2020 05 17 It’s all about Love

Acts 17:22-31. Psalm 66:8-20. Peter 3:1-22. John 14:15-21.

There is no point in asking the perennial question – “what is love?”,

Love simply *is.*

It was out of love that God created – created out of what did not exist – created the universe and created us – you and me. (Hebrews 11:3)

It is like creation is the decoration, the embroidery on Gods garments – not that we should picture God being a physical entity, even though we ‘see’ God in Jesus’ life.

? What can we see about ‘love’ from these readings?

1. “God loved His creation so much that He gave His only begotten Son …” John 3:16

= Love involves giving.

1. “Come unto Me all you who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest” (Mathew 11:28)

= Love desires a response.

1. “if you love Me, you will obey me.” A statement that includes a motive – it can be a freedom or a corruption.

= Love involves a commitment – a giving and a receiving.

1. “Love is patient and kind, love …” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

= Love has definite components in how it shows itself in general – how it expresses itself.

1. In the original Greek language of the time it was written – there were four words for love: *‘storge’* “I love my car, my music etc. *‘philia’* friendship. *‘Eros’* sexual *and ’agape’* self-sacrificing love*.*

= There are different types of love.

There is a principle laid down in the creation story in Genesis: “It is not good for man to dwell alone – I will make a completion of Him,” (Genesis 2:18) and

“Do not forsake the assembling of yourself together”. (Hebrews 10:25)

= Love does not exist in isolation.

In the Peter reading we see love between a man and a woman. The foundation of this controversial and often selfishly corrupted expression of love is point as to how corruption or interpreting the words of God in a self-fulfilling way – this only brings grief and sadness.

I believe that the meaning of Peters words about the wife submitting to the husband are that the husband seeks the wife’s’ good and that he puts her needs before his own and that the wife builds up and lifts her husband – if both are in action there is the bond of two very different people becoming one.

V7 “if a man does not treat his wife rightly – his prayers will be hindered – he is to treat her as Gods princess and she is to treat him with respect and encourage and lift him up.

(v7 1 Peter 3) “men and women are *joint heirs of the salvation of Christ.”* ***This is love.***

1. V8-9 tells us how we live in peace in our families, church and community.

“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, love from truth (brotherly love), kind-hearted, and humble in our spirit, not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (v8,9)

= love lives in harmony.

*This is love and applies as much to people who reject us as to those who care for us.*

Does it sound all a bit much?

What is our motivation – (1 Peter 3:15) – it is our strength – our base – **“sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts – and be ready to tell anyone who asks us how we can be like this.”** Speak of our forgiveness in Gods’ love through Jesus’ death and resurrection

with “gentleness and reverence”. (1 Peter 3:15)

*There but for the grace of God goes me.*

 **This is what love is about.**

Our strength is in knowing that we have a “clear conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven after … all powers and authorities had been subject to Him.” (1 Peter 3:21,22)

**This is love** and this is the inner strength that we have to live in love in all circumstances.

The absolute reality for us of Gods love can be in our being when we accept, know, feel the warmth of our Lord Jesus words in John 14.

**We as an individual walk as a group of four – not eight legs, only two but we are wrapped in a warmth; ”In Him we live and move and have our being”** (Acts 17:28)

(v19)“after a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

(and v16-18) the Spirit of Truth, the very Presence of God will dwell in you – I will come to you.” V23 “if anyone loves Me, they will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come to them individually and make our dwelling place with them individually.”

Can we accept that those words are from God to us each as individuals, can we start to walk in them and then can we feel the security of a warm blanket wrapping us up as one in God,

in the Son, in Gods Spirit –

it is a security in the best and worst of times – it’s a choice in dull or lonely or party times to step out from that security, to compromise trying to ‘fit in’ with the result being that we draw back from God and will never fit in with the world, we will be alone.

In bad times we can feel sorry for ourselves and in times of great pain or distress we can be overwhelmed; yet we are told to *obey* to choose yes or no by what it will bring into the blanket that wraps us in with God.

It is in coming to God in sorrow and confession that Jesus death and resurrection bring us cleanness and freedom and warmth.

Remember at the last supper when Jesus went to wash Peters feet and Peter refused – Jesus said that if I do not wash you, you have no part in me – Peters response was ‘wash all of me Lord” – Jesus wonderful response which brings us peace is “when you have been washed, you are clean and only need to wash your feet” of the sins of the moment. (John 13:8-10)

(Gal 5:13) “you have been given freedom, not freedom to do wrong but freedom to love and serve each other” – “to walk in your neighbour’s shoes”. (Mark 12:31)

“we love God because God loved us first” (1 John 4:19)

Want to love God more – accept how much God loves you individually as a unique person – and thank God.

Choosing Gods way, “doing what I command you” - obeying is not a dirty word, in choosing Gods’ way there is love and unity within ourselves, ‘fourfold unity in God’ which flows out into our families and with others.

“Love – covers - a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)