

## Ponderings From the Pastor

By Brad Taylor, Pastor

### More Than A Feeling

I am sure you are aware how much of the music in our culture deals with the subject of love. The love we hear about in popular songs is almost always portrayed as a feeling — usually involving unfulfilled desire. Most love songs describe love as a longing, a passion, a craving that is never quite satisfied, a set of expectations that are never met. Unfortunately, that sort of love is devoid of any ultimate meaning. It is actually a tragic reflection of human lostness.

As I thought about it, I realized something else: Most love songs not only reduce love to an emotion, but they also make it an involuntary one. People “fall” in love. They get swept off their feet by love. They can’t help themselves. They go crazy for love. One song laments, “I’m hooked on a feeling,” while another confesses, “I think I’m go-

ing out of my head.”

It may seem a nice romantic sentiment to characterize love as uncontrollable passion, but those who think carefully about it will



realize that such “love” is both selfish and irrational. It is far from the biblical concept of love.

Love, according to Scripture, is not a helpless sensation of desire. Rather, it is a purposeful act of self-giving. The one who genuinely loves is deliberately devoted to the one loved. True love arises from the will — not from blind emotion. Consider, for example, this description of love

from the pen of the apostle Paul:

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4–7)

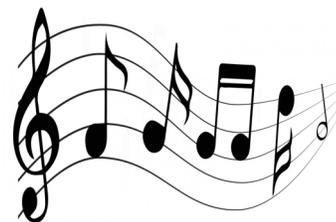
That kind of love cannot possibly be an emotion that ebbs and flows involuntarily. It is not a mere feeling. All the attributes of love Paul lists involve the mind and decision. In other words, the love he describes is a thoughtful, willing commitment.

Also, notice that genuine love “does not seek its own.” That

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# The History Behind 'The Love of God'



Submitted by Mindy Taylor, Worship Leader

Frederick M. Lehman, the 20th Century author and composer of the song *The Love of God*, wrote a pamphlet in 1948. He wrote the following account of writing the song in his pamphlet "*History of the Song, The Love of God.*"

"While at camp meeting in a mid-western state, some 50 years ago in our early ministry, an evangelist climaxed his message by quoting the last stanza of this song. The profound depths of the lines moved us to preserve the words for future generations.

"Not until we had come to California, did this urge find fulfillment, and that at a time when circumstances forced us to hard manual labor. One day, during short intervals of inattention to our work, we picked up a scrap of paper and, seated upon an empty lemon box pushed against the wall, with a stub pencil, added the (first) two stanzas and chorus of the song.

"... Since the lines (third stanza from the Jewish poem) had been found penciled on the wall of a patient's room in an insane asylum after he had been carried to his grave, the general opinion was that this inmate had written the epic in moments of sanity.

"The key-stanza (third verse) under question as to its authorship

was written nearly 1,000 years ago by a Jewish songwriter, named Rabbi Meir Ben Isaac Ne-horai and put on the score page by F. M. Lehman, a Gentile songwriter, in 1917."

Circumstances forced Lehman into manual labor, which reports say were packing oranges and lemons into wooden crates. But the lyrics flowed through his heart as he worked and later created the first two stanzas. He remembered the lyrics he had scribbled so long ago at the revival meeting.

Lehman wrote "These words were found written on a cell wall in a prison some 200 years ago. It is not known why the prisoner was incarcerated; neither is it known if the words were original or if he had heard them somewhere and had decided to put them in a place where he could be reminded of the greatness of God's love – whatever the circumstances, he wrote them on the wall of his prison cell. In due time, he died and the men who had the job of repainting his cell were impressed by the words. Before their paint brushes had obliterated them, one of the men jotted them down and thus they were preserved."

Rev. Lehman, a German Gentile, died in Pasadena, Calif. in 1953.

He had written hundreds of songs over the course of his life and founded the Nazarene Publishing House in Kansas City, Mo.

*The Love of God* remains for all who are willing to accept it, and the song lingers for future generations to discover and love.

What an amazing story written through this song! I thank God for all the inspired word through people who endure hardship or pain, and then write a song of encouragement for others. Let us always listen to the words of God, as well as songs of encouragement about our great God! Oh how He loves you and me!

Verse 3 that was written on the wall ...

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above,  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.*

*Chorus — Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure —  
The saints' and angels' song.*

# February 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2 Shayla Perez bday; Adult Game Day 11am	3
4 Dawn Benson bday; Deacons Meeting 5pm	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Alma Bradford & Mikel Hill bdays	12 Charlene Goodwin bday	13 Laura Holloway bday	14 Michelle Hill bday; Valentine's Day	15 Madison DeVore & Jaxson Pruett bdays	16	17
18 Brenda Drabenstott & Sean McGee bdays; Chili Cook Off & Dessert Auction	19	20 Tim Russell bday	21	22 Rebecca Schoen bday	23 Dewayne Pierce bday	24
25 Steve Thomas bday	26	27 Richard Bradford bday	28 Sandra Rowe bday	29		



# OGBC Youth News

Submitted by Matt Shepard, Youth Leader



Oak Grove's 412 Youth went skating last month and had loads of fun.

Our third annual Chili Cook-Off & Silent Dessert Auction is Feb. 18 following the Morning Service, so mark your calendars! All proceeds will go to helping with youth events, as well as Falls Creek for the upcoming year!

Upcoming dates to know:

- Feb. 18 - Chili Cook-Off & Dessert Auction
- March 18 - 22 - Spring Break (no Wednesday night church the 20)
- March 31 - Easter Sunday

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## February Sermon Calendar

### Sermons from Colossians

Feb. 4 — Paul's Burden for the Church, Col. 2:2-7

Feb. 18 — Spiritual Intimidation, Col. 2:16-23

Feb. 11 — Complete in Christ, Col. 2:10-15

Feb. 25 — Living the Risen Life, Col. 3:1-4

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## February Daily Bible Reading Plan

Feb. 1 — Psalm 33

Feb. 11 — John 6:1-24

Feb. 21 — John 8:12-30

Feb. 2 — Psalm 136

Feb. 12 — John 6:25-59

Feb. 22 — John 8:31-59

Feb. 3 — Psalm 138

Feb. 13 — John 6:60-71

Feb. 23 — John 9:1-12

Feb. 4 — John 3:1-21

Feb. 14 — Psalm 51

Feb. 24 — John 9:13-41

Feb. 5 — John 3:22-36

Feb. 15 — Psalm 57

Feb. 25 — John 10:1-21

Feb. 6 — John 4:1-26

Feb. 16 — Psalm 107

Feb. 26 — John 10:22-42

Feb. 7 — John 4:27-42

Feb. 17 — Psalm 108

Feb. 27 — John 11:1-27

Feb. 8 — John 4:43-54

Feb. 18 — John 7:1-24

Feb. 28 — John 11:28-44

Feb. 9 — John 5:1-18

Feb. 19 — John 7:25-52

Feb. 29 — John 13:1-35

Feb. 10 — John 5:19-47

Feb. 20 — John 8:1-11

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means if I truly love, I'm concerned not with having my desires fulfilled, but with seeking the best for whomever is the object of my love.

So the mark of true love is not unbridled desire or wild passion; it is a giving of oneself. Jesus Himself underscored this when He told His disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, that

one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). If love is a giving of oneself, then the greatest love is shown by laying down one's very life. And of course, such love was perfectly modeled and embodied by Christ.

The apostle John is often referred to as "the apostle of love" because he wrote so much on the subject. He was fascinated by it, overwhelmed with the reality that he was loved by God. He often referred to himself in his

gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20, 13:23; 20:2; 21:7).

John echoed his most famous words (John 3:16) when he wrote in his first epistle that "God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:8-9). John understood that knowing true love is bound to knowing the one true God.

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## Watch OGBC Online Each Sunday

If you are unable to worship with us in person, you can log in to Facebook to watch the service online at <https://www.facebook.com/oak.grove.94043>.

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