

University Heights Church
of Christ
445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is immediately followed by a short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

David Collins

John Thompson

Troy Antle

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Richard Brundige

Matt Thompson

Adam Litmer

Bill Morelan

Jim Parsons

Pat Seabolt

Adam Daniels

Jamie Powell

Adam's Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday (8:30-4:00)

that they heard about Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection. Realizing they were transgressors of God's law they repented of their sins, publicly confessed their belief in Jesus being the Son of God, and were baptized for the remission of those sins. No Pope, priest, or confessional was involved in their salvation. Although Christians continue to sin from time to time they are blessed with the ability to seek forgiveness from God, and when we do so the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. (See 1 John 1:7-9)

Place your faith in God and His word, not in man and his prideful proclamations.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Declan Weatherholt, Jaclyn Litmer, David Seabolt, Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Louis Harrod, Paul Atkisson, Keia Burton, Robert Brundige, Susie Burton, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Janett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Burnice Richardson, Ruth Poynter, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron, Tony Tyree, Jennifer Dunbar, Jean Gartland, John Blessing, Alleen Terrell, the McDonald family, William Roberts, Kip Pearce, Paul Lyda

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Love: The More Excellent Way

Adam Litmer

Our Corinthian brethren were impressed with miraculous spiritual gifts. The ability to speak in tongues was especially valued among them even to the point that they used the gift incorrectly (1 Corinthians 14:1-23). It seems likely that the tongue speakers among them had grown proud and boastful in their gift. In 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 Paul deals specifically with how they were to view and use the gifts bestowed upon them by the Spirit.

Some have questioned the placement of chapter 13 between 12 and 14 while others have gone so far as to claim it was inserted at a later date by another author entirely. Many question what this beautiful chapter on love has to do with the subject matter of chapters 12 and 14. Is the passage misplaced? Is it merely one of the long parenthetical statements Paul is fond of? I believe the passage is situated in the perfect place to achieve maximum impact both to its original hearers and to us.

Among Christians grown proud and boastful against one another nothing is more needful than 1 Corinthians 13. Love is more excellent than any miraculous spiritual gift. Indeed, the Corinthian brethren could be saved without ever possessing any such gift; but they could never be saved without possessing love.

The love of 1 Corinthians 13 is agape. This is the superior love; the highest love. This is the love that moved God to send His Son to this earth (John 3:16). The reason agape is superior is that it surpasses emotion. It is not based upon pleasant feelings. Instead, it focuses upon the tremendous worth found within every person. As God observed sinful man He saw very little to spark pleasant emotions or feelings. However, He *did* see something of immeasurable value when He gazed upon man's soul. On the basis of the souls immense worth God *chose* to act on behalf of man. That is what agape *is*. It is defined by its willingness to *choose* to act in the best interest of its object, even if the emotions elicited by the object are not pleasant, *because* of the worth found within the object. In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul is calling upon Christians to *love like God*. Just how serious a matter is this? Let's consider the first three verses of chapter 13.

Verse 1. *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or clanging cymbal.* The first three verses of this marvelous chapter are filled with hyperbole (exaggeration for emphasis). Paul's language indicates someone who possessed the ability to speak in every tongue known to man. Even more, this individual possessed the ability to speak in the language of angels. Among the Corinthians a greater Christian could not be imagined. However, if he lacked agape he was as useless as a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. That is not the description of a saved person.

Verse 2. *And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.* See more hyperbole here. None besides God understands *all* mysteries and *all* knowledge. No record exists of anyone with faith so strong that they moved mountains from their path with but a thought. Yet even if such a person *did* exist, if they lacked agape, they were nothing. That is not the description of a saved person.

Verse 3. *If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.* I suspect there is hyperbole even here. I've never known or heard of anyone to give away *all* (every last possession, including the shirt off their back) they have. Many *have* given their lives to the fire, however. Even so, without agape, they gain nothing. That is not the description of a saved person.

Now let us make the application to ourselves. Do we possess the zeal of Paul, the courage of Elijah, the hope of Peter, the devotion of David, the faith of Abraham, the dependability of Luke, the eloquence of Apollos, and the wisdom of Solomon? What mighty Christians would we be if we possessed them all! Unless, that is, we are devoid of agape. In that case our zeal, courage, hope, devotion, faith, dependability, eloquence, and wisdom will perhaps serve to help others but not ourselves. Agape is the more excellent way. It is what moved God to act on behalf of the unlikeable and undeserving. Both you and I are in that group, brethren. Let the same love cause us to *choose* (for agape is always a choice) to act on behalf of others. Their soul is worth it and ours depends upon it.

Whose Power Is It To Forgive Sin?

John Thompson

1 John 3:4 tells us sin is a transgression of the law. One sins when he crosses the boundary from law into lawlessness. In order to fully understand what sin is one needs to know whose law is being transgressed. Why is that bit of information so important? It is essential because it tells the one committing the sin who he has sinned against and who has the power to forgive. John writes that sin is, by definition, a transgression of God's law. So, when we sin, we sin against God. In sinning against God we might also be

sinning against someone else or against some entity such as the government, but the bottom line is that we have sinned against our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

When we sin we should seek to be forgiven of that sin. From whom do we seek forgiveness? Who has the power to forgive our sin? Who can wipe the slate clean? It stands to reason that we seek forgiveness from the one whose law we have broken. Hear David acknowledge this very principle as the enormity of his transgressions against God weigh him down and compel him to beg for forgiveness. *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.* (Psalm 51:1-4) Yes, David sinned against Bathsheba and against her husband, Uriah, but it was God's law he broke, and it was from God he sought forgiveness. Young Joseph, when enticed by his master's wife tried explaining to her why he could not meet her demands. He said, *How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" (Genesis 39:9). Had Joseph given in to the temptation he would have sinned against Potiphar, but it was God's law he would have broken. Simon was told by Peter, *Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.* (Acts 8:22) Forgiveness of sins is inextricably bound to the cleansing blood spilled by our Savior during his crucifixion. *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:7-9)

Pope Francis has recently informed the world that he has extended the ability of priests to forgive the sin of abortion. It takes a seriously misguided and ill-informed individual to believe himself to be so powerful that he can do what God has never done, i.e. granted another person the power to forgive sin. The Pope has no power or authority, regardless of what he believes, to bestow upon his priests the ability to forgive sins. The priest who hears a confession may inform the sinner that his sins are forgiven, but his words are useless. Furthermore, the one who confessed leaves the confessional as deeply stained by sin as when he went in.

God is the Creator. God is the Lawgiver. It is His law that is transgressed by sin and it is His forgiveness that must be sought. Only God can forgive sins! All the sinner has to do is to place his faith in God, the only One who can forgive his sins; come to know God's conditions of pardon, and then meet those conditions. When one studies the men and women in the book of Acts who became Christians, one learns

