

Love

- As the Gentiles entered the church, they were confronted with a word they did not know and had never used.
- The Jews had heard of it as it was in their Septuagint translation, but even they had to learn its “*new*” meaning.
- *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35*

- In the word *agapan* the Greek finds nothing of the power or magic of *eran* and little of the warmth of *philein*.
- Its etymology is uncertain, and its meaning weak and variable.
- The meaning of *agapan* is ... imprecise, and ... still tentative, ... hardly ever emerges as a subject of radical deliberation.
- It is indeed striking that the substantive *agape* is almost completely lacking in pre-biblical Greek. (Kittel, TDWNT:25)

agape - The New Word

- “*agapao* and *agape* present “the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to **express ideas previously unknown**, enquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the N.T... (Vine Vol 3 p 20-21)

Without *agape* = Nothing

- *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but **have not love**, I have become **sounding brass or a clanging cymbal**. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but **have not love**, **I am nothing**. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, **it profits me nothing**. 1Cor. 13:1-3*
- This new commandment was essential. If it was not the motivation and reason all was in vain.

A Full Biblical Definition

- *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor 13:4-8*
- Even today many of these things are not in our definition or understanding of love.
- How many times have we fallen short in our love for our wives, children, brethren?

The Greatest of These is Love

- The Holy Spirit introduced agape to the new converts.
- He spoke of it's power to make things profitable
- He defined it.
- Then He revealed that love is even greater than faith and hope.
- *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor 13:13*
- These new converts needed to learn the power, definition and importance of this new word.

Applications of the New Command

- *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. John 14:15-16*
- *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. " John 14:21*
- *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. John 15:9-10*

A Comparison

- *In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1Jn. 4:9-11*
- A love we need and seek
- A love we might find difficult to give

An Application of the New Command

- *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:1-4*

Exceeds Our Comprehension

- *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph 3:17-19*

Even with all these...

- *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*
- **Only with *agape* can we reach the bond of perfection**
- *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. Col 3:12-15*

The Comprehensive Power of Love

- *Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matt 22:35-40*

Even for Israel -- Limited

- *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment.*
- *39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matt 22:35-40*
- Yet both of these commands are relative and subjective as long as I think it is with “all” and “as myself” I can be satisfied.

The New Commandment: Objective

in proportion as



When our love...

- Does not suffer long is not kind;
- Envy parades itself,
- is puffed up; behaves rudely,
- seeks its own, is provoked,
- thinks evil; rejoices in iniquity,
- Does not bear or believe all things
- Does not hope or endure all things.
- We are not allowing *agape* to control and modify and make noble our initial *phileo*

agape – the only way to know God

- *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:8-11*