

Speaking to the soul



Agape

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:14

Robert Browning, the poet, wrote: “Take away love and our earth is a tomb.” It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of love. It isn’t merely one more excellent virtue which we need to acquire – it’s essential because without it no family, organisation or church can thrive. Paul encouraged his readers to put on the clothing of love, and just like any other clothing, we need to head into each day ensuring that it is in place.

The Greek word for love in this verse is ‘agape’. This is the love you have for people regardless of how they feel about you. It’s the kind of love which just can’t stop loving. It’s so committed to loving that it doesn’t give up when the going gets tough and the opposition is fierce. It is, of course, the kind of love that God first showed to us. When John wrote his first letter, he pointed to Jesus as being the supreme expression of God’s love.

Unfortunately, the word love easily gets confused with other words, such as *like*. But the truth is that we are called to love people whether we like them or not. To love is our God-given duty. The Bible makes it plain that the way of love is always God’s way and is a path of incredible blessing. At times, it will be agonisingly difficult to love, but as we do so, we are displaying the nature of God.

The only way to truly understand agape love is to look at the cross of Jesus. The only possible explanation of Jesus’ death is love. He didn’t have to go that way, but he chose to. If love was that costly for him, we shouldn’t be surprised that we will often have a price to pay as well. Love isn’t ever an easy path, but it is always the right one and the best one, so let’s clothe ourselves in God’s love today.

QUESTION

What will it mean for you to show agape love to people today?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that you have shown me what love really means. Fill me with your Spirit so that I may share your love with others today. Amen

Photo: Starscape over Durham Cathedral

