



# Chaplain's Notes

August 2003

"life is for us"

## True love

Foreigner sang "I wanna know what love is ... I want you to show me." I wonder what your response would be?

If someone was to ask that question of our society as a whole, the answer given by the media would be "lust". Just read any of the magazines lining the check-out aisles at Safeway, and you'll soon realize that they are screaming out that seduction, sexual attraction and performance are the key defining factors that are supposed to keep relationships together. Sadly, it seems that Kylie Minogue is our most obvious proponent, and also our most tragic victim, to this cruel lie.

The god of seduction and 'sexual performance' is a cruel task-master, and it ends up chewing up and spitting out all of its devotees<sup>1</sup>. As individuals and as a society we must cast out this demon of sexual lust (*eros*) and replace it with the holy and godly love (*agape*) which God always intended for us from the beginning of time. In actual fact, the word 'love' in English is used to cover at least four different types of meaning, expressed in the following four Greek words: *eros* (seductive sexual love), *stergos* (affectionate love), *phileo* (friendship love), and *agape* (holy unconditional love).

When Jesus says "Love one another"<sup>2</sup>, He means *agape*. Only *agape* can be

commanded because it is the only love which is not based on feelings and desires; it is based on admiration, veneration, and esteem. It is because every human being is made in the image of God<sup>3</sup> that we are commanded to love each other. Love as an emotion cannot be commanded.

Given that our society is so immersed in and surrounded by the goddesses of *eros*<sup>4</sup>, how can we be free from the claws of these goddesses in our own lives? How can we build true love into our hearts, minds, souls, and spirits?



The Bible tells us very clearly that true love, *agape*, comes from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith in Jesus<sup>5</sup>.

**1. Pure heart.** To have a pure heart means to have a heart that is not adulterated by other motives, especially the motive of just trying to see what you yourself can get out of it. It is to have eyes that are not wandering. It means to be single-minded about choices we make, and not dilly-dallying with other choices which we know to be wrong. It means to be faithful. It ultimately means to have no idols in your life, that is, not having anything else along side of or in the place of God in your life. Not

(1) Proverbs 5:1-23; 6:23-29; 7:6-27; 9:13-18. (2) John 15:12ff. (3) Genesis 1:26-27. (4) cf Revelation 17,18; 2:14-15,20. (5) 1Timothy 1:5.

money, not pleasure, not anything 'selfish'. Jesus said "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"<sup>6</sup>. To be able to show true love to people, we need to first of all love God with all of our heart. Only then can our hearts be free from the selfish motives that so easily drag us down. The amazing mystery and paradox with God is that it is only as we love Him totally that we are able to love others well!<sup>7</sup>

*Are you single-mindedly seeking to love God first? Are you purely devoted to Him?*

**2. Good conscience.** A good conscience is a mind that is free from sin; a mind that is not carrying about guilt, whether consciously or unconsciously. Whilst it is true that we have all sinned and done wrong<sup>8</sup>, it is also true that regaining a clear conscience is possible!<sup>9</sup> The key factor involved is being willing to agree with that inner voice that tells you you have done wrong.<sup>10</sup> To agree and to confess, to openly speak out to God "Yes, God, I agree that I have done \_\_\_\_\_; I ask for your forgiveness." Did you know that God wants to help you sort through your life so that there are no outstanding sins on the books, and therefore your conscience can be clean?<sup>11</sup> If your conscience is bothering you, but you can't put your finger on exactly what it is you need to agree with God about, just ask Him! You can pray "Lord, please show me just what it is that I need to confess; please show me my sin so that I can agree from my heart just how wrong I've been, because I want to be free." Be sure that very quickly God will bring thoughts and scenarios to your mind which you can then verbalize and ask

forgiveness for!<sup>12</sup> God wants you to be free!<sup>13</sup>

*Is your conscience clean? Will you take your guilty thoughts to God and specifically ask for His forgiveness?*

**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.<sup>14</sup>**

**3. Sincere faith.** To have a sincere faith means to not be a hypocrite. It means to fully put into practice all that you know to be true, without leaving any conscious shadows. It means to follow Jesus with all your being, and not just be religious. People who say they follow God and love Jesus, and yet do not show practically in their everyday lifestyles justice, mercy, holiness and humility, are those whom Jesus strongly rebuked when He was on earth.<sup>15</sup> We need to put all of our lives into the trust of Jesus. We must seek to live out all that Jesus told us to, and not just pick and choose which parts of the Bible or Jesus' teaching we like, or worse still, re-write or re-interpret what the Bible says to justify our own selfish perverted desires.<sup>16</sup> (For example, how can some Anglican priests say the Bible doesn't condemn being gay, when it is written: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be

(6) Matthew 5:8. (7) Matthew 22:37,38; John 15:4,5. (8) Romans 3:23. (9) Hebrews 10:1-22. (10) 1John 1:8-10. (11) John 3:17,18; Colossians 2:13-15. (12) John 16:7-11. (13) John 8:31-36. (14) 1Corinthians 13:4-8a. (15) Matthew 23. (16) Jude 1-16; 2Peter 2.

deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God"<sup>17</sup>)

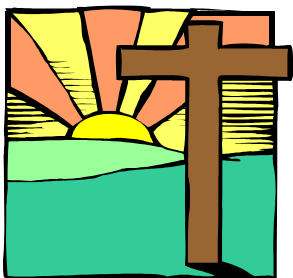
*Are you seeking to the best of your ability to practice what Jesus taught? Are you free from 'covering up' and justifying evil?*

True love is what we all need. True love is the love of God, which can flow through our hearts as we open ourselves up to Jesus Christ and put Him first in our life.<sup>18</sup> What we see on our magazine stands is a stark reflection of the gods of our society. Don't fall prey to eros. It will only kill you.<sup>19</sup>

Let us pray:

*Father in heaven,  
thank you for your great love to us.  
Thank you that you demonstrated your love by sending Jesus your Son to die for us on the cross. Please help me to have that same type of unconditional love flowing through me to others.  
May Your love continue to change my heart to be more like You.  
Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name I pray,*

*Amen.*



## My Answer

**Q: "Dear chaplain, how can a loving God send people to hell?"**

**A:** We first must realize that hell was made for the devil and his angels.<sup>1</sup> Humans were not intended to go to hell, but to heaven.<sup>2</sup>

Hell is a place of utter separation from the goodness of God. That is why it is described as a place of outer darkness, a lake of fire and brimstone, a place of indescribable torment.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus actually spoke more about hell than heaven. Why? Because He wanted to warn us. He wanted us to know the dire consequences of our own choices, and to realize the amazing responsibility we all have as human beings.<sup>4</sup>

God is holy, and He commands all people everywhere to be holy, because He is holy.<sup>5</sup> This is His universe, He made us, and He sets the rules. If we don't want to 'play by His rules', then He has no other option but to 'expel us from the game', so that everyone else can still have a good time. True love must ultimately separate the bad from the good, or else the whole lot will become rotten.<sup>6</sup>

But He never expels anyone without first giving them heaps of warnings!<sup>7</sup> God is long-suffering, not wanting anyone to perish but that all should turn from their sins and believe in Jesus.<sup>8</sup> Will you believe in Jesus today? If you stick with Jesus, you can be sure you will not be going to hell!<sup>9</sup>

(17) 1Corinthians 6:9-10. (18) Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 1:9; 1Thessalonians 4:12. (19) Proverbs 2:16-19.

(1) Matthew 25:41. (2) Revelation 22:12-17. (3) Revelation 20:10. (4) eg Luke 13:1-5.

(5) 1Peter 1:15-16. (6) Matthew 13:47-50; 25:31-33; 24:22-24. (7) Romans 2:4; Revelation 2,3.

(8) 2Peter 3:9. (9) John 3:36.

# News & Events

opportunity in 2004, please contact me!

You're invited to our next  
**CELEBRATION  
SUNDAY**  
*a Christian Worship  
Service  
for the whole community!*

- **Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup>**  
(the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month)
- **5pm - 6.15pm**  
(followed by supper!)
- **Preston Nth East  
Primary School Hall**



*Bring your whole family!*



## Community BBQ, Trash & Treasure, and MORE!

This is an event organised by your local *Neighbourhood Action Group*, and promises to be a great day to help bring the diverse aspects of our community together!



**Where:**  
Community

Health Centre, Cnr Crevelli St. & Blake St.

**When:** Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September.

More details still to come ....  
(ask at the Health Centre Co-op)

Please mark this date in your calendars NOW!



**ALL are WELCOME!**

## CRE Teaching in 2004

Would you like to teach **Christian Religious Education (CRE)** at Preston Nth East Primary School next year? Training is **FREE**, you don't need to be an expert, and the teaching materials are all provided for you! If you would like to take up this



**Thought for the  
month**  
**Know Prayer, Know God**

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