*Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13*

“*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor. 13:13).*

**Charity**

Father God, we give you glory and honor. We adore you and give you the highest praise. Thank you for your counsel and everlasting fatherhood. Lord, you tell us clearly in your Word to love our neighbor as ourselves. How can we do this, except we receive insight from you?

Today we examine charity and love in 1 Corinthians 13, the “love chapter” of the Bible: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

Charity means love. Love is above all the gifts of the Spirit and today we are talking about the unconditional love of God called agape. I pray that agape be given to us in our spirit man, so that we will be able to love our neighbors as ourselves. How is it possible to manifest this kind of love with today’s “everyman for himself, God for us all” attitude? What are the virtues of the kind of love our Lord Jesus Christ commanded? Agape love has fourteen main attributes: it suffers long, is kind, does not envy, is not puffed up and does not vaunt itself, does not behave unseemly, does not seek her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, rejoices not in iniquity, rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

The God kind of love—charity—never fails. Let us mature in love today. Let us upgrade to agape love, the kind of love that will manifest all these virtues. When we were children we were only able to practice eros, romantic love, or philos, the love for family members. But the Bible tells us to outgrow childish things and get to the real experience of love, the God kind of love. The question is: How can we give to someone else what we do not have? That is why the Lord said in His famous instruction: Love your neighbor as yourself. First you must love yourself, and then you can love someone else. Because it is impossible to manifest what you do not know, if you do not practice charity, unconditional love towards yourself, you cannot give it to others. I pray that you will experience agape love and that God will give you the grace to appreciate the need to manifest the virtues laid out in 1 Corinthians 13.

***Prayer Points:***

*Father God, may the spirit of kindness come into our lives in a new way, that we will rejoice when we show kindness. Lord, I pray that you will deliver each one of us from the spirit of envy that harasses our soul. Deliver us from the need to be puffed up, that the spirit that vaunted it will go. Father God, I pray that you will deliver us from behaving unseemly and from being selfish. We humble ourselves before you and ask in Jesus’ name that you will help us to understand what it means to be patient. We ask for the grace to be longsuffering and patient. Lord God Almighty, help us not to be provoked and not to think on evil. Father, give us the grace to rejoice not in iniquity, but in truth, that we bear all things, believe all things in the Word, hope all things, and endure all things.*

*Father, give each one of us a divine revelation of agape love: the unconditional God kind of love. Lord you have shown it to us by dying for us. Give us the grace to experience it, to understand it, and to live it in Jesus’ name, for when we experience that love, we will be able to give it out. I pray that charity will be our portion and we will operate that way from now on in the name of Jesus. Amen.*