

#1 AGAPE - THE VALUE OF LOVE

#2 AGAPE - THE VIRTUE OF LOVE

#3 AGAPE - THE VALIDATION OF LOVE

#4 AGAPE - THE VALOR or strength OF LOVE

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Oswald Chambers writes of agape, "The springs of love are in God, not in us. It is absurd to look for the love of God in our hearts naturally. It is only there when it has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." *the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).*

First Corinthians 13 doesn't tell us what to do, it tells us what happens in and through our lives when we let the Holy Spirit do His work.

I want us to look at verse 7 and see four more things which are always true of agape.

I. THIS LOVE IS LOYAL.

Paul says of agape that it *beareth all things*. Someone has written of Jesus:

A. NOTICE THE DUTY

BEARETH COMES FROM THE WORD STEGO to roof over, or to cover with silence

You never hear Jesus say, "if you do this or that I will love you." fact is that regardless of who they were or what they did or what they failed to do, Jesus loved them. His love was always unconditional.

A. NOTICE THE DUTY

B. NOTICE THE DELIGHT

In other words, my love for you doesn't depend on the condition of my life, it depends on the condition of your life. And if the condition of your life changes, so does my love for you.

We call this "**because of**" love. I love you because of your looks or because you're so smart or because you have a lot of money. But what happens when Father Time has worked you over with an ugly stick? What happens when that brilliant mind is clouded by Alzheimer's disease? What happens when the money runs out? I can tell you. Love disappears. We see it all the time. Conditions change and love gets assassinated in the process.

Not so with agape. This is God's kind of love, the kind about which Paul says in **Rom. 8 that nothing in heaven above or earth below can ever separate us from the love of God.** Jesus bore the denials of Peter and kept on loving him. He bore the doubting of Thomas and kept on

loving him. John says that **He loved them to the end (John 13:1).**

I. THIS LOVE IS LOYAL

II. THIS LOVE IS LONGING

Paul goes on to say that love **believeth all things.**

A. IT IS FIRST LOVE

Re 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Remember, love is the fruit of the Spirit, the same Spirit about which Jesus promised that He would guide us into all truth.

The truth is that as long as there is God, every BELIEVER'S life is a storehouse of LOVE.

A. IT IS FIRST LOVE

B. IT IS A FAULTLESS LOVE

When I was 17 years old and announced that God had called me to preach, there were several people who expressed enormous skepticism. I learned then what I know now, that those who believe in me are those who truly love me. Love believes all things.

I. THIS LOVE IS LOYAL

II. THIS LOVE IS LONGING

III. THIS LOVE IS LOOKING

Not only does love **bear all things and believe all things, agape also hopeth all things.**

BUT WHAT IS IT LOOKING FOR?

Not only does agape believe in the possibilities of people in Christ, it doesn't despair when there is disappointment.

A. IT DOESN'T GIVE UP ON PEOPLE WHO FAILED

Love doesn't give up on people. I'm sure Jesus was disappointed when Peter denied Him three times in the courtyard, but Jesus didn't give up on Peter, did He? He went to Him by the Sea of Tiberias and recommissioned him. And when Pentecost came, it was Peter who was in the pulpit.

A. IT DOESN'T GIVE UP ON PEOPLE WHO FAILED

B. IT DOESN'T GLORY IN PEOPLE WHO FAILED

The prodigal son may be prodigal, but he's still a son. Is there any hope for the boy?

Yes, but in order for that hope to abide in your heart, you have to love him. If you look at him and say, "He's a hopeless case," you can be certain that what you have in your heart for him is something other than agape, and God will never be able to use you to shape his life.

Agape hopes all things.

I. THIS LOVE IS LOYAL

II. THIS LOVE IS LONGING

III. THIS LOVE IS LASTING

IV. THIS LOVE IS LASTING.

The last thing Paul says about agape in this verse is that it ***endureth all things.***

A. IT IS PAINFUL

There is absolutely nothing any of us can do to make God stop loving us. What a blessed assurance that is! We may grieve Him and disappoint Him, but we can never make Him stop loving us. EVEN THO WE BRING HIM PAIN

Love endureth all things. ACC. Now, when we talk about endurance, we automatically think about pain, suffering and hardship. The truth is, love is selfless, sacrificial love, and when you relate to other people selflessly and sacrificially, there will always be some pain and suffering involved. We shouldn't expect it to be otherwise since God's love for us carried the highest price tag in history, the blood of Christ.

But having said that, we all need to understand that Paul is not saying here simply that agape is willing to suffer and keep on loving, but that it is victorious in suffering. Agape comes through its suffering and its sacrifice stronger, richer and purer than it was before.

A. IT IS PAINFUL

B. IT IS PROFITABLE

Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus *endured the cross*. Why did He do that? Because of His love for the Father and for a lost world.

The same verse goes on to say that after Jesus had endured the cross *He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*. In other words, Jesus not only endured **the trauma of love**, He also experienced **the triumph of love**. Even as He hung on the cross, with nails in his hands and feet, with blood running down His cheeks from the crown of thorns, Jesus kept on loving the world and prayed for their forgiveness.

Look around you this morning. Is there someone in this congregation you've stopped loving? If you have, it was the wrong kind of love. We need this love that endures all things.