

Welcome

God's Word says: Come close to God and he will come close to you

So **let us pray** Heavenly Father, in our worship help us to sing your praise, confess our sins, hear your Word, and bring our prayers to you through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

Song New every morning *by John Keble*

- 1 New ev'ry morning is the love our wak'ning and uprising prove
through sleep and darkness safely brought. restored to life and pow'r and thought
- 2 New mercies, each returning day, hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiv'n, new thoughts of God, new hopes of heav'n.
- 3 If on our daily course our mind be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still, of countless price, God will provide for sacrifice.
- 4 The trivial round, the common task will furnish all we ought to ask,
room to deny ourselves, a road to bring us daily nearer God.
- 5 Only, O Lord, in thy dear love fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and ev'ry day, to love more nearly as we pray.

1st Reading comes from John 15: 9-17 (p1083)

- 9 *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*
- 10 *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*
- 11 *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*
- 12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*
- 13 *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*
- 14 *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*
- 15 *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*
- 16 *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*
- 17 *"These things I command you, that you love one another.*

Reflection

What is the four letter word that comes 8x in this Bible reading? **LOVE** But what is that all about?

What shape comes to mind when you hear the word Love? - A Ø shape

CS Lewis (The author of Narnia) wrote a book called **The Four Loves** which shows us that in English: just how this one word love can have many shapes & many meanings and so can cause many misunderstanding.

One of the most misunderstood verses of the Bible (I think) is *whoever loves is born of God*

People can (and do) use this word 'love' for in many ways

Oh yes (they say) I LOVE ... so I am a Christian

But I want to ask: What do We mean by love? Not all loves are the same

For eg: Do I love my wife like I love my children; like I loved my dog; or like I love chocolate; like I love creamy cakes; like I love video games or love playing football Are all these loves the same??

Do I love God and people in 'any old way'?

Love can have so many shapes; and in English it can mean so many things

The word John used is **AGAPE** Christian love/ Christlike love)

And this Christian love is ⊥ **shaped** Which is very different from self centred love

When love is Ø **shaped** we think it is all about us, our senses, our emotions Love becomes very 'airy fairy'

When love is ⊥ **shaped** the Bible shows us that it is all about sacrifice - our actions

in v12 Jesus very clearly said: agape love is: *to love as I have loved you*

v13 he adds *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (S Paul adds and foes)*

Jesus said there is *nothing greater* than agape love which is, *to lay down one's life*

Christian love is ⊥ **shaped**. Agape love is about sacrifice It's about Giving - Giving up, and giving away

I have this book mark that says: "Jesus how much to you love you?" I asked. "This much" he replied as His arms stretched wide and his hands were nailed to the cross to DIE for me - That's Christian love - it is sacrificial love

Song: When I survey the wond'rous cross *by Isaac Watts*

1. When I survey the wond'rous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.
2. Forbid it Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God;
Sll the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.
3. See from his head, his hand, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrows meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an off'ring far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Jesus (as our example) 'gave himself' for our sins in sacrificial love

and he calls for our sacrificial love. He said: '*Take up the Cross and follow me*' Cf Love is costly

What's your most special/ precious possession? Is it a Thing or a Person?

How would you feel about being asked to give it up?

Abraham was challenged to do that

2nd Reading Let's hear what the Bible says in Genesis 22: 1-2; 6-14 (p22)

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

Abraham was challenged to show sacrificial love - to give up his one and only son Isaac.

As he was about to actually sacrifice his son, God said *Stop!* since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me. now I know you love me

Look there's a lamb to take Isaac's place - see God has provided

(on the same Mountain where Abraham and Isaac stood) Jesus out of love for us took our place

So, Biblically, Christian love (Agape) is

1st about Jesus (the Lamb of God) taking up his cross and giving his life to give us eternal life

& 2nd it's about us Taking up our cross/ giving up everything for Jesus who gave up everything for us, it's about sacrificing our wants, and then in his name to selflessly and sacrificially serve others in big or small ways

Christians are called to sacrifice and to serve

Song: A new commandment *Unknown*

A new commandment I give unto you; that you love one another as I have love loved you;

That you love one another as I have loved you

By this shall all know that you are my disciples if you have love one for one another.

By this shall all know that you are my disciples if you have love one for one another

Confession

For failing to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength Lord have mercy

For failing to love our neighbours as we love ourselves Christ have mercy

We turn to you and ask you to forgive us as we say Lord have mercy

Absolution

May God the Father forgive you by the death of his Son, Jesus, and give you power by his Spirit to live a new life.

Amen

Prayers

For the peace of the world, the healing of creation, and the welfare of the church of Christ

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

For our bishops, for the leaders of our sister churches, for all clergy, lay ministers and worship leaders

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

For Elizabeth our Queen at this time of Jubilee, for the leaders of our nation and the world, and all who have authority

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

For our community, and for every city, town and village, and all the people living in them

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

For our farmers, fishermen, shop keepers, workers in the holiday industry, and all business people

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

For the sick and suffering, the physically and mentally challenged, and doctors, nurses, carers, and counsellors who help them,

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

For hearts burdened by sin, addiction, guilt and fear to be freed by the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

we pray to the Lord **Lord have mercy**

Collect

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life; grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share in his risen life; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. Amen

Lord's prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever Amen

Song: Give me oil in my lamp *Traditional*

1. Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning, give me oil in my lamp I pray,
Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning, keep me burning till the break of day.
Ref: Sing Hosanna! Sing Hosanna! Sing Hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing Hosanna! Sing Hosanna! Sing Hosanna to the King of kings!
2. Give me love in my heart keep me serving, give me love in my heart I pray,
Give me love in my heart keep me serving, keep me serving till the break of day.
Ref: Sing Hosanna!
3. Give me joy in my heart keep me praising, give my joy in my heart I pray,
Give me joy in my heart keep me praising, keep my praising till the break of day.
Ref: Sing Hosanna!

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you,
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you his peace

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore
Amen

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