

To Love as God Loves

1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3

I. Intro

A. Valentines Day on Friday; “love” chapter

B. **READ 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3**

C. 4 Greek words for love

i. *phileo* – love of friends

ii. *storge* – family love

iii. *eros* – romantic, very intimate love between two people; marriage

iv. *agape* – God’s love; type of love Paul referring to in passage

a) unconditional - “no matter what” love; it’s not deserved and can’t be earned

b) initiating – takes the first step to establish, develop a meaningful relationship; doesn’t wait for other party to act first

c) sacrificial – love given no matter the cost; love of a person willing to sacrificially give of themselves to keep, preserve the relationship

d) transformational – person who truly experiences this type of love is never the same again; same said for a person who extends this kind of love; main purpose is to bless and benefit the person to whom this love is given

D. Story of Peter’s reconciliation with his Lord and he denies Jesus as Jesus is being falsely accused and tried just before His crucifixion

i. After crucifixion and resurrection, Peter and several others disciples returned to old life – fishing

ii. Jesus appears, when John recognizes Him standing on the shore, Peter immediately sheds his clothing and jumps in the water and begins frantically swimming to where Jesus is – can’t get to Jesus fast enough; rest of disciples reach the shore in their boat, Jesus has fish cooking for them

iii. Conversation between Jesus and Peter: **READ John 21:15 – 19**

iv. Use of two Greek words for love, why Peter is “grieved” after Jesus questions him the third time

v. **Question:** Which Greek word best describes your love for Jesus this morning – *phileo* (like Peter) or *agape*?

vi. **Question:** Which Greek word best describes the love generally expressed within your home, your family (spouse if married, children) – *phileo* (just friendship), *storge* (love that would be expected among family members), *eros* (in your marriage relationship), *agape*?

Speaking to that today – love in our homes, family

E. Answering the question today, two days after the day we celebrate love in our nation – how do we love as God loves?

II. **1 – Know the Supreme Value of Agape**

- A. **Value of agape love (God's love) is such that without it all we do is meaningless**
- B. **Just as important, and even more so, that we allow God's love to flow through our lives in our relationship with our family**
- C. **Paul's describes value of agape**
 - i. **Agape more valuable than spiritual gifts (REFER v. 1, 2); Paul just written about spiritual gifts in previous chapter, importance of gifts within the body of Christ (church); **READ 12:31****
 - ii. **Agape more valuable than knowledge (REFER v. 2); Paul says you can know it all – know everything about everything but if we don't have, know *agape* WE are nothing – our life has no real meaning or purpose**
 - iii. **Agape even more valuable than faith (REFER v. 2); can have all the faith in the world, even the most powerful faith, but without *agape* again WE are nothing; **Look up** James 2:14, 19, and Galatians 5:6**
 - iv. **Agape more valuable than generosity (REFER v. 3); spoke last week on the family value of generosity – truth, resources, encouragement, forgiveness – without *agape* we've gained nothing**
 - v. **Lastly, *agape* more valuable than accomplishments (REFER v. 3); we can have a heart of sacrifice, giving, selflessness but without *agape* it counts for nothing**
- D. **Question:** May ask, how do I know if I am a person that expresses, shows, and lives out *agape* – God's love? If you've truly experienced God's *agape* love in a real, genuine way, then **YOU WILL KNOW IT** – you can't help but know it
- E. **Pastor quote:** *To begin the Christian life, you must truly experience God's love (agape); to live the Christian life, you must learn to express God's love (agape)*

III. **2 – Know the Divine Nature of Agape**

- A. **REFER v. 4 - 7**
- B. **World's idea, perspective of love is so wrong – just plain ridiculous, so misguided**
 - i. **Something we have no control over; popular songs – *I can't help falling in love with you; You've lost that loving feeling, oh that loving feeling*; true, if based on an emotional feeling**
- C. **Agape love is not dependent on behavior, looks, actions of the other person – not determined by emotion; *agape* love is an act of the will, a deliberate choice to love another person through the power of the Holy Spirit in us**

D. Underscored by fact the Lord commands us to love; Jesus' words - John 13:34 (NIV)

34 "A new command I give you: Love (agape) one another (period). As I have loved (agaped) you, so **you must** love (agape) one another (period).

IV. **3** – Know the Superior Impact of *Agape*

A. **REFER v. 13**

B. God's Word tells us that when God's eternal kingdom is established on the new earth, that certain things from this life will remain – faith, hope, and *agape*; notice not *phileo*, *storge*, or *eros*

C. *Agape*, God's love, will be the only kind of love that will exist forever, so we all better start learning to *agape* one another, to love as God loves, in our homes with our spouses, children/grandchildren, all our relatives; in our community, schools, workplace; in our church

V. Close

A. Last week talked about being generous with forgiveness (tonight – The Cross and Unity), people have terrible problem with “total recall” – real forgiveness can only come by having *agape* for one another; there's a great need in THIS church for some of that healing that can only come from *agape* – to love as God loves

B. There is a great need in some of the families of this church for healing that can only come from *agape* – to love as God loves

C. Remember – not about having a certain emotion, feeling for someone – *agape* is a deliberate act of our will

D. **SHORT PRAYER** – Lord, make us people who *agape*, give us a heart to be people who *agape*, in our homes AND in our church