

Pastor's Pen

February 2014

February features a wonderful holiday called Valentine's Day. It is a time when we focus on romance, flowers, chocolate and cupids. The focus is on love. Many couples get engaged on this day. Committed men send chocolate and flowers to the special lady in their life. It is a time of expressing love and appreciation between couples.

Another popular modern custom is exchanging cards. How did this all come about? What is true love? I John 4:7 reminds us of the source of true love which begins with God. This scripture reads, **"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."** The word scripture uses here for love is agape or unconditional love.

In a recent internet article by David Kithcart written for *The 700 Club*, Kithcart traces the History of Valentine's Day to a Roman Catholic Priest honored as Saint Valentine who lived in the 260's AD during the reign of an emperor called Claudias who persecuted the church. The emperor declared it was illegal for young soldiers to marry while in the Roman Army. He felt that a married soldier would think more of returning to his wife rather than carrying out his duty as a soldier fighting to the death.

Saint Valentine would secretly perform weddings for these young lovers. He was arrested, convicted and sentenced to death. One of the Judges at his trial, Asterius, had a young daughter who was blind. Saint Valentine prayed for her healing. The Lord heard his prayer and she received her sight.

Judge Asterius found Saint Valentine guilty and sentenced him to death according to the wishes of the emperor. Through the trial, Asterius got to know Valentine and was impressed with his gentle spirit and faith. He also appreciated the miracle healing of his daughter. Judge Asterius became a believer because of the miracle healing and the display of Christian character in the life of Valentine.

While Valentine was waiting for his death sentence to be carried out, he wrote a letter that encouraged the Judge's daughter to grow in her faith. He signed his last note to her as "Your Valentine". That term became a tradition that lives on today. Saint Valentine's display of agape love for this girl and her father who condemned him to death is a message of unconditional love. People want and need to know they are loved. We send cards to our friends asking if they will be our Valentine. People are asking for someone to agape them or show them unconditional love.

Valentine's faith in a forgiving, loving God worked deep within his soul and became a part of his character. He was able to demonstrate love and forgiveness to this Roman judge and his daughter, which is agape love. It is different than romantic love (eros) and friendship love (philius)

True love (agape) is a powerful thing that changes lives and enriches our character. Agape love is not the romantic love, between couples nor is it the kind of love one has between friends. It is an unconditional love that keeps on loving and caring even when the other person does not respond. The person showing agape love gains nothing as a result of the loving and the caring. When romantic love is based on true agape love, the couple enters into a deep relationship based on understanding of and the practice of a caring and gentle character.

Agape love is true love because it is not limited to any one person. It is a character trait that is a result of the Holy Spirit being allowed to work in our lives. It is one of the fruit of the Spirit listed for us in Galatians 5:22. I Corinthians 13 reminds us the greatest of these is love.

Our lesson here is to live out and demonstrate agape love. Christ's love for you and me demonstrated His unconditional love to us.. This is true love. It is a character trait that develops out our relationship with God by faith. So beloved, let

us love one another and thus fulfill the Law of Christ.

I look forward to seeing you this Sunday.

God's Blessings.

Pastor Cal

P.S.

To read all of David Kithcart's online article go to:

http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/ChurchandMinistry/churchhistory/st_valentine_the_real_story.aspx