

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 John 4:7-14
Lesson #16
God's love and our hope
04/17/2022

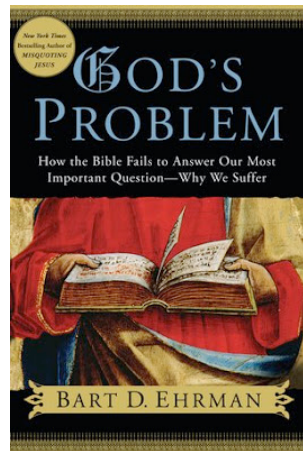
When we look at the brokenness within us and around us we must ask:

Is God there?
Does God care?
Is God fair?



“Why the Bible Fails to Answer our Most Important Question - Why we Suffer?”

“I just began to lose it. It wasn't for lack of trying. But I just couldn't believe there was a God in charge of this mess.”



Could it be that the Biblical answer - “EASTER” is clear but unpopular?

Why is CHRISTMAS more popular than EASTER?

The Word of the Cross (salvation) is more popular than the Way of the Cross (sacrifice)

Easter reminds us that:

1. our hope is not in this life, and
2. we must die to experience it.



John 17 (Jesus' prayer for his followers)

“23 . . . that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and **didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.** . . . 26 that **the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them,** and I in them.”



Are we prepared for this kind of love?

1 John 4

“7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

What is this thing called AGAPE love?

1. AGAPE love is a CHOICE.

- It is NOT something we “fall into” or “out of”.

- It is a **command** in both the Old and New Testaments.

Matthew 22 (Deut.6:5, Lev.19:18)

“37 And He said to him, ‘You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 The second is like it, ‘You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

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- It is a **command** in both the Old and New Testaments.

- It springs from the **image of God** that we receive at birth.

- It is awakened by the **Spirit of Christ** that we receive at new birth.

- It is the heart of **God’s nature and kingdom** on earth.

- It is modeled by **the life of Jesus** and his disciples.

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Agape love is a credential.

- It **IDs** us as Christians.
- It **assures** us of union with Christ.
- It authenticates our **witness** to the Gospel.

John 13:35

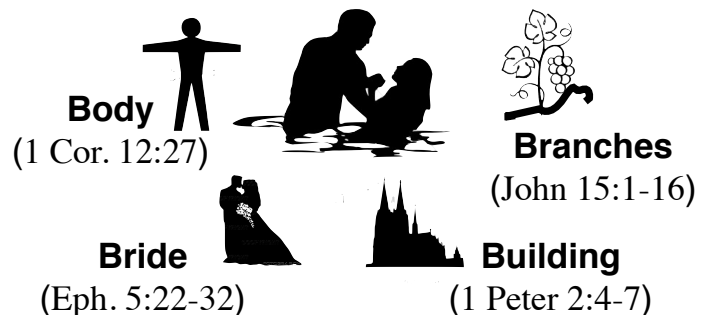
“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Note what **IS NOT** mentioned - personal piety, world evangelism, cultural triumphalism, social peace & justice.

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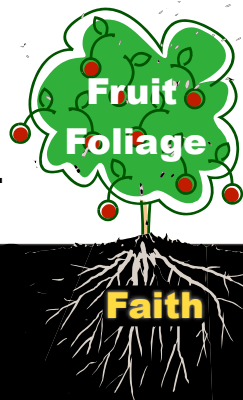
1 John 3:24

“And the one who keeps His commandments **abides in Him, and He in him**. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”



9

When I choose to love as Jesus did, I indicate that I am abiding in him and his Spirit is abiding in me.



Love does not merit our salvation but is the fruit of it.

10

1 John 4

“9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation for our sins**. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, **we also ought to love one another.**”

2. AGAPE love is a **SACRIFICE.**

Agape love is **MANIFESTED** through Christ’s sacrifice and ours.

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The emphasis of the Gospels

Jesus' teaching and deeds



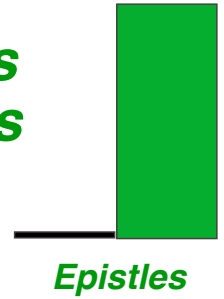
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The Passion & Resurrection

Jesus' 3 year ministry

birth, teaching, miracles, deeds of Jesus

The emphasis of the Epistles



Epistles

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Christianity is the only religion that **celebrates** the death of its founder.



and calls its participants to be **living sacrifices**.

14

The great symbols of the faith are **NOT**



The Law



The towel and basin



Crown of a King

reminding us of the life of Jesus.

15

The great symbols of the faith **ARE**



The Cross

The Lord's Supper

Baptism

reminding us of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

16

1 John 4

“12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have beheld and **bear witness** that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”

3. AGAPE love is a WITNESS.

- TO us and THROUGH us to others.

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How can we nurture agape love?

- We need to be **reminded** weekly of the Word & Way of the Cross.
- We need to **reinforce** the Way of the Cross by modeling it.
- We need to **resist** the temptation to let the world define our hope.
- We must **respond** to a broken world as a ministry opportunity.

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Three key lessons

1.
Agape love is
a common ministry gift
that we each have in this life.

2.
Agape love is
a choice
inspired by
Christ's Spirit.

3.
Our hope is
Easter centered
not Earth centered.

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1 Corinthians 15

"17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 **If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.**"

How did Paul
understand this life's
troubling circumstances

**in the context
of God's love?**



20

Paul viewed life
in an **EASTER context.**

Romans 8

"18 For I consider that the **sufferings** of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. . . 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall **tribulation**, or **distress**, or **persecution**, or **famine**, or **nakedness**, or **peril**, or **sword**? 36 Just as it is written, *"For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were **considered as sheep to be slaughtered.**"* . . . 39 no created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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Paul embraced
the **WAY of the Cross.**

1 Corinthians 4

"10 We are **fools for Christ's sake**, but you are prudent in Christ; we are **weak**, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are **without honor**. 11 To this present hour we are both **hungry and thirsty**, and are **poorly clothed**, and are **roughly treated**, and are **homeless**; 12 and we **toil, working with our own hands**; when we are **reviled**, we bless; when we are **persecuted**, we endure; 13 when we are **slandered**, we try to conciliate; we have become **as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things**, even until now."

22

**It's Friday but
Sunday's coming.**

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