

## **“Love Locks” – by Lorelei Pepe**

The Pont des Arts is a lovely pedestrian bridge over the Seine River in Paris. I saw a movie once which showcased this amazing bridge with thousands and thousands of padlocks, called “love locks”.

They were placed there by loving couples, young and old, - “lovebirds”, “sweethearts” engraved with both sets of initials. These were symbols of their true deep committed love to one another forever.

Then I read by 2015, there were over 700,000 locks on the bridge weighing more than 45 tons. They were causing a strain on the infrastructure of the bridge and one railing collapsed. So, sadly they all had to be removed and the bridge was restored. Today it is known as the Enchanted Bridge and to many couples it is still “magical” as the legend lives on.

This makes me think sometimes that romantic love doesn’t always last and sustain us throughout our entire lives. Couples today have a hard time staying together; the marriage rate is down and the divorce level is up!

After going through marriage and an extremely painful, difficult divorce, I can understand how devastating it is not to feel loved anymore. There was an empty void deep down in my soul and heart and I ached for many years feeling broken. But I realized only Jesus can fill that empty space. In time, through prayer and meditation, I came to know Him better and develop a relationship with Him. I know now He dwells deep within my heart and fills it with His peace, grace and love. I have come to realize His love is unending and unconditional and will last for all of eternity. I am sure of that.

We were all put on this earth to get along and learn how to live peacefully and love one another, truly love one another, despite our religious backgrounds, or race or beliefs. Jesus came to the earth to teach us about His love. He sacrificed Himself for us, by giving up His life. He was God’s gift to us. For 33 short years, He walked and talked all about the gospel – the “good news” of the Bible showing us how to live and love. His disciples were just regular men who became His followers and He taught them as well and commanded them to go out into the world and preach the gospel. A huge task, but they did it despite opposition and much turmoil and trouble along the way. He asks us to do the same.

I believe today the spirit of God lives in each and every one of us, deep in our hearts. But many have not “tapped” into this and need to dig deeper to find that special place. It is like a small seed planted in a garden and we must nurture it, tend to it so it will grow. Jesus gives us “spiritual roots”. He supplies all our needs. In **John 15:5**, Jesus says, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in Him bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”**.

Once we are secure in this knowledge and our beliefs, we will be able to follow His example. It may take a lifetime for some of us, but I know Jesus is patient and is always waiting. He never lets us down.

As I pray to Him every day, I strive for that, for Him to show me the way and guide me down the right paths of life. I pray to Him as I take my daily walks and ask Him to change my heart and to keep it in the right place. Break down those chains of defeat, evil and despair and replace them with love and grace. As it says in the **Psalm 119: 105...** **“His word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”** He lights my path and my life every day. He takes away my darkness.

I am a work in progress and at times frustrated in my walk with God, but one thing I know for sure, I will continue to follow Him, no matter what, as God’s LOVE never fails, He promised me that!

## **John 13:34**

**“Love one another”** Jesus said after washing His disciples feet, **“as I have loved you, so you must love one another”**.