

Love Believes All Things
I Corinthians 13:7
June 19, 2020

There were two melancholy Danes, in the history of Denmark, not just one. King Lear was the original melancholy Dane who was broken-hearted by the deception of his daughters' false love for him. The second melancholy Dane was that philosopher of the heart, and the first psychologist of anxiety and fear, Soren Kierkegaard. His life of faith, inwardness and commitment to the human struggle, led him into a lonely and melancholy life of servanthood to God. He was committed to his writing, completing almost thirty books on philosophy, literature, theology and psychology, in his short life. He wrote groundbreaking works in all areas and is still relevant today. One of his works, which I read frequently, is **Works of Love**. It contains several inspirational and meditative works designed to help us understand the love that comes from God and how it is to work in the human community. One of his chapters is entitled, "Love Believes all Things----and Yet is Never Deceived."

This is one of the hardest demands of loving others. To believe all things, seems so naïve, and so dangerous. That is why Kierkegaard adds to the statement----yet is never deceived. He is not saying that love can never be deceived. He means that love absorbs deception, and sees the object of love as worthy, even within the possibility of deception. How many of us have fallen into this situation? The most famous lover who was deceived was that first melancholy Dane, King Lear. He gave his three daughters one third of his Kingdom, if they would tell him how much they loved him. The first two daughters provided him glowing remarks of their love for him, but the third, Cordelia, said, "I love you no less, or more, than a daughter should love a father." Lear was angry and took her one third and gave to the other two daughters. He believed that Cordelia was ungrateful, while his other daughters were superior in their love for him. But in the end, he was wrong. When he learned of his two daughters' deception, he went mad. His mistake was that love should have believed Cordelia, but his pride demanded more.

This is what I believe Kierkegaard is getting at. Love must stand before all things and believe what the other is saying. Yet, love knows, as well, the heart of those who are being loved. In this way love is never deceived. It always knows the truth because love looks to the heart. But when love sees the heart of the other, and see's that falseness is present, it doesn't mean that love is to recede. Love is to believe that the other person is worthy of love. In this there is no deception. You may feel powerless and shameful for this kind of relationship to others, but in truth it is the most powerful relationship that moves the world forward.

Kierkegaard writes, "*So it is with the one who loves, who believes all things. This can very easily be confused with shallowness, and yet there is the depth of wisdom in this simplicity; this can very easily be confused with weakness, and yet the powers of eternity are in this person whom anyone can deceive, and yet he is the only one who is eternally and infinitely secured against being deceived.*"

We are not to keep ourselves innocent of the motives of others, love never teaches that we should dismiss motives and falseness. It teaches completely the opposite. Love teaches us to constantly look at the heart for the answers that love has questions of. Therefore, it is not deceived. Love continues to reach out, even when it knows the heart of the other person. That I believe is the meaning of Paul's wonderful statement, Love Believes All Things.

In this time of lock down it is easy to point fingers. But love does not point, love extends a hand and brings others close in order to embrace.