

I invite you to open your bibles this morning to today's scripture text which can be found in 1st Timothy, the 1st chapter, verses 1 – 7. We will be doing a three-week series exposing the most important thing in life we can experience, God's Love; and what that love looks like; this week will be Love, from a PURE heart.

1 Ti 1:1-7

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

2 To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work — which is by faith. 5 **The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** 6 Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. NIV

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(The most important thing, Love! From a PURE HEART)

We are all blessed with many things in our lives. Many of which cost money and some even take our time and other resources. Gods gifts are perfect and complete for all who receive them. One of these perfect gifts, the greatest gift, is the gift of love. God showed us this love when He gave Jesus, His Son to lay down His life for the sins of the entire world. This gift was an expression of His love for you and me. God's desire is that we not keep this love for ourselves but that we give this love away! We can give others God's love by giving of our time, talents, and treasures to bless them. Let our blessings bless those around us. The most important thing in life is love.

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Today we will look at love that comes from pure heart, a heart that is filled with the love from God.

"God is Love", " the Bible declares He is the personification or embodiment of perfect love. (1 Jn 4:8) *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

The warm word agape is the characteristic term of Christianity. This word for love is used several different ways in the Bible. God's love is not love like we know love, phileo "to have enthusiastic or passionate affection and feeling"-a type of impulsive love, but the agape love as Paul proclaims in First Corinthians chapter 13, which contains one of the best known chapters in the New Testament. In poetic cadence "**the more excellent way**" of **agape** (chap. 13). *Love is not merely a feeling, but an attitude committed to patience, hope, and stability in the face of problems. Such love will outlast the world itself. Agape love is the greatest characteristic of the Christian life.*

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so what is this love Agape LOVE?

The high esteem which God has for His human children and the high regard which they, in turn, should have for Him and other people. Because of the hundreds of references to love in the Bible, it is certainly the most remarkable book of love in the world. It records the greatest love story ever written-God's unconditional love for us that sent His Son to die on the cross. Love is not only one of God's attributes; it is also an essential part of His nature.

God is the personification or embodiment of perfect love.

- Such love surpasses our powers of understanding (Eph 3:19) and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
- Love like this is everlasting (Jer 31:3) The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.
- Love like this is free (Hos 14:4) "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.
- Love like this is sacrificial (Jn 3:16) "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.
- and Love like this enduring to the end. (Jn 13) It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.
- Agape love indicates the nature of the love of God toward His beloved Son (Jn 17:26) "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." NIV
- toward the human race generally (Ro 5:8) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. NIV

- and toward those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 14:21) *Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. NIV.*
- Agape love conveys God's will to His children about their attitude toward one another. Love for one another was a proof to the world of true discipleship (Jn 13:34-35) *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
- Agape love also expresses the essential nature of God (1 Jn 4:8) *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. NIV.*
- Love from our pure heart can be known only from the actions it prompts, as seen in God's love in the gift of His Son (1 Jn 4:9-10) *9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. NIV*
- Love found its perfect expression in our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian love, love from a pure heart, is the fruit of the Spirit of Jesus in the believer (Gal 5:22) *22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...NIV*
- Love is commanded by God, as we learned in Mt 22 when the Pharisees got together and one of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" *Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*
NIV

So Love from a pure heart is like oil to the wheels of obedience. It enables us to run the way of God's commandments (Ps 119:32). Without such love, we are as nothing (1 Co 13:3). Such Spirit-inspired love never fails (1 Co 13:8) but always flourishes.

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Today's text was chosen because of verse 5. We are being alerted to a great peril in this scripture, and what God wants from you and his children is to Love with a pure heart. Now in Paul's letter to Timothy, he has set the stage for why he is so concerned about this, he says that his **goal** in his preaching is Love, and explains why certain people have failed to reach that goal because of the way people are using the law. So do you see what's at stake here? Love at Pemberville UMC is at stake here, Love for your enemies and your friends is at stake here. You can totally **botch** love if it comes from an impure heart and does not come from Christ. Read verse 5, the **goal** of our instruction is Love, that's the aim of all that he does, he wants people to love each other, the goal of our instruction is Love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and sincere faith. Now right there in that verse is not only the goal of Paul's ministry but the Gospel method of bringing it about. And notice what **he did not say, he did not say**, the goal of our instruction is Love through works of the law. He said that the goal of our instruction is Love, and then he went **INSIDE** the human being. PURE heart, good conscience, sincere faith. **THAT'S** where love comes, Love comes not from list keeping or law keeping. Lists cannot turn unloving selfish hearts into humble, childlike, God dependent, Christ exalting, loving hearts **it can't do it**. So somethings got to happen **in me, in me, deep in me**. It's a miracle, it's a supernatural thing here, it's a Spirit wrought reality. It's called a PURE heart without hypocrisy. We come to Christ for this, we don't go to the Law for this, you go to Christ for this and you cling to him like a desperate sinner and you hold onto Him as He is your only hope and through that hope what flows into you, a cleansing of the heart, the heart is cleansed by faith Acts 15:9 says, making your heart a PURE heart, because Christ declares it pure, apart from works

of the law. Out of that newness comes a PURE heart with love for people, you want to fill up shoe boxes for kids around the world, you want to go and spend time in the rescue missions, take families, hard families into your life, get your hands messy loving people that you don't know. Because Christ is in you, shaping your whole mind, your whole heart according to his image through communion with him. You want to volunteer your time in the soup lines, and the food pantries, or go on mission trips where your safety may be at stake. A selfless, bold new person emerges because you have a confidence in Christ, who lives in you and leads you, who protects you and feeds you, who loves through you with a cleansed PURE heart.

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Closing Prayer.

Father, we want so badly, as a congregation, as your church, to know and experience your agape love in our lives each and every moment, to experience a PURE heart that comes from your cleansing; to allow all those around us that you put on our life paths to minister, to know your love through us. Because we see that shipwreck can be made of churches, and ministries, and families, and lives, and eternities, when **your love** is absent.

So that we as your church would grow in our understanding of what it means to be good stewards of your grace, of your Love. Guard us from Satan now I pray, may all his fiery darts be quenched in the faith of those who pray in this service. May unbelievers in this service feel welcomed, so welcomed that they are drawn all the way in to faith and salvation and eternal life. Strengthen your church now through your word I pray, and fulfill the law, whose goal is Christ Jesus for righteousness to all who believe and lives of love. Father deliver us from a coldness of heart, a wrongful desire, soften our stony hearts, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us here anew today so that all we do here with your church, and in your mission field will be pleasing and acceptable to you.

In the precious and Holy name of Jesus we pray,

AMEN