

Scriptures – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is the driving force of our actions

The Books of Corinthians were written by Paul.

Corinth was a principal city of Greece

It was a place of great trade and wealth.

It was an affluent city famous for wealth, and arts and infamous for vice.

The city of Corinth was noted for fornication – there was a proverbial phrase – to play the corinthian, is to play the whore or indulge whorish inclinations.

Yet in this city, Paul, by the blessing of God and with his hard work, planted and raised a Christian church, chiefly among the Gentiles. Paul continued in this city for almost 2 years and laboured with great success.

Sometime after he left then he wrote this letter to the church of Corinth, to water what he had planted and to correct some gross disorders that were introduced during his absence.

Paul talked about a different topic in every chapter of his letter to the church of Corinth. In chapter 13 which is one of the most famous passages in the bible talks about love.

Paul talked about love in its fullest and most extensive meaning, true love to God and man, a benevolent and loving attitude towards our fellow Christians, growing out of sincere and fervent devotion to God..

Vse 7 -Where the fire of love is kept in, the flames of wrath will not easily kindle

Anger cannot rest in the bosom where love reigns.

It is hard to be angry with those we love. But very easy to drop our resentments and be reconciled.

Love does no envy and has no ill wills. How many of us do feel genuinely happy about other people's success?

This is the highest form of love we are talking about here. I know many of us try to model Christ and try to follow God's way to please Him. But how many of us can actually achieve these high ideals?

This is also the theme song of MSI whose goal is to help Chinese people living in the interior region of China and their driving force is the love of God. MSI has been in existence since 1999. They have established excellent relationship with the Chinese government who knows that this is a Christian organization. However, MSI workers and volunteers are not allowed to preach the gospel. We are there to witness Jesus thru our actions of love. It is not what we say that we touch the lives of the non believers there.

The MSI volunteer trip I went to was made up of 13 volunteers.

- 4 – from Calgary
- 2– from Toronto – Dennis, Rebecca
- 3 – Canadians living in China, (Ed, Josephine and their daughter)
- 1 – from Ireland
- 3 - from Singapore

We landed in Chongqing on Thursday, July 10, and started our orientation and training. For 3 days.

The schedule was quite grueling:

- 5:30a.m – Morning call
- 6:15a.m. – Morning devotion
- 7:15 a.m.– Breakfast
- 8:15 a.m.– Arrive at school
- 8:45 a.m.– Morning session

11:30-12:30 p.m. – Lunch

12:30 – 3:30 p.m. - Afternoon session

4:00 – 6:00 p.m. – Lesson planning and debriefing

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. – Dinner

Initially, we were supposed to be working with 100 elementary and secondary teachers from the Chongqing Teachers Education College and gave us some afternoons off because it was in the 37- 40 degrees in the afternoon.

But after a week, the College liked our program so much that they added another 50 teachers for the afternoons for us to work with and took away our afternoons off.

But our leader, Ed, never complained and neither did our whole team and we just took on the additional workload and worked with the teachers.

How are the Christian volunteers different from the regular volunteers:

1. God's message

The Chinese teachers and officials also had the opportunity to interact with a team of all Christian volunteers.

Each morning, before we started our formal lessons,

We would start the morning with singing some English songs and from time to time we would sneak in some songs with biblical messages. We sang many English songs, but this was the one that really touched the heart of the many Chinese teachers and officials. This was their favourite

song and a few of them said to me,” I really like this song. This song is very special and it has very very good meaning. It is so special from all the other songs that we heard. God’s word touch people’s heart. And we told them that this are words takne from a Jewish book.

I wanted to add that every morning when all the teachers were gathered in the lecture hall, all the singing and lecture were videotaped and we were very careful of what we said.

2. Speaking truth and correcting thru love

Each one of us was assuigned a small group of 10-12 teachers who are mostly young teachers and already teaching English in their shoools. Because they are very young and inexperenced. We discussed with them the teaching methods and provided them the opportunity to practise their oral and conversational English with Englsih speakers.

After the first few days, the teachers’ affection for me was evident. I have never felt so loved and admired. My teachers treated me like royalty. They learned about my birthday and they arranged for me a very special surprised birthday celebration in a day. They knew that I didn’t have a labtop so I couldn’t send any emails, one of them loaned me her computer so that I could email my family.

A few of them told me I am an excellent teacher and that I am very different from all the English teachers and pofessors they had at university. They really apprecaited me. I asked them why am I so different from their previous Englsih teachers and professors, they said to me” You told us our mistakes and you helped us to improve and learn English better. Our colleges teachers never correct our mistakes so we couldn’t imporve our English.”

Well, I was surprised to hear that but I also understood why. Because it is much easier to tell people that you are doing well or say nothing when someone makes a mistake. It is much harder to tell people their mistake in a way that they can accept and without offending them and making them dislike you. Example – my son.

3. Love subdues pride and vain –

Long hour and culture shock caused the Canadain team members to complain and grumbled. The canadian culture is a complaining culture and they are not afraid to let it known. Team mebers were not happy with the long hours and complained behind the leader’s back. The team leader listened to their complaint and modified the schedule and humbled himself.

Conclusion

There are always going to be diffculties and challenging situations in our lives. But nothing is impossible because we have Jesus and the love of Christ to fall back on. As Christians we are very fortunate because we have Christ in our heart and because we have god in our lives, we have more strength and power and we are not afraid to admit defeat and this makes us a little more humble. We need to pray our family members, our children and those who surround us for the attitide of humbily in their heart so that they can seek God and know him.