

There are a good number of folks present today, who remember my Father, **Michael B. Wells**. The last years of his life, he suffered from Alzheimer's. Around the time my Mother died, he began to live nearby, so I was able to spend more time with him and Margaret and I were able to provide him transportation on Sunday mornings for Worship. **We are very grateful for the agape love, welcome, and support, which the members and friends of the congregation showed him during Sunday Worship and other activities. It provided him great comfort to be included in the worshipping community.**

As I began considering our Scripture for today, I thought of my Father for several reasons. **First, because the Reading came across to me as very mathematical and my Father was a Mathematician**, who put those skills to use in the field of Nuclear Physics. **Second, because the Text refers to the tremendous importance of agape love – self-giving and sacrificial love in our lives and the purpose and fulfillment of Creation.** As I already referenced, the agape love of this congregation and of my family were of great comfort for my Father in his final years. **Third, the Scripture reminded me of my human Father because it revealed and affirmed the Divine Parent sent God's Son as the ultimate act of Agape Love for All People and Creation.** Clearly, there was and remains a very special relationship between Jesus the Christ and our Divine Parent, just as, hopefully, the vast majority of us have experienced such a relationship between ourselves and our human parents.

Let's first consider the Mathematics of Agape Love as presented in the word equations found in our Reading. **If we substitute = for the word "is", then we find in verses 7-10, "Dear friends, let us agape love one another, because agape love comes from God. [Whoever Agape Loves = Child of God] [Whoever Agape Loves = Knows God] [Whoever Does Not Agape Love = Does Not Know God] [Agape Love = God]. [God's Agape Love Shown = Sending the Son into the World, so that we might have life through him.] [Agape Love = God Agape Loved us and sent His Son to be the way for us to experience God's Forgiveness of our separation from whom God Intends us to be.]**

Continuing to look at the text as God's Agape Love Math, we find in **verses 16b and 20-21, [God = Agape Love] [Live in Agape Love = Live in Union (Reconciliation) with God and God with them.] [We say we Agape Love God + Hate Others = we are Liars.] [We Cannot Agape Love God = We Do Not Agape Love Others.] [Whoever Agape Loves God = Agape Loves Others Also.]**

Summarizing all of those Agape Love Equations, our Text, most likely written by the same author as the writer of the Gospel of John, declared God Is Agape Love. We Agape Love God only when we Agape Love others also. When we Agape Love God and others, we are United – Reconciled with God. God's Agape Love was demonstrated by sending God's Son, Jesus, into the World to provide All People the opportunity to recognize and live in God's Agape Love – to be Reconciled – Forgiven.

Indeed, the premise of this Worship Series – **Sacred Earth: Sacred Work** is that God Created the Creation, including us as sacred – originally blessed – God Called All Creation "Good". Unfortunately, human beings and the rest of Creation have become corrupted – are not as our Creator intended us and the Creation to be. Yes, according to the Apostle Paul, even Creation itself groans in eager anticipation when God's Fully Revealed Kingdom will transform the broken Creation to its glorious liberation – healed of its estrangement from its intended purpose. As the Threshold Moment stated, "We live in sacred relationship with every other living thing. Our food, our health, our homes, our vocations are all part of an interconnected community. Creation hangs in the balance when we forget this connection. We acknowledge that our species and the entire earth community depends upon the healing of harm already done, moving toward sustainability for the future, and harmony that offers life-giving coexistence for all. Can we embrace our responsibility to care? Now is the time, if we want a future."

Embracing our responsibility to care is our Call to Follow God's and Jesus' Examples of Agape Loving. Living that Agape – Self-Giving and Sacrificial Love toward All People and All of Creation helps bring the Healing of Relationships between individuals, between groups of people, between nations and races, and between

humanity and Creation. **Keeping that in mind, through our Agape Love we are to work to heal our personal relationships, to heal alienation between groups of people and all people of the world, to heal the estrangement between humans and the other creatures on this planet, and to heal the environment of this Sacred Earth.**

Pointing back to how the Divine Parent had sent the Son to the World for us, John went on to remind us in verses 11-12, *“Dear friends, if this is how God agape loved us, then we should agape love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we agape love one another, God lives in union with us, and His Agape Love is made perfect in us.”* It may seem too much but our calling in our own personal relationships is to bring healing through living agape love – self-giving and sacrificial love. For example, that means one needs to give up anger, pride, greed, personal glorification, etc. to bring healing in personal relationships. **Yes, it means apologizing**, even when the other person should also be apologizing. **Yes, it means forgiving**, even when one feels aggrieved so that reconciliation may transform conflict into a renewed relationship based on agape love.

Considering the broader context – the healing of relationships between others, between groups, and between races and nations includes additional options from the well of agape love, which we are called to utilize. Especially, with reference to justice and the destroying of oppression and racism. **These types of situations require agape love taking up the prophetic mantle of revealing to those caught up in those evil acts the Divine Parent’s solidarity with and eventual deliverance of the outcast, downtrodden, rejected, and the abused.** Agape Love’s prophetic voice declares justice for the vulnerable and oppressed will be part of the Fully Revealed Kingdom of God when the Great Transformation of the Universe takes place with the Reconciliation of Creation with God and the Creator’s Original Purpose and Blessing. This may call for each of us to be much more active in making justice demands of elected officials and of the government. It may require participating in protests and/or providing financial support to pursue remedies.

There is also the need of healing relationships of All People on this Sacred Planet, who are unaware of the true nature of God’s Agape Love and how it can heal and transform their lives and relationships. Remember John said in verses 13-15, *“We are sure that we live in union with God and that He lives in union with us, because He has given us His Spirit. And we have seen and tell others that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If we declare (reveal and live God’s Agape Love showing) that Jesus is the Son of God, we live in union with God and God lives in union with us.”* Our revealing and living God’s Agape Love along with our words testifying to God’s Agape Love being demonstrated by sending the Son, will help others to be open to God’s Agape Love and allowing It to transform their lives, even when the legalists have rejected them.

**Finally, we are called to seek to Agape Love Heal our Relationships with all the Creatures and the Sacred Earth.** First, we need to come to terms with our own roles and the roles of our society in polluting the environment and keeping Creation from joining in its Original Blessing and Purpose. This may mean we are more conscious of what we can do to reduce the consumption of the dwindling nonrenewable resources of our planet. It may mean we take more seriously how as an individual and as a society we are causing greater diminishment of other life in nature. It also calls for us to use our political power to encourage our elected officials and governments to seek more ways to bring healing of the earth and its creatures. **Let’s not forget, this is the only planet we have available now, so if we destroy its ecological systems, we will, ultimately be hurting our own interests and the lives of our descendants.**

Finally, our Scripture reminds us of the Eternal Importance of our Living Agape Love – following the Example of God and Jesus. The text said in verse 17, *“Agape Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on the Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ’s.”* Our life in this world is the same as Christ’s, if we live agape love and bring healing relationships so **we will not have fear – the expectation of falling short of God’s Intention – Original Blessing when we live “in agape love; perfect agape love drives out all fear. So then, agape love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.”** Put away fear and be part of the solution of **Healing Relationships by following God’s and Jesus’ Examples of Agape Loving All People and the Whole Creation.** Amen.