

Jesus THE BIBLE & SEXUALITY

The Original Brand of Love

Pastor Nathan Carroll – February 7, 2016

Last week we established a foundation for our conversation about sexuality:

1. Jesus was the most _____ person that ever lived.
2. The journey to sexual _____ is no less than choosing to live out of an entirely _____ - the story of the Kingdom of God.

Going Back to the Beginning (Genesis 1, 2 & 3)...

- Before all of creation, there was _____
- which was God (1 John 4)
- This love was
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

[*This original brand of love became known, during the time of the Roman Empire, as _____.]

Human beings were created - the only thing in all of creation that could _____ and _____ *agape*.

- In order for this to occur, God had to make humans in _____;
including an in-built _____.
- This is the essence of human sexuality: the intrinsic drive within humanity to draw close to _____ and, likewise, to draw close to _____.

With creation complete and deemed good, endowed with its own ability to carry on creation through reproduction, *agape* _____ all of life and it was _____.

Paradise was broken, however, when humankind chose to seek a rich and satisfying life _____ of *agape* - to seek to govern their lives out of _____ and _____ on God.

- The world entered a new era - an era of brokenness due to sin. An era in which *agape* became _____ in the earth.

Q: How do people channel their in-built impulse towards intimacy when separated from *agape*?

The world became a polarized environment as human beings sought to fulfill their impulses towards intimacy in either:

_____ or _____ bonds		_____
(<i>philia</i> and <i>storgē</i>)		(<i>erōs</i>)
Outside of <i>agape</i> , leads to: unhealthy dependencies, division, resentment	OR	Outside of <i>agape</i> , leads to: consumerism, addiction, destruction

THIS IS STILL THE WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN TODAY.

In spite of all of the pain that this caused the heart of God, _____, determined to return things to the way that they were and always intended to be.

- God began by establishing a people for himself through his _____ with Abraham.
- God then gave his people detailed instructions on how to _____ *agape* (see it played out in the book of Ruth).

Eventually, God initiated the most dramatic stage of his *agape* reclamation project: _____, itself, entered the world as a _____.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my apprentices."

John 13:34-35 NLT

An examination of Jesus' brand of love (*agape*) against the prevailing brand of love (unchecked *eros*) that dominates our cultural concept of sexuality based upon 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

UNCONDITIONAL

- ***Agape* is _____ and _____.**
 - _____ the other. It allows intimacy to blossom in its (God-)intended form and time.
 - Galatians 6:9 / Romans 5:3 / James 1:4
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, always has a _____.
 - _____ with no expectation of anything in return.
 - Luke 6:34-35
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, involves _____, _____ and can easily lead to a sense of _____.

- **Agape is not easily _____ and keeps no _____.**
 - Intimacy, in any form, cannot be established without rigorous _____.
 - Matthew 18:21-22 / Colossians 3:13 / Ephesians 4:31-32 / Romans 13:8
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, inclines us to grow _____ when hopes/expectations are not met... which eventually compels us to _____.

SELF-GIVING

- **Agape is not _____, _____ or _____.**
 - We cannot enter into intimacy _____, but primarily attentive to _____ and then to _____ as those made in his image.
 - Luke 10:25-27 / James 4:4-6
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, causes us to be solely focused on the _____ and value only that which contributes to _____.
- **Agape is not _____ or _____.**
 - Intimacy, in any form, cannot be established without rigorous _____ - meaning that we actively put _____.
 - John 15:13 / Philippians 2:5-8 / James 4:10 / 1 Peter 5:6
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, causes us not to _____ if there are _____ on the road to _____.

FAITHFUL

- **Agape always _____, always _____, always _____, always _____.**
 - There is no _____, however trying, that should cause _____.
 - Galatians 6:9 / James 1:2-4 / Hebrews 13:4 (marriage)
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, causes us to _____ at the first sign of _____ - living under the perpetual lie of a “_____”.
- **Agape does not delight in _____ but rejoices with _____.**
 - Fundamentally, we are accountable to be _____ and all that he _____.
 - John 3:20-21 / Galatians 5:13-25 / Ephesians 5:8-10
 - *Erōs*, unchecked, incites us to _____ toward God.

Q: How is Jesus establishing his reign of agape in the earth again?

Through _____. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

Jesus, THE BIBLE & SEXUALITY: The Original Brand of Love

Join us as we continue this conversation on Jesus, THE BIBLE and SEXUALITY over the next two Sundays:

Sunday, Feb. 14 – Singleness and Marriage

Sunday, Feb. 21 - Humility and Compassion (and Accountability)

For further reading: *Sexual Character* by Marva J. Dawn

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the big takeaway for you, personally, from Pastor Nathan's message? [Go around the group and take time to allow people to interact with each other's answers]
2. How did you interact with Pastor Nathan's recounting of Genesis 1-3 in light of this idea of *agape* - God's embodied "brand" of love?
3. What did you think about the idea of humankind, because of sin, being left to navigate the in-built impulse towards intimacy (human sexuality) outside of the reign of *agape*? How do you see this lived out in and around your life?
4. What is the significance of Jesus entering the story of human history through this lens of *agape*?
5. What does it look like for the church to be an agape community? How are aspects of this evident at St. Albert Alliance? How do we need to grow in this regard at St. Albert Alliance?

Read through 1 John 4:7-21 (perhaps have someone in the group read it out loud) and process together how this passage applies to us as apprentices of Jesus and to us as the church at St. Albert Alliance.

6. As Pastor Nathan went through the descriptions of *agape* from 1 Corinthians 13 and contrasted them with unchecked *erōs*, what did you find most challenging?

Take time to listen to Jesus; ask him how you can put yourself in the place to receive his capacity to live out agape in this aspect of your life.

Pray for one another along these lines as individuals feel comfortable.