

# Valentine

John 13:34-35

Introduction: According to legend, Roman Emperor, Aurelius Claudius II (reigned A.D. 268-270) invoked a decree prohibiting military personnel from marriage. He believed such relationships made men weak. It was a man named Valentinus that took pity on the forlorn young soldiers and secretly married couples in opposition to the Emperor's edict. When Claudius II was informed of the marriages, he had Valentinus beaten and beheaded on February 14, 269.

Valentine's Day; therefore, has become the romantic recognition of personal sacrifice for the sake of love. Valentine is listed among the early martyrs for the sake of Christ. (By the way, Valentine could not have been a Catholic priest as Roman Catholicism did not begin for 55 years after his death.)

Yet the significance of Valentine's defiance to the emperor's decree is far more significant. I would like to think that Valentine recognized a few particularly important principles which are the subjects for our lesson.

I. Valentine recognized that marriage is a God ordained institution.

A. Beginning with Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6).

B. *"It is not good that man should be alone"* (Gen. 2:18).

C. *"For it is better to marry than to burn"* (1 Cor. 7:9).

II. Valentine recognized *"we ought to obey God rather than men."*

A. Peter and John set this precedence (Acts 4:1-3, 7-10, 15-19).

B. A little later, the Apostles confirmed this principle (Acts 5:17-29).

C. Governments, rulers, emperors, kings, and presidents are ministers for God (Rom. 13:1-4). When they usurp their authority, God must be obeyed.

D. Valentine was not doing something wrong by marrying soldiers. He was fulfilling God's commands! It wasn't because he was willing to risk his life for the romantic idea of love. He was risking his life for the love of God (Jn. 14:15; 15:12-14)!

E. If anything, Claudius II should have given all newlyweds 1 year off from their military obligation.

III. Valentine could not have foreseen the good his defiant action proclaimed.

A. Similarly to the days of Valentine, the institution of marriage is under attack. Except this time, our government says we must marry homosexuals in opposition to God's word.

1. Are we willing to endure jail time because we refuse to sanction the marriage of two people of the same sex?

2. Are we willing to speak out against such perversions knowing we might be incarcerated under hate crime legislation?

B. Former President Obama declared that government has the right to force religious institutions into sinful actions if the government sees some virtue in it.

1. Didn't Aurelius Claudius II see virtue in forbidding his soldiers from marriage? He thought it made men weak.

2. Since democratic presidents see virtue in a woman's "right to choose," does that mean we should permit the murder of unborn children?

3. Should we stop condemning homosexuality just because our sitting president sees it as discriminatory or because our government made it legal?

4. Should I be forced to pay for other people's abortions through contraception like RU-486 because government sees virtue in it?

C. Government in some states are trying hard to outlaw worship gatherings for the sake of a virus. Should we stay home from our obligation to assemble (Heb. 10:25) to accommodate the government's concern for a virus?

**Conclusion: Are we willing to lay down our lives to uphold God's laws?**

Valentine laid down his life while ensuring that God's laws were obeyed despite what the most powerful person in the known world in his time believed. Are we willing to show the same amount of love for God (Rev. 6:9-11)?