

Trinity 2 2017 Some thoughts on the Collect Rev Godfrey Hilliard

Allow me to remind you of the words of today's Collect.

*Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Send your Holy Spirit and,

*“pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.*

In the days of recent horrors, Westminster Bridge, Manchester, London Bridge and Borough Market, the Finsbury Park mosque and the unspeakable horror of the fire at Grenfell Tower, we have been called upon to show love to one another; that love and peace which passes all understanding. But what do we really mean by love and what is the definition that we are given in the New Testament?

There are four types of Love defined in the New Testament – Greek words and definitions. Love is a special and complicated emotion which is quite difficult to understand. Although most people believe that love revolves around the heart, it actually occurs in the brain. Artists, poets and painters all epitomize the heart as the love symbol, but it's the brain that generates chemical signals to

make people understand love. There are different forms and styles of expressing love. To describe these styles, the Ancient Greeks came up with four terms (

agape, philia, storge and eros) to symbolize the four types of love. Let us look at these four loves in details.

Agape

This is an unconditional love that sees beyond the outer surface and accepts the recipient for whom he/she is, regardless of their flaws, shortcomings or faults. It's the type of love that everyone strives to have for their fellow human beings. Although you may not like someone, you decide to love them just as a human being. This kind of love is all about sacrifice as well as giving and expecting nothing in return. The translation of the word agape is love in the verb – form: it is the love demonstrated by your behavior towards another person. It is a committed and chosen love.

Phileo

The phileo love refers to an affectionate, warm and tender platonic love. It makes you desire friendship with someone. It's the kind of love which livens up the Agape love. Although you may have an agape love for your enemies, you may not have a phileo love for the same people. The translation of the word phileo is love in the noun – form: it is how you feel about someone. It is a committed and chosen love.

Storge

It is a kind of family and friendship love. This is the love that parents naturally feel for their children; the love that member of the family have for each other; or the love that friends feel for each other. In some cases, this friendship love may turn into a romantic relationship, and the couple in such a relationship becomes best friends. Storge love is unconditional, accepts flaws or faults and ultimately drives you to forgive. It's committed, sacrificial and makes you feel secure, comfortable and safe.

Eros

Eros is a passionate and intense love that arouses romantic feelings; it is the kind that often triggers “high” feelings in a new relationship and makes you say, “I love you”. It is simply an emotional and sexual love. Although this romantic love is important in the beginning of a new relationship, it may not last unless it

moves a notch higher because it focuses more on self instead of the other person. If the person “in love” does not feel good about their relationship anymore, they will stop loving their partner.

This just offers us a general understanding and description of the four types of love which promotes a good, healthy and progressive relationship. In any relationship, we should have all these four loves working together to enable it survive for a longer time. But in some cases, a relationship may be long-lasting if partners share the same style of love.

"The theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God." Paul tells us that love is the greatest of the theological virtues: "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

I enjoy very much one particular scene in the movie, “Crocodile Dundee.” A folk hero from the outback country of Australia, Crocodile Dundee visits New York City for the first time. While accompanied by a female newspaper writer, he finds himself cornered by a gang of young thugs. When Dundee does not immediately produce his wallet, one young hoodlum pulls out a switchblade and threatens Crocodile Dundee. Not bothered by such aggression, Crocodile simply reaches behind his back with the words, “That’s not a knife,” suddenly producing the largest knife I have ever seen, “This is a knife!” Quickly disarmed, the hoodlums run for their lives.

It is as though Paul is saying to the Corinthians, “No that is not love, **this is love**” the bigger and bolder love that comes only from Jesus himself.

That is the love that Jesus demands of us. A love that is all embracing, all consuming and above all, selfless and freely given.

After all we have been through in the last month, love may well have been far from our minds as we may be prompted to ask why a loving God will allow such things to happen to us.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, much loved of wedding couples, reminds us that love is the most important thing in life, and as the Greeks remind us, it has many interpretations. As Crocodile Dundee pointed out with his huge knife: This a knife; as Paul reminds us; This is real love.

It was 50 years ago that the Beatles released the single, "All you need is love".

Love, Love, Love.

Love, Love, Love.

Love, Love, Love.

There's nothing you can do that can't be done.

Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.

Nothing you can say but you can learn how to play the game.

It's easy.

Nothing you can make that can't be made.

No one you can save that can't be saved.

Nothing you can do but you can learn how to be you in time.

It's easy.

All you need is love.

All you need is love.

All you need is love, love.

Love is all you need.

Nothing you can know that isn't known.

Nothing you can see that isn't shown.

Nowhere you can be that isn't where you're meant to be.

It's easy.

All you need is love (All together, now!)

All you need is love (Everybody!)

All you need is love, love. Love is all you need (love is all you need).

Love, Love, Love. Love, Love, Love, Love, Love, Love.

*There's nothing you can do that can't be done.
Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.
Nothing you can say but you can learn how to play the game.
It's easy.*

*Nothing you can make that can't be made.
No one you can save that can't be saved.
Nothing you can do but you can learn how to be you in time.
It's easy.*

*All you need is love.
All you need is love.
All you need is love, love.
Love is all you need.*

*Nothing you can know that isn't known.
Nothing you can see that isn't shown.
Nowhere you can be that isn't where you're meant to be.
It's easy.*

*All you need is love (All together, now!)
All you need is love (Everybody!)
All you need is love, love. Love is all you need (love is all you need).*

Who knows, maybe the Beatles and St Paul are right!

Amen.