

## 150902 God is Love

### Introduction:

#### I. Love is the Core of Our Faith

- A. *“But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.**”* (1 John 4:8, NLT)
  - 1. Love is the identity of who God is. It defines Him.
  - 2. It is a love like no other love!
- B. The new birth is the reception of the nature of God.
  - 1. Therefore: *“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.”* (1 John 4:7–9, NLT)
  - 2. This new nature gives us the capacity to love like God. The fruit is what makes our faith visible. God’s nature enters us. His love causes us to blossom and to bear fruit.
  - 3. Our primary life goal is to be focused on receiving and expressing God’s love. We are to make this the primary preoccupation of our life before, during, and after revival. We do not need to wait for a special seasons of revival to deeply engage in this reality. Mike Bickle
- C. The word we are looking at is love. Better spoken as Agape. Jesus gives this word new understanding. Agape is a noun that give title to something. It is an identifier.
  - 1. *“This is my command: Love each other.”* (John 15:17, NLT)
  - 2. It is a command. We are to Agape each other!
  - 3. It is a distinguisher. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. When Jesus is speaking these things, He is fully aware of the condition of the heart of man where love had been displaced by selfishness. But with the new birth, love/agape was the new nature of man.
- D. The fullness of this love came at Pentecost. *“And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”* (Romans 5:5, NLT) The power of Pentecost was “Love!” Holy Spirit empowers us to love God, love ourselves and to love each other!

#### II. Agape verses Phileo

- A. If agape is the way that God loves and it is a word to define Himself. Then the word **Phileo** is best used to describe the love of natural man. This is human love: love for mother, love for child, love for a spouse. Yet this love governed by the “fallen human heart” can quickly turn to divorce, jealousy, murder. (i.e. Cain and Abel). Phileo is the understanding we have of human love. (Self is at the center) And Agape is the understanding we have God’s love. (God is at the center.)
- B. Agape is what makes Christianity more beautiful than all the religions of the world. It goes the extra mile, forgives when forgiveness cannot be found, bears the burden of the weak, etc.
- C. It is hard to define Agape. The moment I try to define it, you look to discredit it, or the enemy seeks to fill your thoughts with lies to discredit it. That is why agape defines God. It is to loft to comprehend especially when we place it beside Phileo when it has failed. We ask ourselves how can we love.
- D. Paul through the Holy Spirit does a good job in 1 Cor 13:1-ff

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1. Noisy gongs vs. Agape. If I can speak every language of the earth, and of angel but have not love I am a clanging gong. Without love Christianity is stripped and left naked. Without love Christianity is left meaningless even though it has many words.
  2. Vs 2: If I have prophecy, can tell the future, reveal the plans of God, and possess all knowledge and have all faith I would be nothing! I could fill stadiums, get on Oprah with that kind of stuff but God says, without love it is all meaningless.
  3. Vs 3: If I gave all I had to the poor that would be noble. And if I sacrificed my body that would be news worthy but it would all be meaningless/without gain if I live without loving/Agape.
  4. Paul is saying you can do all of these great things but without love it is all meaningless. I.e. It is like water poured out on sand.
- E. This new Love is what Jesus brought to us! God's nature in us. It is both revelation of who He is and of the life that is pour out into our hearts.
1. Love is patient and kind. Phileo may suffer but it will grow bitter in the process.
  2. Agape is not jealous, boastful proud or rude. Phileo has always puffed itself up because it is centered around self.
  3. Agape does not behave rudely but phileo will always air its grievances.
  4. Agape does not seek it own but Phileo does from start to finish.
  5. Etc etc.
  6. God is agape! That is why it can never do the counter action of itself.

### Conclusion:

- Abide in love: This is a call to continually live in it and stay focused on gaining insight into its various expressions. This is the main exhortation in the Bible. It includes studying it, praying over it and sharing it—going deep in it and to be students of how God feels about His people. *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”* (Jn. 15:9)
- Our primary life goal is to be focused on receiving and expressing God's love. We are to make this the primary preoccupation of our life before, during, and after revival. We do not need to wait for a special seasons of revival to deeply engage in this reality.