

## **SERMON: HOW WILL I KNOW? (A Valentine's Day Sermon)**

### **John 3:16**

**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

### **Introduction**

Love is a constant topic of discussion. We write about it; talk about it in face-to-face conversations and on social media; we preach about it, as I am doing now; and of course, we sing about it in church and with our secular songs. Some of the great theologians have written tomes about God's love and how believers should reflect His love. Since love is so important, because everyone wants to be loved, why is true love so hard to find and to keep for so many people? For some, it is hard to find in romance or even in the family. Why are so many people mean and hateful, yet these same people want others to love them? This question has baffled theologians, pastors, philosophers, and psychologists, just to name a few. In a general sense, we know it is the work of the evil one.

Some of the secular songs address this quandary with more clarity and emotion than the theologians. They don't give an answer, but express the frustration. Only the Bible has the answer. Whitney Houston sang a song entitled, ***How Will I Know?*** The gist of this old school song is how will I know if he really loves me? He could be playing me for a fool. If I give him my heart, will he break it? There was another song entitled, ***I Want To Know What Love Is***. The gist of this song is, I have not experienced love enough to know the real thing if and when it comes to me. Tina Turner just gave up on finding true love. She asked ***What's Love Got To Do With It?*** The gist is to have relationships to satisfy our physical instincts and don't worry about finding true love.

Love has many dimensions or levels. Whereas English makes one word refer to all of these varieties of love, the Greek language has a different word for each variety. While this is now common knowledge, it is still beneficial to consider briefly some of the Greek terms used for love. ***Storge*** means family love. ***Philia*** refers to the love between friends. ***Eros*** refers to romantic love. ***Agape*** refers to divine love. One of the classical definitions of ***agape*** is unconditional love. The highest level of love is divine love, but all of the varieties still conform to parameters of divine love. God loved and loves us so much that He gave us something precious. What did He give us? He gave us His Son.

True love, no matter the level, is always giving. Let's look at the five things that love at all levels will give or do, if it is genuine.

## **Exposition**

### **1. Love Respects Other's Thoughts And Feelings.**

(Even When There Is Disagreement.)

(Colossians 4:6; Titus 3:2-4.)

### **2. Love Directs When Necessary.**

(Psalm 32:8; Psalm 73:24; Matthew 2:12-14; Acts 16:9-10.)

### **3. Love Corrects When Errors Or Mistakes Are Made.**

(Galatians 6:1)

### **4. Love Protects From Harm and Danger.**

(Psalm 5:11; Psalm 46:1; Isaiah 54:17; Daniel 3: 22-27; Daniel 6:21-23; Acts 18:9-10.)

### **4. Love Detects Needs And Fulfills Them.**

(God Supplies All Of Our Needs.)

(Our Greatest Need Is The Need For Salvation.)

(The Need For Eternal Security.)

(Psalm 23:1; Philippians 4:19.)

## **Closing Thoughts**

The love of God is like sunlight. It is crystal clear, but when you let it flow through a prism you see all of the colors of the rainbow. When you direct God's love through the prism of faith and gratitude, it is amazing what you see. Allow me to elucidate:

Grace is God's love giving blessings we do not deserve.

Mercy is God's love withholding punishment we do deserve.

Justice is God's love upholding fairness.

Peace is God's love giving us much needed rest.

Longsuffering is God's love waiting with patience.

Forgiveness is God's love not holding a grudge.

Prayer is God's love allowing us to talk with Him.

Bible Study is God's love allowing us to learn of Him.

Discipline is God's love correcting us.

Prosperity Is God's love supplying all of our needs.

Science is God's love allowing us to analyze His handiwork.

Mathematics is God's love assuring numerical accuracy.

The Cross is God's love dying for everyone.

The Bible is God's love in holy print.

The Father is God's love creating and sustaining the universe.

The Son is God's love saving us from our sins.

The Holy Spirit is God's love guiding us daily.

Worship is God's love allowing His children to celebrate His goodness.

Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

**End Notes:**

1. Of the many Greek words for love, agape is used the majority of the time in the New Testament. It is used as a noun one hundred sixteen times. As a verb, it is used one hundred forty-three times. As an adjective, it is used sixty-one times. The total is three hundred twenty times. *Philia*, the runner up, is only used fifty-five times. **Agape** literally means no gap. There is no gap in God's love for us. The pronunciation almost gives it away. An "a" preceding a noun or adjective negates it. For example, atypical means not typical. Amoral means no morals. *Agape* means no gap. The first use referred to the requirement that when in the public, a king, emperor, or their family members were always surrounded by a human shield of soldiers who acted as bodyguards. This human circle could not be broken under any circumstances. The penalty for breaking rank or leaving the formation was sure and sudden death. A good example of this is in the movie *The Gladiator*. When Caesar goes down to the combat area of the coliseum to speak with the hero, his bodyguards constantly surround him. They circle him and when he moved the circle moved. The movie has a lot of bloodshed in it, but that part reminds me of how God's love is complete and has no gaps in it. During the Roman Empire, they were called Praetorian Guards. God is our single Praetorian Guard. He alone is enough!

2. Many philologists assert that the Greek word for romantic love, "eros", and our English word "error" have both the same linguistical origin. They quip that you can easily make an error, and pick the wrong person, when you are excited by *eros*.

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