

St. Barnabas Hom. 4th Sun. Ord. Time 2/03/2019 (1 Cor. 12: 31—13: 4-13) YrC

IN TODAY'S 2ND READING IN CORINTHIANS THE SCRIPTURE SPEAKS ABOUT;

“THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

SCRIPTURE TELLS US THAT WE SHOULD STRIVE EAGERLY FOR THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL GIFTS,,, BUT,,, EVEN IF YOU HAVE THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,,, BUT,,, YOU DON'T HAVE LOVE,,, YOU ARE LIKE A NOISY GONG,,, A CLASHING SYMBOL,,, OUTSIDE A PAGAN TEMPLE!

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, ***YOU CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS BY FAITH,,, YOU CAN GIVE ALL YOUR EARTHLY POSSESSIONS AWAY,,, YOU CAN EVEN DECIDE TO BECOME A MYRTYR,,,*** BUT,,, **WITHOUT LOVE,,, IT'S ALL MEANINGLESS!**

THE KIND OF LOVE THAT TODAY'S SCRIPTURE IS TALKING ABOUT,,, IS REFERRED TO AS: “***AGAPE LOVE***”,,, AND ***AGAPE LOVE***,,, IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER KINDS OF LOVE.

IN THE GREEK,,, THE WORD “***LOVE***” HAS (3) DISTINCT,,, CONNOTATIONS AND THEY ARE:

PHILEO LOVE: IS BROTHERLY LOVE, OR, WONDERFUL FRIENDSHIP.

EROS LOVE: IS SEXUAL LOVE,,, AND IT IS FROM THE WORD EROS,,, THAT WE GET THE WORD “***EROTIC***”!

BUT THE WORD;

AGAPE: IS A SELFLESS LOVE! THE KIND OF LOVE,,, THAT JESUS HAS FOR HIS FATHER,,, AND THE KIND OF LOVE,,, THAT JESUS HAS FOR US.

AGAPE LOVE,,, IS NOT A LOVE OF JUST WORDS! ***BUT,,, IT IS A LOVE,,, OF ACTION AND DOING WITHOUT SELF-INTEREST!***

IN 1 JOHN,,, CHAPTER 4: VERSE 8 IT IS SAID VERY WELL;

“WHOEVER DOES NOT LOVE,,, DOES NOT KNOW GOD,,, BECAUSE GOD,,, IS LOVE!”

EVERYTHING THAT A PERSON WANTS TO ACCOMPLISH,,, DESIRES TO ATTAIN,,, OR,,, WHAT YOU WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER ABOUT YOU,,, SHOULD GO THROUGH THESE NEXT TWO MINDSETS. ASK YOURSELVES;

1) *AM I DOING THIS WITH AGAPE LOVE?* OR,,,

2) *HOW CAN I LIVE OUT MY LIFE,,, WITH AGAPE LOVE?*

TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER THESE TWO QUESTIONS,,, WE MUST DRAW UPON THE STRENGTH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EMPOWER US,,, AND,,, TO GUIDE OUR LIVES.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IN THIS SECULAR,,, TEMPORAL WORLD,,, THAT WE LIVE IN,,, WITH ALL IT'S WORLDLY PHILOSOPHY,,, OR EVEN,,, IT'S SOMETIMES RELIGIOUS PIETY,,, YOU WILL NEVER FIND THIS KIND OF *AGAPE LOVE!* ONLY BY PROCLAIMING JESUS,,, AS LORD IN OUR LIVES,,, BY FAITH,,, CAN A PERSON RECEIVE AND LIVE OUT *AGAPE LOVE!*

SCRIPTURE DEFINES THE CHARACTER OF *AGAPE LOVE*,,, BY THE 8 THINGS,,, THAT *AGAPE LOVE* IS,,, AND ALSO,,, BY 8 THINGS,,, THAT SELFLESS LOVE IS NOT!

AGAPE LOVE IS: PATIENT,,, KIND,,, REJOICES IN TRUTH,,, TRUSTS,,, PROTECTS,,, HOPES,,, PERSEVERES AND NEVER FAILS.

AGAPE LOVE,,, IS NOT: ENVIOUS,,, BOASTING,,, PRIDEFUL,,, RUDE,,, SELF-SEEKING,,, ANGRY,,, HOLDING GRUDGES,,, OR,,, DELIGHTS IN EVIL.

THAT BEING SAID,,, LET'S TAKE A CLOSE LOOK,,, AT WHAT TRUE SELFLESS,,, *AGAPE LOVE* IS LIKE:

IT'S PATIENT: IT USES SELF RESTRAINT WHEN THINGS DON'T GO OUR WAY. IT DOESN'T JUST STRIKE OUT. IT IS HUMBLE,,, AND NOT QUICK TEMPERED.

IT'S KIND: NOT ONLY ARE WE TO BE PATIENT,, BUT,, WE SHOULD REACH OUT AND HELP OTHERS,, WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN FOR DOING RIGHT.

IT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH: BE GLAD IN THE TRUTH THAT OTHERS HAVE A RELATIONSHIP IN CHRIST. BELIEVE IN THE TRUTH OF FORGIVENESS OF SIN AND IN GOD'S LOVE,, GRACE AND LIFE EVERLASTING.

THE LAST FIVE WORDS; **TRUSTS,, PROTECTS,, HOPES,, PERSEVERES AND NEVER FAILS**,, ARE ALL RELATED,, IN THAT THEY SHOW,, THAT LOVE,, ALWAYS PROTECTS AND COVERS OVER THOSE,, WHO ARE LOVED!

TRUE **AGAPE LOVE**,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, ALWAYS TRUSTS,, ALWAYS GIVES HOPE,, ALWAYS PERSEVERES AND,, IT NEVER FAILS!

NOW,, SINCE WE'VE LOOKED INTO WHAT **AGAPE LOVE IS**,, WE MUST ALSO LOOK INTO WHAT **AGAPE LOVE IS NOT**;

IT IS NOT ENVIOUS: WE SHOULD NOT BE JEALOUS OF WHAT OTHERS HAVE. ENVY IS WHEN WE WANT SOMETHING,, AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS.

IT IS NOT BOASTFUL: WE MUST NOT BE POMPOUS AND BOASTFUL,, ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE,, AND THEN WANTING TO FLAUNT WHAT WE DO HAVE,, IN FRONT OF THOSE WHO DON'T.

IT IS NOT PRIDEFUL: SCRIPTURE CALLS THIS,, "BEING PUFFED UP". IT'S ARROGANCE! OR,, TRYING TO INCREASE YOUR SELF-IMPORTANCE... BEYOND YOUR HAT SIZE.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, GOD SAID,, THAT HE WILL:

"CAST DOWN THE PRIDEFUL AND EXALTB THE LOWLY AND HUMBLE OF HEART"

IT IS NOT RUDE: WE SHOULD NOT SAY THINGS,, THAT ARE UNBECOMMING OR EMBARRASSING TO OTHERS,, OR EVEN

TO OURSELVES. THINGS THAT MAKE PEOPLE NOT WANT TO BE AROUND US!

IT IS NOT SELF-SEEKING: WE MUST NOT WORSHIP OURSELVES,,, OR IN OTHER WORDS,,, BE TOTALLY SELF-CENTERED. YOU KNOW,,, IT'S ALL ABOUT ME,,, ME,,, ME!

IT IS NOT BEING ANGRY OR QUICK TEMPERED: WE NEED TO HAVE PATIENCE AND NOT JUST LASH OUT AT SOMEONE WHO HAS A DIFFERENT OPINION THAN OURS,,, OR WHOSE ACTIONS OR OPINIONS,,, MIGHT OFFEND US AT TIMES.

IT IS NOT HOLDING GRUDGES: WE SHOULD NOT BROOD OVER THINGS,,, OF KEEP RECORDS OF ANOTHERS WRONGS SO WE CAN HOLD THEM OVER THEIR HEADS. WE SHOULD NOT THINK EVIL OF SOMEONE,,, OR DWELL OVER THE WRONGS THAT THEY HAVE DONE TO US,,,

RATHER,,, WE ARE TO FORGIVE!

IT DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL: WE MUST NOT “*FEEL GOOD*”,,, WHEN SOMEONE,,, WHO WE DISLIKE,,, HAS SOMETHING BAD HAPPEN TO THEM. THIS IS ANTI-LOVE AND ACTUALLY; IT'S A FORM OF HATRED!

THE ACT OF ***AGAPE LOVE***,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, ISN'T SOME MAGICAL ACT,,, THAT SHOULD GIVE US A ROSY,,, FUZZY FEELING. NO,,, AGAPE LOVE,,, IS OUR LOVE,,, IN ACTION,,, WHILE WE TRUST IN GOD,,, NO MATTER WHAT. AND ALSO,,, WHILE WE SEEK THE VERY BEST,,, FOR THOSE AROUND US,,, AS THEY GROW CLOSER,,, TO THE LOVE OF CHRIST,,, WHO IS LOVE!

THIS WEEKS SCRIPTURE CLOSES WITH THESE WORDS OF ST. PAUL;

“SO,,, FAITH,,, HOPE,,, LOVE,,, REMAIN THESE THREE,,, BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE”.

AND THESE THREE,,, ARE THE ESSENTIALS OF LIFE.

FAITH,,, HOPE AND LOVE

FAITH: IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

HOPE: IN THE GREAT THINGS,,, THAT HE IS DOING IN OUR LIVES,,, AND

LOVE: WHICH MEANS,,, OUR LIFE ETERNAL,,, THAT WE HAVE INHERITED,,, NOW AND FOREVER.

REMEMBER,,, LOVE IS THE GREATEST OF ALL THE GIFTS!
IF YOU DO NOT HAVE LOVE,,, YOU HAVE GAINED NOTHING!
BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE,,, AND IT IS HIS AGAPE LOVE,,, THAT HAS REDEEMED US.

BECAUSE OF THIS,,, WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE OF GOD.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, AS WE CONTINUE TO MATURE IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES,,, AND IN OUR FAITH,,, WE WILL BEGIN TO SEE,,, MUCH MORE CLEARLY,,, WHAT GOD IS ALL ABOUT.

HE IS ALL ABOUT SELF-LESSNESS,,, ALWAYS GIVING LOVE.

IT'S NOT ABOUT US,,, AT ALL! RATHER,,, IT'S ABOUT:

WHAT GOD WANTS US TO DO,,, THROUGH US,,, AND THROUGH OTHERS.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

AMEN

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(1,102 WDS 5 PGS)