

*“The Table of Love”*

**(video)**[Please show the “*Love Is*” Video]

What is Love? (PAUSE) Or, as I have said many times, **(slide)** “**Agape** Love” – the English pronunciation of the Greek word, that is one of a handful Greek words, which are translated by the word “love” in English. (PAUSE) We have a subtle example of Agape Love in the following story, “In the days when an ice cream cone cost much less, a ten year old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. ‘How much is an ice cream sundae?’ he asked. ‘Fifty cents,’ replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. (PAUSE) ‘Well (pause) how much is a plain dish of ice cream?’ he asked. By now (pause) the waitress was growing impatient. ‘Thirty-five cents,’ she quickly said. (PAUSE) The little boy again counted his coins. (PAUSE) ‘I’ll have the plain ice cream,’ he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. (PAUSE) The boy finished the ice cream, paid

the cashier and left. (PAUSE) When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. (PAUSE) There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies. You see, (pause) he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip. (PAUSE) (Posted Davon Huss on sermoncentral.com) The young boy was not merely thinking about his own wants and desires – he was considerate and living for the benefit of the waitress. (PAUSE) That is the type of Agape Love Jesus manifested (pause) and called us to live!

(PAUSE) Last Sunday, we began this Worship Series of **(slide)“Come to the Table”**. We joined in the Celebration of Holy Communion at the Lord's Table and focused on our call to love, serve, and welcome one another and all people to the Table – into the Church – the Body of Christ.

(PAUSE) **(slide - Table of Love)** Today, our theme is on making our table –Christ's Table “The Table of Love”. **(slide)** The Apostle Paul dealt with the subject of making Christ's Communion Table “The Table of Love” when he confronted the behavior of some of the members of the

Corinthian Church in his First Letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 11:18, 20-22b, and 33-34a, Paul wrote, **(slide)** *“I have been told that there are opposing groups in your meetings; and this I believe is partly true ... When you meet together as a group, it is not the Lord’s Supper that you eat. For as you eat, you each go ahead with your own meal, so that some are hungry while others get drunk. (PAUSE) (slide) Don’t you have your own homes in which to eat and drink? (PAUSE) Or would you rather despise the Church of God and put to shame the people who are in need? ... (slide) So then, my friends, when you gather together to eat the Lord’s Supper, wait for one another. (PAUSE) And if any of you are hungry, you should eat at home”.*

(PAUSE) When we “Come to the Table”, we are to do so with agape love and respect for one another – treating each other as equals. We are not to use gathering together (pause) as an opportunity to lord it over (pause) or to put down one another with either our words or our actions. (PAUSE)

Our Society encourages everyone to approach how we relate to other persons (pause) on a basis very different from the agape love we are called to exhibit (pause) in our Community of Faith (pause) toward one another or with anyone else. (PAUSE) Alan Brehm explained this situation in a very revealing manner. He wrote, “I think many people these days are pretty confused about love. We say ‘I love you,’ but what we really mean is ‘I’m lonely and I want you to comfort me.’ Or ‘I think you’re incredibly attractive and desirable.’ Or ‘Will you please just do what I want?’ Or ‘I’m really excited to have such a great looking guy/girl with me; my friends are going to think I’m really cool.’” (PAUSE) Summing up what the World wants us to do, Brehm concluded, “Love is about wanting, or desiring, or controlling.” (PAUSE) Brehm explained, “I think part of the reason for this is that we associate love so completely with romance. (PAUSE) As a result, love has everything to do with feelings of infatuation or attraction or even lust. (PAUSE) When we do that, we tend to lose sight of any aspect of love as a choice, as an act of will, as a gift

you give to another person.” (PAUSE) (“Charity Never Fails” by Alan Brehm posted on [thewakingdreamer.blogspot.com](http://thewakingdreamer.blogspot.com))

Since the general public understanding of love is such, (pause) let’s take a few moments to recall what Jesus taught about agape love (pause) and how his life and death are sterling examples of it. (PAUSE) During Jesus’ last night with his Original Disciples, after the Lord’s Supper, he told them, as recorded in John 13:34-35, **(slide)** “*And now I give you a new commandment: agape love one another. As I have agape loved you, (pause) so you must agape love one another. (PAUSE) If you have agape love for one another, then everyone will know (pause) that you are my disciples.*” (PAUSE) The agape love Jesus called them and us to live toward one another is to follow the example of how he has agape loved us. Later that evening, (pause) Jesus got even more personal and specific with the disciples (pause) on the nature of this agape love. Jesus said, according to John 15: 9-11, **(slide)** “*I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in*

*my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His Love. (slide) I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*" (PAUSE) Now, that may seem a bit confusing! (PAUSE) Jesus was explaining to the Original Disciples and to us (pause) that he is the fulfillment of God's Agape Love and our Savior wants us to remain in God's Agape Love by obeying Jesus' commands. (PAUSE) In the Gospel of John, Jesus only gives his disciples one commandment – "Agape Love one another". Living that agape love is sharing in Jesus' joy and it becomes the fulfillment of our joy! (PAUSE)

That is why Jesus went on to say to the disciples and us in **verses 12-14, (animation #1)** *"My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. (PAUSE) The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them. (PAUSE) And you are my friends if you do what I command you."* (PAUSE) Jesus commanded that the disciples and we "love one another, just as" he loved us. He went on to allude to

what was about to happen to himself – as he loved us. He explained the “greatest love” we “can have for” our “friends is to give” our “life for them”! (PAUSE) Indeed, Jesus gave his life for the Original Disciples and for us! (PAUSE) That type of sacrificial and suffering agape love for others is what we are to do for one another and for all others. (PAUSE)

Hopefully, (pause) none of us will be called on (pause) to die for the welfare of someone else. So, (pause) what else are we to do as we agape love one another, our neighbors, and even, our enemies? (PAUSE) The Apostle Paul provides us a very practical answer (pause) for the minimum of what it means (pause) in our relationship with someone else. He wrote in our Scripture Reading from Romans 13:8b, 9-10a, **(slide)** *“the only obligation you have is to love one another. ... The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery; do not commit murder; do not steal; do not desire what belongs to someone else’ — all these, and any others besides, are summed up in the one command, ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ If you love others, you will never do them wrong”*. (PAUSE)

Paul, a former Pharisee, raised up some of the Ten Commandments as examples of commandments one follows, if we are to not do harm to someone else. (PAUSE) The Ten Commandments can be divided into two groups. Those, which show our Love for God and those, which deal with how we treat or love someone else. So, (pause) let's make the two lists. (PAUSE) You can open your Pew Bibles to Exodus 20. It is on page 87 in the Old Testament at the front of the Bible. (PAUSE) What are the Commandments which show our **(slide) Love of God?**

**(animation #1)**I. Worship only God.

**(animation #2)**II. Do not Worship idols.

**(animation #3)**III. Do not use God's Name for evil purposes.

**(animation #4)**IV. Keep the Sabbath Holy.

Now, let's compile the list from the Ten Commandments, which show

**(slide) love of others** – not abusing others. What are they?

**(animation #5)**V. Respect your father and mother.

**(animation #6)**VI. Do not murder.

**(animation #7)** VII. Do not commit adultery.

**(animation #8)** VIII. Do not steal.

**(animation #9)** IX. Do not accuse anyone falsely.

**(animation #10)** X. Do not desire someone else's loved ones or possessions.

As the Apostle Paul wrote in our Scripture, **(slide)** *“all these, and any others besides, (pause) are summed up in the one command, ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ If you love others, you will never do them wrong”*. (PAUSE) The Pharisees often gave into the temptation to use commandments to beat down others – to give themselves power. Instead, (pause) we are to use them as specific reminders (pause) of how we are to love one another, including all people! (PAUSE)

Jesus often confounded the Pharisees and other Legalists – those for whom acceptance (pause) was conditional. (PAUSE) Their litmus test of love (pause) leaves little room for grace. (PAUSE) Jesus chose time and again (pause) to seek out the intention of someone's heart – to gather

together (pause) and engage in conversation (pause) as a way of moving toward a right relationship among everyone. (PAUSE) What happens (pause) when we seek to “do no wrong” to our neighbor, (pause) moving beyond boundaries (pause) into reciprocal understanding? (PAUSE)

**(slide) Let us come to “The Table of Love” – the Church (pause) with agape love for one another (pause) inviting all people (pause) to share in God’s Agape Love, Forgiveness, Invitation, Welcome, and Healing.**

Amen.