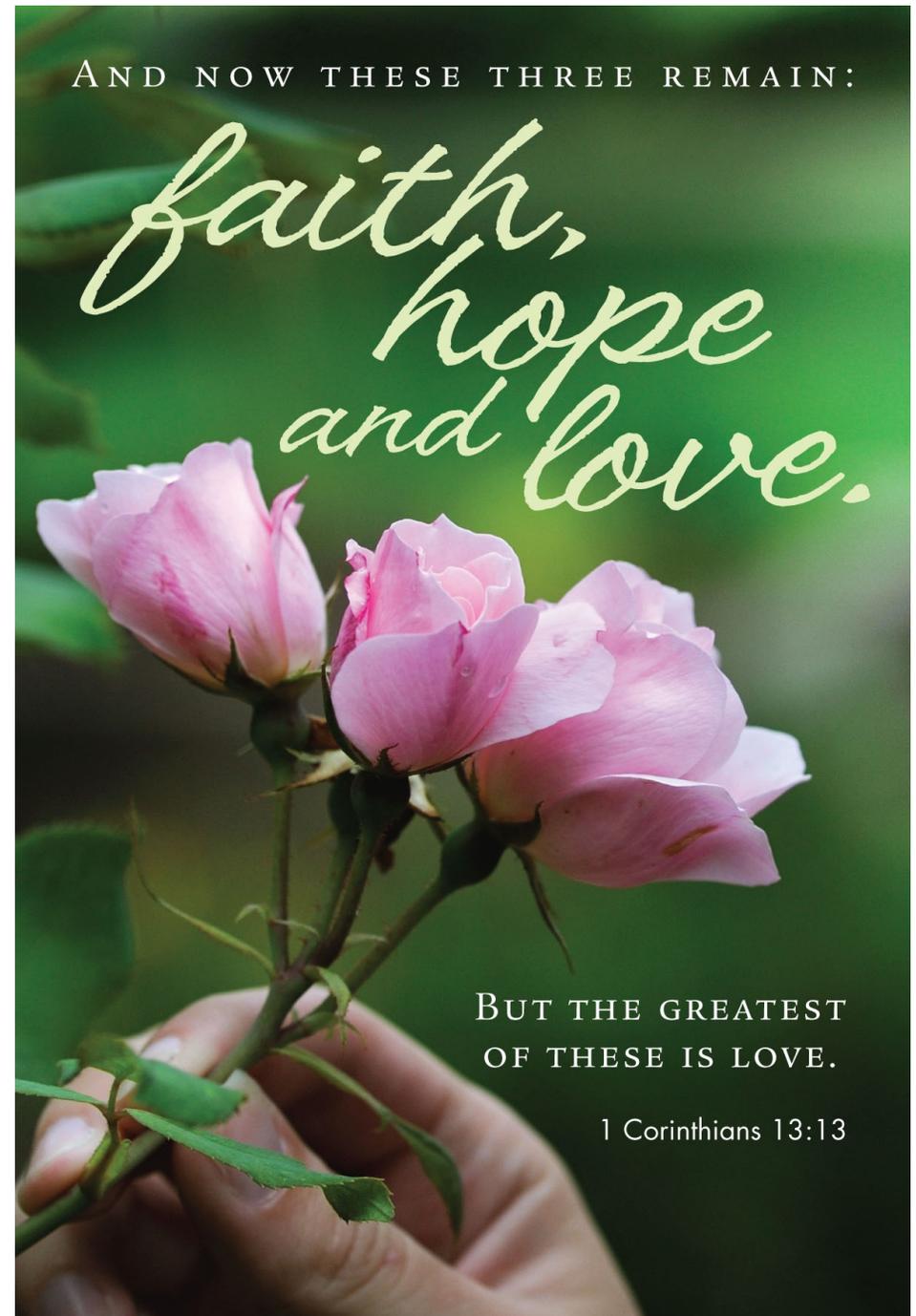
And yet the love of the Son of God for us is of such magnitude that the greater the filth and stench of our sins, the more he befriends us, the more he cleanses us, relieving us of all our misery and of the burden of all our sins and placing them upon his own back.

Whenever the devil declares: "You are a sinner!" Christ interposes: "I will reverse the order; I will be a sinner, and you are to go scotfree." Who can thank our God enough for this mercy?

—Martin Luther, Luther's Works 22, 166-167

"Solutions are not found by pointing fingers;  
they are reached by extending hands."

—Aysha Taryam



**"The Little Church That Could"**  
"Believing is Seeing"