

January 21, 2023
Day 6

Hello everyone. I trust that Holy Spirit is drawing you closer as you spend time with him during this fast. Today we will take a look at the virtue love, specifically phileo and agape love. Peter wrote to us in 2 Peter 1: 3-10 that because his divine power has been given to us, we can live a Godly life. It's not always easy to live the life that God would have us to or love as we should but we also have his empowering grace that enables us to add to our faith the virtues mentioned in these verses, including to love as Christ loves us.

A few years ago while I was pastoring we had Mike Love the Director for the YC Alberta conferences come for a pre YC rally. After the rally Mike went around the church meeting the youth that attended. He met a couple of girls whose names were Faith and Hope. He grabbed his phone to have a picture taken with the two girls. He made a big deal about this picture to those around him and proceeded to say, "You know you can't have Faith and Hope without Love!"

In 2 Peter 1 we are instructed to add to our faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness and brotherly affection with love. Love is not an impulse from feelings or just extended to those who we have an affinity with.

This love is to be shared with all mankind as though they were family.

Agape love is used in the New Testament to describe the Father's love toward his Son, the human race, and to those who believe in his Son. This love is poured out on us and in turn we can love others as God loves us. It is this sacrificial love that Jesus had when he went to the cross.

So how do we live out the action and purpose of brotherly love and agape love? We find the answer in 2nd Peter 3:3 "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and goodness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness." It's the power of God displayed through us that gives us the strength and will to love as He has instructed. Galatians 5:16-25 gives us a glimpse of how Holy Spirit works through us by the fruit of the Spirit. The vices and sinful behaviour in verses 19-21 flow out of our own nature, but we have divine power to overcome that nature. We can measure the fruit of the Spirit by how much we have crucified the sinful nature of our flesh, with its passions and desires.

Without God's divine power working in us there isn't a chance that we can love as we should. 1Cor. 13:1 states this, "If I speak in the tongues of men and angels but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." This is useless noise and empty words. Is that how we want our world to view our Christian faith? We can make a huge difference in our home, our church, and our neighbourhood by allowing Holy Spirit to show us the areas of our life where his love is not fully working in our lives.

Each one of us must take an assessment of the love we have and share. It has been said "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Where on the scale of having Christ-like love are you this day? Are you near the top or half way? Maybe you are sitting in the bottom half and needing some encouragement and inspiration to make your way up the scale. One must recognize that we do not have to do this alone. 1John 4:16, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."

The evidence of God in us is love. It's his agape love, self-sacrificing love that has been given to us by Jesus' death and resurrection. And, because of this beautiful act of love, we now have God's kingdom, his divine power not just 'near' us as the Apostles had, but within us! Philippians 1:9 (AMP) "And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more (displaying itself in greater depth) in real knowledge and in practical insight,".

-Pastor Al