

“GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS”

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Read text: John 15:13
- B. Regarding the text:
 - 1. There are two basic things which bring about right living.
 - a. The facts given by God’s word. (1 Peter 3:15; Romans 1:16; John 8:32; 17:17)
 - b. The life which is lived. Either in accord with God’s will or in rebellion to it. (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 5:9; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17)
 - 2. Every command which is given is important. (James 2:10; Revelation 22:18-19)
- C. Someone said, “He who observes this greater love is never selfish nor self-centered, but has the good of others as the center of himself.”
- D. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” would end strife and heartache.

DISCUSSION: IN OUR STUDY LET US OBSERVE...

II. THE COMMANDMENT. (12)

- A. Define love: The Greek word *Agapao* means more than simply kind affection.
- B. Two words are used in the New Testament to identify love.
 - 1. PHILEO is translated “brotherly love.” (Phileo more nearly represents tender affection. John 12:25)
 - 2. AGAPAO is a word that can be known only from the actions it promotes (John 17:26; 3:16; Romans 5:8; John 13:34). It expresses the nature of God (1 John 4:8).
 - 3. Love of the brethren” (*agape*) is the one practical topic of John's epistles. It is the message heard from the beginning, “that we should love one another” (1 John 3:11, 23). It is the test of light and darkness (1 John 2:10); life and death (1 John 3:14); children of God or children of the devil (1 John 3:10; 4:7-12). Without it there can be no knowledge or love of God (1 John 4:20), but when men love God and obey Him, they necessarily love His children (1 John 5:2). No man can be of God's family, unless his love extends to all its members. (ISBE)
- C. This love is commanded (John 15:12).
 - 1. How can love be commanded? If love (*agapeo*) is primarily a feeling it would be impossible to command. This word is feelings coupled with proper action.
 - a. Christian love is the fruit produced because of our association with the Lord.
 - b. John 15:1-8 tells of our relationship to the Lord. Verses 9-11 shows that love for our brethren is a product of abiding in Jesus.
 - 2. Love is found in man’s action towards the Lord (John 14:15), and towards one another (1 Peter 1:22)
- D. Love is the mark of our discipleship.
 - 1. John 13:34-35.
 - a. Jesus gave the command to reveal the fact of our relationship to Him (1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 2:5; 1 John 3:10, 14, 16, 23; 5:1).
 - 2. 1 John 4:19-5:2.
 - 3. 1 John 2:8-10.

III. THE EXAMPLE. (12)

- A. No greater.
 - 1. Remember that the love described in our passage is action taken which is best for the

- one who is loved. Someone said, "Agape love always does what is best for a person."
2. God has done what was best for us!
 - a. John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; John 10:11-15; Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 4:7-11.
 - b. By giving Christ as our sacrifice the "Greater Love" was shown.
 3. This demonstration of God's love was prophesied. (Genesis 3:15)
 - a. Numbers 21:6-9 illustrates obedience which produces the salvation of men today. (Note John 3:14-16)
 4. The demonstration of the "greater love" was in God's eternal purpose. (John 6:38; Ephesians 3:11; 1 Peter 1:17-20).
 - a. The promise was fulfilled when Christ was crucified and arose victorious. (Hebrews 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57)
 - b. Why did He die? This demonstration of "great love" was for our redemption from sin. (Ephesians 2:16)
- B. 1 John 3:12 gives a contrast to love (agape).
1. Cain's action is not an example of "Greater Love..."
 2. Brother killing brother. (Genesis 4:1-8; 1 John 3:15)
 3. This action of non-love is an example of wickedness, unkindness, and a hard-hearted disposition. (Can you imagine Adam and Eve's reaction to this hatred?)
 - a. Notice God's reaction; "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"
- C. The command did not leave us doubting as to how we are to love our brethren.
1. "...as I have love you."
 - a. John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."
 - b. His love for them was strong, continued, unremitting, and he was now about to show his love for them in death.
 2. He gave His very life for us.
 - a. So ought we to love our brethren.
 - b. Sometimes we do not have time for our brothers and sisters in Christ, much less giving our selves for them.
- D. The early church is an example of this love.
1. Acts 2:42, 44; 4:32-35.
 2. Their love was not simply words spoken (1 Peter 3:18).

IV. THE OUTCOME. (14-27)

- A. In the immediate context Jesus is speaking to His disciples.
 1. They were called "friends" when they obeyed Him.
 2. The world would hate them because it hated Him.
 3. These disciples would ultimately give their very lives for the brethren.
- B. We are friends of the Lord when we obey His commands. (When we give ourselves over to Him and to our brethren.
 1. Galatians 2:20, 24; Romans 6:4-6; Colossians 2:11-14.
- C. By this love we know that we have assurance of our relationship with the Lord.
 1. 1 John 3:10. (Manifest means to be made apparent or to be clearly seen.
- D. Love is to motivate us to service. (Galatians 5:13-15; Romans 13:8)
 1. By the proper manifestation of love one to another strive to promote each other's welfare. To do this will not be inconsistent with the freedom of the gospel. When there is love there is no servitude. Duty is pleasant, and offices of kindness agreeable.

V. THE APPLICATION.

- A. This "great love" will produce several needed things in the church.
 - 1. Our love will promote fellowship and good works. (Hebrews 10:24; Ephesians 4:3; Galatians 6:10)
 - 2. Our love will prevent strife and division. (Galatians 5:15; 1 Corinthians 1:10)
 - 3. This love will not be envious or jealous. (1 Corinthians 13)
 - 4. The greater love will encourage others to be faithful to the cause of Christ. (3 John 4)
 - 5. This love will cause us to correct the erring. (Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:17)
- B. Today we must demonstrate this "great love" so as to maintain the purity of the body of Christ.
- C. Remember this "great love" will always do what is best for a person considering their soul.

VI. CONCLUSION:

- A. To have this kind of love is one of the great blessings of the Christian life.
 - 1. We have not been left without the greatest of all examples.
- B. Our eternal salvation, the growth of the church, and the church's influence upon the world greatly depend upon love for our brethren.
 - 1. Note 1 John 4:17 "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."
- C. John 15:12-13 "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
 - 1. This command is as binding as any other.
 - 2. To refuse to obey, is to refuse God's love for us.
 - 3. To neglect love for one another is to be disobedient.