

An “After Easter” Gift

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April 7, 2013

Sermon in a sentence: Calvary was God’s love gift to humanity, and our “agape” love for Him and each other is the gift He desires in return.

Scriptures: John 21:1-17; Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 4:8; 2 Pet. 1:1-8

John 21:1-17 NASB After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested *Himself* in this way. 2 Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will also come with you.” They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 So Jesus said to them, **“Children, you do not have any fish, do you?”** They answered Him, “No.” 6 And He said to them, **“Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.”** So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped *for work*), and threw himself into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net *full* of fish. 9 So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, **“Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.”** 11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, **“Come and have breakfast.”** None of the disciples ventured to question

Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead. 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "**Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?**" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Tend My lambs.**" 16 He said to him again a second time, "**Simon, son of John, do you love Me?**" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Shepherd My sheep.**" 17 He said to him the third time, "**Simon, son of John, do you love Me?**" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "**Do you love Me?**" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "**Tend My sheep.**"

A fruit is the ripened ovary of a flowering plant, containing one or more seeds. The fleshy part of the fruit nurtures the seed and allows it to be nourished and grow.

Spiritually speaking, the seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11) and the ovary is the Fruit of the Spirit.

A fruit has various parts, although it is just one fruit. It contains skin, meat (flesh), stem, seedpod and seeds; all one fruit.

The Fruit of the Spirit is similar, comprised of nine parts, as Paul details in Gal. 5:22-23.

Gal. 5:22-23 NASB But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The first part of these parts is LOVE.

Webster's definition of "love": "A strong, complex emotion or feeling causing one to appreciate, delight in, and crave the presence or possession of another and to please or promote the welfare of the other; devoted affection or attachment."

On May 2, 1962, a dramatic advertisement appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner*: "I don't want my husband to die in the gas chamber for a crime he did not commit. I will therefore offer my services for 10 years as a cook, maid, or housekeeper to any leading attorney who will defend him and bring about his vindication."

One of San Francisco's greatest attorneys, Vincent Hallinan, read or heard about the ad and contacted Gladys Kidd, the woman who had placed the ad. Her husband, Robert Lee Kidd, was about to be tried for the slaying of an elderly antique dealer. Kidd's fingerprints had been found on a bloodstained sword in the victim's shop. During the trial, Hallinan proved that the antique dealer had not been killed by the sword, and that Kidd's fingerprints and blood on the sword got there because Kidd had once toyed with it while playfully dueling with a friend when they were both out shopping. The jury, after 11 hours, found Kidd to be not guilty. Attorney Hallinan refused Gladys Kidd's offer of 10 years' servitude.

Love causes us to go the extra mile!

Now let us look at an incident in the word of God. For a little background, there are three different words for love we are quite familiar with in the Greek language. Phileo (brotherly love and friendship), Eros (passionate, romantic love), and Agape (self-giving, non-demanding, unconditional love).

Jesus asked Peter a series of questions in John 21 regarding his love for Him. The English word "love" is used in all these questions and answers, but if we look at the root words involved, we see something interesting. Jesus asked Peter "Do you agape me?" Peter answered "Yes Lord, I phileo you."

Jesus asked again “Do you agape me; (love me with total unconditional love)?” Peter again responded “Yes Lord, I phileo You; (love You like a brother).” Now the third time around, Jesus asked him, “Do you phileo me?” The text tells us that Peter was grieved because the Lord was asking him for the third time “Do you love me like a brother?”

We are reading this story from John’s pen and clearly he must have spoken to Peter to know what he was thinking at the time when he became ‘grieved’. And we quickly see the problem. Jesus was asking ‘do you agape me’, but Peter was hearing, ‘do you phileo’ me! That’s why he was grieved when he *thought* Jesus was asking him the third time ‘do you love me’.

But what was really happening? Jesus was dealing here with a man who had betrayed Him, one who had not yet received the gift of the Holy Spirit, one who was not yet in the place where he could manifest the FRUIT of the Spirit. So what was Jesus doing? He was showing Peter, as he is showing us, that we cannot love as Jesus loves without the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the fruit it bears! To put it in other words, it is IMPOSSIBLE for us to love as God wants us to love until He Himself enters into us and makes it possible for us to love that way.

So, you may ask, did Peter ever understand? Did he ever ‘get it’? Did he ever have his eyes (and ears!) opened to the kind of love God intended for him to have? We find the answer in his epistles as he writes to the Church AFTER the day of Pentecost: *after* receiving his personal baptism of the Holy Spirit. You hear him say in 1Peter 4:8 “Above all, keep fervent in your love (agape) for one another, because love (agape) covers a multitude of sins!” That’s chapter four of his first epistle. By the time he gets to his second epistle, his full understanding of love is right in the very first chapter. (v. 3) “His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness....”

In verses 5-7 he says “... 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 (phileo), and in *your* brotherly kindness, love (agape)”!

How does this part of the fruit of the Spirit help the seed of the Word to grow?

People are constantly looking for great ‘experiences’. Good feelings. Acceptance. Warmth. Well, NOTHING makes a person feel better, feel accepted and get that nice warm feeling all over more than a good dose of love! It is in the ovaries of love that the WORD has a chance to be nourished and grow. As the old saying goes: “People don’t care how much you know ‘til they know how much you care.”

Love is always seeking the best for another. It is a commodity we can all possess. It is a commodity we can all share. Love speaks. It says: ‘You first’. It says: ‘I will take your place.’ ‘I will give all to you without thought of the cost to me’. Love takes the blame, takes the shame, endures the pain. Love says ‘I forgive’.

LOVE NEVER FAILS!

Let us pray for a fresh baptism of agape love. Let us pray for this love to be “... shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5 KJV). Let us pray that we will give to God the love He truly desires to receive.