***Decorating the Cross***, Pt.1

**1 Corinthians 13:1-4a** 2-21-21

*Bottom Line: Only a life lived in love can be worthy of decorating the cross.*

**Introduction:**

 A. In 1976, Rick Monday did something that made everyone cheer. **Video**

 1. It’s only a symbol but it must not be desecrated!

 2. Ask any Boy Scout: rules for how to treat our flag.

 B. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a sacred place with rules about how to act & decorate it. **Picture**

 C. The Cross is a sacred symbol. Used for decoration?

 1. Constantine’s 4th century vision “… this sign conquer”

 2. Symbol for crusades, knights Templar in Medieval period of Crusades – 1096 into 1400’s – Holy Land?

 D. How do you honor the cross? How do you decorate something that represents the love of God & the sacrifice of Jesus?

 1. It is easy to cheapen it. Mere art? Symbol of hate?

 2. Only one thing can go on the cross – Jesus & love!

 E. Love and Jesus are inseparable! It is who He is and who we must be! Not A part of being a disciple – it’s what we are!

 F. **Seven things we all need to know about love!**

 1. Love is God!

 2. Love is the summation of God’s will! Jesus & Paul

 3. Love is the single most defining characteristic of a disciple of Christ!

 4. Love is the greatest gift any child of God can have. 1 Cor.12:31

 5. Love is greater than faith and hope! 1 Cor.13:13

 6. Love is our most important responsibility to one another! 1 Peter 4:8

 7. Love is the only thing that covers sin! Grace is love!

 G. Love is the most essential concept in our walk with Jesus! We will never have a relationship w/o it!

 1. Take up your cross and follow! How? Love!

 2. I’ve been crucified with Christ! How? Love!

 3. Present your body as a living sacrifice? How? Love!

 H. Love is the only thing that can decorate the cross!

 1. Paul’s description in 1 Cor.13 is not about marriage!

 2. It is about how the church becomes the body of Christ! Continuation of his discussion in chapter 12!

 I. Love IS – Love ISN’T – Love ALWAYS – Love NEVER!

 1. 1 Cor.13:1-3 Love must be the foundation!

 2. Love IS patient and kind! Why these two?

**1. Patient and kind go together!**

 A. One w/o the other is self-serving! Politics! Tool!

 B. Which comes first? Both do!

**2. Patient and kind together embody love!**

 A. Require unselfishness, self-control, thoughtfulness

 B. Only love can keep them together!

**3. Patient and kind are characteristics that please God!**

 A. Patience: Joseph, Moses, Job

 B. Kindness: Elijah & the widow, Jesus, Good Samaritan

**4. Patient and kind both represent Jesus!** They are what he was and what we must be!

**Conclusion:**

A. Looking like our Dad! Natural Dad & Heavenly Dad!

B. God is love, love is patient & kind, godliness is P&K!

C. Now you know how much you look like God!

**Bible Study for Sunday, February 21, 2021**

**Decorating the Cross: 1 Corinthians 13:1-4a**

1. What are some things that you believe should never be decorated?

2. How important is love in our journey to know and obey God?

3. What do you think every Christian should know about love?

4. How does love connect us to the cross?

5. The great love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, was written by Paul to make what point? What is the context?

6. Why do you think that patience and kindness are the first descriptions of love Paul gives?

7. Does being patient and kind go together? Why?

8. Why do they embody love? Or do they?

9. How important are they to God? What examples from the Bible teach us about their importance to Him?

10. How does being patient and kind represent Jesus?

11. Why does being patient and kind show us how much or how little we are like Jesus?