

THE LOVE OF GOD

“And now these three remain; faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” —1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

Over the centuries, Valentine’s Day has emerged from legends of martyrdom and folklore with its roots going back as far as 496 A.D. It is, of course, a day when couples celebrate their love. To love and be loved is a wonderful thing, but the greatest love there is comes from our Heavenly Father.

John 3:16, Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” And He also said, “Greater love has no one than this: that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). In the Greek translation of the Bible, the word ‘agape’ speaks of the highest form of love there is; one that is freely given and does not depend on being reciprocated. This is God’s love for all humanity, and is supremely expressed in the sacrifice of His Son for our transgressions, even while we were still dead in our sin.

Love is absolutely fundamental to the working of God; so much so, that anything done without love negates the purpose and validity of it. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor, and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.” Then he says

in Chapter 14:1, “Follow the way of love...” Effective Christian ministry depends on it.

The ultimate expression of love is godliness, and that is because God is love. To know God is to love Him, and we need to know Him, not in propositional statements, not as a tidy set of doctrines, not as a First Cause, but as the lover of our souls, and the one whose love is so real we will never need to ask, “Where is God?” By His Spirit, He makes His home in our hearts, and we discover a truly benevolent Master whose great desire is to see us risen to His glory, inheriting His very own goodness. Jesus loves everyone, and His love is the fruit of the Spirit, which He is intent on producing in us. It is what changes us and flows through us to touch and transform the lives of others. And through His love, we come to know what life on earth is all about.

PRAYER: Precious Lord, thank you for loving me and making your home in my heart. I pray for many opportunities to pass on to others the love You have so graciously shown me.

TO REFLECT UPON: How is the love of God expressed most in my relationship with others?