



INTRODUCTION: The word *charity* in our text is from the Greek word *agape* which is the strongest word for love. It is a self-sacrificing love. It is the type of love that Jesus shows us. Agape love is the love that the Holy Spirit produces in our hearts as you and I choose to walk in the Spirit and draw on the virtue of Christ rather than fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. This is the fruit of the Spirit.

Romans 5:5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Matthew 24:12, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

In Revelation, chapter 2, God is speaking to the church at Ephesus and compliments them on their work, labor, patience, separation from evil, forbearance and suffering for the gospel. But then he says that He has somewhat against them because they left their first love. Their focus was no more on Jesus.

Col. 3:14, "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

Matthew 22:35-39, "35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

I. KEEP YOUR FILLING IN PERSPECTIVE

Acts 8:18-20, "18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

"The average Christian is so subnormal that when one becomes normal, everybody else thinks he's abnormal." – Vance Havner

Ephesians 3:19, "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Eph. 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"

The word for *filling* has 3 basic uses:

1. **SATURATION** – This is like the filling of a sail in a sailboat. When the sail fills with wind, it bows out and it literally carries that ship along. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be moved along life's journey by God Himself (II Pet. 1:21).
2. **PERMEATION** – This is the process used of salt to permeate meat. It affects the flavor of the meat as well as preserving the meat. God must permeate our lives.
3. **DOMINATION** – To be filled means to be totally dominated by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:1-2, "1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

II. KEEP YOUR FAILURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Mark 16:6-7, "6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

John 21:15-17, "15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

A. GOD'S LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL

B. GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONAL

C. GOD'S LOVE IS RECIPROCAL

III. KEEP YOUR FUTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

II Timothy 4:6-8, "6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I John 3:1-3, "1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."