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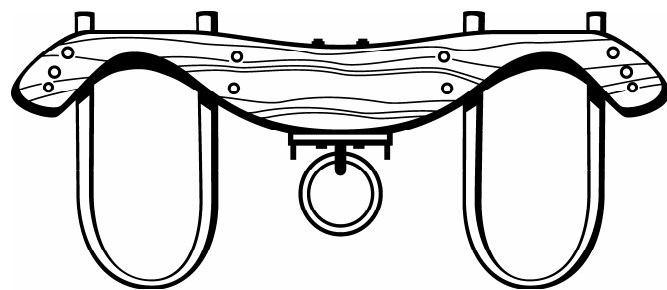
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C E L E B R A T E
BLACK HISTORY

Christian Symbol



Yoke

The yoke is a burden of hardship and toil, as well as of subservience. But Jesus said the “yoke” of serving him is “easy” and that he provides rest for the weary (Matthew 11:28-30). The yoke also symbolizes human allegiance, as in marriage. (2 Corinthians 6:14, NIV)

[We're on the web at
www.mtpisgahame.org]



What is Agape Love?

Question: "What is agape love?"

Answer: The Greek word *agape* is often translated "love" in the New Testament. How is "agape love" different from other types of love? The essence of agape love is self-sacrifice. Unlike our English word "love," agape is not used in the Bible to refer to romantic or sexual love. Nor does it refer to close friendship or brotherly love, for which the Greek word *philia* is used. Nor does agape mean charity, a term which the King James translators carried over from the Latin. Agape love is unique and is distinguished by its nature and character.

Agape is love which is of and from God, whose very nature is love itself. The Apostle John affirms this in [1 John 4:8](#): "God is love." God does not merely love; He is love itself. Everything God does flows from His love. But it is important to remember that God's love is not a sappy, sentimental love such as we often hear portrayed. God loves because that is His nature and the expression of His being. He loves the unlovable and the unlovely (us!), not because we deserve to be loved, but because it is His nature to do so, and He must be true to His nature and character. God's love is displayed most clearly at the Cross, where Christ died for the unworthy creatures who were "dead in trespasses and sins" ([Ephesians 2:1](#)), not because we did anything to deserve it, "but God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#)). The object of agape love never does anything to merit His love. We are the undeserving recipients upon whom He lavishes that love. His love was demonstrated when He sent His

Son into the world to "seek and save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)), and to provide eternal life to those He sought and saved. He paid the ultimate sacrifice for those He loves.

In the same way, we are to love others sacrificially. Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of sacrifice for the sake of others, even for those who may care nothing at all for us, or even hate us, as the Jews did the Samaritans. Sacrificial love is not based on a feeling, but a determined act of the will, a joyful resolve to put the welfare of others above our own. But this type of love does not come naturally to humans. Because of our fallen nature, we are incapable of producing such a love. If we are to love as God loves, that love—that agape—can only come from its true Source. This is the love which "has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us" when we became His children ([Romans 5:5](#)). Because that love is now in our hearts, we can obey Jesus who said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, you should also love one another" ([John 13:34](#)). This new commandment involves loving one another as He loved us sacrificially, even to the point of death. But again, it is clear that only God can generate within us the kind of self-sacrificing love which is the proof that we are His children. "By this we have known the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" ([1 John 3:16](#)). Because of God's love toward us, we are now able to love one another.

<http://www.gotquestions.org/agape-love.html>

Words of Encouragement

Agape

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

John 13:34

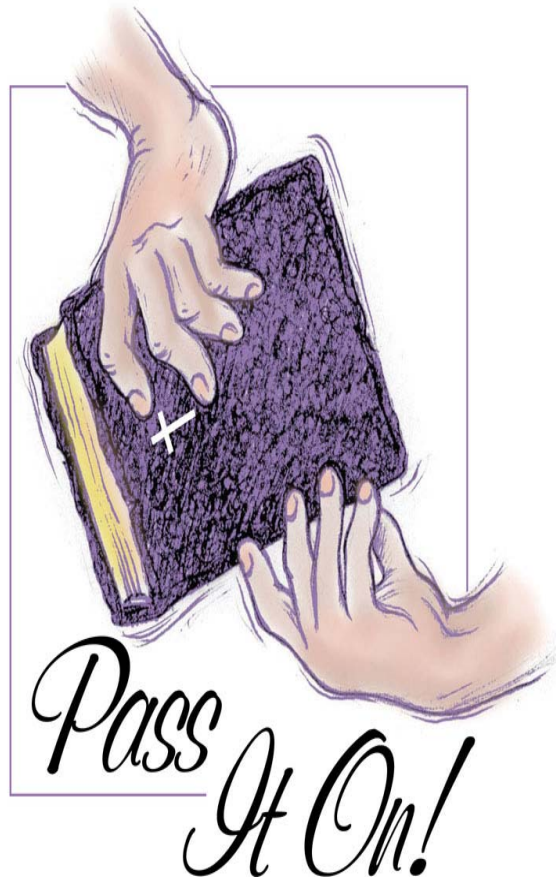
Inside this issue:

What is Agape Love?	1
The Longest Walk	2
Thinking of Lent	2
Pastor's Article	3
Be a Love Bird	3

Special points of interest:

- *Prayer Service Every Wednesday @ 6PM
- *Black History Discuss, February 3, 10, 18, 25 @ 7PM
- *Valentines Day, February 14, 2010
- *Lenten Service, February 17, 24 @ 7PM
- *President's Day, February 15, 2010
- *Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2010
- *First/Second Sunday in Lent, February 21, 27

The Longest Walk



A young pastor was called to serve a 3,000-member church where the retiring pastor had served for 26 years. On his first Sunday, the choir began proceeding up the center aisle, singing the opening hymn. The pastor nervously trailed behind.

The pulpit appeared to be very far away; the endless aisle seemed as long as a football field. The pastor was walking but felt as if he was getting nowhere. The hymn dragged on forever. His hands shook, and he was perspiring. He felt unsure of himself. Would he be accepted? Could he communicate clearly?

Later, when the pastor described the experience to friends, he said it felt like the longest walk he'd ever taken. Now that he's been that church's pastor for 10 years, he doesn't think that aisle is so long after all.

Like in the famous "Footprints" poem, God had carried this man during a time of anxiety. By relying on God's strength, the pastor was able to face uncertainty and gratefully serve God in return.

Thinking of Lent

Advent prepares us for Christ's birth; Lent prepares us for the glorious act of Christ's resurrection. Churches have special services during the weeks of Lent, but it's what each of us does regarding our spiritual life that makes Lent most meaningful. Lent is a good time to read, study and inwardly digest the four gospels. (The word gospel means "good news.") A college student decided to work his way through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for his Lenten devotional time. Soon he was fascinated by the stories, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees trying to trap Jesus in debate. The brilliant Jesus

handled every occasion with wisdom, leaving the authorities dumbfounded. During his devotional time, the student was filled with laughter and amazement at the brilliant son of God, who was only in his 30s. Get to know the good news, and you'll understand the young man's amazement.



...HOW WIDE AND LONG AND HIGH AND DEEP IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST. EPHESIANS 3:18, NIV

Pastor's Corner



TIMELESS TRUTHS IN ANCIENT GREECE

Scripture Isaiah 55: 6-9 "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways,' say the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than yours ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'"

In the magazine Pulpit Helps, for the month of December 2009, there was an article on Timeless Truth. After reading this article and thinking of the times we live in and the lack of commitment to our Christian Faith, and how shallow we are on biblical prophesy, I felt the need to address this matter and to share a part of this article with those in the faith community.

This article opens with the statement "Secular culture has a hard time with the Bible", and if the truth be told so does many that call themselves Christians. Many have a very hard time believing that this book is truly the Word of God. 'Nowhere does Scripture more readily spring to life than in the excavated ruins of Greek cities. Corinth and Philippi are particular sites of interest because of their extensive and relatively well-preserved Roman structures from New Testament times and lack of classical Greek ruins'. When Lou and I were in Greece we were able to observe these ruins and listen to our Christian tour guide explain the significance of each sight we visited. The depth of this trip can only be realized when the Holy Spirit opens again your eyes to God's truths.

You may read this article for yourself at [www.pulpithelps.com]

When we come to the question of our own relationship with God through the merits of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, we come to one of those areas which in a supreme degree is truly a matter of life and death. How can we-undone and lost, sinful and wretched, alienated from God, say that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and God's revealed plan of salvation do not take priority over ALL of life's decisions? In our intellectual and social world we often use the phrase that says "all roads (paths) lead to Rome. **This is not true!** All roads do not lead to Rome, some roads are dead ends". Some roads (paths) lead people down roads they wish they never had taken (regrets, sorrows, even death). "Because my people have forgotten Me, they have burned incense (waited time in things that do not give Me glory) to worthless idols. And they have caused

them to stumble in their ways, from the ancient paths, to walk in pathways and not on a highway." Jeremiah 18:15. (emphasis added) This is because many people go through life trying to stay up with their perception of "life". This is not to say we should not enjoy this life and the activities it offers, but it does cause us to observe our devotion (The amount of time placed on the things that have NO spiritual value). For we know of His Divine Person, we know that He is the Lamb of God who suffered and died in our place. My brothers and sisters don't you know that our PRIDE has caused us to put aside the Christ of God, the ETERNAL Son who holds the world in His hand?

He is Savior and Lord and head over all things to the Church. It will be at His Word that the graves shall give up their dead, and the dead shall come forth, alive forevermore. He is the One; the Mighty One! Love Him, Serve Him, and Worship Him. The Psalmist states in 52:8-9 "But I am a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good." Therefore, wait on the Lord.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL
PASTOR & LOUISE

Be A Love Bird

Many stories about the origin of Valentine's Day have come down through the centuries. There's no definitive story, but most revolve around the imprisonment of Valentinus (St. Valentine) for his disregard of Roman laws.

Many legends are also associated with Valentine's Day. For example, because birds seemed to arrive and mate in some countries in mid-February, human couples came to be called "love birds." In 1667, the first recorded Valentine card was printed. Today, people will give their sweethearts countless millions of cards and acres of heart-shaped boxes filled with candy. But why wait for Valentine's Day to share love with others? Remember

Jesus' words in John 13:34 (NRSV): "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."

