

## I. DEFINING THE LOVE OF JESUS

***“Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:33-35***

A. “[T]he command of love, which as such is of course found in non-christian religions, only receives its specifically Christian significance and its deeper meaning by its anchorage in that history of revelation and redemption.” (Christ and Time; Oscar Cullman Pg. 27)

1. STRONGS: 25. ἀγαπάω (agapaō) – properly, to *prefer*, to *love*; for the believer, *preferring to “live through Christ”* (1 Jn 4:9,10), i.e. embracing God's will (choosing His choices) and obeying them through His power. [25](#) (agapāō) preeminently refers to what *God prefers* as He “is love” (1 Jn 4:8,16). [See 26](#) (agapē).

With the believer, [25](#) /agapāō (“to love”) means actively doing what the Lord prefers, with Him (by His power and direction). True [25](#) /agapāō (“loving”) is always *defined by God* – a “discriminating affection which involves *choice and selection*” (WS, 477). 1 Jn 4:8,16,17 for example convey how loving (“preferring,” [25](#) /agapāō) is Christ *living His life through the believer*.

- a) Actively doing what the Lord prefers. Love is always defined by God as an *action*, whereas man usually describes love as a feeling or idea. This promotes discontinuity with the Biblical definition of love.
  - b) Agapao is also the love we are commanded to have for our brother. It is the action we are to exemplify in our lives towards others. Its distinct Christian definition, is found in its specific and unique usage by Jesus, John, and Paul when talking about the Cross, and laying ones life down to death. It is this love that the *world* is supposed to be able to define *Christians* with.
2. The usage of love today, and its disproportionate use in regards to the way we *feel* about God, placates its original meaning. It takes away the TEETH of what love is, and makes it a 90 yr old man with dentures. Love is meant to be a bulldog.
  3. The problem today, is that love is no different to us Christians than the world, and does not therefore possess a *distinct* characteristic of death, since we have replaced the definition of love (God bleeding and dying on a Cross) with our ethereal disconnected feelings of romance. Since it is Jesus who defined agape love by the exploit of His death, and we are commanded to follow Him, this deathly love must be clearly understood by us as the reciprocal that we must also adhere to and actively apply to our own lives.
  4. Simple Formula:

Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of the world to define His great love.

I am supposed to follow Him.

If I do not lay down my life unto death (whether in theory or reality) I do not love Him, nor am I following Jesus.

5. Imagine for a moment if the story of the Gospels was very different. Let's say that they recorded the story of a man who called Himself the Son of God, who came and taught all the people about the love of God, and used Scripture from the Old Testament to tell His story. He still did miracles, and still taught a radical devotion to God, and explained this with many words and phrases seeking to define God's love and our need of it. All of the passages about giving your enemy a cup of cold water, forgiving the trespasses of another, laying down your life for your brother, were no longer found in our Bibles, but instead were passages about conforming to an arbitrary, ethereal idea of what God's love was like. Jesus was a sensitive, hopeless romantic, describing God's love with the imagery of a chick-flick. Maybe the people of that time still felt that this man really was the Son of God and that he was trying to show others the love of God through His perfect life, and animated poetic language about God's love. The Pharisees would never end up hating him because he wouldn't be that polemic anyway... in fact, they might worship Him for His linguistical rhetoric in explaining God's love with such analogies and scenarios. And then, good ole Jesus lived to a ripe old age of 70, and die a normal mans death to be remembered as the man who really showed us God's love through His miracles.
6. The idea of a friendly, romantic, kind of sappy, in harmony with life and society's idea of love filled Jesus is preposterous. God's explanation of love involved one thing—His own death!
7. If this was God's idea of love, and true agape love is to actively do what the Lord prefers, then how is our love for Him equated? Look into our own hearts here...

## II. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND HIS LETTERS

- A. John 3:16 is the first mention of love in the gospel of John and the means by which John and Jesus' definition of love becomes illumined. The verse that rings wonted in people's ears, is the very hermeneutical key that John the Beloved is founding his definition of love upon wholesale. In other words, the verse that we have become desensitized to, is the very verse which our definition of love is meant to be derived from.
- B. John 3:16 wasn't overused when the apostle wrote his gospel. This was ultimate revelation from the man who laid on the chest of Jesus and heard Him breathe. To John, this verse was the epitome of what he founded his writings upon, and must have been the ultimate truth by which he penned these words for others to read. His hope could have never been that this verse would become corrupted by its overuse in pop-christian culture, at football games and in every tract ever written. To John, this was a foundational stone by which he communicated the life and death of Jesus.
- C. John 3:14-17 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. "For God so loved the world,

that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

1. As Moses checked the plague of serpents killing the Israelites by having the Israelites look upon a snake on a pole, us too, by looking upon, and putting ALL our faith in the man on the Cross to check our plague of sin and death, are delivered by this Man and His death alone at the Day of the Lord.
2. It is important to see that the reference of *love* in this passage, is equated with the Father giving His Son over to death. The "gave" is in direct reference to Jesus death for the sins of man.
3. John 3:16 states a similar thing:

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

We understand what love is by looking at this example—Jesus laid down His life for us. If we understand this, we will lay down our lives for our brothers.

4:10 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 (win back the favor of God by giving His life for ours).

D. John's pointed intention to distinguish agapao love in his gospel.

1. 37 uses of agapao in various forms in John's gospel.
2. 8 in Matthew, 5 in Mark, 13 in Luke. This is why John is the beloved!
  - a) Most importantly, John seeks to define the agapao of Jesus by one event—Jesus death. The following verses are exclusive to John's gospel.

***John 10:17 "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.***

***17:23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.***

Let's just say this plainly with our hermeneutical key of John 3:16. God loved His Son so much he sent Him to DIE. God loves us, as He loved the Son, so He sends us to DIE.

***14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.***

***15:12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.***

***17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.***

**Rev. 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.**

**17:26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”**

Again, the love which the Father loved the Son was to crucify Him as propitiation for the sins of man. So, let this same love that was in Jesus to go to the Cross, and lay down His life for SINNERS, be in us.

John then uses three times at the very end of his gospel the very distinct phrase about himself “The disciple whom Jesus loved (agapao).” Seemingly, John is summing up His gospel and concluding it with his self-identification to Jesus definition of love by alluding to a very simple fact. He is saying, “I get it. The Father loved Jesus and sent Him to die. Jesus was obedient to the love of the Father, and loved me through His death. I’m the one Jesus died for, the one he loved.” This isn’t a weird boastful statement, this is his understanding of love summed up at the end of his life.

**Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

**Rom 8:35-39 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.” But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

### III. THE REPUDIATION AND RESURRECTION OF SIMON PETER

**John 13:1-38 “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, “Lord, do You wash my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.” Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.” Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, “Not all of you are clean.”**

**So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. "I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.' "From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."**

**When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night. Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.**

- A. John 13:38- Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."
- B. Jesus says, love one another as I have loved you. Peter equates his following of Jesus to the principle of laying down His life. Then, Jesus says "You cannot follow me now, but you soon will." Peter was not yet mature enough to lay down His life for Jesus, and thus his betrayal ensues.

C. This makes the redemption of Peter in John 21 a far greater story than is normally told. Mark 14:29 says it best since this is Peter's gospel through Mark— "Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." Or in other words, I love you more than all of these. Which is why Jesus asks him this question directly. The dialogue is as follows:

21:15 Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?"

(Simon, remember when you said to me that you loved me more than anyone?)

"He said to Him, 'Yes Lord, you know that I have affection (philo) for you."

"Tend my Lambs" (Love the people the way I have loved you).

"Simon, do you love me?"

(Simon, do you really want to lay down your life for me as you said that day? Do you truly agape me?)

"Yes, Lord, you know that I have affection for you."

(Jesus, you know that my love isn't as strong as agape, so please quit using such a strong phrase. Didn't you see me deny you a few nights ago? Obviously, I'm not ready to lay down my life for you. My love isn't agape yet like I thought it was when I said I would lay down my life for you.)

"Shepherd my sheep."

(You've seen my love, now love my people the way I have loved you.)

"Simon, do you have affection for me?"

(Simon, I'm making a point here...)

Peter is grieved because the Lord has now altered what He was saying and responds "Lord, you know all things(!!!); you now that I (only) have affection for you, and now you have said it with your own mouth!"

"Tend my sheep."

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

(PETER! You only have affection for me now, and this was proven by your denial of Me on the night of my crucifixion. But, take heart! Your philo will become agapao! Follow me to death!)

1. The exhortation to Peter is that he is still young, and he denied Jesus precisely because he still went where HE wanted to go and not where the Lord was leading Him to go. He had not yet surrendered his life for the sake of the Cross. But, Jesus is encouraging Him, saying "Peter do not worry. Though you are young now, you will grow older and truly will follow Me to your own death. In that day, you will agape Me Peter, and when you do the sheep will follow. Peter is crucified upside down in AD 64.

#### IV. THE CONTRADICTION AND BREAKDOWN OF A KINGDOM-NOW/PROSPERITY GOSPEL

- A. ***Matt. 10:24,25 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!"***
- B. ***Luke 6:40 "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.***
- C. ***John 13:15-17 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.***
- D. ***2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.***
- E. ***2 Corinthians 4:10-12 "...always carrying about in the body the dying of the Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.***
- F. ***Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.***
  1. We carry within us at all times the truth that Jesus died. Therefore, we are also prepared to die at any moment for His sake so that the life which was in us may be openly manifested in our deaths which glorify Jesus. This death happens in sharp contrast to the ones who are seeking to "live life to the fullest" now, which is the issue Paul dares to confront the Corinthians on. Paul is saying "Look, we're out here dying like Jesus did, you're trying to make your ministry big!"
  2. We who are alive, carry about within us the death of our Lord Jesus. Because only the living can carry within them their Lord's death. This works out a willingness within the living

to also go to their deaths that the one who died in their place may be glorified since He is living at the right hand of God, awaiting the day that we too live, and have life to the fullest.

3. We cannot ever reach that life unless we first carry His death.