

Love of God & Christ for Church & Each Other III

(Feast of Tabernacles—Day 3)
Michael Heiss—October 11, 2014

Once again, everybody, good morning! Today we're going to get to what seems almost like a dilemma, a contradiction. But finally, we're going to find a distinction between *loving* your neighbor as yourself and *liking* your neighbor as yourself. They are two different things; they really are. God says, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' But you will never find in any Scripture a command to *like* your neighbor as yourself, and there's a reason for that, and it has to do with personality.

There are some books out that do an amazing job in describing personality. One in particular has what is known as *the personality codes*. They conform to colors: red, blue, white and yellow.

Reds:

It's very interesting. The reds are your *take charge* people, the dashing commanders. These are the Caesars, the Antonys, Alexander the Great. They are the builders of big companies, CEOs, take charge. In fact, two of my favorite generals in the 20th century were reds: Douglas MacArthur and George Patton. You didn't get much more red than they were. They could take charge!

Every one of us comes in contact with reds, but that doesn't mean bad. In fact, one of the worst reds that ever lived was Adolph Hitler; it simple means that a red personality is a *take charge* individual.

So, when you're working on a committee or trying to get something done, somebody will rise to the top and try to ramrod the show. That's just the way it is; *he's a red*.

Blues:

Then there are the blues. The blues are your stalwarts, like defenders of the faith, the loyalists. On the political sphere, the far left, the far right—they're dominated by blues.

No negotiation, it is all this way or that way, that's just the way it is. Your great religious leaders down through the ages have been blues: Martin Luther, John Calvin. They were rock solid in their beliefs. I'm not here praising all of their beliefs, that's not the point. The point is simply to show the personality. They believe what they believe and you couldn't shake them. Today, still alive—past his prime, of course—Billy Graham would be a good

example of a blue. Fervent in his belief; a decent, honest man. *These are blues*.

Whites:

I tend to be in that category. A white tends to be the peacemaker. He's the diplomat, the unflappable one. It takes an awful lot to rile up a white.

If you're dealing with a red, it doesn't take much to rile him up, you keep your distance. It doesn't mean you can't work with him, but you be careful what you say and how you say it.

The whites are peacemakers. One of my favorites in Biblical times was Isaac. Three times the Philistines and others plugged up his wells. He wouldn't fight. He kept moving and moving and moving until finally the fourth well they dug for water and had peace. He was just a white, that's all.

His son Jacob was not a white. He was a trickster. Abraham was not a pure white either; he was blue/white. In fact, one of my favorite Presidents in the 20th century—a gentle man—Ronald Reagan was one of the most effective Presidents. Why? I'm not saying that I agree with everything Reagan said or did.

Again, we're not talking about whether you believe the individual or you liked all of his policies. That's not our point here. He was effective. Why? *He was blue/white*. Blue was stalwart, staunch in his belief, but white in his gentle touch. I can still see and hear him saying, 'Now, there you go again...' He had his way of... Or he could say of poor Walter Mondale in the 1984 campaign on the age problem, Reagan said: 'I promised my opponent that I will not hold his youth and inexperience against him.' That was Reagan's personality! It was awfully are to hate Ronald Reagan. You might not have agreed with him, but it was awfully hard to hate him.

Yellows:

These are the jokesters, the comedians. They're the funny guys. In fact, tragically, we just lost this last year one of the funniest guys in America: Robin Williams. I didn't like everything Williams did or said; he could get pretty crass, it's true; but he was a funny guy. He was a yellow.

Think of Johnny Carson, David Letterman, Jay Leno—they're yellows. It doesn't mean that they don't work, it doesn't mean they're lazy. They're

not! But it means that life is like a joke; lighten up, will you.

I guess my two favorite yellows in the entertainment business were Bob Hope and Jack Benny. I don't think you could ever get two better guys. Bob Hope delivering his one-liners, and Jack Benny, he didn't need a one-liner, all he had to do was fold his arms and say, 'Wow!' and you broke-out laughing. Couldn't help yourself. These are the yellows.

One thing to remember: Where did all these combinations come from? *They came from God!* The DNA, the information in the cells. God is take charge, He's stalwart in righteousness, He's gentle, merciful and He can laugh and has a sense of humor, too.

One of the reason for that is that He is parceling out those genes, and each one of us has a particular aspect of God's personality, so that in the kingdom when God has particular job to get done in a particular area—whether it calls for a dynamic individual or more gentle—

- all will be god
- all will be powerful
- all will be righteous

but we'll have a little different focus. Otherwise, why does God need us? He is going to assign us based upon our personality and our ability to get a job done.

You look around and deal with people, deal with brethren in the Church—as I have done and others—and sometimes I say, 'This guy's a stick in the mud! Come on, will you lighten up a little bit.' You sit down to dinner and ask a question. (short cryptic answers). You try to dig something out him; can't do it! It doesn't mean I don't love him, but it means, I don't have a very good time having dinner with him, that's all.

You're going to have that. You're never going to get away from that, that's just the way it is. You enjoy certain people and you don't enjoy others. *That's personality!* That's all right to not particularly care for a personality.

Example: An individual I know has a neighbor next door. He's a nice enough guy and his wife and two small kids. You watch out, this guy is explosive! As long as you say the right words and deal with him properly, he's very helpful and kind, but he has what we call 'a hair-trigger.' You say something wrong—and you don't even know you're saying something wrong—and he can explode!

He said that one time he was talking to him and he said, 'Hey, you've got a cell phone, call me

on the cell phone!' What do you do? *You keep your distance!* You say, 'Hi' to him and his kids, 'How you doing,' talk for five to ten minutes and that's enough. That's personality.

- But what about *loving your neighbor*?
- How do you love him as yourself?
- *That is different!*

We are now going to look at a quote from two different covenants. Here comes our technical lesson for today. God made several covenants. One covenant was called *The Old Covenant*, the covenant at Sinai. That covenant, believe it or not, comprises only three chapters in the book of Exodus, that's it. Nothing else in the Old Testament truly comprises the Old Covenant.

Then later God made a much bigger covenant with Israel, just before they were going to enter the 'promised land.' It was a different covenant.

- Exo. 20—the Ten Commandments
- end of Exo. 20 thru Exo. 23—the Old Covenant, the judgments of God

He's telling them what to do and what you don't do.

- Exo. 24—how the covenant was ratified; how Moses wrote all the words in a book, the Book of the Covenant (Exo. 21-23).

You can read how Moses had the altar there, they slew the animals, they sprinkled half the blood on the altar and the other half on the people. That ratified the Old Covenant.

Just before they were going to enter the 'promised land' another broader covenant was made. It didn't do away with the Old Covenant. No, that Old Covenant is there, but this one was different, and the same type of format.

Deut. 5—again, the Ten Commandments. A little different; why is it different? *Now the people are going to go into the land!* Moses is preparing the people for what to do and what not to do *in the land*. This was 40 years later, after the Old Covenant was ratified at Sinai.

Now it's 40 years later, Deut. 6 begins this covenant clear through Deut. 28. If you look at Deut. 29:1-5 you will see where it's like this:

Deuteronomy 29:1: "These *are* the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, **besides** the covenant which He made with them in Horeb"—another name for Sinai.

So, you've got two different covenants; not that this is all important and if I don't know this I'm not going to be in God's kingdom—**NO!** But it gives you a flavor for those covenants.

Now let's look at the *big covenant*, and we'll see what God says about or neighbor.

Deuteronomy 22:1: "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep go astray and hide yourself from them. You shall surely bring them again to your brother. And if your brother *is* not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring *it* into your own house, and it shall be with you until your brother seeks after it, and you shall give it back to him again. In the same way you shall do with his donkey. And so shall you do with his clothing. And with any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do the same. You may not hide yourself" (vs 1-3).

Maybe I don't like the guy, maybe I can't take his personality, but if his dog somehow gets lost and I happen to see it and find it, what am I to do? If I can get a hold of it, I call him up—I know where he lives—and say, 'Hey, I've got your dog.' That's loving your neighbor as yourself.

I may not like his personality, but he's my brother and we're going to be in the kingdom. We're all going to have different jobs to do, but that is the difference between *liking* your neighbor as yourself—which I don't have to do; but I sure better be willing to help him out. He is my brother; he is the younger brother of my Savior Jesus Christ. He is the beloved son of our Father in heaven, so we better love him until it becomes second nature to us.

Just because it says donkey or clothing, you be sure to return it to him. That's good, but what about an enemy. Not just your neighbor—and he may well be your next door neighbor—but a guy who hates you, the guy you can't stand and always makes a face at you, or always has some snippet approach to you. Let's see what God says about that.

Let's see what God says about that. Now we're going to the Old Covenant in Exodus. Let me tell you, this is hard to do!

Exodus 23:4: "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again." *But, Lord, this guy does nothing but cause me grief! He despises me! He let's his dog go you know what on my lawn! He doesn't care!*

Doesn't matter, God says that if your enemy's ox is lost, and you find it, you bring it back to him no matter what. That's a command from our God. That's *loving* him. That doesn't mean I like him, but God says, 'Heap coals of fire; pray for

those who hate you.' What did Jesus do on the cross? *He was praying for those who were crucifying Him!* So really, **God is asking of us nothing more than He has already done Himself!**

Verse 5: If you see the donkey of him who hates you lying under his burden... [he can't get up] ...and would hold back from helping him, **you shall surely help him.**"

Maybe your next door neighbor is having trouble with his car or something and he's trying to move and it's hard for him, *volunteer to help him*, even if it's your enemy. Not that you like him so much because of his personality, but you're willing to help him.

A case in direct point, this happened: The year is the winter of 1776-77 in a location known as Valley Forge. The chief protagonist—hero of this story—is General George Washington, Commander of the Continental Army.

It was cold in Valley Forge. The British were a few miles down the road in Philadelphia, nice and warm. One day George Washington was in his quarters and hears a commotion outside; a flurry of excitement and people are talking in loud voices. A good commander gets out and walks over and says, 'What's going on? What's happening?'

'Oh, we have two dogs that wandered into our camp.' Well, George Washington was a huntsman. Remember, he was a very, very upper-class patrician in Washington; Mt. Vernon. So, he quickly walked over to see the dogs and right off the bat he knew these were find hunting dogs. They were not scraggly, scrawly and he looked at the tags. On those tags was written the name: Howe.

Ring a bell? General Howe, Commander of the British Army in Philadelphia. A friend? *Well, maybe a brother by decent, but certainly not in that context.* The spoils of war—right? You capture your enemy and you keep it. Remember the old phrase: *finders keepers, losers weepers!* Not George Washington!

What did he do? *Unbelievable!* Calls a truce, and under a flag of truce with a couple of armed men, into Philadelphia they go, up to the General's location with a note from George Washington saying, 'I believe these belong to you.' That's what he did. Howe was impressed, but not impressed enough to call off a war, but he was impressed. That's an actual example of what we should be willing to do. That's not easy, but that was George Washington's character.

Now let's look at a couple of apostles who were full of the Holy Spirit, who were mighty in the

service of God. Yet, it came to a point where they practically got into a shouting match and couldn't work with each other.

Wait a minute! Aren't they full of the Holy Spirit? Aren't they full of humility? *Sure!* But they were different personalities. When you have convictions and different personalities, and different ideas as to what is to be done—and both are apostles—one does not have to be subservient to the other.

Acts 15:35—right after the Jerusalem conference: : “Now, Paul and Barnabas were staying in Antioch with many others, teaching and preaching the Gospel—the Word of the Lord. And after certain days, Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us go back to see how our brethren are doing in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord.’ And Barnabas was determined to take with *them* John *who was* called Mark; but Paul did not think *it* good to take him... [Why?] ...*because* he had departed from them at Pamphylia, and did not go with them to the work. As a result, **such a sharp contention arose between them that they parted from one another.** And Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, after being committed to the grace of God by the brethren. And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, establishing the churches” (vs 35-41).

Remember, Luke was a mild-mannered individual. If you've read anything that we know about the beloved physician Luke. For him to write these words, “...**sharp contention**...”; you can imagine what must have gone on. What if we had a ‘bug’ in the tent? What would we have heard?

God knew this. Was God upset? *No!* He wasn't upset; in fact, it was God's way of separating two—in the right way—prima donnas. You can't have George Patton and Douglas MacArthur working together. *Impossible!* It couldn't be! One had to be in command, and the other had to play second-fiddle.

Well, in this particular case, Paul wasn't going to play second-fiddle and Barnabas wasn't going to play second-fiddle. What happened? *Paul went one way, Barnabas went the other way, both preached the Word of God, both did God's work!* They loved each other, but their personalities were such that they just couldn't get along.

So, if there's someone in your congregation or wherever you are that you just don't like that much, you just don't get along—he/she is always this way or that way; always talking about this or that; always complaining about this type of thing—

enough is enough! Back off, but if you saw them in need, you better be willing to help.

If you, for example, on a Sunday you're going to go somewhere and your neighbor, your brother, who happens to live not too far from you, is walking down the street as though he's looking around. You know him and you ask him, what's happening? What's going on? What's wrong?

‘Lost my dog; got out.’ You were determined that you were going to go someplace. Not some place that you had to command a meeting, or it was vitally important, but you had other plans. What would you do? God say that you stop what you're doing and you help him. You may not like his personality that much, but you help him.

That's the difference between *loving* your neighbor as yourself and *liking* your neighbor as yourself. That would be the way. As I said, loving each other doesn't mean that we need to spend a lot of time with each other, just make sure you don't exclude our brother.

Let's take a look at *judging* each other, thinking in terms of making a decision.

Romans 2:1: “Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges *another*; for in that in which you judge the other, you are condemning your own self; for you who judge *another* are doing the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those who commit such things. Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?” (vs 1-4).

Maybe the other guy is wrong; maybe he really is. Go to God and ask God to intervene and lead him to repentance. That's what Paul is trying to get to here. In Matt. 7 we'll see essentially the same thing in slightly different words. This is part of the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus is elevating the physical Law of God to a spiritual level.

Matthew 7:1: “Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you. Now, why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye? Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye’; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye? *You* hypocrite, first cast out the beam

from your *own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye" (vs 1-5).

So, we clean ourselves up first before we be so quick as to condemn and judge others. Look at what the Apostle James had to say. I really appreciate the book of James; there's a lot of meat in here.

James 4:11: "Brethren, do not talk against one another. The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the* Law, and is judging the Law. But if you judge *the* law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge." You've made yourself a judge. *Judge not that you be not judged!*

This does not mean that you don't judge an action by somebody else. It doesn't mean that you can't look and say, 'That is wrong.' Yes, you can do that, and we have a classic example of Paul doing just that.

Paul was saying not to judge others, but let's see where he did judge. It wasn't the individual so much as it was the action. But he had to take action against the individual, and we're all familiar with this. I'm sure we've all read of this incident and we all know exactly what Paul said and what he did:

1-Corinthians 5:1 "*It is commonly reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—allowing one to have his own father's wife.... [most likely step-mother] ...You are puffed up and did not grieve instead, so that he who did this deed might be taken out of your midst. For I indeed, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged concerning him who has so shamelessly committed this evil deed as if I were present: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*" (vs 1-5).

This was an act to had to be dealt with. This wasn't Paul just judging the person, as such, but he could not let this go on. There's a difference between judging and condemning an individual, and taking action because of an act. There's a difference between judging an act and the personality of the individual. We all need to understand that.

In addition to that, we need to forgive one another, also a part of loving God. Look at what Jesus said, again, in the Sermon on the Mount. We've all read these Scriptures, but let's let the message sink in a little more effectively.

Matthew 6:14: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (vs 14-15).

I was made aware one time of an individual—an unusual individual—who did hold grudges. He was a member of God's Church—a baptized member—and he would take the Passover, and he knew that he had to be willing to forgive or he really couldn't take the Passover. He knew that!

So, figuratively speaking, he would go up to the door where the service was being held, his grudges he would put on the doorstep, go in there and wash feet, take the bread and wine and come back out and pick up that grudge and hold it against him again.

NO! This doesn't fly with God! That's not what He wants. He says to be willing to truly forgive your brother, leave it be and let God work it out; let Him be the Judge. We know that Jesus said, 'Forgive them, Father, for they no not what they do.'

Matthew 5:21: "You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, 'You shall not commit murder; but whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment.' But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause shall be subject to judgment. Now, *you have heard it said*, 'Whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca"... [you fool, you idiot, don't you know better than that?]) ...shall be subject to *the judgment of the council*.' But *I say to you*, whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna. For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you" (vs 21-23).

This is talking about that your brother has a reason for it, not that he's just off half-baked. If an individual doesn't like you and refuses to like you, there's nothing you can do to stop that; there really isn't. But the impression here is that you did something—even if you didn't realize it, but it was to provoke him.

Verse 24: "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your* way; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him; lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. Truly I say to you, there is no way that you shall come out of there until you have paid the *very* last coin" (vs 24-26).

The picture is that if you or I do something wrong—whatever it is—better agree with the

adversary. God says, ‘Don’t come to me asking Me for help, and praising Me, while you are skewing and talking down to one of My sons.’ Don’t you do that! You go to him and reconcile first. You do your best.’

Then true, if he won’t listen, if there’s nothing you can do, God understands that. But if you’ve got something against him and you think God’s going to hear the prayer, God’s going to bless you, and God’s going to say, ‘Yes, My son, well done.’ *NO! He’s not going to do it!*

Even though we not fully like our brother’s or sister’s personality—we may not—*let’s be sure that we love our brother/sister/neighbor as ourselves!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 29:1
- 2) Deuteronomy 22:1-3
- 3) Exodus 23:4-5
- 4) Acts 15:35-41
- 5) Romans 2:1-4
- 6) Matthew 7:1-5
- 7) James 4:11
- 8) 1 Corinthians 5:1-5
- 9) Matthew 6:14-15
- 10) Matthew 5:21-26

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 20-24
- Deuteronomy 5-28

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Transcribed: 11-9-14

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