

## THE RESULTS OF LOVE

Friday, April 17th 2020

### *Philippians 1:7-11*

*"It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."*

What makes this passage so encouraging? It's almost as if you can feel Paul's longing for spiritual communion in prison. It's clear he remembers the community of Philippi only in joy, love and hope, and that's what's so encouraging. He makes no distinction between their situation and his, between their freedom and his imprisonment. He does not look down on or judge them, but instead regards them as equal partners in their common vocation of God's grace.

It's out of his own deep longings that Paul knows what he desires for the Philippians and this he prays for them:

That they love one other; with love they learn from Jesus and which the Holy Spirit brings to fruition in their lives (Rom 15:30).

We also learn from Paul the results of this love: knowledge and depth of insight. In other words, out of this love we will know what's important in our spiritual lives and in our relationships with others, so that we can effectively accomplish our mission until Jesus returns.

At first, this sounds simple. But what does it entail?

It's quite a big task! Jesus Himself explains in John 15:9-10 when he tells the disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love."

Even though the Holy Spirit may be the one who causes this love through us, we still should learn to love from Jesus and cannot simply live it out passively. We are called upon to examine and correct ourselves. To what extent do we condemn and judge the actions of others in our current situation?

**Prayer:** LORD, we pray for this fulfilling, rich love. A love that we long for again and again and act out of. A love that unites us as a church. Amen.

-Marita Erb-

