**R841\_Rumination for 7 March 2021 by K.C. Ung**

The **T**heme: **God’s Agape Love – Pt. 3** [berita-bethel-ung.com](http://www.berita-bethel-ung.com)

The **T**ext: *God is love* [Agape] I Jn. 4:8b

The **T**hots:

The first two parts of this Rumination series were focused on **John 3:16** – **God’s Love for the Sinners**.

This third part now focuses on **The Saints Love for God** – **I Jn. 3:16** See #A below

The **S**inners who have responded to His Love are now **C**alled **S**aints. I Cor. 1:2

*Unto the* ***C****hurch of God which is at* ***C****orinth, to them that are sanctified in* ***C****hrist Jesus,* ***C****alled to be saints…*

 Thus:

1. **The Agape Love of God in Displayed Perspective:**
2. **Jn. 3:16** – The **O**pen **F**act of God’s Love for **S**inners **D**eclared:

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him*

*should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.* I Jn. 4:8

1. **I Jn. 3:16**, NKJV – The **O**bligatory **F**ollow-up of God’s Love in the **S**aints to be **D**emonstrated:

*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.*

*And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*.

 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*

 *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* I Jn. 4:16

1. **The Agape Love of God as Demonstrated by the Divine Persons:**
2. **G**od, the Father, Loved and He **G**ave. Jn. 3:16

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son…*

1. God, the **S**on, Loved and He **S**acrificed Himself for us. Gal 2:20

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:*

*and the life which I now live in the* ***F****lesh I live by the* ***F****aith of the Son of God,*

*who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*

1. God, the **S**pirit, **S**heds abroad this Love of God in the **S**aints: Rom. 5:5, NKJV

*The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

1. **The Agape Love of God in the Saints’ Deportment and Practice.**
2. The **C**ommand to Love: Jn. 15:12
3. Love God with all the **B**est you can. Matt. 22:37-38

*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.*

1. Love Your **B**rethren:

*This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* I Jn. 4:20

*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother*

*whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

1. Love and **B**less even your Enemies. Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27

*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,*

*and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

1. The **C**onstraint to Love: II Cor. 5:14, 15

*For the love of Christ constraineth us…that He died for all, that they which live should not*

*henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.*

1. Our **C**onsciousness in Love: I Jn. 4:19
*We love Him, because He first loved us.*
2. The **C**ompanionship of Love: I Thes, 4:9

*As touching brotherly love…ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*

1. The **C**overing up of Love: I Pet. 4:8, NKJV

*And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

1. The **C**haracteristic Walk of Love Eph. 5:2

*Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering*

*and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

Let us this day, Remember God’s Agape Love for us by **R**eciprocating it in the **R**emembrance of His Son,

Who died for us, was Buried and **R**esurrected for us to **R**evere Him this day at His Supper.

*O the depth of love divine, Th’unfathomable grace!*

*Who shall say how bread and wine God into us conveys!*

*How the bread His flesh imparts, How the wine transmits His blood,*

 *Fills His faithful people’s hearts With all the life of God!* Charles Wes­ley

**REFLECTIONS FOR THE WEEK: R. 841**

The Agape Love of our Lord Jesus Christ was well-seen in the restoration of Peter in the Lord’s post-resurrection appearance to him on the coast of Tiberias. Peter had denied the Lord three times (Mk. 14:72) after having professed that he would never do so even should the other disciples of the Lord deny Him (Mk. 14:31). He would be faithful to the Lord to the end. He would never forsake Jesus. But later, he denied the Lord three times before the cock crew twice. No wonder as the cock crow reminded him of this, he wept bitterly.

To restore him, the Lord prepared a supper for him. After supper, Jesus took Peter aside and started the process of restoration. The following conversation ensued: Jn. 21:15-17

* **The Lord’s Challenge**: *So when they had dined…* Jn. 21:15, 16

*Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon…lovest* *[**agapaō] thou Me more than these?...*

*He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest* *[agapaō] thou Me?*

On both occasions, the Lord challenged Peter to love [*agapaō*] Him with divine love.

On top of it, the Lord went further and challenged Him to love Him “*more than these*”.

What was the Lord referring to by “*these*”?

We do not know. But the Lord knew! And Peter knew the Lord knew! Yes, Peter must commit Himself to loving the Lord more than anyone or anything he loved. Nothing could come in between his love for these and the Lord. The Lord must have priority!

Knowing how he had failed the Lord earlier, Peter dared not take up the challenge.

 He saith unto him, *Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love* [phileō] *thee* on both occasions.

Yes, He would love *[phileō]* His Lord with His very best now that he had been given a second chance. But it might not be the same as the best that the Lord loved [*agapaō*] him with. The Lord knew Peter’s heart; And Peter knew that the Lord knew!

* **The Lord’s Condescension** and understanding.

 *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest* *[**phileō] thou Me?*

This third time, the Lord came down to Peter’s level and asked Him if he could love *[phileō]* the Lord as His Friend more than he could love any other loved one or thing of his [as denoted by “*these*”]? Of course, Peter was grieved at this, but then he also knew his own heart and that the Lord also knew. Thus, he accepted the Lord’s love for Him with his own reciprocated love for His Lord in whatever way he could.

* **The Lord’s Commission**

 The Lord condescendingly accepted Peter’s Confession, and Commissioned him to feed, care and tend His lambs and His sheep after this.

This Peter did so faithfully when later he wrote his epistle to the elders of the church:

as follows: I Peter 5:1-4

*The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear,*

*ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

1. What is your Response to His 1st and 2nd Challenge:

“…… Love [*agapaō*] Me more than these?” **REFLECT**

1. Or His third Challenge: “…..[*phileō***]** Me more than these?” **REFLECT**.

**Points To Ponder:**

 *In our joys and in our sorrows, Days of toil and hours of ease,*

 *Still He calls, in cares and pleasures, Christian,* ***love Me more than these!*** *C*e­cil F. Alexander