

## Love is still the greatest thing

By Revered John Koedyker, pastor, Word of Hope Church

Being a romantic at heart and also realizing that Valentine's Day is right around the corner, I stopped by at the video store the other day to pick up a good "chick flick" to watch with my wife. The one I chose was an older movie called "50 First Dates," starring Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore. I had seen it years ago and all I could remember was that it was funny. How could it not be with Adam Sandler in it?

What I didn't remember is that the movie is actually quite profound. And it didn't hit me till the very end of the movie. You see, in the movie, a young man by the name of Henry falls in love with a young lady by the name of Lucy. Henry doesn't realize it right away, but Lucy had been in a car accident and had suffered a head injury. It left her with a short-term memory loss problem. Every night, all memory of her day would be erased. She would get up in the morning and not remember a single thing about the day before.

Obviously, this proposed quite a challenge for young Henry who was head over heels in love with her. What he ended up doing — with great determination — was making her fall in love with him every day. Each and every day by his loving acts, he would remind her of how much he loved her.

To me, that was profound because that should really be our aim every day. Whether it is for our spouse, our neighbor, or our work associate, we should be proving to them every day our love, respect and care for them.

When put on a spiritual level, it is also true. In the pages of the Bible, God shows us over and over again that He loves us. He proves His love to us every day by His words of encouragement from the Bible, His blessings, His provisions, and most of all, His faithfulness and forgiveness.

One of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century was the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. Toward the end of his career, Barth did a series of lectures in America at Princeton and the University of Chicago. At one of those lectures, Barth was asked the question, "Of all the theological insights you have ever had, which would you consider to be the greatest of all?"

This was a remarkable question to ask a man who had written tens of thousands of pages of some of the most sophisticated theology ever put on paper. The students sat with their pens ready. They wanted to jot down every word that the great doctor of theology would speak.

Karl Barth is said to have closed his eyes and thought for a few moments, then he smiled, opened his eyes and said to the young seminarians, "The greatest theological insight is this: Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Barth was right, of course. The greatest thought that could ever come into our minds would have to be that God loves us. God, who is good and perfect and righteous in all things, loves us. And the amazing thing is that God loves us despite the fact that we do not always love Him. In fact, we ignore Him, disobey Him, and even spurn His love. And yet, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Love is still the greatest thing ever. Paul the apostle says in I Corinthians 13, (appropriately called "The Love Chapter") that "love never fails." (v. 8) And he concludes that chapter by saying, "And now these three remain: Faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

I hope you celebrate love this month. But really, it is something that must be done each and every day. As God shows us His love each day, I hope you show it to someone each day, too. What a different world we would have if, instead of trying to prove that we are right, we lived in a way that proved our love. •

## The Amish

By Reverend R.A. Shackles

The Amish are a unique group of Christians whose way of life is probably one of the most wholesome segments of American society. Known best for their settlements in and around the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area — but found elsewhere in the country — they present to our nation standards of faith and morals worthy of greatest respect. Noted for their skills in agriculture, they can do more with 100 acres than most could do with 500. Granted, their customs are different from most others — unique dress, doing without many "modern" luxuries. They are an asset to any community in which they live.

So why have they suddenly become the focus of TV programs which seem to denigrate all that these fine people stand for? One, called *Breaking Amish*, portrays young Amish boys and girls who, throwing off their Amish traditions, seem to be eagerly embracing all of the "pleasures" of urban New York City life. Another — admittedly we have only seen this in those leaders advertising the program — centered around an "Amish Mafia." Just the title alone seems to be an outrageous oxymoron, a self-contradicting insult to the Amish (?) men who use force and violence against anyone who defends their "honor."

In our opinion this is really "pushing the envelope" in the constant warfare against Christians. As such, and speaking as a seriously committed Christian, this seems to be one more effort of the media to trash both Christian faith and any who dare to practice their faith. To ask, "Is there nothing sacred?" is to answer the question. Apparently the amoral leaders of the media do worse than ridicule the sacred; they are out to destroy the sacred, the holy. So we ask, "Why the Amish?" Because they are one of the few remaining Christian groups who truly live by their Christian commitments. In deciding where you should stand in these things, remember: To tolerate sin is to become one with it. It must be stopped! So we insist and so shall we stand. •

## Love never fails

By Reverend William Randall

This is an appropriate time of year to share a love story. An appropriate source is the Bible. No, I am not writing about God's great love that moved Him to give His son, Jesus, so those who believe in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. That, indeed, is a wonderful love story, but I am writing about a young man in the Old Testament who traveled many miles to a strange land to seek a wife.

A young man named Jacob arrived at a well where sheep were gathered around. A big stone had been placed on the mouth of the well. Jacob went near and rolled the stone away and watered the sheep for a lovely maid named Rachel. He kissed her and it was love at first sight. She was beautiful and well favored, and she was of the family Jacob had set out to contact. Her father was Laban, his uncle, whom he had never met. His uncle agreed to hire Jacob as a worker and asked him what the wages should be. Jacob wasted no time in asking to marry Rachel. Jacob loved her and offered to work for seven years for her. Being driven by love, it seemed to him to be just a few days.

Finally, the wedding day came. In many weddings today the bride and groom do not see each other on the wedding day until the bride walks down the aisle. Things were different then. The groom did not see his bride until morning after their first night together. Jacob awoke and rolled over expecting to see his beautiful wife. But his father-in-law tricked him by substituting Rachel's older sister Leah, who was definitely not attractive. Can't you just see Jacob storming out of the tent shouting to Laban, "what is this you have done to me? I worked seven years for Rachel."

Jacob's love for Rachel enabled him to work another seven years for the one he loved, as Laban demanded. He was excited to consummate the marriage, but to his great disappointment, she was not able to bare a child. Leah, the older sister, had children and handmaidens had children with Jacob. After ten sons and one daughter were born, God opened Rachel's womb and she happily gave birth to Joseph.

After nearly seven years, Jacob had direction from God to take his family to the land of Canaan from which he had come. Along the way there was fear and possible danger. Though Jacob had concern for all of his family, he showed a special love for Rachel and put her and her son way back in line for safety.

Rachel gave birth to a second son named Benjamin while on their journey. She died at childbirth and was buried in Bethlehem where Jacob set up a pillar at her grave site — a pillar that stood for many, many years. Jacob's lasting love for Rachel was seen in his favoritism shown to Rachel's son. The Bible tells the story of the long and lasting love of Jacob toward the bride he had worked fourteen years to obtain. True love overcomes obstacles and is lasting. In these days of pressure upon families, it is beautiful to see marriages that endure with love that keeps growing stronger.

Love truly is a gift from God. •



## The ultimate source

By Al Wezeman

That is, the ultimate source of life. We all know that is God. At the very beginning of all things, God breathed life into man. God put life into man. Genesis 2:7 tells how God started life. God is the author of life. God is the one who determines about life. God made the fact of who determines very plain in Exodus 20:13 and in Deuteronomy 5:17. Man does not determine about life. God was not kidding when He laid down the rule for life: "You (man) shall not murder."

Obviously we have gone against the wishes of God as the only legal determiner of decision for life. As we said, God was not kidding. There are consequences for breaking the law. God has not changed His mind. Every human has had the spark of life put into him. The chain continues because God puts the life into the living being. Without that initial spark of life, no conception can happen. Jesus is a good example. The Holy Spirit put the spark of life in Mary's womb to provide human life for Jesus.

Now, according to the latest figures, man has ended the lives of 55,000,000 unborn babies. God said, "You (man) shall not murder." Has God closed His eyes? Are there no consequences for disobedience? The Holy Bible, God's Word, says there are.

Deuteronomy, a book of the Old Testament, makes it very plain in chapter 28 that there are definitely consequences for obedience and also for disobedience. Verse 1 says, "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands — the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth." There are many consequences of obedience, a few of which are: "you will be blessed

— fruit of the womb — crops of your land — young of your livestock — you will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out."

In other words, God will watch out and make things turn out for good. That is the consequence of obedience.

On the other hand, Deuteronomy 28:13-68 says, "If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees — all these curses will come upon you and overtake you."

God does want to bless us, but we must wonder why He would. There are wicked ways in our country. There are evils in our country that go against the commands of God. We don't have to enumerate them. We know what they are.

Neither do we have to enumerate the curses that have come upon us. We can blame freaks of weather, but we know who is in control of all things.

After 40 years, we can't put life back into 55,000,000 innocent babies and we wonder how we could stop the present evil practices going on in our country. So what could we possibly do?

As those who fear God we must do what God tells us to do in II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people who are called by my name (Christians) will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land."

Plead for the mercy of God. Pray diligently for our leaders that they will see the light, the truth of God's Word. •

40 Years  
55 Million Babies  
Lost to Abortion

1973-2013

PRAY  
TO END  
ABORTION

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