

February 24, 2019

The Greatest Gift is Love: He First Loved Us

From **1 Cor 13:1-13** we have learned; love is greater than faith, hope and is eternal, without love we are nothing, without love all that we do for Jesus amounts to nothing (no reward), the Fruit of the Spirit is love and parallels all of the attributes of love from **1 Cor 13:4-8**. The opposite of love is selfishness and walking in the flesh. **Agape love** is the greatest love and it is not based on a feeling, but on choice. It is unconditional love and always seeks the highest good for another no matter what they do. We can only walk in agape love through being in fellowship with Christ.

Rom 5:3-5 *And not only that, but we also **glory in tribulations**, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the **love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit** who was given to us.* God instituted relationships (especially marriage) **not** for our happiness, but for our holiness to **develop the character of Christ in us** through tribulation and perseverance. In tribulation the world will see the love, and glory of the Father through us as we lay our lives down for one another.

1 John 4:19 *We love Him because **He first loved us**.* God did not fear **rejection** or being hurt; He made the first move.

Rom 8:37-39 *Yet in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through **Him who loved us**. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to **separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**.* There is not any demon or any person or any circumstances (or behavior) that can separate us from God's love. God not only loves us, He dances over us and is crazy about us (**Isa 62:5**)! With God's love in us, nothing can stop us! **More than conquerors**; over powering, super victorious, great confidence. God's love empowers us.

Eph 2:4-6 *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of **His great love with which He loved us**, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**),*

Eph 5:1-2 *Therefore be **imitators of God** as dear children. 2 And **walk in love**, as **Christ also has loved us** and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

2 Thess 2:16-17 *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who **has loved us** and given us **everlasting consolation** and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

Philem 7 *For we have great joy and **consolation in your love**, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.* Consolation is not feeling sorry for someone, it is comforting them with encouragement and agape love.

Rev 1:5-6 *To **Him who loved us** and **washed us from our sins in His own blood**, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* Jesus died for us so He can make us kings and priests, be joint heirs with Him and sit on His throne!

John 3:16 *For **God so loved** the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

John 17:26 *And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the **love with which You loved Me** may be in them, and I in them."* This was the last prayer of Jesus before He was betrayed and taken prisoner. He is asking His Father God to love us as much as His Father God loved Him! Right after this Judas came with the troops, officers, and Pharisees to betray and arrest Jesus which led to His crucifixion. This is crazy love and Jesus is crazy about you!

1 John 4:9-10 *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.* We don't have to love God in order for Him to love us. But once we receive His love, we can't help but to love Him. ***Christians have one Kryptonite; unbelief. **Mk 9:24** *"...Lord I believe! Help my unbelief!"*

Father God, I believe, You love me, help my unbelief, now I receive, all of Your love, into my heart, changing my life, into the image of Christ, I love you Father, I give my heart to You, in Jesus name, Amen!