TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#881 Mansion Over the Hilltop
#458 Give Me the Bible

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#350 When My Love to Christ Grows Weak
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#615 He Keeps Me Singing
Sermon: "Jumping for Joy"
Acts 3:1-26

Almost Persuaded
#452 Standing on the Promises

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Tonight is our 2nd Sunday Evening Service Project

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

February 13, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

What is Love?

Notwithstanding the fact that this article's title will get a certain early 90s dance song stuck in the heads of some readers, the question is an important one. Tomorrow, we celebrate Valentine's Day, which—rightly or wrongly—is associated with love. And we all know that love is of paramount importance in Scripture. *God is love* **(1 John 4:16).** We are commanded by Jesus to *love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* **(John 13:34-35)**

But what do we mean by "love"? We use that term a lot, but our usage of it is confusingly inconsistent. I love my wife. I love the University of Texas. I love winter. I love ice cream. Those are all true statements. Yet they don't quite mean the same thing in every case. We use this one word "love" as a catch all for many different feelings. We love ideas and beauty, we love countries and hometowns, we love our pets, we love colors and flavors, songs, poems and books. Since we use the same word to express all those different emotions, we depend a lot upon the people who hear us to put our words through the filter of understanding and arrive at the correct conclusion.

When I say, "I love my wife," I trust you to take those words and reach the conclusion that "He loves his wife the way that a man ought to love his wife." When I tell you that I love ice cream, I trust you to understand I am not weird, and therefore I don't love a food in the same way that I love my wife. I trust you to put those words through the filter and reach the conclusion that I love ice cream in the way a man ought to love a food.

So what is love, really? Much of our confusion is because of the limitations of our language. We all know the NT was originally written in Greek. Many of you have also heard of the 3 different Greek words that are most often translated into the one English word, "love": *eros, phileo, agape*. Each expresses different kinds of love. Yet we generally translate all 3 of them into one English word "love," because we don't have any other single words to better render them. Let's consider those 3 words to help us better understand how we can cultivate love.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Lydia Leal, Joe Leal's niece, is on a ventilator and in a coma. She is on a waiting list for Methodist Hospital.

Don & Debbie Lynn have covid.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Caitlin Smith, Ka'Leisha Jones, Oscar Cantu, Gary Nielsen, Virginia Cole

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

New Movers Program

We are starting a new movers program. We will have a list of people that have moved into the area. If you are interested in helping with this, see Bryant Perkins.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister, meeting Monday, Feb. 14th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a mid week evening meal on Wednesday, Feb. 16th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Feb. 17th at 8:00 a.m.

We have a blood drive scheduled for Monday, Feb. 28th from 4-8 pm. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Thank You

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for supporting us during this time of Oscar's illness and then the loss of our son Gerald.. We appreciate all your kind words, thoughts and prayers.
Oscar and Barbara Cantu and family

Response

Please add Tabatha Anthony to your directory. She was baptized last Sunday morning.
Her address is: 26380 Hwy 146 N., Cleveland, TX 77327; phone 479-857-3733, taantho@outlook.com

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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1. Eros - While this word is not actually used in the NT, it's meaning is referred to repeatedly throughout Scripture. This is physical attraction, sexual love. That subject causes some to shift uncomfortably in church; that's partly because we have not always given Biblical definitions to Biblical things. *Eros* is a gift from God to be enjoyed within the confines of a one man/one woman marriage. But within those parameters, God has given it as something good.

Nevertheless, *eros* has its weaknesses. By nature, it is dependent upon emotions and feelings; it is trying to satisfy its own desires. In its intention, it is a blessing from God. But if it stands by itself, all of its imperfections come to the surface.

2. Phileo - This means "brotherliness," "companionship," and "friendship." In classical Greek, a *philos* was a friend or loved one. That is the usual use of the word in the NT, of a close personal relationship, whether that is friendship or "boy meets girl." This, too, is a beautiful gift from God; it is spoken highly of in the NT. But it can also fade away. It exists as long as there is smooth sailing. But that is not the depth of love that is needed either in marriage or to sufficiently characterize Christian love.

3. Agape – This is the word that is used in both of the text quoted above. *Agape* was seldom used in classical Greek; early Christians took it and poured the content into it. This is the love that God discloses as his nature, the love that we are to reflect to each other. It is different from the other two in that it is totally unselfish: it puts the needs of the object of love first.

That is precisely what God did. When he looked at humanity, he did not consider his own comfort. He willingly sacrificed himself and came to earth and lived with us. It is the kind of love that reaches down, picks up clay and anoints blind eyes, causing them to see. It is the kind of love that stands beside the grave of a loved one and weeps with mourners. It is the kind of love that blesses children. It is the kind of love that does not regard itself, but unselfishly goes to the cross and sheds its blood, giving its life.

If Jesus had loved us with *eros* or with *phileo*, he would have packed his bags the first time He was rejected. He would have never persevered and gone to the cross. But because it was *agape*—because he was more concerned about the object of love, about us, than he was about himself—he endured.

So when we see *God is agape*, it means that God doesn't love us with merely a surface-level love; he loves us with an utterly sacrificial love. He gives himself completely to express it. And he calls us to do the same. Do you love him that same way in response, keeping his commandments, even if it means denying ourselves? Do we love others that way, self-sacrificially, reflecting the love he demonstrates toward us?

May God help us all to *agape* one another.

Bryant Perkins