

FEBRUARY 2019

Hemyock *Baptist Church*



With St. Valentine's Day approaching, I thought I'd consider the theme of love this month – although my starting point, Proverbs 10:12, is perhaps one of the lesser known references to the subject. And on the face of it, it may seem controversial. Love *covers* all sins? Well, love can't *condone* sin because sin is an offence against our holy and loving God. Love certainly can't *cleanse* sin because "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). But love can *cover* sin so that we don't gossip and bring disgrace to the Lord's name.

We are overcomers; *we should overcome evil with good* (Rom. 12:21). You might recall Shem and Japheth obeyed this command as they covered their drunken father Noah's naked body, and were careful not to look at him. Yet their brother Ham had looked upon Noah and told his brothers about the situation, having done nothing to put it right (*cf.* Prov.12:16). Moses' law had yet to be given, but surely something in Ham's heart could have prompted him to do the right thing? As Edmund Burke famously said, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing." Indeed, James 4:17 reads: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin".

We must overcome lies with truth. Look at the way Joseph dealt with his deceitful brothers who sold him into slavery and told their father he was killed by a wild animal (Gen 17). When his brothers returned to Joseph (now second ruler of Egypt having come through his trials) during a famine, Joseph dealt with them sternly out of love for them; because he wanted to see them free from their guilt. He spoke truth in love (Eph. 4:15), having learnt from his experiences in Egypt, that his brothers had to feel the painful consequences of their lies prior to enjoying forgiveness.

We must overcome hatred with love. Joseph bore no ill will to his brothers and eventually his love won the day. Think too of David, who had opportunities to destroy King Saul, but wouldn't have anything disrespectful said about him. "He who covers a transgression seeks love" (Prov. 17:9). And the verse at the top of the page is quoted by Peter, in 1 Peter 4:8: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

Of course, the greatest example of 'covering love' is that of our Lord Jesus Christ. After his resurrection, he met privately with Peter and forgave him (Luke 24:34, 1 Cor. 15:5); and later restored Peter publicly (John 21:15-19). "A new command I give you: Love one another", Jesus said in John 13:34; and Paul wrote: "He who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8). Love is both the greatest commandment and the greatest covering. Surely, we are closest to God when we love others and practice forgiveness.



We're delighted that Messy Church is back for 2019, although a little later than usual as we wait for our new kitchen area to take shape! We're taking the opportunity to tie in a bit closer to the academic year so that we can release dates as soon as we know when the schools take a break. So, to take us up to the summer holidays, come and join us for Messy Church from 4-6pm on:

Friday 29th March

Friday 26th April

Friday 14th June

Friday 19th July

Please see the Messy Church page on our website for more information.