



Sermon Notes from 27 January

Expressions of Love (1 Corinthians 13:1-7)

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The kind of love that Christians celebrate the most is Agape love. Eph 5:25 – *Those with the Agape Spirit love selflessly and sacrificially.*

1 Cor 13:1-7 – The mention of the word 'love' in the passage refers to Agape love. Paul was calling the church in Corinth to rekindle the Agape Spirit.

Context - Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. The church was spiritually gifted but plagued with division, sexual immorality and social snobbery. Paul, the founder of the church, seeks to address these issues through this letter. He writes about the gifts of the Holy Spirit - the diverse spiritual gifts God gives (1 Cor 12), the right motive for the gifts to operate (1 Cor 13), and the proper use of them (1 Cor 14).

3 Discoveries That Will Rekindle In Us The Agape Spirit:

1. Why the Agape Spirit is so important
v1-3 – Paul emphasizes the importance of having the Agape Spirit using hyperbole. If you don't have Agape love, you are nothing. God-called disciples reflect the love of God (1 Jhn 4:8). *Value the fruit of the Spirit more than the gifts of the Spirit* (Gal 5:22-23). True disciples of Jesus Christ are those who love selflessly and sacrificially (Jhn 13:35). Where there is an absence of Agape love, God is calling you to repentance.

2. Why we struggle to live out the Agape spirit

v4-7 - This is God's personal and most complete description of love in the bible. The heart of the problem is selfishness. True Agape love is contrary to the sinful nature. *Love is only love when it acts.* The kind of love God desires for humanity is agape love. However, the struggle to do so is caused by a blockage in the heart

– idolatry. Under every behavioral sin is the sin of idolatry. *'An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, 'If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure.'* – Timothy Keller.

4 Idols In Your Heart:

#1 Power – a longing for influence or recognition

#2 Control – a longing to have everything go according to your plan

#3 Comfort – a longing for pleasure

#4 Approval – a longing to be accepted or desired

While these desires are not wrong by themselves, they become a problem when they turn into longings. *The evil in our desire typically does not lie in what we want, but that we want it too much'* – John Calvin. Only when you have resolved the idols in your heart can you express Agape love as a lifestyle. God is calling His people to love in the radical way - putting other's needs above your own.

3. How we can live out the Agape Spirit

God's answer to the idols in your heart is not by giving in to them or denying them, but by having them met in the person of Jesus. Because they have been perfectly met by Jesus, they no longer need to be idolatrous longings. This gives you the freedom to love in the Agape Spirit.

When Jesus is invited to sit on the throne of your heart, the idols stand at attention to listen to Him because of His sacrificial love for them. When Jesus's voice dominates the chambers of your heart, His Agape love is no longer blocked. Make Jesus the most essential part of Your life story so people can see that your life has been redeemed for praise unto Him!