

## **Feeling it**

Matthew 22:34-40

October 26, 2014

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*

Two weeks ago, we talked about loving God with all your mind, following the lead of the Presbyterians. We talked about the importance of using our minds, of thinking clearly, of doing Bible study: not just winging it, not just making it up as we go along, not just following our gut, not just doing what we've always done because we've always done it that way, but listening to God, paying attention to God's word, becoming smart about our faith, becoming capable critics both of culture and of religion, becoming wise enough to discern between what is genuine and what is false, between what comes from God and what is just so much hogwash.

And we talked about the importance of taking care of our minds just as we take care of our bodies, so both body and mind may be healthy and fit. We take care of our bodies by filling our bodies with good things, not junk or poisons, and we take care of our minds by filling our minds with good things, with things that are true, things that are noble, things that are just, things that are lovely, things that are pure, things that are honorable.

Last week, we talked about loving God with all your soul, taking our cue from the Methodists. We talked about striving for holiness, which we might call striving for "whole-liness" because it involves the whole of our life, inside and outside, personal intimacy with God nurtured through study and prayer and worship, and love put into action through works of charity and justice.

We love God with all our soul when we consciously focus the whole of our lives -- intention, direction, attention, energy, time -- toward the goal of pleasing God, doing what God wants, doing God's will. We love God with all our soul when we strive for holiness, for nothing less than entire holiness, to be as Christ is, inside and out, in being and in doing, because we were made for nothing less.

This week, on Assemblies of God Sunday, we are talking about loving God with all your heart. Loving God with all your heart, because faith is not just about mind, about what we believe or how we think or what we know, and faith is not just about soul, about a way of life, about lifestyle, about discipline and duty and service, but faith is also, maybe even mostly, about heart, about loving God by finding in God our true love, our first love, our highest love, the love that comes before and above all other loves.

It's not hard to figure out what this means, because we know what love is! When you love someone you give her your heart. You show her affection. You want to be with him, share life's most special moments with him. You confide in her. You reveal yourself to her. You tell him how you feel.

You tell him, and you show him, how you feel. Love is expressive. Love expresses feelings. That's what we have to learn from the way folks in the Assemblies of God worship. They feel it! They aren't afraid of expressing their feelings.

Now before you get too nervous, let me make one important distinction. There is a difference between being emotional and having emotions. Not all of us are emotional. Some of us are emotional, but some of us are not.

But all of us, all of us, have emotions, and emotions, feelings, passions are the gifts our hearts give to the ones we love. Emotions, feelings, passions are the gift our hearts give to God. You don't have to be emotional to love God with all your heart, but you do have to tell God, you do have to show God, how you feel.

Don't be afraid of feeling it! Expressing feelings, releasing emotions, is your gift of love, of yourself, to God, but it also may well be the occasion of God's gift of love to you. It may provide an emotional catharsis, an inner cleansing, an inner healing, letting go of things deep inside that need to be let go.

I know you have experienced that at some point in your life in the presence of someone you love, in the presence of someone who loves you, when you shared a feeling, when you let it go, and suddenly everything was changed. What might that mean ... in God's presence?