

The New Testament Church
The Righteous will Shine #11 – The Love of God
December 29, 2024 - Pastor Paul Jehle
Galatians 5:13-14

I The Righteous will Shine

- A. God strategically places our character as a seed of the Kingdom where we influence others
- B. How will the character of Christ be carved into our lives and shine to others?
 - 1. Joy, peace, self-control, longsuffering – “a disposition to bear injuries patiently”
 - 2. Faithfulness, kindness, goodness – “uprightness in heart and life” – virtue
 - 3. Meekness – “God-tamed” or “marked by humility and a gentle spirit”

II Love – *selfless, sacrificial, love* of God toward us and to God – primarily **an attitude**

- A. The Fruit of the Spirit – Christ’s character of love is the first listed in Galatians 5:22; *agape*
 - 1. Similar to the word *logos* (the divine expression of ideas), it is a comprehensive word
 - a. *Selflessness, sacrifice and unconditional care* – laying down one’s life (q. D. Prince)
 - b. It transcends feelings, emphasizing **actions** and **commitment** in covenant.
 - c. *Consider its comprehensive nature from 1st Corinthians 13:4-8;*
 - 1. *Love suffers long, and is kind, does not envy, parade itself, is not puffed up*
 - 2. *does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil*
 - 3. *does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things... love never fails*
 - 2. Love is the opposite of the “works of the flesh” – Gal. 5:19-20 (the motive is self)
 - a. Body: adultery, fornication, uncleanness (flaunting publicly), lasciviousness (illicit sexual relations), drunkenness, revellings (partying), murders...
 - b. Spirit: idolatry, witchcraft (worship of self, evil)
 - c. Soul: hatred, variance, emulations (jealousy), wrath, strife (discord), seditions, heresies, envying, and such like (endless variety of sin)
 - 3. Love fulfills the Law – Galatians 5:4-6; 13-14; Romans 13:10 (by a **pure motive**)
 - a. *(not) justified by the law... but faith which worketh by love*
 - b. *by love serve one another... all the law fulfilled... love thy neighbor as thyself*
 - c. *Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*
 - d. Ex. of tithing – Malachi 3:8-10 (law) and 2nd Corinthians 3:6-7 (motive of love)
 - e. Love is lawful – borders – not “license” (without law) or “legalism” (without love)
- B. C. S. Lewis’ *Four Loves* – 1960 edition...
 - 1. Storge love – affection – but without *agape*, the strongest grip of the demonic kingdom
 - a. *Affection; especially of parents to offspring* – quote Lewis, p. 53-54
 - b. This is familial love – or the natural diversity, familiarity, vulnerability, transparency
 - 2. Philial love – friendship – common values, interests and activities
 - a. *Friendship – mutual respect, shared values, common bonds* – quote Lewis, p. 87-88
 - b. It is the most un-natural, and difficult to cultivate – someone must initiate it...
 - 3. Eros love – marital intimacy – limited and exclusive – bodies one – protected boundaries
- C. God’s love is the most powerful force in the world! – Quote Lewis, p. 163-164
 - 1. It gives meaning and purpose to all of the above aspects of “love” – It fulfills them all
 - 2. It originates in God Himself, and is a priority of the spirit, then to the soul and body
 - 3. *We are destined to have His love as our motive, and that can and will change the world!*

The Fruit of the Spirit, Part 1 – by Derek Prince – The real meaning of Agape

How was Jesus' love for us expressed? By laying down His life for us. If we love one another, then we are obligated to lay down our lives for one another. This is brought out again in 1st John 3:16 – 'we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' You see, this is the essence of agape love; it's laying down our life. Not necessarily as a martyr through physical death, but by making ourselves and what we possess, as well as our abilities and talents, available to our brothers (and sisters) in Christ.

*The Four Loves, by C. S. Lewis, Harcourt, Brace, Javonovich, 1960
Affection – storge – pages 53-54*

The Greeks called this love storge... I shall here call it simply Affection. My Greek Lexicon defines storge as "affection, especially of parents to offspring" but also of offspring to parents.

... It presents us at the very outset with a certain paradox... It is a need-love but what it needs is to give. It is a gift-love but it needs to be needed... This warm comfortableness, this satisfaction in being together, takes in all sorts of objects. It is indeed the least discriminating of loves.

Friendship – pfilia – pages 87-88

To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it. We admit of course that besides a wife and family a man needs a few "friends."

Friendship is – in a sense, not at all derogatory to it – the least natural of all loves – the least instinctive, organic, biological, gregarious and necessary... the moment two men are friends they have in some degree drawn apart together from the herd ...few value it because few experience it.

Charity – agape – pages 163-164

The natural loves (storge, pfilia, eros) are not self-sufficient. Something else, at first vaguely described as "decency and common sense," but later revealed as goodness, and finally as the whole Christian life in one particular relation, must come to the help of the mere feeling if the feeling is to be kept sweet.

It is no disparagement to a garden to say that it will not fence and weed itself, nor prune its own fruit trees, nor roll and cut its own lawns. A garden is a good thing but that is not the sort of goodness it has. It will remain a garden, as distinct from a wilderness, only if someone does all these things to it. Its real glory is of quite a different kind.

When God planted a garden He set a man over it and set the man under Himself. When He planted the garden of our nature and caused this flowering, fruiting loves to grow there, He set our will to "dress" them. Compared with them it is dry and cold. And unless His grace comes down, like the rain and the sunshine, we shall use this tool to little purpose.