

The NORTHERN LIGHTS

Let Your Light Shine Before Men - Matthew 5:16

FIRST QUARTER 2019

LUKE TEN
TWENTY SEVEN

LOVE

YOUR GOD
YOUR NEIGHBOUR

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:
Sharing in Love

**20 QUESTIONS
WITH...**



Inside this issue: An indepth study on the concept of "LOVE"

■ MAGAZINE INFORMATION

The Northern Lights is the official publication of the Northern territory of The Church of God Jerusalem Acres headquartered in Cleveland, TN.

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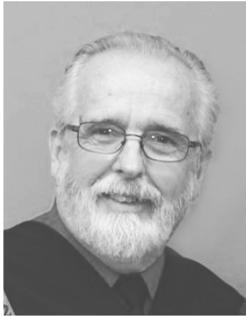
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LETTER FROM THE

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Welcome to our new “The Northern Lights” publication. I know that you will enjoy the interesting information that we have to offer. We have decided to feature some of our licensed ministers



from each congregation to help us all to get to know them better. We have a very diverse group of ministers in our territory with unique insights into the word of God and its callings. God is calling us all to a higher level of service and worship, he wants greater commitment from us all. We are striving to be the Bride of Christ and in saying that it means we must be more personally involved. Giving of our time and resources to further this life style and message. We are unique in this world and so in saying this let us not compromise our standards for the sake of fitting in. In so doing we are called and are leading others to a higher level of service. The articles which you are about to read will hopefully aid you in accomplishing this task. Enjoy these articles and let your pastor know how you liked them.

God bless you is my prayer!
Bishop H. David Lam

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By Minister Brenda Grey, Sidney

While He was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. Hear Him!” (Matthew 17:5) “Beloved Son”, “Well-Pleased”. And yet, God our Father delivered Him over to a crucifixion so brutal, we can’t even bear to think about it. All for us. For you and me. Consider a Creator Who is pure and perfect and Holy. Who loves us so much that He became one of us through the manifestation of His own Word, His Son Jesus. In order to give people, who are neither pure nor perfect, the opportunity to become one with Him.

It can be difficult to grasp the full meaning of God’s love. We study Scriptures and we can comprehend that love to a degree. But, in order to truly “get it”, we must live in it. We must push past the syrupy sweetness of storybook love and love in the midst of an ugly mess. Even in the midst of hate. “Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

(John 15:13) Jesus took His own statement to its most literal meaning. In our own lives it can also mean putting our own self “on hold” for the good of someone else. Delaying or even denying, perhaps permanently, our own ambitions. For example, spending what might be the strongest and most productive years of our own lives to care for someone in at could be the latter or most fragile years of their own life.

We’ve all heard the old saying “Love is blind”. I disagree. Infatuation is blind. Love sees it all and chooses to love anyway. We know the world loves us while we are sinning. God loves us while we are sinning, too. The difference is, God loves us too much to just leave us there. He offers us the better way. In some ways, our love for people grows stronger as we witness the various trials and hardships they go through. Whether it’s a fairly minor mess or a major atrocity, whether self-inflicted or a full-scale attack by the enemy. Our spirit rises up within us and immediately wants to help, to heal, or to rescue.

Love seeks what is best for others, prefers others above itself. How many times have our own hearts felt broken when we heard of a disaster and knew we were not in a position to help?

The grief we feel when a loved one is taken from us is eased somewhat by our knowing that if they died in faith in Christ, they will also be resurrected to eternity with Him. Knowing that if we also remain faithful to the Lord, we will be reunited with them in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Love has different functions, different facets, different depths. Human love seeks the unity of the hearts of people to one another. But the highest form of love seeks the unity of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. And this is the love for which our heavenly Father sent Jesus to us. This is the love for which Jesus suffered and died that we might attain. "That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they all may be one in US, that the world may know that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one as We are one." (John 17:21-22).

Jesus told us that in the last days "the love of many would grow cold." (Matthew 24:12). Sadly, we are already seeing that prophecy being fulfilled in our world. Selfishness, greed, hatred, and fear are fueling much of the violence we see in our world today. Love provides for someone who is not thankful; love will help someone who has no way of paying it back; love prays for someone who has never said a kind word to it. If we can look squarely into the face of someone who hates us "just because",

someone who wants to harm us or worse; and choose not to return hate for hate, but to decide to love instead, then we are making the same decision as did Steven, Paul, and of course, Jesus. Is that degree of love easy? Certainly not. But we know that if Jesus expects us to be able to do it, then we can. "With God all things are possible." Our love seeks fellowship with other people, however, it is not limited to whether or not they love us in return. Rather, it is based on our being so filled on the inside with the love of Christ that it can't help but spill over wherever we go.

Knowing the promises that you and I have been given in Christ, then our desire to see people fully immersed in God's love should BURN HOT within us. The desire that Jesus had for us to all be one in Himself and our Father should be the reason we get up in the morning. It should be the reason we keep going even when it seems like no one is listening. When it seems like we are getting nowhere. Because maybe just one person will be touched by the love of Christ. That one person is worth it all. Someone who has never believed in God probably won't be moved just because we read a list of Scriptures to them, at least not at first. But if we can sincerely love them, right where they are, the way Jesus loved us when He found us, then perhaps that love will be able to spark a fire on the inside of them to know Him for themselves.

Many people are so filled with the guilt and shame of their past that it is impossible for them to even comprehend that anyone

BUT IF WE CAN SINCERELY LOVE THEM, RIGHT WHERE THEY ARE, THE WAY JESUS LOVED US WHEN HE FOUND US, THEN PERHAPS THAT LOVE WILL BE ABLE TO SPARK A FIRE ON THE INSIDE OF THEM TO KNOW HIM FOR THEMSELVES.

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Love

ALWAYS 
wins

By Minister Craig Woodward, New Florence

1 Corinthians 13:13 tells us that the greatest virtue is love. “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” As believers in the word of God, we need to understand why love is so powerful. No matter what situation we may be struggling through love will always win. The Bible explains what makes love so powerful.

Love knows no boundaries. Your love for someone will reach them no matter how close or far away they are. This truth was stated in 1 Corinthians 13:7-8. Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen. It is difficult for the human mind to understand that love can't be stopped by distance. Jesus proved the power of love when He died on the cross. Jesus died so that all souls could be saved. 2 Corinthians 5:15: “And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” This is confirmed in Psalms 36:5: “Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. True love, like Jesus showed, will never end.” Jeremiah 31:3: “The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love.”

The Holy Scripture tells the story of the Centurion and his servant. Luke 7:1-10: “When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered

Capernaum. There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” So, Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.” The love that the Centurion had for his servant was so strong that Jesus didn't even have to see the servant or touch him. Love healed him from a distance. Love eliminates anything negative. Love has the ability to remove anything that separates us from God. We can read in the Bible that love conquers fear. 1 John 4:18: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear. Love will also stop hate.” Matthew 5:44: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray

for those who persecute you. Love is able to cover sins." 1 Peter 4:8 "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Proverbs 10:12 supports this scripture. "Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs". The story of Jesus's crucifixion demonstrated the amazing power of love. The Lord was humiliated and beaten. The same people that he loved called for him to be crucified. Even after everything that he went through Jesus Christ still showed unwavering love and asked his heavenly father to forgive those that hurt him. Luke 23:34: "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." We are called to imitate our savior and live like Jesus did, therefore we must forgive everyone who harmed us. When we are able to forgive those who trespass against us we show them love. Love always triumphs over negativity.

Love opens communication. Romans 12:10 states "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." We can also find the importance of love and communication in Hebrews 10:24: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. The way that we speak to one another must be with love." Ephesians 4:15 "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."

We can rest assured that God is love (1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love) and love always wins. Acts 5:39 "But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God". Always remember that no matter what happens love always wins!

LOVE WILL ALWAYS WIN BY TRAVIS GREENE

I see so much pain
From the choices that we have made
So much we would change
Can't help but wonder if its too late
There's a truth that just might save us

Love is a language, stronger than hate
Love is forgiveness, it doesn't run away
Love needs no weapon
It is its own defense
In the end
Love will always win, yeah, yeah yeah yeah

I see so much war
Do we know what we are fighting for?
And it tore us apart, yeah
But the battle's within our hearts
There's a truth that just might save us

Love is a language, stronger than hate
Love is forgiveness, it doesn't run away
Love needs no weapon
It is its own defense
In the end
Love will always win, yeah
It always win, yeah

And if tongues of angels, with that love
We got nothing, oh
And if faith move mountains, with that love
We got nothing, oh yeah yeah yeah

If tongues of angels, with that love
We got nothing, oh oh oh, yeah
And if faith move mountains, with that love
We got nothing, oh oh oh
Love is a language, stronger than hate
Love is forgiveness, it doesn't run away, no
Love needs no weapon
It is its own defense
In the end
Love will always win
Oh, in the end
Love will always win, ye
Love will always win, oh oh



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Sharing in Love

Matthew 28:19-20 says “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus ascended into heaven he left us with this commandment which is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. What a wonderful opportunity the Lord has given mankind He wants us, His believers, to share our faith with the world about him. How do we do that?

What I have learned it's the zeal that I have for the Lord is reserved from my relationship with Jesus. My Zeal is not to be shared with others. If I try to give someone else my zeal, it will drive them into the ground and I will find myself setting my own expectations upon them. We shouldn't do this. Sharing in love will build a zeal within the person that we are ministering to. This will also help drive them to want to share as well. The best way to share is found in Matthew 22:34-40. “But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked

By Deacon Mark Clark, Pastor of Sidney, Montana

him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

The first commandment isn't hard for most believers to love God. Some believers have trouble with this commandment because they are mad at God. I would like to turn our focus to the second commandment in verse 39 “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The first question we must ask ourselves is, “Do I love myself?” It is impossible for me to love other people unless I love myself. Did you know that we could learn the deep mysteries of God and never love ourselves?

This is where the secret of witnessing the love of Christ is found within our own testimonies. We cannot lead people in forgiveness of their sins while harboring unforgiveness within ourselves especially those that we see on a daily basis. Look at work or friends or family or even church

family. Our sin is a weight and it holds us down and it must be cut loose. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witness who by faith had testified of the truth of God's absolute faithfulness tripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us let us run with endurance and an active persistence the race that is set before us."

Jesus says it this way in Matthew 7:3-5, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take

the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." We can see in verse 5 that the secret of witnessing first time is to take care of my own trouble and my own issues, what's going on within me first, then I can see how the Lord has been so patient and loving with me and willing to forgive and then I can share and that aspect. This will build our testimonies in such a way that people will come to you and ask you how are you doing this or what are you doing where do you even go to church I want what you have people will be drawn to this hope that you live in this hope that's living within us is to be shared in its purest form not filtered through our expectations about others if there is any past issues in your life that hasn't been resolved. About forgiveness, go to your pastor and set of counseling time for yourself. Once we can truly love ourselves and forgive ourselves, sharing in love is all that we will do hurry though the words of life or in your mouth needing to be shared with a lost and dying world. God bless.

It doesn't matter how smooth
your words are or how angelic
you sound. If what you share
is not rooted in love...

IT'S JUST
NOISE.

(see 1 Cor. 13:1)



Loving ^{our} RELATIONSHIPS

By Minister Margie Funk, Pittsburgh-Monroeville

According to the dictionary, to love someone means: “to have a strong feeling of affection; a fond and tender attachment; the state of feeling kindly towards others and to delight in.”

According to I Corinthians 13, the word loves means: to be patient, kind, do not envy, does not boast, is not proud, is not self-seeking, . . . always protects, always hopes, . . . and it does not fail!

Jesus tells us to love one another as He has loved us. So just how did He love us?

Philippians 2:5-8 tells us: “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing, a servant, even to death.”

Sometimes, as humans, our love is very conditional. It is based on whether or not ‘you do what I think you should do’. We want to treat others like they are our servants, but we don’t want to be one! We need to ask ourselves if our love is ever used for our own advantage. We live in a world today where everyone is out to get what they can for themselves. They say, “if I love you

enough, I can get what I want out of you”. That is not the true love of Christ, it’s ‘fake love’, and if we are not careful, the enemy can work that into our actions, almost without us even noticing it.

One definition of relationship is, “... mutually connected or interested...” In other words, it is where two (or more) people are working together for the same purpose; with a shared connection with each other. Where they are united and have the same goals in mind. The “goals” that Jesus gave us, to “go ye into all the world”, to “love one another as I have loved you”, and to “prepare the way of the Lord”. There has to be a relationship in order to work together, just as there has to be a relationship to love one another.

Our relationships with each other must be built on the unselfish mindset of Christ Jesus, or we cannot love like He loved. Love is the foundation of any relationship – without love, our relationships will dissolve – much like couples that want to just live together to see ‘if it will work’ – and it doesn’t, because their relationship was not built on the firm foundation of love. The Bible speaks about us being one body, a family; we are

brothers and sisters in Him. If we are part of His body, we will love like Him. He does not base His love for us on what we do, or what we say, or our sin, or our self-righteousness. If we are members of one body, we will love each other as we do our own body. So how is it that we can say we don't love this one or that one? What are we basing our love on? His love is unconditional, and by His grace (only by His grace), we must have that same unconditional love for each other.

I'm sure we've all experienced a time in our lives when the outpouring of love on us was a special blessing – I mean over and above what we receive from each other on a daily basis. Face it – we are humans, and we all get busy and sometimes don't take the time to do or say what we could to support each other. I believe I, and my family, experienced some of that Godly love a few years ago when I had a fatal heart attack.

I was not expected to live through the night, and yet here I am almost 6 years later! Praise God for His loving kindness that brought us all through that horrible experience. But also, I want to say Praise God for His family – they were there to help my husband and kids get through a nightmare that popped up out of nowhere! I was fine that morning, (well, I guess not as fine as I thought I was!) and dead in the Cath lab that evening! They were there throughout the next many weeks helping with things like food, monetary

gifts and spiritual strengthening and oh, how they prayed. Only God knows how many people lifted me up in prayer! Truly the number stretched throughout the United States and even into Africa! The church was there to help Kenny and stand by him, no matter which way the circumstances were to go. There was an unseen hand of mercy and grace that brought strength and support. All brought about by love.

So next time you tell someone you love them, but really don't even "like" them, think about the relationship you have with that person – and if it needs repair, than ask God to help you do whatever needs to be done to truly show your love to them. He has put within us a gift that no one else can give – the gift of love. And the Lord wants us to enjoy that same love with one another that we enjoy with Him.

LOVE IS Patient  and kind,
NOT jealous, boastful, proud, rude, self-seeking, irritable, or resentful.
LOVE ^{does} _{not} delight in evil **BUT**
rejoices with Truth. **Love** *always*
protects, **ALWAYS TRUSTS*** *always hopes,*
ALWAYS perseveres. **Love NEVER fails.** 1COR 13:4-8

LUKE TEN TWENTY SEVEN



What is love? It is an age-old question with varying answers. If you take the time and ask people what their definition of love is, you'll get a variety of differing opinions. Love is a hard thing to quantify and define because it is a wide-ranging emotion that has been used as a motivating factor in war, peace, conquest, acts of sacrifice and more. Love is a word that describes more than one real emotion, and there are many facets of love.

Merriam-Webster defines love in many ways. Love is both a noun and a verb. It describes a thing and describes an action. Love as a noun is defined as a strong affection for another. This affection can be based on several factors. One is kinship or personal ties, another is sexual desire, another can be admiration, benevolence, or common interests. Love can also be described as an object of attachment, devotion, or admiration. There is unselfish and benevolent love such as a concern for the good of others. As you can see just as a noun, there are many ways to describe love. As a verb, can be defined as to hold dear or to cherish, to feel devotion, to actively desire or take pleasure in – with an example being that one loved to play an instrument. So, what is love?

The bible has a lot to say about love and devotion. It speaks about a love that one should have to wards both God and their brother. Love is so important that it has

its own chapter in the bible – 1 Corinthians 13. This chapter describes and defines what love is. Love here is something to aspire to. When you talk about differing types of love, which we'll get to here in a min, verses 4 & 5 talk about what love is. Love is patient. Are we patient with each other? Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. Do these describe things that we are with each other? It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. Did you keep this in mind when the driver of that car cut you off this morning? It keeps no record of wrongs. So, what is love? Verse 13 says, "and now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."

So how important is love? Can someone live without love? They can but what kind of life can that be? A human without love is not a human being at all. To live without love is to merely exist. We would be like a robot, emotionless. To be truly alive, to feel, to live – someone must have some sort of love in their life. This world needs love. We have to give love, share love, receive love. Love can heal a broken heart. It can bring sources of positive energy to a discouraged soul. It can connect us and keep us together regardless of distance. It acts as a bridge between people. It can trump sadness, pain, anger, envy, revenge, and suffering. It conquers all. It heals wounds. 1 Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, love

LOVE YOUR GOD LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR

By Minister Theresa McGinity, Greensburg

each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins.” Is there anything else that has covered a multitude of sins? Jesus, the embodiment of God’s Word...so if Jesus is God’s Word, and Jesus covered a multitude of sins, doesn’t it stand to reason that Jesus is Love? And God’s Word is love? And if Jesus is love, and God’s Word is love, how important is love? I’d say pretty important. John 15:12 states, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” That’s pretty powerful. 1 John 4:16 further says, “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in loves, lives in God, and God in them.” Love is a powerful, good spirited emotion that God embodies. Jesus died for me. Say it. Jesus died for me. What greater example of love than the selfless love Jesus had for us?

We’ve all been blinded by the blanket of emotions that comes from falling in love. While we only have one word for it, the ancient Greeks in their pursuit of wisdom and self-understanding, found eight different varieties of love that we all experience at some point. But within those eight, you really can combine them into five basic types of love. When we understand the different types of love, we can become conscious of how deep our connection is with ourselves and others in our lives.

The first type of love is “Eros” or physical love. Eros represents the idea of passion and desire. This kind of love can be

dangerous because it is accompanied usually by a loss of control through the primal impulse to procreate. It is a passionate and intense form of love that is purely physical in nature. It is a primal and powerful fire that burns out quickly. It needs its flame to be fanned through one of the deeper forms of love because it centers on the selfish aspects of love, infatuation, and desire. It can also describe the aspect of being “In love” with someone. The ancient Greeks separated another aspect out of this called “Ludus” or playful love. It is the feeling we have when we go through the early stages of falling in love with someone. Think back to when you first started dating, the love you felt for your significant other was different than what you feel for them now. Unfortunately, this type of love is often lost in long-term relationships. But this type of love is one of the secrets to keeping the childlike innocence of love alive, interesting and exciting.

The second type of love is known as “Philia” or affectionate love. It is also known as friendship and is without physical attraction. It is a type of love that is felt among friends, sometimes blossoming out of shared experiences. It often involves the feeling of loyalty among friends, camaraderie among teammates, and a sense of sacrifice for another. Our species does not need friendship in order to reproduce, but to the classical and medieval worlds it is a higher level love because it is freely chosen. The

Greeks separated this type into another as well called "Pragma" or enduring love. This is a love that has aged, matured, and developed over time. It transcends the physical, the mental, and balances both. You can find this type in married couples and friendships that have endured for decades. Unfortunately, especially nowadays, this type of love is hard to find. The world is spending so much time in trying to find love (often in all the wrong places) rather than trying to maintain it. Unlike other types of love, this type results from efforts on BOTH sides. It is the love that has come from those who've learned to make compromises, have demonstrated patience, and tolerance to make the relationship work.

The third type of love is "Storge" or familiar love. This type of love is very similar to philia because it is also love without physical attraction, but it is more to do with kinship and family than just friends. It's a natural form of affection that flows between parents and children and vice versa. It can even be found among childhood friends that is later shared as adults. It's a powerful form of love and sometimes can be an obstacle in our spiritual lives because sometimes our love for our family can conflict with our walk with God because if our family doesn't align with or support our spiritual journey it can put us at odds with each other.

The fourth type is known as "Mania" or obsessive love. This is a dangerous type of love. It can lead someone into a type of madness or obsessiveness. To those who experience mania, love itself is a means of rescuing themselves; a reinforcement of their

own value as the sufferer of poor self-esteem. This person wants to love and be loved to find a sense of self-value. Because of this, they can become possessive and jealous lovers, feeling as though they desperately "need" their partners. If the other partner fails to reciprocate with the same kind of mania love, many issues prevail. This is why mania can often lead to issues such as co-dependency. In addition, this obsessive type of love can be turned inward to be almost narcissistic in nature. Deep down, all narcissists are insecure and have low self-esteem.

The final type is the type I want to focus a little on. It's known as "Agape" or self-less love. It is the highest and most radical type of love according to the Greeks is agape, or selfless unconditional love. This type of love is not the sentimental outpouring that often passes as love in our society. It has nothing to do with the condition based type of love that our sex obsessed culture tries to pass as love. Agape is what some call spiritual love. It is an often an

unconditional love, bigger than ourselves, a boundless compassion, an infinite empathy. It is the purest form of love that is free from desires and expectations and loves regardless of the flaws and shortcomings of others. Agape is the love that is felt for that which we intuitively know as the divine truth: the love that accepts, forgives and believes for our greater good. This is the love of God for man, and of man for God. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world." He loved us unconditionally. Key word here. "That He gave His one and only son that

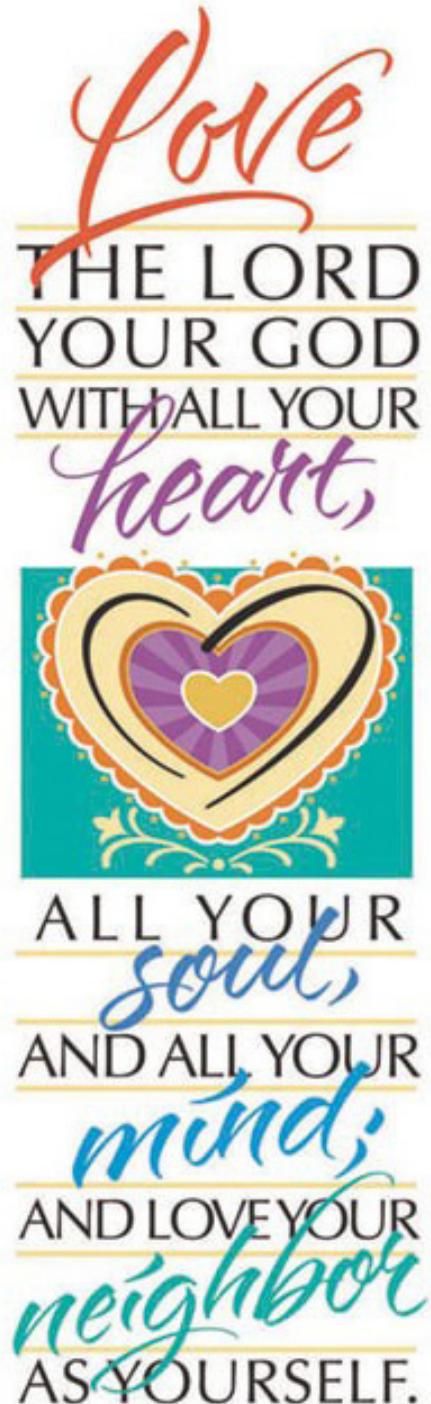
**AGAPE IS WHAT SOME
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whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” What greater love is there?

Matthew 5:43-48 says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” This is a hard scripture for most to swallow. Love our enemies? This kind of love is a love we have a hard time dealing with. How can we love someone who hates us, treats us poorly? Look at how Jesus still loved those who were persecuting him. He could have said to God, “Forgive those...except the ones persecuting me.” But he didn’t. He chose to die...for ALL. Even those who reject him. Can we say the same about how we are with others? Do we love those who reject us? Do we really?

God doesn’t need anything in this world. He has everything he could ever want. The only thing he truly wants is your love. The love of his people. But in today’s society, love has been so distorted that people don’t know what love really is. They don’t know God. So how can we turn that around?

Luke 10:27 states, “Love the Lord your god with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.” Wow. God wants ALL our love. “and Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love your neighbor as ourselves. Interesting. How do we do that? Do you remember how you came to know



God? What helped you understand that He is what you needed? Someone told you what God did for them, right? Do you know that we all have written a gospel? It's true. Think about it. What's a gospel but a testimony of good news? Don't we all have a testimony of what God's done for us? God wants us to share that with others. He doesn't want us to beat them over the head with a bunch of scriptures that...mean nothing to them. He wants us to show them love. God will do the rest. When we try to tell someone how wrong their life is, we're trying to BE God. How about showing them love and telling them how good God is and let GOD do the work in showing them how their life is not up to his standards. Here's an example. Think about your favorite sandwich. It all starts with the bread, right? What kind of bread do you choose? Most people go with a plain white bread. To be satisfied how much bread do we need? Lots of it. Why? Because it's artificial, fake, and guess what, unfulfilling. But if you get two pieces of real, home made bread to make your sandwich, those two pieces will fill you up and sustain you for hours, maybe a whole day depending. Jesus is like the real bread. The majority of churches out there have watered down Jesus to be more like that artificial bread. People can't be satisfied by the \$1 bread you find in Walmart. You eat half the loaf and then your belly hurts because even though it tastes so sweet going down you ate too much and instead of being satisfied you over indulged. Now, I don't mean when we over indulge in Jesus that we will have a tummy ache. I mean when we fill ourselves with everything else, it doesn't satisfy, only hurts. When

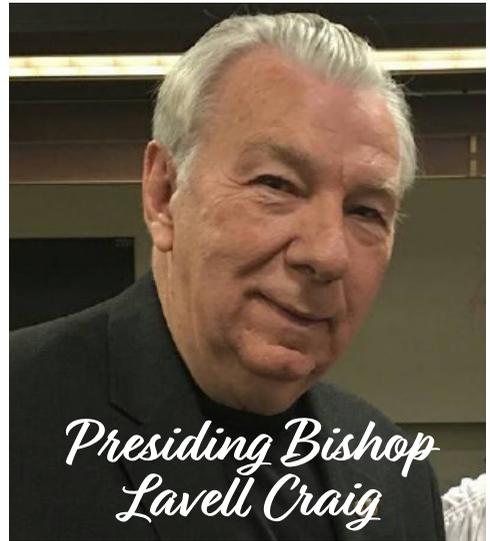
**JESUS IS THE
BREAD OF LIFE,
SATISFACTION
GUARANTEED.**

we fill ourselves with the nutritious bread that is Jesus, it's all we need. Jesus is the bread of life, satisfaction guaranteed. People today look for churches online or just want to come in for a sample of the sandwich. They should want to come in and get the whole sandwich. How are they going to know how good that sandwich is unless we share it with others right? People can't see because their eyes are closed and they're stumbling around in the dark. We need to show others that the lights are on. The lights are shining so bright, but yet they can't open their eyes to see that. We have to love others so that they feel safe opening their eyes to the light. And what is the light? Jesus. One thing we have to remember is church is a HOSPITAL. It's for the broken and the sick. It's not a social club. Too often people think they can't come to church because of how they are or that we're too good for them because they don't dress right, act right, or don't have it all together. Guess what? I don't have it all together, far from it. If people don't come because of any of these reasons, guess what? We're the ones who've messed up. GOD cleans them up, not us. And you know what? He's continuing to do it with us too because we're not perfect. Part of sharing with others is letting them know that we're not perfect either. God doesn't want to use the perfect people, he uses the broken, the messed up. Look at every example in the bible. They were all messed up people too. But no matter what, Love compels us to leave our comfort zones. But love should NEVER compromise our morals or standards. Show others how God is love, but never compromise your standards to do so.

20

QUESTIONS

with



*Presiding Bishop
Lavell Craig*

- 1. What drew you to The Church of God?**
God and my brothers.
- 2. When did you first go into ministry?**
1972
- 3. What would best describe your perfect day?**
Preaching & leading someone to the Lord.
- 4. What is your favorite meal?**
Beans, potatoes and cornbread
- 5. What was your first job?**
Chicken plant.
- 6. What is your favorite song?**
The Old Rugged Cross
- 7. What is your favorite scripture?**
Psalm 127:1
- 8. What is your favorite thing about serving God?**
Peace and happiness
- 9. If Jesus was sitting beside you and you could ask him any question to answer, what would it be?**
When are you coming back?
- 10. Would you rather go 15 hours of a train journey through a scenic route or a 1 hour plane journey?**
15 hour train ride
- 11. What is your favorite TV Show?**
Any cowboy movie
- 12. If you were to get an opportunity to live anywhere in the world, where would it be?**
In the land the Lord would have me be
- 13. What is the one thing you love most about your family?**
The unity of our family and serving the Lord together.
- 14. What movie had the greatest ending?**
Passion of Christ (Mel Gibson) movie
- 15. What is the one material thing in your life that you can't live without?**
My wife and church
- 16. When was the last time you laughed so hard your stomach hurt?**
Last week
- 17. Who is on the guest list for your ideal dinner party?**
My Wife
- 18. What are your pet peeves?**
Lack of dedication and commitment to the Kingdom of God.
- 19. If you could change the world with one action, what would it be?**
Inner healing prayer
- 20. What is one thing you would want people to remember you by?**
That I loved them all

God so loved the world



By Minister Shirley Flick, Clarion

“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.” (John 3:16) The blood of bulls and goats couldn’t take away our sins, so God chose His one and only Son to suffer and die for us. He took on all the sins of the world so we could be forgiven of our sins. Jesus overcame death hell and the grave and rose victorious. because of His willingness to do this we too can be victorious. Jesus loves us so much and wants us to follow in His footsteps so we can be with Him.

We need to PRAISE HIM FOR WHO HE IS! Praise Him all the time. God likes to be praised, Just as we like to be praised. It is a natural thing. “I am the Lord, and there is no other, apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me.” (Isaiah 45:5) “Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” (Psalm 22:3)

At one time Israel as a nation was God’s chosen people but now through the blood of Jesus we who have asked Jesus

into our heart and believe He is Lord, are now His kingdom.

In Psalms we are told many many times to Praise Him, He is worthy to be Praised!! “Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; is splendor is above the earth and the heavens.” (Psalm 148:13)

“The Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.” (Psalm 147:11) We need to THANK HIM FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR US!!

“A psalm of praise. Of David. I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The

Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.” (Psalm 145) THANK HIM, THANK HIM, THANK HIM!

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we

wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.” (Romans 8:18-23)

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is interceding for us.” (Romans 8:28-34)

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

There is nothing in this world that is worth losing out with Jesus. We in the U.S are so blessed and have no idea what it means to serve Jesus without being persecuted. Thank Him for our freedom and pray for those being persecuted in other countries. Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart and ALL your soul and ALL your mind. “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:11-14)

LOVE AGAPE LOVE *Style*

By Elder Kenny Butts, Assistant Pastor - Youngstown

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”(Matt. 22:37) Agape love is a love from Jesus and to Jesus. A love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstances. Love at all costs exists in our hearts because Jesus made the first step and offered this unconditional love relationship that we enjoy. This love exists between him and us because we have made a commitment to his love, a covenant if you will. Each of us is so special to him that we could get away with saying, “I am his favorite!” Jesus has so much room in his heart that mankind could never fill it up leaving no more room. Jesus has made room for all creation in his love. His deepest concern for his children is that they grow, mature and learn to love with his heart, a heart that opened to me a sinner and made changes in my life that will go on for ever and ever.

“Love your neighbor as you love yourself” (Matt. 22:39) Each of us was born

with a pure soul reaching out for love. As a newborn we responded to being held, hugged, kissed and cared for. Our parents began to mold us in the environment in which we got our start, growing and maturing. Every human is built to love and respond to love.

We have determined that loving God is a feat that is easy and within our ability. The trick seems to be transferring our love for God to people within our circle of life, the area of our daily activities. I don't have to elaborate that there are unlovely people that we are acquainted with and often encounter daily. How do I love people that I don't want to love, ever feel that way? Now is when Agape love kicks in or I will not love like Jesus does. The woman caught in adultery in John 8:3-11. The religious leader of the day brought her to Jesus using her as a reason to try to trap and accuse him. Seems as though they were looking for his agreement to the law that would allow them

to stone him. Jesus said, you who are without sin cast the first stone. I use this scripture text so often it seem like this is the only scriptures I know. The relevance here is what Jesus said to her at the end of this discourse, "go and leave your life of sin". In our desire to imitate Jesus we must always be ready to address sin with the agape style promoted by our God. No, we do not compromise with sin but we must in every circumstance love the soul that sins.

I am convinced the way I look at others should start with a love/respect for the others creation, an ear to listen and an eye to see the sin sickness in people lives. I have learned through my experiences that I have a mandate to promote mercy and grace. There are lifestyles in our world that are detestable without debate. Never-the-less I hope to live with agape love active 24/7 in my life. When we are in love with someone we tend to have a desire to please them and include them in our life endeavours. I want to sing with you "O How I Love Jesus" learn to put it into practice, put yesterday behind and be his light for the rest of my life. Love occurs 310 times in 280 verses in the Bible.

OH, HOW I LOVE JESUS

There is a name I love to hear
I love to sing its worth
It sounds like music in my ear
The sweetest name on earth

Oh, how I love Jesus
Oh, how I love Jesus
Oh, how I love Jesus

Because He first loved me
It tells me of a Savior's love
Who died and set me free
It tells me of His precious blood
The sinner's perfect plea

Oh, how I love Jesus
Oh, how I love Jesus
Oh, how I love Jesus

Because He first loved me
It tells of One whose loving heart
Can feel my deepest woe
Who in each sorrow bears a part
That none can bear below

Oh, how I love Jesus
Oh, how I love Jesus
Oh, how I love Jesus
Because He first loved me

CONTINUED FROM "UNITED IN LOVE" ON PAGE 5

could love them, much less God. Many of them come from abusive homes where their self-worth has been shattered. God's love can heal them. Sometimes it requires a very graphic explanation of what Christ went through in His physical body in order to offer them salvation before they can begin to understand that they are truly loved. The enemy tells them they are what they have done. God's love tells them who they are in Christ. "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:23.)

To help people understand that our Heavenly Father loves them as much as He loves Jesus is the whole point of our ministry. And to be able to take part in the fulfillment of this prophecy: And the Spirit and the Bride say "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17) "But the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11)

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

A black and white photograph of a hand gripping a piece of barbed wire. The hand is positioned in the center, with fingers wrapped around the wire. The wire extends horizontally across the frame, with several sharp points visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

By Elder Ralph Campbell IV, Greensburg

Love is a universal language spoken around the world. It doesn't matter where you are from, young or old, male or female, rich or poor, weak or strong, love can cross all bounds and translate to people whom may not even speak the same verbal language as you. You see, it may not take words at all to show love toward someone. It can speak in ways that are beyond comprehension. We as humans desire to be loved. Whether it's by our families, our friends, our coworkers or somebody else, we want someone to love us. This is something that is consistent with all people.

Since we all have a desire to be loved, showing love must then be easy for us right? If it were only that simple. It is easy for us to point out others people's unbecoming qualities and behaviors, but whether we want to admit it or not, we all have qualities and characteristics that aren't so great. Let's face it, people don't always love us the way our mother's think we should be loved. It is easy to show love toward people that love us, but what about the people who don't? Should we ignore people whom for some reason find us unlovable, or should we just pretend they don't exist and not give them the time of day? Human nature dictates that we do exactly that but that's not what God wants from us. He wants us to love those that may not talk very kindly of us, those that think they are better than us, those that mock us, those that make fun of us, and those that may even hate us. He wants us to show love

to those that don't love us. This is a tough thing for us to remember oftentimes because it goes against our human nature. Jesus himself gave us the prime example while hanging on the cross. He asked God to forgive those that put him there. Those that mocked him, beat him, tortured him, and ultimately killed him. He showed love and forgiveness to people that should by human nature been re-paid for their cruelty. But no, He showed us how to show unconditional love.

It is not always easy to show love for people who oppose us or mistreat us. The word of God tells us in Proverbs 25:21-22 that we should feed our enemy when he is hungry and give him water when he is thirsty and by doing this we will heap burning coals on his head. Upon reading this our minds may lead us to think, "Yeah-I'd like to heap burning coals on my enemy's head; give them what they deserve!" While that might be what our flesh wants to do, this isn't what God had in mind. There are some great men throughout the bible that showed love toward people that didn't deserve it. Take for example Joseph. He was sold into slavery by his own brothers, people that should have loved him. He ended spending a good deal of time in prison by being wrongfully accused by a morally unrestrained woman. Through all his hardships, God blessed Joseph and put him into a position of

power. Although prosperous, he had good reason for some ill feelings toward his brothers. But when Joseph was finally reunited with them again he threw his arms around them, kissed them, and wept over them (Genesis 45). He used his position that God put him in to bless his brothers and his family. Another great example is David. King Saul was set on killing David and chased him all through the desert trying to capture him. When given the opportunity, David spared Saul's life in the cave in the Desert of En Gedi, only cutting of the corner of his robe to show Saul he spared his life (I Samuel 24). When showed the piece of cloth, Saul felt guilty for trying to kill David but how quickly he forgot. He again started out to kill David in the Desert of Ziph, but David again spared his life as Saul laid sleeping before him. David took his spear and water jug to show Saul that he was at David's mercy yet again (I Samuel 26). He thought it wasn't right to harm God's anointed King. When Saul was confronted by David again, he saw the error of his ways and didn't try to harm David again. Then there is Moses. When Aaron and Miriam spoke out against Moses and God struck Miriam with leprosy, Moses forgave them and cried out to God to heal her (Numbers 12). The prophet Elisha gave us another powerful example. While at war with the Israelites, the King of Aram set traps for the Israelites but Elisha would warn the King of Israel of the traps (II Kings 6). The King of Aram was set on killing Elisha for thwarting his plans against the Israelites. The King of Aram sent an army after Elisha but God blinded the Arameans before they could capture him and Elisha then led them into Samaria before the Israelite army. The

Arameans were as good as dead before the Israelite army but did Elisha have them killed? No, Elisha said not to harm them. Instead he prepared a great feast with food and drink for them and sent them back to the King of Aram. From that time on, the people from Aram stopped raiding Israel's land. A fourth and final example was Stephen, one of the Seven. He did great wonders and miraculous signs among people and spread the gospel of Jesus but was persecuted by some men whom were jealous of Stephen's abilities through the Spirit (Acts 6). After being wrongfully accused of blasphemy against God and Moses he was stoned by an angry mob. While being stoned, Stephen said "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:60). Talk about showing love to some people that didn't deserve it.

These 5 men have given us great examples of how to show forgiveness, mercy, and love to people that didn't deserve it. You see, by showing love instead of repaying evil with evil, their lives have been a testimony through time to generations after them. The coals heaped on their enemies' heads were coals of conviction and remorse. The love shown by these men penetrated the evilness of the heart and made a difference. We all at one time in our lives have done things that made us unlovable but regardless of our sins, we have been forgiven through Jesus. We have never done anything to be deserving of the Jesus' love, but we received it anyway. How great a love that was! He wants us to in turn show that love to others just as real and unconditional it was shown to us. This isn't always easy and will go against everything in our flesh to do it, but if we truly desire to be like Him, we have to love like Him, enemies included!

**Love your enemies
and you won't have any**

FRUIT *Of the* SPIRIT

LOVE

JOY • PEACE

patience

KINDNESS

GOODNESS

FAITHFULNESS

GENTLENESS

self control



GALATIANS 5:22-23