

## “I Love You Harlod”

When I was at the tender age of 11 and in the sixth grade at Wise Elementary School, a new girl came to town. It was February and everyone was giving out valentine cards. I got one from the new girl, Judy Day. She had black hair and was wearing a light blue dress to match her blue eyes. She handed me a homemade card which affectionately said, “I Love You Harlod”. She couldn’t spell worth a hoot, but she had a great smile. I was in love!

Later that day as we walked hand in hand on the playground I got choked on a peanut and kind of “puked” a little bit. Well, maybe more than just a little bit. It was pretty cool for an 11 year old boy. She didn’t think so. Our love affair was over as fast as it started. All over a peanut!

Sometimes love comes and goes in our lives. I wonder why? Most probably because it is tied to our emotions, how we “feel” about someone. But more probable is our lack of understanding about what love is.

In **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a** the scripture says . . .

Love has long patience, is kind; love is not emulous of others; love is not insolent and rash, is not puffed up, does not behave in an unseemly manner, does not seek what is its own, is not quickly provoked, does not impute evil, does not rejoice at iniquity but rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails;

In the Greek language there are three words for love: **Eros**, a love of desire and intimacy; **Phileo**, a love of tender affection and friendship; and **Agape**, a love of unconditional acceptance. This last one is the word used in 1 Corinthians chapter 13. This is the only love that never fails. This is the love that God has for us.

It is used to describe His attitude toward the human race (John 3:16)

It is used to convey His will for the disciples (and us) concerning their attitude toward one another (John 13:34)

It is used to express His essential nature (1 John 4:8)

It is unconditional love . . . even if you “puke” in public.

The key characteristic of **Agape** is forgiveness. Sometimes friendships and even intimate relationships fade or even die because of neglect or error on one or both parts, but the love God has for us and the love of God in us should never fail. If it does, it is because we have failed to forgive. Thankfully, God always forgives.

This February please remember the greatest Valentine ever given . . .

Jesus loves me this I know  
For the Bible tells me so  
Little ones to Him belong  
They are weak, but He is strong  
Yes, Jesus loves me  
Yes, Jesus loves me  
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so

Happy Valentines Day!

Pastor Howard