Messy Grace **– wk 19 – Triple Decker**

**Corinthians written by the Apostle Paul to a church he planted 5 yrs earlier. Weird stuff was getting back to him. A challenge to grow up!**

**Paul has been correcting some wreck-lessness in their life**

**(1 Cor 1:5-5, 3:1-2)**

**1 Corinthians 12-14 – talking about their life together and in their gatherings. They were out of order and causing confusion.**

**Right in the middle is one of the most famous chaps in bible. Read at weddings and Valentines’ day… a chapter on Love.**

**13 is about the great work of the Spirit in true follower of Jesus**

**1 Cor 12:31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. (Spiritual gifts that encourage and build up) - And yet I will show you the most excellent way.**

**What is this most excellent way? Our FATHER gives us a picture of great pursuit for dad’s dad (and everyone else)**

**1 Corinthians 13:13 …these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

**BBQ grille, burger. What’s cookin’ in your life? What should be cookin’ A great big triple decker to bite into - faith, hope, love.**

**FAITH - trust in the true and living LORD – in God’s goodness now**

**HOPE - trust and assurance in His goodness to come (return eternity)**

**LOVE- not a song, romance movie, family love - this is deeper.**

**LOVE - Agape**

**(John 13:1-17, Ro 13:8-10, Phil 2:3-5, 1:9-10, 2 Thess 3:10, Heb 12:5-8, Eph 4:15)**

**Called unconditional love – this love puts the needs and interests of others first. It has no boundaries and does not change – or expect repayment. It is best defined as “self-denying”**

**It has been said, Love is always and never in our best interest.**

**Let’s read 1 Co 13, I need some music to bring it home, set mood. Tiny.**

**1 Corinthians 13:1** **If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. (Thank you Tiny – that was beautiful)**

The Priority and Superiority of Love

 **Let’s break down the most famous love chapter in the Bible**

**Of anything you could desire – this is it - Fathers day!!**

**1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and/or angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. (It’s just noise)**

* **Without Agape, all that I say is ineffective**

**The world is impressed by great communicators. God is impressed with great lovers – Our words have power when motivated by love –**

**\*\* we are to – “Speak the truth in - Love” (Eph 4:15)**

**1 Cor 13:2 - If I have the gift of prophecy, and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge... (Scripture knowledge) but have not love I am nothing…”**

* **Without Agape, all that I know is incomplete**

**Knowledge is another area where people are impressed – sadly we often value knowledge and education more than love.**

**Smart, successful, athletic, wealthy - and unloving**

**We’re in a knowledge explosion- with the internet, phone, & media But with all this knowledge – are we any more satisfied or fulfilled? No.**

**1 Corinthians 8:1 - …Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.**

**13:2 and if I have faith that can move mountains but have not love I am nothing.**

* **Without Agape, all that I believe is insufficient**

**Some people erroneously believe that all there is to being a Christian is believing – but guess what the devil believes too.**

**Gal 5:6 - …The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**

**Actually, compassionate love moves and motivates true faith**

**1 Cor 13:3 - If I give all I possess to the poor... but have not love, I gain nothing.**

 **(You could give / sacrifice everything that you’ve got – but it still is nothing…)**

* **Without Agape, all that I give is insignificant**

**We usually give for the wrong reasons: recognition, control, guilt, obligation - People who give for the wrong reasons begin to resent it**

**Giving coupled by love: heart for people, the nations, lost, needy – results in sacrifice without regret.**

**1 Corinthians 13:3 - … (if I) surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. (If I were to give my life for God…)**

* **Without Agape, all that I accomplish is inadequate**

**One day God will audit our life - when He does He will not focus on our accomplishments or bank account - but our relationships to evaluate how you loved.**

**Success without love is nothing – it’s empty. We see this every day – the famous and wealthy still empty. Life - love = nothing**

**Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

**How do we live this? Is it possible? Chap 13 defines agape for us. This a picture of great Fatherhood (love of any kind)**

**Paul defines this agape 7 Christlike qualities & 7 un-Christlike qualities**

**1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.**

**4 Things to Know about Agape (Dynamic Love)**

**1. Agape is a choice (Matthew 5:43-44, Matthew 22:36-40)**

**We read 1 Cor 13 and we want that kind of Love- But do we give that kind of Love? You choose to love & you choose not to love**

**A myth of Love is that Love is uncontrollable - “I just fell in love” – like it was a ditch or something - That’s not true – you can help it.**

**That is the power of agape, it is not led or controlled by feelings**

**Men / Fathers remember the Gillet commercial. The hatred & comments were mind blowing. Why are we so offended by the challenge to be better in how we treat each other? Are you threatened that you might need to change or admit your attitude is negative. The Arrogance.**

**Ask yourself - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - Love is patient (Do I give others the same room to make mistakes as I want them to give me?) love is kind. (Do the people I work with actually like being around me?) It does not envy (Do I see others blessings as a threat to what I think I deserve?) It does not boast. (Do I feel I need to remind people how great I am – or try to make me look better?) It is not proud. (Do I feel like I have all the answers?) Love is not rude. (Do I give my spouse and kids a chance to be heard – Do I cut them down or off?) It is not self-seeking. (Do I make the arguments with my wife about what I want?) Love is not easily angered. (Are my kids afraid to talk to me? Do I have a short fuse?) It keeps no record of wrongs. (Do I remind people of their past mistakes for my own leverage?) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. (Do I laugh or make fun of others failures? Are people able to speak honestly with me?) Love always protects (Does your spouse know you have their back? – your friends – You can count on me!) always trusts (Do you believe in and trust those around you?) always hopes (Do you assume the worst in people or the best?) always perseveres (Am I quick to give up on relationships?) Love never fails (Love doesn’t walk out on you?)**

**Love is not a feeling - When you chose to love even when you don’t feel like it – it is actually a greater expression of love**

**2. Agape is an action**

**It’s not something we say, know, believe, or accomplish – it is not something we start and finish – it is perpetual movement.**

**Notice all the action - 1 Cor 13:4-7 - Love is… love is… love is… love is… love is… love is (lit. is means = agape does this)**

* **Love is getting up in the middle of the night with a sick child**
* **Love is patient when you husband is uptight and a jerk**
* **Love is kind when your wife is irritable and negative**
* **Love is giving a person what they need – not what they deserve**

**3. Agape is not optional (1 Cor 13:1-3, Jo 13:34-35, 1 Jo 4:7-8, Rev 2:1-5)**

**Those passages that we are read are not an optional quality – they are not the gold package for Christians – or the extra credit. It is the core.**

**The absence of it – renders everything else we do worthless – we read the verses earlier…**

**John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love (Agape) one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (why was this new? World operates on a give to who deserves it, kind of love – this is not that) 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, (Mathetes) if you love one another.”**

**The primary identifier of someone who really has Jesus is – AGAPE.**

**It is *the* fruit – the by-product – it grows from you.**

**Jesus said the world will know you are His disciple by our love for each other. A primary reason the world loathes Christians...**

**(1 John 4) – if we don’t have it, we don’t belong to God.**

**How can we possibly love like that? It seems impossible – but there is ONE who has done it and models it – and love you this way…. Jesus.**

**4. We Must Know Love to Give Love**

**Matthew 22:36-39 …Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”**

**That is the problem with some – you can’t give or receive love because you don’t know love – and you don’t love yourself**

**For some - the pain of growing up not knowing love has affected your ability to give and show love in a healthy way. … (your father / family)**

**3 ways we respond to a lack of love:**

**\* We desperately look for it – touch me please (promiscuous)**

**\* We become a shell and run from it – please don’t touch me**

**\* Some loath themselves and look for abusive relationships**

**I want to tell you something – God loves you - He gave it all for you – our sin was not going to stop Him – the cross answers**

**John 3:16 – God so Loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. The Dynamic Love of God – to heal and forgive**

**Knowing the Love of God that forgives and covers our sin through the Spirit enables us to love others in ways we never imagined!**

**What kind of reputation do you want dad? Tough, quiet, harsh, hardworking, great beard, strong, reliable – greatest thing you can serve up is FAITH< HOPE< LOVE – Great triple deckers!!!**

**1 Cor 13:8b But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is (word of) knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, (our gifts abilities, possessions, accomplishments will all fade) 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.**

**When Jesus appears – we will not need the spiritual gifts.**

**But FAITH – HOPE – LOVE will remain forever**

**11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. (time to grow up dads! - this life is like being a simple-minded child – being with Jesus will be like growing up – and the SN gifts will be out away) 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; (we need them now to understand God and our self) then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (when Christ returns and you are made whole – you will truly be known – as you are and better!) 13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

**Take a big triple decker burger to bite into - faith, hope, love.**

**You want to be a great Father? A great parent? A great spouse and friend? FAITH, HOPE, LOVE – the greatest of these is love!**

**1 Cor 14:1 Follow the way of love (pursue – (LB) make your greatest aim) and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit…**

**Life’s Greatest Aim**

**Have you ever noticed how people aim at a lot of things?**

**Our aim is not to be knowledge, education, success, money, power, respect – the aim is not a family, a house, decent job and friends… But who you know (Jesus) and how you love – it is our life’s greatest aim**