

## 344: Aug 25; Sept 1. Love is the Answer (New Testament Weeks 34-35)

8/25: 1 Cor. 1-7

**9/1**: 1 Cor 8-13

Schedule Review:

9/8: 1 Cor. 14-16

**9/15**: 2 Cor. 1-7

9/22: 2 Cor. 8-13

9/29: Galatians

10/6: General Conference

10/13: Ephesians

**10/20**: Philipians; Colossians

The four loves, by C. S. Lewis

<http://www.cslewis.com/love-love-love-love/>

### **Affection (*storge*)**

Affection covers an array of loves. Like animals, the care of mother to babe is a picture of affection. It relies on the expected and the familiar. Lewis describes it as humble. "Affection almost slinks or seeps through our lives," he says. "It lives with humble, un-dress, private things; soft slippers, old clothes, old jokes, the thump of a sleepy dog's tail on the kitchen floor, the sound of a sewing-machine..." Affection can sit alongside other loves and often does. For example, when a man and woman fall in love it is often because of certain affections – a particular location, experience, personality, interest – that begin to wrap around the couple so to make love an expected and familiar part of their shared lives. It's the familiarity of, "the people with whom you are thrown together in the family, the college, the mess, the ship, the religious house," says Lewis. The affection for the people always around us, in the normal day-to-day of life, is the majority of the love we experience, even if we don't label it.

### **Friendship (*philia*)**

Friendship is the love dismissed. "To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves," says Lewis, "the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it." Why? Perhaps we know it's the most time consuming, the least celebrated, the one we could live without. Perhaps too, as Lewis says, "few value it because few experience it." Romance lends itself to conception, affection enables us to have a sense of place and belonging, and charity provides a track to redemption. But friendship doesn't

provide the same level of productivity, if we want to state it in a consumer mindset. However, Lewis thinks friendship likely has closest resemblance to Heaven where we will be intertwined in our relationships. We develop a kinship over something in common and that longing for camaraderie makes friendship all the more wanted. “Friendship must be about something,” Lewis says, “even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice. Those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travellers.” Think about it too. Friendships have begun faith movements, developed entire areas of thought, and contributed to many projects from art to business.

### **Romantic (*eros*)**

Different than friendship, lovers, “are always talking to one another about their love” and “are normally face to face, absorbed in each other,” says Lewis. The danger in romantic love is to follow blindly after a feeling of passion. Then, we celebrate the passion and think its absence means such love has died. Certainly, true romance is not so fickle. Though the feeling is useful. “The event of falling in love is of such a nature that we are right to reject as intolerable the idea that it should be transitory,” says Lewis. “In one high bound it has overleaped the massive wall of our selfhood; it has made appetite itself altruistic, tossed personal happiness aside as a triviality and planted the interests of another in the centre of our being. Spontaneously and without effort we have fulfilled the law (towards one person) by loving our neighbour as ourselves. It is an image, a foretaste, of what we must become to all if Love Himself rules in us without a rival.” There’s a reason Scripture teaches this bond of man and woman, from Genesis onward, is the picture of God’s love for the world, Christ for his bride, the church. When we discover afresh that romance is more deeply set than the drivel served up by our culture, than we will more rightly hold our spouse in the model of unconditional love.

### **Charity (*agape*)**

This is our chief aim, the unconditional love of the Father given to us through his Son. Affection, friendship and romantic love are each the training ground for charity to grow. It’s also a rival to the three. Lewis mentions St. Augustine’s deep loss of a friend who says that such desolation is what occurs when we give our heart to anything but God. “All human beings pass away,” says Lewis. “Don’t put your goods in a leaky vessel. Don’t spend too much on a house you may be turned out of.” Yet, we are made to love and we are in want of it. If we play it safe, we are not living out the Gospel, but burying the coin in the safe ground, as the parable says. Lewis reminds us:

*There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of*

*tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.*

John 21: A reminder (Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, using Paul's word, agape, and Peter responds twice that yes, he likes/is fond of him (philia). The third time Jesus

Agape (pronounced ah-gah-pay)

Selfless love that wants what is best for self and others, independent of ego or comparison.  
"Charity"

Analysis of 1 Cor. 13 (Paul has been speaking about spiritual gifts, and now uses one gift/concept to put everything in perspective) (show dictionary)

Love: Agape: "the quality of warm regard for and interest in another" (My definition of love is: A warm desire for someone's well-being, backed by a willingness to invest in that well-being)

Suffereth long: Makrothumei: This makes me think of my "hurt well" principle. Emotional endurance is one of the most essential skills in life. Self controlled in the face of provocation. Patient, forbearing, tolerant.

Kind: chresteutai: "treat well" seems to be the core of this word, the root being "to use" and something being "easy". Makes me think of David Scharch's advice that our job is to become the easiest version of ourselves, and only then require others to deal with the remainder.

Envieth not: ou zeloi: "to have intense negative feelings over another's achievement or success" but also "to be positively interested in something, strive". One of the attributes that makes me most happy and well is that I genuinely celebrate excellence without comparison. I'm happy when ANYONE excels, even if they are in competition with me.

Vaunteth not itself: ou perpereutai: "braggart, windbag" heaping praise on yourself.

Is not puffed up: phusioutai: blow up or inflate "to cause to have an exaggerated self-conception" "full of hot air" medical term for swollen.

Doth not behave itself unseemly: ou aschemonei: To act contrary to social standards. Related to "schema"

Seeketh not her own: ou zetei ta heutes: Just what it says "does not seek what is its own" (for its own benefit)

Is not easily provoked: ou paraxunetai: Root is "sharpen" provoke irritation or escalated state, "work up"

Thinketh no evil: logizetai to kakon: I really like the Greek nuance of this. "Does not keep an account of bad things" (don't keep a stockpile of negatives to weaponize later)

Rejoiceth not in iniquity: ou chairei epi te adikia: Interesting tension in the words. Xhairo means rejoice, take pleasure in, be glad. So don't rejoice/be glad in things contrary to the principles of wellness.

Rejoiceth in the truth: sunchairei de te aletheia. I really like the addition of "sun" which means "with" So, "rejoice with" that which is true. Love it. "Love what is" is one of my current practices.

Bearth all things: panta stegēi: Protective enclosure. I love that nuance! “To bear up against difficulties” I love the idea of staying firm and strong to protect ourselves and others.

Believeth all things: panta pisteuei: This is the faith word. Believe in, trust, have confidence in, lean on, put confidence in, invest in.

Hopeth all things: panta elpizēi: Look forward to something with confidence.

Endureth all things: panta hupomēnei: “stay in a place beyond the expected amount of time” Remain. Stand one’s ground, endure. Remain where we should be even when we have pressure against us, even when things try to make us move. Fortitude.

[https://biblehub.com/interlinear/1\\_corinthians/13.htm](https://biblehub.com/interlinear/1_corinthians/13.htm)

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται, οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν, οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συνχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.

Corinthian problems and how love solves them:

Now that we have the answer, let’s look at the problems:

- 1: Rivalries, comparison of status and conversion pedigree.
- 2: Boasting in wisdom/learning (implied)
- 3: More competition of status/pedigree.
- 4:
- 5: Someone married his stepmother. Immoral associations.
- 6: Christians taking each other to court/suing.
- 7: Questions about sex, marriage, and the lack thereof.
- 8: food sacrificed to idols
- 9: Should religious leaders be financially supported?
- 10: idolatry and temptation
- 11: Worship issues (women wearing veils; Paul struggles here). The rich eating all the Lord’s supper.
- 12: Comparison/pride about spiritual gifts.

A few other highlights:

“All things to all people” (also 9:5 mentions the apostles are married, which is cool)

“No temptation that is not common to humanity has seized you. God is faithful, and he will not permit you to be tempted beyond your ability, but with trial he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (important clarification beyond the oversimplistic way we cite this)

Love and the body of Christ (Love everyone for what they are. Delight and celebrate everyone for what they are, without comparison or defensiveness)

Makes me think of how I've understood humility: 1) Honesty (making yourself no more, no less than you are), 2) no need to compare, 3) able to accept correction and feedback graciously

Discussion/exploration: How does love solve all problems?

Conclusion:

Takeaway: Truly love IS the greatest, and in some ways, the only necessary commandment.

Love God: Love what is greater than your understanding, your source, mystery, what IS.

Love yourself: Has to start here. Love yourself as you are now with compassionate acceptance.

Love your neighbor: Show and practice love for those around you.

Love: Take each person seriously as a divine, singular, free being. Treat people as people.

Treat yourself as a person.

David Whyte (From the book Consolations)

Unrequited

UNREQUITED

love is the love human beings experience most of the time. The very need to be fully requited may be to turn from the possibilities of love itself. Men and women have always had difficulty with the way a love returned hardly ever resembles a love given, but unrequited love may be the form that love mostly takes; for what affection is ever returned over time in the same measure or quality with which it is given? Every man or woman loves differently and uniquely and each of us holds different dreams and hopes and falls in love or is the object of love at a very specific threshold in a very particular life where very, very particular qualities are needed for the next few years of our existence. What other human being could ever love us as we need to be loved? And whom could we know so well and so intimately through all the twists and turns of a given life that we could show them exactly, the continuous and appropriate form of affection they need?

Requited love may happen, but it is a beautiful temporary, a seasonal blessing, the aligning of stars not too often in the same quarter of the heavens; an astonishing blessing, but it is a harvest coming only once every long cycle, and a burden to the mind and the imagination when we set that dynamic as the state to which we must always return to in order to feel ourselves in a true, consistent, loving relationship.

Whether our affections are caught in romantic love, trying to see our neighbors as ourselves or trying to love a great but distant God, our love rarely seems to be returned in the mode that it is given. That gift is returned in ways that to begin with, we rarely recognize. Human beings live in disappointment and a self-appointed imprisonment when they refuse to love unless they are loved the self- same way in return. It is the burden of marriage, the difficult invitation at the heart of parenting and the central difficulty in our relationship with an imagined, living God. The great discipline seems to be to give up wanting to control the manner in which we are requited, and to forgo the natural disappointment that flows from expecting an exact and measured reciprocation, from a partner, from a child, from a loving God.

We seem to have been born into a world where love, except for brilliant, exceptional moments, often seems to exist from one side only, ours - and that may be the difficulty and the revelation and the gift - to see love as the ultimate letting go and through the doorway of that affection, make the most difficult sacrifice of all, giving away the very thing we want to hold forever.

## HEARTBREAK

is unpreventable; the natural outcome of caring for people and things over which we have no control, of holding in our affections those who inevitably move beyond our line of sight. Even the longest, strongest marriage has had its heart broken many times just in the act of staying together over the years.

Heartbreak begins the moment we are asked to let go but cannot, in other words, it colors and inhabits and magnifies each and every day; heartbreak is not a visitation, but a path that human beings follow through even the most average life. Heartbreak is an indication of our sincerity: in a love relationship, in a life's work, in trying to learn a musical instrument, in the attempt to shape a better more generous self. Heartbreak is the beautifully helpless side of love and affection and is just as much an essence and emblem of care as the spiritual athlete's quick but abstract ability to let go. Heartbreak has its own way of inhabiting time and its own beautiful and trying patience in coming and going.

Heartbreak is how we mature; yet we use the word heartbreak as if it only occurs when things have gone wrong: an unrequited love, a shattered dream, a child lost before their time. Heartbreak, we hope, is something we hope we can avoid; something to guard against, a chasm to be carefully looked for and then walked around; the hope is to find a way to place our feet where the elemental forces of life will keep us in the manner to which we want to be accustomed and which will keep us from the losses that all other human beings have experienced without exception since the beginning of conscious time. But heartbreak may be the very essence of being human, of being on the journey from here to there, and of coming to care deeply for what we find along the way.

...If heartbreak is inevitable and inescapable, it might be asking us to look for it and make friends with it, to see it as our constant and instructive companion, and even perhaps, in the depth of its impact as well as in its hindsight, to see it as its own reward. Heartbreak asks us not to look for an alternative path, because there is no alternative path. It is a deeper introduction to what we love and have loved, an inescapable and often beautiful question, something or someone who has been with

us all along, asking us to be ready to let go of the way we are holding everything and everyone that comes our way, and preparation perhaps, for the last letting go of all.

## Friendship

is a mirror to presence and a testament to forgiveness. Friendship not only helps us see ourselves through another's eyes, but can be sustained over the years only with someone who has repeatedly forgiven us for our trespasses as we must find it in ourselves to forgive them in turn. A friend knows our difficulties and shadows and remains in sight, a companion to our vulnerabilities more than our triumphs, when we are under the strange illusion we do not need them. An undercurrent of real friendship is a blessing exactly because its elemental form is rediscovered again and again through understanding and mercy. All friendships of any length are based on a continued, mutual forgiveness. Without tolerance and mercy all friendships die.

In the course of the years a close friendship will always reveal the shadow in the other as much as ourselves, to remain friends we must know the other and their difficulties and even their sins and encourage the best in them, not through critique but through addressing the better part of them, the leading creative edge of their incarnation, thus subtly discouraging what makes them smaller, less generous, less of themselves.

Through the eyes of a real friendship an individual is larger than their everyday actions, and through the eyes of another we receive a greater sense of our own personhood, one we can aspire to, the one in whom they have most faith. Friendship is a moving frontier of understanding not only of the self and the other but also, of a possible and as yet un-lived, future.

But no matter the medicinal virtues of being a true friend of sustaining a long close relationship with another, the ultimate touchstone of friendship is not improvement, neither of the other nor of the self, the ultimate touchstone is witness, the privilege of having been *seen* by someone and the equal privilege of being granted the sight of the essence of another, to have walked with them and to have believed in them, and sometimes just to have accompanied them for however brief a span, on a journey impossible to accomplish alone.