

## The Real Saint Valentine

### The History of Valentine's Day

- Confusion
  - Historians aren't sure exactly where the holiday comes from
  - Over 50 men named "St. Valentine" in the early church and 1 Pope Valentine
  - At least 3 stories of men named St. Valentine who were martyred on February 14 in the 3rd c.
    - A priest in Rome
    - A bishop of Terni, Italy
    - A martyr in the Roman province of Africa
- The Holiday Emerged
  - Lupercalia
    - A Roman holiday Feb 13-15
    - The Luperci ("brothers of the wolf") sacrificed goats and dogs as an offering to the gods
  - The Church Re-brands Lupercalia
    - 496 AD: Pope Gelasius I banned Lupercalia, replaced it with St. Valentine's Day, in honor of the martyred St. Valentine
  - St. Valentine's Day Becomes Associated with Romance
    - In the Middle Ages, a poem by Chaucer led to the holiday being associated with romance
  - Hallmark Took Over
    - 1913: Hallmark offered the first pre-made Valentines cards
    - 1916: Hallmark mass-produced Valentines
    - The holiday grew exponentially

### What About St. Valentine Himself?

- Background on Greco-Roman Society at the Time
  - The Church had grown substantially, however, there was still a strong pagan undercurrent throughout the Empire
  - Rampant Sexual Immorality
    - Before marriage: sleeping around was normal (at least for men) - young men were encouraged to use slaves or prostitutes
    - During marriage: polygamy was normal... men had mistresses, concubines, and slaves kept specifically for sex
      - Quote: Pseudo-Demosthenes (1st c.) – "We have mistresses for our enjoyment, concubines to serve our needs... and wives to bear legitimate children."
    - Sexual immorality in pretty much all forms was considered normal and acceptable
      - Quote: Tatian (early Christian writer) – "[Romans] consider pederasty to be particularly privileged and try to round up herds of boys like herds of grazing mares."
    - Religion supported this culture
      - The Greco-Roman gods were examples of immorality
      - Temple prostitution (In Corinth, the temple to Aphrodite had 1000 temple prostitutes)
    - Marriage
      - A political-economic thing about family alliances
      - Slaves were forbidden to marry, and since as many as 50% of Romans were slaves, most people never married and only fooled around with sex their whole life
  - Endemic Violence and Warfare
    - Gladiator battles
    - Bloody public executions

- Pax Romana, accomplished by constant warfare
  - Greek Warfare: the Greeks were the first in history to develop an idea of warfare that was extremely intense and bloody
  - Roman Warfare: took Greek ideas and expanded on them, making them even more brutal and effective
    - The Romans created the world's first large, professional, fully-trained, full-time paid standing army that specialized in making war
    - The Roman war-machine was famously feared by the ancient world for their bloody, violent, brutal tactics
- Enter Saint Valentine
  - 268AD: Emperor Marcus Aurelius Claudius Gothicus II (AKA Claudius the Cruel) took the throne
    - His goal was to restore the glory of the Roman Empire through battle
    - He banned marriage among young people, thinking it would encourage people to join the military rather than marry
  - Saint Valentine
    - Rather than obey the Emperor's order, he secretly married young people
    - He was caught and imprisoned
    - 269 AD: sentenced to death by being beaten with clubs, stoned, then decapitated
    - While awaiting execution in the home of a nobleman named Asterius, he prayed for and healed his blind daughter, and the entire family gave their lives to Jesus
    - His last words were in a note to Asterius's daughter, signed "from your Valentine"
    - Feb 14, 270 AD: Valentine was executed, his body buried along Via Flaminia

#### Six Lessons from Saint Valentine

- A Biblical View of Sex and Marriage is Worth Fighting For
  - Book *Sex and Culture* by JD Unwin (1934)
    - Studied 80 primitive tribes and 6 civilizations through 5,000 years of history
    - 5 (Not So) Surprising Findings:
      - The more a culture stuck to the idea that sex was for one man and one woman within marriage, the stronger the civilization was... But if this restriction was lifted at all, every culture he studied declined or collapsed within 3 generations
      - The most important factor to determine whether a culture would be successful and flourish was whether or not sex was allowed before marriage
      - Rational cultures that held to the idea that sex is only for within a marriage consisting of one man and one woman for life... always did better than every other type of culture, in every area - literature, art, science, furniture, architecture, engineering, and agriculture...
      - If a rational culture allowed sex before marriage, then within 3 generations, the culture lost the importance of rational thinking, the idea of a moral Divine being, and the norm of monogamous relationships
      - If total sexual freedom was embraced by a culture, it collapsed within 3 generations to the lowest state of a society, a state he calls "inert"... characterized by people who have few desires or ambitions outside fulfilling their own wants and needs... At this point, the culture was usually conquered from without or overwhelmed by a stronger sub-culture from within
  - Book *A Queer Thing Happened to America* by Michael Brown
    - Encouraging someone to engage in a homosexual lifestyle is like playing Russian roulette with their life
  - The Biblical standard of sex and marriage is a hill worth dying on:
    - Sex outside of marriage is destructive and harmful

- Marriage is for one man and one woman for life
  - Divorce is wrong and hurts everyone involved
  - Homosexuality is a sin that hurts all involved
  - Sexual immorality of any type is destructive
  - Pornography is shameful, harmful, abusive, exploitative, and addictive
  - If you have a man's biology, you are a man. If you have a woman's biology, you are a woman. What you think about your gender does not change the truth of your biology.
  - Marriage is holy, family is good, and children are a blessing
  - A baby is a life at conception, and abortion at any point is murdering an innocent human created in the image of God.
- There are Times When it is Right and Good to Disobey the Government
  - Romans 13:1-2 – 1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.
    - “be subject” = *hupotasso* = “to arrange yourself under”
      - This word is always used in the NT to mean submission, but never obedience
        - Submission = a matter of your heart
        - Obedience = a matter of your actions
      - There are many times that the NT uses the word *hupotasso* to describe situations in which people or things that were submitted but not obedient
        - Mark 9:29, 1 Corinthians 15:27, 1 Corinthians 14:34
    - “to obey” = *hupokouo* = literally means “to hear under” and carries a sense of really listening to the one speaking and then carrying out their orders
      - Used in NT to mean obedience, doing what's commanded
        - Ephesians 6:1, Luke 8:25, Luke 17:6
      - This word is never used in the NT to tell believers how to respond to the government
    - Conclusion: it is possible (and at times appropriate) to submissively disobey
      - Acts 4:19-20 - 19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”
      - Acts 5:29 - But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”
- No Matter the Circumstances, be Ready to Minister
  - Acts 16 – Paul and Silas are in jail praising God
  - Acts 28 – Paul is in prison in Rome
    - Philippians 1:12-13 – the whole Praetorian Guard (10,000 soldiers guarding Paul) knew about Jesus through Paul's ministry
- God Wins
  - Philippians 2:9-11 - 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- When the Choice is Between Death and Disobeying God, Choose Death
  - Luke 12:4-5 - 4 I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!
- It is Time for Men and Women of Courage in the Church
  - “Valentine” = Latin *Valentinus* = “worthy, strong, powerful”
  - Quote: CT Studd - “Too long have we been waiting for one another to begin! The time of waiting is past! The hour of God has struck! War is declared! In God's Holy Name let us arise and build! ‘The God of Heaven, He will fight for us’, as we for Him. We will not build on the

sand, but on the bedrock of the sayings of Christ, and the gates and minions of hell shall not prevail against us. Should such men as we fear? Before the world, aye, before the sleepy, lukewarm, faithless, namby-pamby Christian world, we will dare to trust our God, we will venture our all for Him, we will live and we will die for Him, and we will do it with His joy unspeakable singing aloud in our hearts. We will a thousand times sooner die trusting only our God, than live trusting in man. And when we come to this position the battle is already won, and the end of the glorious campaign in sight. We will have the real Holiness of God, not the sickly stuff of talk and dainty words and pretty thoughts; we will have a Masculine Holiness, one of daring faith and works for Jesus Christ.”