

Bible Study Kangaroo Ground Presbyterian Church FAITH, HOPE & LOVE. May 2011

Scripture: 1 Corin.13 Now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three, but the greatest of these is LOVE.

So let's look first at Love, and essentially the love of GOD, for GOD is LOVE, and therefore all true Love comes from GOD. Yet we are made in the image of GOD, and therefore we have built into our very nature, the capacity to love. Indeed GOD commands us to love Him. See Deut. 6-5, Matt.22-37/40. Likewise our neighbor; but who is our neighbor? Jesus shows us that it is not just the person living next door, but the person who is in need.

There are three Greek words for love, **Agape**, **Philos** and **Eros** and these 3 relate to our spirit, soul and body. All three were good and holy as they came from GOD.

Agape love is Divine Love, it is the love with which He loves us, and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us, Rom.5-5, so that we may love Him with His divine love. It is the love by which we should love one another, for as the Scripture says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, by your love one to another".

Philos is the love of the soul, particularly in friendship, and includes the love of art, music, beauty, the animal creation and all the wonderful works of GOD. It should fill our hearts with Praise !

Eros refers to the natural side of love as between husband and wife, and was given as a bond to make two one, and also for the procreation of children, a very precious and blessed gift. It is a great pity that, man in his sinful state, has desecrated and made common, that which was pure and holy.

When we have GOD'S love in our hearts we can truly love one another, our spouses and families. GOD says of His Love that He has loved us with an Everlasting Love, Jer.31-3, that He so loved the World (of His creation) that He gave His only begotten Son to die in our stead, so that we might enjoy His Divine Love through all Eternity. (paraphrasing John 3-16). GOD'S Love is so wonderful that it is hard for us mere mortals to fully comprehend it, yet Paul prayed that – "the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST would grant us, according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in our inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of GOD." What an amazing prayer; and what heights of Glory GOD wants us to share; surely we should bow in humble adoration and seek with all our hearts to respond to such a gracious and precious petition. Through all Eternity we will surely be exploring the depths of GOD'S Wonderful Love for us.

Let us look at the 1 Cor.13 definition of Love. (KJV). Firstly what it is not, i.e. when it is without Love; for tho' we have the gift of tongues and prophecy, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, tho' we have mountain moving faith, and tho' we give all to charity, and our body to be burned, if our service is not motivated by and rooted and grounded in GOD'S Love, it is all to no avail. This is a solemn warning to us and to the Church as a whole, for indeed we are divided into a thousand different camps, and all over points of doctrine, over forms of worship, eulogy,

praise and church government, etc., etc. It is only when there is a real move of GOD through the Holy Spirit that we see these barriers broken down, as in the Charismatic Renewal of the 70/80's, when Christians of all communities met together in a spirit of love and fellowship which transcended all barriers. Unfortunately it gradually disseminated as people returned to their own churches again, but those who experienced that love had their lives forever changed.

So let us strive that we might Love with all our heart and mind and strength.

Paul's description of Divine Love.

1. Love suffereth long. - Is patient under affliction and opposition.
2. Love is kind – is generous to all without respect of persons or favour.
3. Love envieth not – is satisfied with GOD'S grace to them – is not ambitious
4. Love vaunteth not itself - does not seek to be in the limelight all the time.
5. Love is not puffed up – is not proud, does not think more highly of itself than it ought.
6. Love does not behave itself unseemly – modest in behaviour, observes the proprieties.
7. Love seeketh not her own – is not greedy for gain, seeks the blessings of others.
8. Love is not easily provoked – is well tempered, avoids contentious issues.
9. Love thinketh no evil – is pure in heart.
10. Love rejoices not in iniquity (but) - hates evil
11. Love rejoices in the Truth. – loves GOD'S Law
12. Love beareth all things - suffers hardship
13. Love believeth all things - is full of faith
14. Love hopeth all things - “who against hope, believed in hope” Rom.4-18
15. Love endureth all things - is faithful even unto death.
16. Love never fails. - this is the GOD kind of Love.

There are so many Scriptures we could quote about Love, Paul in 1 Thess.4-3 speaks of “Your work of Faith, - and Labour of Love, - and Patience of Hope” in our Lord Jesus Christ, In the sight of GOD and our Father. They don't come on a plate, we have to work for them, in prayer, Bible study, meditation, in communion with GOD our Father, and in pursuit of excellence. John 14=23 If we keep His commandments, both the Father & the Son will dwell with us ! Rom.5-5 We progress thru' tribulation, patience, experience, hope, until the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Phil. 3-14/15 We are told to forget the things which are behind and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in Christ Jesus.

1 John 4-16/19 Whoso dwells in Love dwells in GOD and GOD in him.

1 John 4-20 tells us we cannot hate our brother & still say we love GOD! and JESUS tells us to love our enemies. If we cannot love our brother or sister, how can we love our enemies ?

We must stand amazed at the merciful Love of GOD; Deut.7-8 tells us it was because GOD loved Israel, and had given His Word, that He brought them out of Egypt..

JESUS loves us with a Shepherd heart, Jo.10 and prayed in chap.17 that we might share the very Love of the Father's heart.

GOD cannot deny His Love, and longs to pour it out, even on backsliding Israel, Hosea 11-1 & 14-4. The Bible is full of GOD'S Love, and all He seeks is that we might Love Him in return.

HEAVEN will be populated with people who Love GOD and one another with an all embracing and never failing Love, so let's prepare and look forward to that great and wonderful day. Amen.

We now come to HOPE & FAITH.

HOPE: like Love, GOD has given us the inherent ability to Hope. As the saying is, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast". Our great Hope is the Hope of Glory, the Day of Resurrection when we shall enter into our glorified bodies in which we will dwell through all eternity. This is a future Hope. Tit.2-13, 1 Pet.1-3/4, Eph.1-18, Col.1-27

There is also Hope in our day to day activities; we put our Hope and Trust in GOD, and even in the darkest hours of the severest trials, we Hope for the fulfilment of GOD'S promises, that He will take care of us, preserve us in spirit, soul and body, in all our travels and circumstances, etc. and be like Abraham of old, "who against Hope, believed in Hope, that he might become the father of many nations". This was when he was far past the age of begetting children. This Hope is related to Faith, subject to the Will of GOD. Ps.78-7, Ps.146-5, Prov. 10-28, Rom.15-13.

We are creatures of Hope, Hope is part of the very nature GOD has built within us, such as the thousands of sports fans who go along to watch their team play, always hoping that they will win, even when the odds are stacked against them, we hope for a fine day when we have planned an outing, we hope the cake in the oven will turn out well, ministers hope that their sermon will be effectual, etc. etc. We cannot live without this kind of Hope, and that's why, when people give up on Hope they fall into depression and despair. Even in the darkest pit of depression, Jeremiah in his Lamentations says, ch.3-21/24 "It is of the LORD'S Mercies that we are not consumed; - the LORD is my portion saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him".

Ps. 16-9 says "My flesh shall rest in Hope".

So Hope is a precious virtue, that helps to keep us going, and we should always thank GOD for the Hope that is within us. Paul exhorts us to "Rejoice in Hope" Rom.12-12, and the Hope of Salvation is as a Helmet that protects our minds in times of war with the Enemy, 1 Thess.5-8. It was this Hope that enabled the martyrs of old to stand fast when threatened with torture, stretched on the rack, burnt at the stake, disemboweled, etc., even as today there are martyrs Hopefully we and our children will not have to face such tortures before the end comes.

For **FAITH** our examples are in Heb. 11. Faith is not an ethereal thing, but is substantial, positive, the ground on which we act. Despite this catalogue of the saints of the O.T., whose deeds were "by Faith", the word "Faith" only occurs twice in the O.T., one negative Deut. 32-20, speaking of Israel's idolatries "they are a very forward generation, children in whom is no Faith". The 2nd is positive Hab.2-4 "The Just shall live by his Faith". However there are many ref's to "Faithful" and "Faithfulness", the best known being put into a hymn, from Lam. 3-23, when Jeremiah, out of the depths of despair, rises up, and triumphantly proclaims "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

In the N.T. there are 260 or more ref's to the word "Faith". This highlights the difference between being under the Law, which essentially demanded obedience, which is subjective, whilst under Grace we are exhorted to act in Faith, i.e. be positive. We are to be Christ's witnesses. We see these conditions still at work in the Church today; people who attend Church regularly, go to Mass, confession, etc., or in similar ways in traditional churches, but who never witness for Christ, and instead of being a light in a dark place, they hide their lights under a bushel. Others are led astray by false doctrine and end up like Jim Jones followers. We must remember at all times that

we are engaged in a warfare against our Enemy, Satan the Devil, who gives no quarter, and therefore it is essential that we learn to stand and walk and overcome in and by our Faith in Christ. 1 Tim.6-12 “Fight the good fight of Faith”; 2 Pet. 8/9 “Resist the Devil who acts as a roaring lion”. Almost all our blessings are obtained through Faith Faith is simply taking GOD at His Word. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD” Rom.10-17. Matt. 9 tells us about the woman who heard of the miracles of JESUS and believing she touched his garment and was healed, JESUS said “your Faith has made you whole”. To the persistent SyroPhenician woman who would not take no for an answer, JESUS said “O woman, great is thy Faith”. Matt.16-28.

Eph.2-8 “Through faith ye are saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD” .
Rom.3-22 “The Righteousness of GOD which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all that believe”.
Rom.3-28 “Therefore we conclude that man is Justified by Faith without the deeds of the Law”.
Rom.5-2 “By our Lord Jesus Christ we have Access by Faith into this grace wherein we stand”.
2 Cor.5-7 “For we Walk by Faith, not by sight”
Eph.3-17 “Christ dwells in our Hearts by Faith”.
Phil.3-9 “Having through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness of GOD which is by Faith”.
2 Cor.13-5 “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith” !
2 Thess.1-3 Paul thanks GOD because their Faith was growing exceedingly”.

Most of these are things we receive, but GOD wants us also to act in Faith, that we may be a Blessing to others. We must act according to the Faith we have; Rom.12-6/15
There are 9 Gifts of the Spirit, incl. the gifts of Faith and Miracles, 1 Cor. 12-7/12, and these gifts have never been withdrawn.
Acts. 3-1/16 “And His Name, through Faith in His Name, hath made this man whole. Let us follow Peter’s example, and be the Witnesses GOD wants us to be.

There are so many Scriptures on Faith; we could group them as follows :-

1. Faith in which we believe for Salvation, Sanctification, Righteousness thru’ to Resurrection.
2. Faith by which we act – works of Faith, Miracles, Healings, Speaking in Tongues, etc.
3. Faith in GOD, in His Glorious Creation, His Wonderful Works, and His Eternal Kingdom.
4. Faith in One Another, specially our own Families, our Church, our Friends, our Neighbor, etc.

Finally, “Without Faith, it is IMPOSSIBLE to please GOD ! Heb.11-6.

JESUS’ Last Words to us “Go into all the World, & Preach the Gospel, -- and these signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing. It shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16-15/18

This is the challenge we are facing. Are we prepared to believe GOD and act on His Word ?

May the LORD in His Gracious Mercy help and encourage everyone of us to believe. Amen

