

# DENAIR FRIENDS CHURCH

## Devotions with Matt

March 21, 2020

### AGAPE LOVE

In an effort to stay connected I will be sending out a devotion to you all until Easter. I hope we will be meeting together again by then.

It has been said that the Ancient Greeks didn't have a word for the kind of love that Jesus showed us in His Incarnation, death and suffering. They had a number of words for the common love we see every day. They had words for brotherly love, passionate love and familial love. The closest word they had to what Jesus did was called agape.

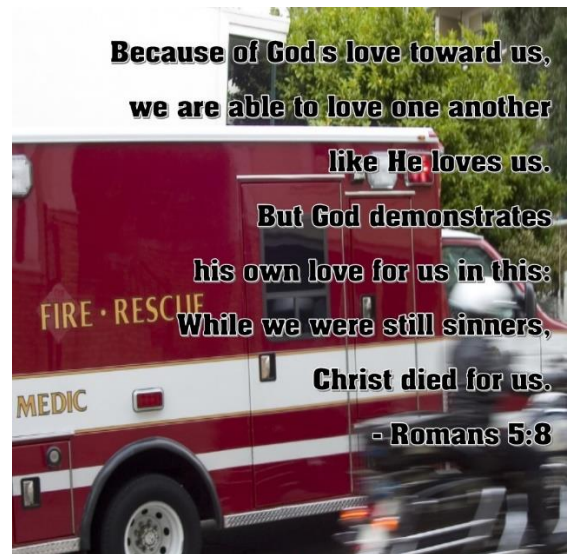
Agape love to the Greeks was the highest form of love and charity a human could have for one another. Their many gods had a form of this love- at times- but it was capricious. They could turn from agape love when their worshippers didn't sacrifice enough, pay enough respect or abide by their will. They would pull agape love from them as they felt like it. They had the word for this special kind of love, but no one had ever really seen the true meaning of it- until Jesus.

The New Testament writers quickly picked up on the Greek word, but deepened it's meaning after they saw, and experienced, the great sacrifice of Jesus. They saw that Jesus was not capricious with His love. He went to the Cross for all mankind- even those who didn't love Him back, worship Him or obey His will. He even went to the cross for those who led him there, nailed Him to it and mocked Him while He was on it.

The Disciples picked up on something that no one ever had seen before and deepened the meaning of agape to self-emptying love. A love that has other's greatest interest and benefit always in mind. It is not a love of feeling alone, but one of action toward the good of another- no matter the cost to the agape giver.

We see a form of this love in the middle of this crisis. Doctors, nurses, medical professionals and our first responders are putting their own health (and sometimes their own lives) at risk for the benefit for others and their communities. We see it in those willing to go out and shop, do errands and take to appointments the most vulnerable among us. This is a form of agape love that can only come from a God who is love (1 John 4:16) and who, because of His great sacrifice for all human kind, has affected the way we look at and treat one another with a form of His love.

Agape love does not come naturally to us. Because of our fallen and broken nature, we are incapable of producing such a love. If we are to love as God loves, it can only come from its Source. This is the love that "has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" when we became His children (Romans 5:5 and Galatians 5:22). "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 John 3:16). Because of God's love toward us, we are able to love one another like He loves us. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8



In Christ's Love ~ Matt