

AGAPE – The Love That God Defines

Introduction

- Love is a central theme in the Bible: God's love for humanity, Christ's love, and the love we should show toward God and each other.
- Without love, even good works are meaningless ("we are nothing").
- The sermon's focus: Love in its highest form—Agape.

Body

I. The Biblical Concept of Love Surpasses Ordinary Definitions

A. English vs. Greek Words for Love

1. English uses "love" broadly (for God, food, etc.).
2. Greek distinguishes types:
 - a. *Phileo*: affection for friends
 - b. *Eros*: sensual/physical love (not used in N.T.)
 - c. *Storge*: natural affection (e.g., parent for child)

B. Agape: The Highest Form of Love

1. Not just an emotion, but a choice of will to act in another's best interest—even for the undeserving and at personal cost.
2. Key characteristics:
 - a. Not simply an emotion
 - b. A choice of will
 - c. Active toward imperfect objects
 - d. Willing to sacrifice

C. Scriptural Examples

1. John 3:16 – God's sacrificial love for the world
2. Galatians 2:20 – Christ's love for Paul, despite his past
3. 1 Peter 1:22 – Command to love one another fervently

II. Developing and Maintaining Agape Love

A. Education

1. Learning what the Bible teaches about Agape
2. Responsibility to study, reflect, and apply scripture

B. Determination

1. Must choose and commit to practice Agape
2. "Whosoever will"—it's a choice

C. Imitation

1. Following God's example (e.g., loving enemies as God does)
2. Jesus as the model for Agape

III. The Practical Value of Agape in Three Key Relationships

A. Love for the Lost

1. Evangelism motivated by love for God and the lost
2. Seeking the best interests of others, even if undeserving (What they need most)

B. Love for Brethren

1. Love within the Christian community is essential
2. Without love for brethren, one cannot truly love or know God

C. Love for Family

1. Agape in marriage: no problem is unsolvable if both practice this love
2. Agape in family: no problem is unsolvable if all practice this love
3. Love can restore, rebuild, and bring joy

Conclusion

- True love for God is shown by keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3).

- God invites all to embrace this way of life through Christ.