

2 Peter 1:2-15

We have been discussing over the past couple of months, the Holy Spirit inspired pathway to maturity and disciple making revealed to us by the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:2-15. We have seen....

1. God has provided you with every thing you need for life and godliness, along with precious and magnificent promises so that you can be partakers of the divine nature.
2. Because of these great graces, you must apply all diligence in your faith-walk to add to this faith moral excellence, and to moral excellence knowledge etc.
3. If these qualities become yours and are increasing...you will not be useless, unfruitful, blind, or at risk of falling away, but you will have the kingdom abundantly supplied to you!

This was Peter's focus for the rest of his earthly life.

We have been spending our time walking through the qualities Peter identifies in vs 5-7.

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

1. We have looked at every one of these qualities one by one over the past 2 months.
2. This morning we come to the last one: Love.

Though it is not a complete description, the Bible's simplest description of God is "love."

1. John goes on to say after stating that God is love, "*and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*"
2. Therefore the simplest and most profound description of the Christian is the one who abides in love.
3. This is different than the *phileo* love, brotherly kindness, we looked at last time. This is agape.

The latter term "love" is the more comprehensive, all mankind being its object.

1 Thess 3:12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;

The best definition of Agape is found in 1 Cor 13:1-8.

Let us see what we can learn about love from this text in 1 Cor 13:1-8.

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1. The greatest truths spoken in the greatest way fall short if they are not spoken in love.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

2. We can prophesy the future, unlock the mysteries of the past, and have faith enough to move mountains, but without love, we are nothing!

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor,

3. The term for give means to dole out in small quantities, and signifies a long term, systematic program of giving away everything one possesses.

- a. If this is done without genuine love, not only will our bank accounts be empty but our spiritual accounts will be empty too.
- b. Only love makes giving worthwhile.

and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4. Even accepting death for the faith profits nothing if it is done without true divine love.

The loveless person produces nothing, is nothing, and gains nothing, so what is love Paul?

Paul uses 16 strokes to paint for us a picture of agape love. Let's look very quickly at each one...

1. Love is Patient

4 Love is patient,

- a. This word is used almost exclusively of being patient with people, rather than with circumstances.
- b. This patience is the ability to be inconvenienced or taken advantage of by a person over and over again and yet not be upset or angry.

2. Love is Kind

4 Love is patient, love is kind

- a. To be kind means to be useful, serving, and gracious.
- b. It not only desire's other's welfare, but works for it.
- c. It is active goodwill.

3. Love Does Not Envy

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous;

- a. Jealousy, or envy, has two forms.
 1. One form says, "I want what someone else has."
 2. The second form says, "I wish they didn't have what they have."
- b. 1 Sam 18:3-5 *Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.*
 1. Jonathan had every reason to be envious of David
 2. But his love for David conquered any envy that could have existed.

4. Love Does Not Boast

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag

- a. Love does not parade its accomplishments.
- b. Envy is wanting what someone else has.
- c. Boasting is trying to make others jealous of what we have.
- d. Jealousy puts others down; boasting builds ourselves up.

5. Love Is Not Arrogant

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

- a. When we compare ourselves by ourselves, we may find reason to be arrogant
- b. But, when we compare ourselves to the standard, we find ourselves just as much in need of mercy as everyone else.
- c. We find that we have no reason for arrogance.

6. Love Is Not Rude

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly;

- a. The loveless person is careless, overbearing, and often crude.
- b. To the extent that our living is ungracious and inconsiderate it is also unloving and unchristian.

7. Love Does Not Insist On Its Own Way

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own,

- a. It is not self-centered or self-seeking
 1. The inscription on a tombstone in a small English village read, “Here lies a miser who lived for himself, and cared for nothing but gathering wealth. Now where he is or how he fares, nobody knows and nobody cares.”
 2. In contrast, a plain tombstone in the courtyard at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London reads, “Sacred to the memory of General Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God.”
- b. Matt 20:28 *the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

8. Love Is Not Irritable

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked,

- a. Irritable means to arouse to anger.
- b. The being provoked that Paul is talking about here has to do with things done against us or that are personally offensive.
- c. To be angered by the mistreatment of the unfortunate or by the maligning and contradiction of God’s word is righteous indignation.
- d. But when it is righteous, indignation will not be provoked by something done against us personally.

9. Love is Not Resentful

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

- a. The Greek term here, for resentful, is a bookkeeping term that means to calculate.
- b. Resentment is careful to keep books, which it reads and re-reads, hoping for a chance to get even.
- c. Keeping track of things done against us is a sure way to resentment and unhappiness.
- d. Love keeps no books.
 1. No wrong is ever recorded for later reference.
 2. Love forgives, and moves on.
- e. Resentment will make you miserable and bitter and those who have to be around you miserable too!

10. Love Does Not Rejoice In Sin

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness,

- a. Love cannot tolerate evil or rejoice in it in any way.
- b. One of the most common forms of rejoicing in sin is gossip.
- c. Gossip uncaringly reveals the weaknesses and sins of others, and therefore hurts rather than helps them.
- d. Gossip is talking about a problem with anyone who is not part of the problem or part of the solution.
 1. That is the vast majority of reality TV shows, magazines, newspapers, and news stories
 2. Rejoicing in the sin of others...getting the scoop...and it makes us feel so good to be in the know.
- e. It may be true, but if you are not part of the problem, or part of the solution, it is still gossip.
- f. Love does not rejoice in, take pleasure in sin.

11. Love Rejoices In Truth

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

- a. Love does not compromise the truth, but rejoices in truth.
- b. He is speaking of God's truth, God's revealed Word.
- c. Compromising the truth of God's Word is not loving.
 1. That is why we must be very careful to get it right.
 2. That is why we should not even allow a person who teaches falsehood about God's truth to be received into our home or be given a greeting.
 3. 2 John 10 *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting*
- d. One of the most unloving things we can ever do is compromise the truth
- e. Love rejoices in truth

12. Love Bears All Things

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things,

- a. The term for bear all things means to cover or to support and therefore to protect.
 1. Love bears all things by protecting others from exposure, ridicule, or harm.
 2. Even when a sin is certain, love tries to correct it with the least possible hurt and harm to the guilty person.
- b. Love does not justify sin or compromise with falsehood.
 - a. But love does not expose or broadcast failures and wrongs.
 - b. It covers and protects.

13. Love Believes All Things

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things,

- a. Love doesn't rush to believe the worst in a person
- b. If a loved one is accused of something wrong, love will consider him innocent until proven guilty.
- c. Love hopes the best for one another and about one another.

14. Love Hopes All Things

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,

- a. When our ability to love runs out, our faith holds onto hope.
- b. When our hope becomes weak, we know our love has become weak.
- c. When should I give up on so and so? Never! Hope.

15. Love Endures All Things

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- a. To endure was a military term used of an army's holding a vital position at all costs.
- b. Every hardship and every suffering was to be endured in order to hold fast.
 1. Love holds fast to those it loves.
 2. It endures all things at all costs.
- c. After loves bears, it believes. After it believes, it hopes. After it hopes it endures.

16. Love Never Ends.

8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1. Love is the culmination of all of these qualities Peter gives us.
 - a. Faith
 - b. Virtue
 - c. Knowledge
 - d. Self Control
 - e. Steadfastness
 - f. Godliness

- g. Brotherly Love
- h. Love

2. Peter begins with faith, and ends with love.

3. As one commentator said, *“the one being the foundation or root, the other the crowning glory and bright, consummate flower of all Christian excellence.”* LILLIE

4. Love is really the culmination of the other qualities...faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly kindness...all present and increasing in our lives culminate in love.

Conclusion:

1. Paul uses 16 strokes to paint for us a picture of agape love.

2. And listen: Jesus Christ is the one sitting for his portrait.

a. If God is love, and Jesus is the exact image and representation of God, then if we want to know what love looks like, we cannot let our culture define or redefine what love is.

b. We must look to Christ! GOSPEL This is love!

c. And if this is love, Jesus Christ, the Gospel, then the greatest act of love would be getting that gospel to those who have yet to hear and understand it.

1. Evangelism

2. Disciple Making

3. Missions

d. John 13:34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

Have you seen, understood and received this love?