

Audio Transcript of Sermon
February 29, 2020
Charity

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Today, we'll be finishing up on a study that we've been looking at in second Peter one, we'll start in verse five.

2 Peter 1:5-8

5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second Peter one gives us a blueprint on how we should be developing spiritually in our life. It all begins with a foundation of faith, and through the diligent effort to our faith we learned several weeks ago to add virtue, and to add knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and today we're finishing with charity. In the modern use of the word charity, we think of charity as being very generous and giving to other people. There's nothing wrong with that particular use of the word charity, but that was not the original use of the word as it was translated in the New Testament. The Greek word for charity is the word *agape*. It's Strong's Greek word 26, and it means affection or benevolence, a feast of love, charity, and love. It has a lot to do with a very higher order of love that might exist between God and Jesus Christ. That's the kind of love we are striving to develop in our own life. This word is most often translated as love in the New Testament. Here, we are looking at the word charity in second Peter one but more often than not, *agape* is translated as love. In fact, it's translates as love more than three times than it is translated as charity.

Charity, or love, this *agape*, is such an important concept that there is this entire chapter of the New Testament that's devoted to it. Beautifully written by the apostle Paul, we're going to start our examination of the word charity by looking at first Corinthians thirteen. Thirteen may be an unlucky number for many people,

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but first Corinthians thirteen with its thirteen verses is the love chapter of the Bible. Let's start in first Corinthians thirteen, verse one.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**
- 2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

Very quickly, Paul is painting a picture that without love, without this *agape*, as our underlying motivation, anything that we do spiritually is a waste of our time. Everything we do spiritually must be based on this love, on this *agape*. Verse three.

- 3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**
- 4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

We can take every last cent that we have to our name, and give it away. We can deplete our bank accounts, we can sell everything that is in our homes, and we can give it to people in need. And we can do all of that without having a sense of this love, this charity, this *agape*. And, if we do all of that, as good as it is, without a basis of *agape*, it does absolutely nothing for us, because there is no basis for anything that we do spiritually, unless it is based on this *agape*. If we have this godly kind of love, we will have a lot of patience, we will be very kind, we will not be jealous of other people whose circumstances in life are different than ours. We will not think highly of ourselves as individuals. We will not be arrogant in self-conceit, because everything that we do will be based on this *agape*, this godly love. Verse five. Charity,

- 5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;**

It's amazing to hear how in verse five in the Greek that charity is given a feminine characteristic. In the English language, we only use the definite and indefinite

articles that have no link to gender, but in many languages, Spanish, which is a language spoken frequently here in the El Paso area, German, which is the country of many of my relatives, many of their words are linked to gender and they are very gender specific. Here, it's amazing to look that the act of love is tied to a mother and there can be no higher love that a person can have than a mother's love for her child. In nature most people do not fear the male of the animal, they tend to fear the female of the animal if they come between that female animal and her children. Up in Alaska there are many animals that people are afraid of, but the animal that is most feared and most revered up there that comes into closest proximity to people is the cow moose, the mother moose. You never want to get between that mother moose and her child, because bad things will happen. Verse six. Charity,

6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

People who have this pure, unbridled love, this love of God, this *agape*, will never be happy when bad things happen, but they will celebrate when God's truth is revealed in the lives of other people here on earth. Verse seven. Charity, this *agape*,

7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity, godly love, is not skeptical. We are not going to doubt the promises of God if we have God's love. Verse eight.

8. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Love is considered to be an eternal emotion. When a person we love passes away, our love for that person does not cease. My father passed away a few years ago, and I still love my father, just like I know he loved his father and his mother who passed away many years before him. Love does not stop when somebody who we knows, dies, and godly love is the same way. Godly love will never fail. It will continue forever. But notice how prophecies can fail. That's because prophecies are open to the interpretation of men. We can take a look at any number of prophecies in the Bible, and I think sadly, most people take a look at prophecy not

from the perspective of trying to simply understand where we are in the linear timeline of man's place here on earth, but in a very selfish effort to save their own skin. People who misread and misinterpret prophecies, those are the people whose prophecies will fail, but love will never fail. Tongues, languages will cease. The New Testament is written on the Greek language, which is a language that is in existence and use today. However, the Greek language is based on Latin, and Latin is not considered an active language. It is considered a scholarly language. Many of our medical terminologies in the English language are tied directly to Latin, but Latin itself is considered a dead language. It is simply not a language that is readily spoken on earth here today. Knowledge, knowledge shall vanish away. Everything that we learn is only information that we have. When we do die, the knowledge that we have dies with us. Even if we write down the knowledge that we have, so that others can read the knowledge, that knowledge is of no value until somebody in that situation would read what we've written down and apply it in their own life. So, even knowledge fades away, but this *agape*, this godly love, this charity, will continue forever. Verse nine.

9. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

When we look into the future, to try and understand prophecy, we don't have a clear image of what is going to happen. It's sort of like looking through a smoky, dark glass. We may see some things, we may overlook other things, simply based on our perspective. But in this future time when all is revealed, when this perfection is revealed in all people, then we will see things very, very clearly. For now though, we don't have this future time of perfection, we have this present current world that we live in, and it is a world that is described in verse thirteen.

13. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three;

We have faith that God sacrificed his only begotten son so that we could have eternal life. We have hope of the resurrection and those are all something we

have for the future. Right now, we have the opportunity to exercise charity, this *agape*, this godly love, but the greatest of faith, hope, and charity,

but the greatest of these is charity.

Nothing trumps charity, nothing trumps love, this godly love, this *agape*. *Agape* is the word we are looking at in depth, this godly love, this charity. There's a variation that is used frequently in the New Testament. It's the Greek word *agapao*, and that simply means to love. It's used in many places in the New Testament including Romans thirteen. Let's take a look at Romans thirteen, verse eight, Romans thirteen, verse eight.

Romans 13:8-10

8. Owe no man any thing, but to love

Or agapao,

one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

We must have this godly love one for another. Verse nine.

9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The ten commandments are easily thought of as four commandments that show us how to love God and six commandments that show us how to love our fellow people here on earth. Verse ten.

10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

When Jesus Christ said that he wasn't going to change any part of the law, not one jot or tittle till all was fulfilled, Jesus Christ was speaking of this time when this godly love would be established throughout earth for and by all people. That time has not yet arrived here on earth. We are still in the process of bringing that

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type of godly love about. However, love does nothing that is evil or wrong to another person. And because of that, when we are demonstrating this godly kind of love, we are fulfilling the purpose for the law, because the ten commandments, again, were written for us to one show how to love God and two how to love other people here on earth.

Jesus spoke of love to his disciples, and as he got closer to the time of his passing, he shared with them the importance of love in their life and the new commandment that he gave to them. Let's take a look at John thirteen beginning in verse thirty-one, John thirteen verse thirty-one. And, in this series of verses, we're using both the Greek word *agapao* and *agape*. Verse thirty-one.

John 13:31-35

31. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

And here is what Jesus said to the disciples. Verse thirty-four.

34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Jesus did not say that people would know we are his disciples if we kept the Sabbath, if we kept the Holy Days, if we kept the ten commandments, if we followed the laws of clean and unclean foods as given in the Bible. Jesus didn't say any of that. What did he say? We will be known by all men that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ if we have love one to another. That's the new commandment that Jesus Christ gave to us, and if that is a commandment that our Lord and Savior gave to us, that's a commandment we have to get right in our life. We have to have this godly love, this godly charity, this *agape* for other people, because if we do not, we are not fulfilling this commandment and we are

jeopardizing our own salvation. That would be very foolish. Notice what Jesus said in John chapter fifteen. John chapter fifteen verse nine.

John 15:9-17

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

Just as Jesus followed in the love of God by keeping the commandments of God, Jesus needs for us to continue in the love of Jesus by keeping that new commandment that He gave us, that we have love one for another.

10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

If we want to remain with Jesus, we must follow the commandments of Jesus, just as Jesus followed the commandments of God. Verse eleven.

11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

If we are living a life without joy, we need to examine ourselves, to see if the love of God is in us. We need to examine ourselves to see if this *agape* is within us. If we are showing this *agape* to other people, and when we are doing all of that, we do this final check, are we keeping the commandments of Jesus just as Jesus kept the Father's commandments. If we are doing all of this, then our joy will be full. It's as simple as that. Verse twelve.

12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

We need to show other people the same kind of love that Jesus had for us. Verse thirteen.

13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Jesus Christ physically laid down his life for us. He was sacrificed for us, so that we could have this shot at eternal life, thoroughly frustrating the evil that we know of

in Satan the devil. And, what does Jesus expect from us? How does Jesus expect us to lay down our life? He does not expect us to sacrifice our life, though for some that may be part of the life that they are called to live. Notice verse fourteen, *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”* We lay down our life not by living the life of our choosing, but by living the life that is the choosing of Jesus Christ, doing whatsoever Jesus Christ would have us do as Jesus Christ also follows the Father’s commandments. Verse fifteen.

15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Jesus Christ does not think of us as servants. He thinks of us as friends. We pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ drawing upon that very special relationship that Jesus Christ has with God the Father. We are Jesus Christ’s friends, and everything that Jesus has heard of the Father he has made known unto us. Verse sixteen.

16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

If we are ordained by Jesus Christ, that means we are specially set aside by Jesus Christ that we should go and bring forth fruit, spiritual fruit, and that as we develop this spiritual fruit, it remains, and whatsoever we ask of the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, God may give it to us. And then again, he ends in verse seventeen,

17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

This very special relationship that we have with Jesus Christ is that of a friend, and it’s based on the concept, this new commandment that we love one another.

With this love that we have, we sometimes wonder, is it possible to be separated from love? We live in a time when divorce is common, when love can grow and fade away. People will divorce. We live in a time where sometimes children are taken from their homes by child protective services. Is there any spiritual situation

out there that is similar? Paul wrote about that in his letter to the Romans. Let's take a look at Romans eight beginning with verse thirty-one, Romans eight verse thirty-one.

Romans 8:31-39

31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

And that's the biggest rhetorical question. If God is on our side, nobody can be against us, and the way that we make sure that God is on our side is that everything we do is aligned to the will of God. Verse thirty-two.

32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

It is Satan who is the accuser of the Brethren. It is Satan who will be the one who will lay charges against us with God. We take comfort in verse thirty-three in knowing that it is God that justifieth, or who adjudicates us as innocent. He acquits us when these charges from Satan are brought against us. Verse thirty-four.

34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Jesus is at the right hand of God. Jesus is our friend. Jesus will go to bat for his friends with God the Father. Verse thirty-five.

35. Who shall separate us from the love

Or agape,

of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love

Or agape,

of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing will separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. That's a promise that we have given to us in the Bible. Death will not separate us from the love of Jesus. Tribulations, famines, persecution, absolutely nothing will separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. Death may cause us to be temporarily separated from the people that we love here on earth, but it will not cause us ever to be separated from the love of Jesus Christ, and in that, we can take incredible and great comfort.

Let's consider what the apostle John wrote in his first letter. The apostle John wrote often about the concept of love, and in first John three, verse sixteen, we'll pick up where he talks about love.

1 John 3:16-18

16. Hereby perceive we the love

Or agape,

of God, because he laid down his life for us:

We know that Jesus had the love of God in him, because Jesus allowed himself to be sacrificed for us.

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

We will not physically sacrifice our bodies so that we die in the manner of death the Jesus Christ died, but we will lay down our lives in service to other people. Verse seventeen.

17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

As we have been given physical blessings from God and physical blessings are not the only type of blessings we're given, but when we have physical goods, that we can share with other people, and we see that other people have need, how can we have the love of God in us when we do not help other people who have this need. Notice what John writes in verse eighteen.

18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

We can go right through those words and overlook what it says. John is telling us to not be simply talking about love, but to be showing love in action. When we love in deed, we love through what we do. What we do always begins with obedience to the commandments of Jesus, to love one another, but beyond that, we need to be doing certain acts and things as we work and serve other people. And we not only show love in the deeds that we do, but in the truth. It's easy in the modern era to punt on the truth of God. We can punt on the weekly Sabbath Day. We can punt on God's annual Holy Days. We can punt on clean and unclean foods. And if we do all of that, we punt on the truth, and that's not how we love. We love in deed and in truth. That means we hold fast to that which we have from the Bible, but we also show this love towards other people. Deed in verse eighteen comes from the Greek word *ergon* which is Strong's Greek word 2041 and it means to work, an act, or a deed, and the very basis of all of our actions is obedience to the truth. But is also involves other things beyond that.

We live in a time where it is very possible for our love to be challenged. We live in a time where everyday we look, and we see evil things happening. Today in my home town, I heard about a young child who was stabbed at a fast food restaurant. Why is a very young child being stabbed at a fast food restaurant? Well, it's because we live in a time where there is a lot of evil in our world. Let's

take a look at what Jesus shared with his disciples shortly before his death in Matthew twenty-four. This was a time when Jesus had spoken at the temple and his disciples came to Jesus wanting to know a little bit more about what to expect when the end of time would come. Matthew twenty-four verse one.

Matthew 24:1-14

1. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

And here are some of the signs that Jesus gave. Verse four.

4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

There are many people who will tell you about Jesus Christ. What I will share with you is prove everything for yourself. Whatever I say, whatever anyone else may tell you about Jesus Christ, I encourage you to read it for yourself in the Bible and to prove what anybody is saying from the context of the Bible. Don't take a person's word as gospel because in this end time many people will come in the name of Christ to deceive people. Verse six.

6. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

We look around the world and there are armed conflicts and sometimes more significant battles and wars in very many places. The end of time is not yet here.

7. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Again, the need to prove what people are saying about the Bible. And because all of this evil occurs, what do we see happening in verse twelve?

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love

Or the *agape*,

of many shall wax cold.

It is the people of God who have this *agape*. It's not the person who doesn't know God who loses their *agape*. People who know God, the love of many shall wax cold. We cannot allow that to happen in our life. We must be on guard that the love of God that we have in our life stays glowingly hot in our life for other people. We cannot allow our love, this *agape*, to grow cold. Verse thirteen.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Let's take a look at the Book of Philippians chapter two, Philippians two verse one.

Philippians 2:1-11

1. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love,

Or *agape*,

if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2. Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

- 3. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**
- 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.**

We need to be concerned not only with our own selves, but with other people.

- 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**
- 6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:**
- 7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**
- 8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

When we have this *agape* in our life, we may not be expected to sacrifice ourselves like Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for us, but, we will have sacrifice in our life for other people because that is how we show *agape*. Verse nine.

- 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:**
- 10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;**
- 11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Jesus Christ is our spiritual brother. Jesus Christ is our high priest, and it is through the love of God in Jesus Christ, this *agape*, that we are a friend of God, and can call upon God in the name of Jesus Christ. *Agape* is the highest of the different kinds of fruit of the spirit that we see. Faith is the foundation of our spiritual development and it takes diligence to grow our faith. And, to our faith we have added virtue and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness. Today we've looked at the value of *agape*, this charity, this godly love. Godly love, *agape*, is the fulfilment of the law. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.