



# FROM THE PASTOR

*“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13 NRSV*

Dear Friends,

It shouldn't have taken me by surprise, but it did when a couple of weeks after Christmas I began to see displays for Valentine's Day at Fred Meyers. In those displays you will usually see decorations of hearts on packaging, flower arrangements, etc. They are meant to symbolize the main sentiment behind Valentine's Day, which is love. So, I thought it might be good as we are in the month when Valentine's Day is celebrated to look at how the bible, specifically how the apostle Paul defines love.

The Bible verse at the top of this monthly letter is the final verse of a whole chapter devoted to the topic of love from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13. It is an eloquent reflection on love when one reads it, reads it aloud or hears it. I have read it at many weddings, as well as at some funerals, especially when a beloved person has died. But there is more to be gained if we examine this chapter from just reading or hearing it. It all comes from the main word in this passage; love.

You see in the English language we have one word for love, which can be applied in many ways. You can tell a person "I love you." Many of us have probably heard the expression "making love." The word love can be used when really enjoying something like a movie or a food we like! At the far end of the spectrum "love" can be a term used in tennis.

However, the New Testament in the Bible was written in Greek. The Greek language has three words for love, describing various aspects of it. The first is "phileo" which describes "friendship" love. That word for "love" can be found in the city named "Philadelphia", called the "city of brotherly love." The second term is "eros" for physical love. (From that we get the familiar word "erotic.") The third word is "agape." This word for love describes a sacrificial act, preferring the other to self. It is this third word that Paul uses in this beautiful passage of scripture.

So, what Paul is calling the Corinthians to do, who were a bit self-centered and gathered in cliques, to be "sacrificial in putting others first." Obviously for them, to do that would be a tall order. But I believe when Paul wrote this, he did have an "example" in mind; Jesus Christ. He is the "embodiment" of self-sacrificial love in his crucifixion and death so that we might have eternal life.

So, during this month when love is at the heart of it "Valentine's Day", let us ask God to show us how we might be messengers in word and deed of the sacrificial love Paul is describing. I can't think of a more appropriate way of bearing witness to our faith in Jesus Christ to others than that.

Your brother in Christ,  
John

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**Sunday Worship Times**  
**8:30 & 11:00am**  
**Sunday School**  
**9:45am**



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