

# Does Our Heavenly Father See His Reflection in You?

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In preparing for today's sermon, I researched into the refining and purifying process of silver and how silversmiths historically refined and purified silver so that it could be used in different products such as tableware, decanters and vessels.

From an article by Patricia Holbrook entitled "Making Silver: A Reflection on the Heat of Our Trials" appearing in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, she writes:

*"One of the earliest methods of refining silver is called "cupellation," and it involves heating crude silver at extremely high temperatures until it is liquefied and adding certain substances such as nitric acid to help absorb the impurities. Once the pollutants are consumed, and the temperature is just right, the liquefied silver should become as clear as a mirror. According to tradition, when the silversmith can see his/her reflection in the metal, it is ready to pour. Both the temperature and the moment to take the metal out of the fire must be precise, or it could destroy the silver. For that reason, the craftsman must sit and carefully manage the process, tempering the metal until it's ready, controlling the heat and timing."*

This process of refining and purifying silver by a silversmith required that the silversmith pay close attention and remained totally focused on the silver in the fire as it is heated up. Once the process is started, the silversmith does not leave the silver in the fire for any reason. He continues to sit by the fire, observing the silver as it is being purified by the high heat of the fire. The silversmith never leaves because, if the silver was unattended even for a little while, it could become too hot, resulting in irreparable damage to the silver itself.

And the silversmith knows that the purification process is complete when he can see his own face reflecting back to him in the silver.

My sermon this afternoon is entitled

## Does our Heavenly Father See His Reflection in You?

I would like to ask four questions so as to explore in a more in-depth way, whether God Our Father can see Himself reflecting back at Him when He looks at us.

We will begin in Matthew 23 and we will read the words of Jesus Christ about three parameters which comprise the weightier matters of our Heavenly Father's law.

**Matthew 23:23** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law,*

*judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (KJV)*

So, Jesus listed three weightier matters of the law, and the principles behind these matters of the law form the questions in the sermon today.

The first question in the sermon today is:

### **1. Does our Heavenly Father see His faithfulness reflected in us?**

We read again and again and again in the pages of the Bible about the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father and about how we can totally put our trust in Him. Let's read some of the many scriptures about His faithfulness.

In Deuteronomy 7 we read about God Our Father telling the Israelites that He is a faithful Elohim or Mighty One.

**Deuteronomy 7:9** *Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; (KJV)*

The phrase "He is God" in Hebrew is הוּא הֵאֱלֹהִים – Hu HaElohim – He is the Mighty One. This term has the definite article "the" in front of Elohim. This term "HaElohim" is used specifically for God Our Father throughout the Old Testament. Our Heavenly Father says emphatically that He is *the faithful Mighty One*.

In Psalm 36 David, when describing our Heavenly Father, includes the great faithfulness that God Our Father shows to us all.

**Psalm 36:5** *Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*

*6) Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. (KJV)*

We read much about our Heavenly Father's faithfulness in Psalm 89

**Psalm 89:1** *I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*

*2) For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. (KJV)*

Continuing in Verse 8.

*8) O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 24.

24) [Yehovah speaking] *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.* (KJV)

Continuing in verse 33.

33) [Yehovah speaking] *Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* (KJV)

The Apostle John wrote about God Our Father's faithfulness.

**1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (KJV)

So, our Heavenly Father is faithful and we can totally trust Him and He expects us to trust Him, because He is faithful.

In Malachi 3 we read that our Heavenly Father is like a silversmith purifying His silver.

**Malachi 3:3** *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.* (KJV)

What can we glean from this verse? Once a silversmith begins the purification process of the silver, he has to sit and intently watch the silver as it heats up. He just doesn't put the silver down in the fire, and then goes and does something else. He is totally committed to purifying the silver and will not leave the silver until the process is done. He cannot leave because if the silver gets too hot, then the silver will be ruined. Our Heavenly Father is like a silversmith sitting over the fire watching intently as the silver is being purified in the fire. We are His silver that our Heavenly Father is purifying. He doesn't leave us for even a moment. He is there with us for the duration of our lives.

In Deuteronomy 31 there is a promise from God Our Father which should give us hope, comfort, and encouragement in our lives when we are facing trials.

**Deuteronomy 31:7** *And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.*

8) *And the LORD [Yehovah], he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.* (KJV)

This verse in Deuteronomy is also referenced in a very comforting verse in Hebrews 13.

**Hebrew 13:5** *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

6) *So that we may boldly say, The Lord [Kurios without the “the” – Yehovah – God Our Father] is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (KJV)*

So, Yehovah, our Heavenly Father, will never leave us nor forsake us, just like a silversmith purifying his silver. We are His main focus. We are His main work in the world today. The saints, who are His future spiritual children, have always been the main focus of our Heavenly Father. Just like a silversmith purifying his silver in the fire, our Heavenly Father is purifying us by putting us in the fire and heating up the temperature in our lives by allowing trials and tests.

Are we surprised and dismayed that we are facing trials and tests and tribulations in our lives? Many of us are experiencing severe trials, trials of grave health issues, trials of finances, trials of relationships, trials of employment, trials of obedience. The list goes on and on. Brethren, these are trials of faith, which deepen our faith in our Heavenly Father. Are we surprised that we have these trials?

In 1 Peter 4 the Apostle Peter addresses this concept very plainly and tells us not to be surprised.

**1 Peter 4:12** *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

*13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (KJV)*

The Apostle Peter was exhorting us and encouraging us, not just about regular trials, but fiery trials, trials where God Our Father has put us deep in the fire and has heated it to remove more and more impurities.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 about our Heavenly Father's faithfulness, and that He will not allow us to undergo trials which we will not be able to withstand.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (KJV)*

Just like a silversmith will not leave his silver in the fire to where the silver is damaged or destroyed, our Heavenly Father will not leave us in our fiery trials to where we are damaged or destroyed. He loves us so dearly He would never let that happen. When we face fiery trials and tests, when we are suffering wrongly, when we are enduring sickness and disease and discomfort, when we are enduring seemingly endless hardships and pain in our lives, let us not be surprised! Instead, let's remember that our Heavenly Father is sitting there like a silversmith, never taking His eyes off of His children, as they undergo and endure the trials and tests which beset us.

In John 15, we read about God Our Father purging those whom He loves in order to make them more fruitful. Jesus talked to His disciples about that purging on the last night of His physical life.

**John 15:1** [Jesus said] *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

*2) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (KJV)*

The Greek verb for *purge* in verse 2 is καθαίρω *kathairo* – Strong's #2508. It means “to cleanse, to prune, or to purify and make clean by removing undesirable elements.” We obtain our English words *cathartic* and *catharsis* from this Greek verb. This cleaning by removing undesirable elements is exactly what the silversmith does when he is purifying his silver. But why is God Our Father purifying us and pruning us? We read an answer in verse 8.

**John 15:8** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (KJV)*

Our Heavenly Father purifies us so that we bear much fruit, so that He Himself is glorified because we reflect Him in our lives. People will see that fruit and will glorify Him. God Our Father is so faithful to us. He will never leave us or forsake us, never, ever. But brethren, are we faithful to our Heavenly Father? Do we leave Him and do we forsake Him? Does our Heavenly Father see His faithfulness in us reflected back to Him through our faithfulness in Him? How do we show faithfulness in our Heavenly Father?

Jesus was describing a faithful and wise servant in Matthew 24.

**Matthew 24:42** *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43) But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.*

*44) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

*45) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*

*46) Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*  
(KJV)

- We show our faithfulness to our Heavenly Father by exhibiting our trust and confidence in Him on a daily basis.
- We show our faithfulness to Him by not putting anything – anything – above Him.
- We show our faithfulness to Him by making Him the focus of our daily lives.
- We show our faithfulness to Him by not allowing our trials and tests of life to discourage us, to overwhelm us, leading us to want to give up and bringing us to despair.

Do we truly believe and utilize as our firm conviction the affirmation that the Apostle Paul wrote about in Romans 8:31?

**Romans 8:31** *If God [ὁ Θεὸς – ho theos – God Our Father] be for us, who can be against us? (KJV)*

Do we truly believe those words? God Our Father wants us to trust Him, to have total confidence in Him, and to be faithful always to Him, just like He is always faithful to us. Does our Heavenly Father see His faithfulness reflected in us?

The second question in the sermon today is:

## **2. Does our Heavenly Father see His holiness reflected in us?**

Brethren, our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus the Christ, are holy. Everything that They do is holy. Everything that They touch is holy. The Bible is full of scriptures which show the holiness of our Heavenly Father. We will read just a few of them.

**1 Peter 1:13** *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*  
*14) As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance;*  
*15) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*  
*16) Because it is written, Be ye holy: for I am holy. (KJV)*

The Apostle Peter was referencing verses in Leviticus 11.

**Leviticus 11:43** *Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby.*  
*44) For I am the LORD [Yehovah] your God [Elohim – Mighty One]: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*  
*45) For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. (KJV)*

In Leviticus 19 we read another verse of Yehovah telling the Israelites that He is holy.

**Leviticus 19:1** *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*  
*2) Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy. (KJV)*

There was a specific reason why our Heavenly Father called Israel out to be a separate nation and why they were to be a holy nation.

**Leviticus 20:24** *But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.*

*25) Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.*

*26) And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. (KJV)*

There was a reason for Yehovah to separate out Israel from the rest of the world. In Psalm 67 we read that reason why God our Father called out Ancient Israel like He did.

**Psalm 67:1** *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.*

*2) That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*

*3) Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. (KJV)*

Israel was chosen by God Our Father and separated out from the other nations in order to be a model nation to the world. To showcase our Heavenly Father's way of life to the world. To show that it works and to show its many benefits. To show the difference that obedience to Him and His laws makes in a nation's success. Ancient Israel was to be a living example and evidence of God Our Father ruling in their lives.

The physical nation of Ancient Israel was a forerunner of the spiritual nation of the ecclesia, the spiritual church, the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father. The words *Church of God* in the Greek is "ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ" (ekklasia tou theou) literally mean "the called-out ones of the God" or "the called-out ones of God Our Father".

There is an important and crucial concept concerning the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father in Galatians 3

**Galatians 3:28** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

*29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (KJV)*

From the premise in these two verses, the Apostle Paul is expounding on the concept that the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father now are spiritual descendants of Abraham, just like the ancient Israelites were the physical descendants of Abraham. So, the saints are considered to be the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

The Apostle Peter further discusses that we, as the saints, as called-out ones of the Father, are also a holy nation.

**1 Peter 2:5** *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

*6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*

7) *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,*

8) *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

9) *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

10) *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (KJV)*

Peter wrote that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people who are the people of our Heavenly Father.

The Apostle Paul wrote that we are to be holy.

**Ephesians 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

4) *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (KJV)*

So, God Our Father has chosen us that we should be holy and without blame before Him. Just like Ancient Israel was to be a model nation to show the world the incredible difference that having God Our Father as their Elohim (their Mighty One) and ruler would make in their lives. So then the world would revere and praise Him. The same is true for the saints throughout the New Testament history and for us today.

**Matthew 5:13** *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

14) *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

15) *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

16) *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

We, collectively as called-out saints, are to be that “holy nation” that shines its light in a very dark and dim world. We are to live our lives as living testimonies of our Heavenly Father’s calling and as very ambassadors of Jesus Christ, His Son. We are to live our lives in a holy fashion in subjection to and in obedience to our Heavenly Father and His laws, following ever so closely to the example set for us by Jesus the Messiah. Is that what the world sees when the world sees our light? Are we shining our lights brightly by the way we obey and live our lives as holy vessels of God Our Father?

Brethren, does our Heavenly Father see His holiness reflected in us?

The third question in the sermon today is:



### 3. Does our Heavenly Father see His mercy reflected in us?

Our Heavenly Father is a merciful Mighty One and Father to us. He is perfect in character, perfect in thought, and perfect in action. The Bible is filled with scriptures concerning the great mercy that God Our Father has for us and shows toward us.

In Psalm 103 David had much to say concerning the mercy of Yehovah, our Heavenly Father.

**Psalm 103:8** The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (KJV)

**Psalm 117:2** "For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD. (KJV)

In talking to Moses on Mount Sinai, our Heavenly Father told Moses of His great mercy toward His people.

**Exodus 34:6** *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*

*7) Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.* (KJV)

God Our Father showed great mercy toward His people, even through the times that they disobeyed Him, disavowed Him, and were unfaithful and irreverent to Him. In the discourse now known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ taught much to His disciples and the multitude about showing mercy to others.

**Matthew 5:7** *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* (KJV)

So, when we are merciful to others, we are blessed because we obtain mercy from our Heavenly Father. We will read a portion of Luke's account of the Sermon on the Mount concerning the importance of showing mercy.

**Luke 6:27** *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,*

*28) Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.*

*29) And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.*

*30) Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.*

*31) And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

*32) For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.*

- 33) *And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.*
- 34) *And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*
- 35) *But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*
- 36) *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (KJV)*

So, we are to be merciful to others and to show mercy to others, just like our Heavenly Father is merciful to us and shows mercy to us each and every day.

In Matthew 18 we will read a parable that Jesus used to exemplify how important it is that we show mercy to others because of the mercy that we receive from our Heavenly Father.

**Matthew 18:23** *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.*

24) *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.*

25) *But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.*

26) *The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

27) *Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

28) *But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence (denarii): and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.*

29) *And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

30) *And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.*

31) *So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.*

32) *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:*

33) *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?*

34) *And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.*

35) *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses. (KJV)*

The verbs *to have compassion on* and *to have pity on* are both the same Greek verb ἐλεέω (eleeo) (Strong's #1653 – to have mercy on, to show mercy). So, verse 33 could be better translated as

*“Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?”*

At the time of Jesus, one denarius was a day’s wage for a common laborer. So, the debt that the fellow servant owed the unforgiving servant was the wages of 100 days (not a small amount of money). Using the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, the daily wage would have been approximately \$58.00. So, the debt would have been 100 days of wages or \$5,800.00.

However, one talent was worth 6,000 denarii. The other larger debt was 10,000 talents, which is equal to 600,000 denarii, or 600,000 days of wages (that’s over 1,900 years of wages). A day laborer could never pay that amount back. The 10,000 talents based on today’s minimum wage would \$34,800,000.

So, the unforgiving servant was forgiven almost \$35,000,000 by the king, but then he would not forgive his fellow servant of a debt of \$5,800. Brethren, does this describe us? Do we find ourselves doing the same thing? After repeatedly being shown mercy by the Father for disobeying Him through sinning which should bring the death penalty to us, do we then refuse to show mercy to others who have done something wrong against us?

Do we quickly forgive one another? Or do we stew on offenses done against us, even against us from other members in the Church? Do we show mercy to others in the way that we treat them, in the way that we speak with them, in the way that we act with them, and in the way that we pray for them?

Our Heavenly Father sees all. Nothing is hidden from Him. Does He see the mercy that He continually shows to us being reflected by us in the way we show mercy to others?

Brethren, does our Heavenly Father see His mercy reflected in us?

The fourth question in the sermon today is:

#### **4. Does our Heavenly Father see His love reflected in us?**

We explored at length in my prior sermon the Godly agape love that God Our Father has for us and that same love that we should show to others. This final question is a crucial and all-encompassing question, but we will briefly explore this question in this sermon. Jesus Christ told Nicodemus about the incredibly deep love, the Godly agape love, that God Our Father has not only for us but for all of mankind. John 3:16 is the most quoted verse in all the Bible.

**John 3:16** *For God [ὁ Θεὸς – the God – God Our Father] so loved [the verb form of agape love] the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Brethren, God Our Father loved us with Godly agape love so much that He willingly gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we may live eternally with Them in the future.

The Apostle Paul wrote about this incredibly deep love that God Our Father and Jesus Christ have for not only His elect, but for all of mankind.

**Romans 5:5** *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love [Godly agape love] of God [ὁ Θεὸς – the God – God Our Father] is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

6) *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

7) *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

8) *But God [ὁ Θεὸς – the God – God Our Father] commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (KJV)*

As we have explored in my last sermon, Jesus Christ loved all of us so much with that Godly agape love that He was willing to be savagely whipped and tortured and beaten until His back, His torso, His face, His arms, and His legs were torn open and bloody to the point that He was no longer recognizable to people. Jesus loved all of us so much that He was willing to be mocked and cursed and ridiculed, to be put on a cross, with His hands and feet nailed through, and ultimately to die from being pierced with a spear. He did this when all of humanity had rejected Him, and, as Paul said in verse 8, Jesus died for us while we all were yet sinners.

God Our Father watched as all this was done to His only begotten Son, the precious Being with whom He had shared an eternity in the past. God Our Father did not react like we would naturally react with vengeance against an ungrateful humanity, because He had Godly agape love for not only His called-out ones, but for all of mankind. His Godly agape love is at the heart of His plan of salvation for all of mankind who will repent of their evils and follow and obey and love Him.

Furthermore, brethren, as we read in Revelation 5:10 and Revelation 20:4, the saints will reign with Jesus Christ on the earth during the 1000-year period that we refer to as the Millennium. Now, does Jesus need our help in His reigning on the earth? No, Jesus does not need our help at all. As a Mighty One just like His Father, He is more than capable of reigning without any of our help. He does not need us at all. But why are we destined to help Jesus reign on earth? Because it is the way that God Our Father and Jesus Christ, through their immense Godly agape love for us, will bring honor, prestige, dignity, and respect to us in front of all of the world and for all the world to see.

Brethren, God Our Father and Jesus Christ have such deep Godly agape love for us. But we are expected in turn to exhibit that same deep Godly agape love for others to the point that God Our Father can see that Godly agape love in us reflecting back at Him.

Jesus was asked by one of the scribes what the first and foremost commandment was.

**Matthew 22:34** *But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.*

- 35) *Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,*
- 36) *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*
- 37) *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord [Κύριος – Kurios without the definite article “the” – Yehovah – God Our Father] thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*
- 38) *This is the first and great commandment.*
- 39) *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*
- 40) *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (KJV)*

So, Jesus told the Pharisee that the first and foremost commandment is *to love our Heavenly Father with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength*. And the second commandment is like the first – *You shall love your neighbor as yourself*. Jesus emphasized the importance of the second commandment because it is inextricably tied to the first commandment. We cannot truly love our Heavenly Father if we are not showing Godly agape love to others. The characteristics of Godly agape love can be summed up in one phrase which was given by Jesus. It is widely known as “The Golden Rule”.

**Matthew 7:12** *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (KJV)*

Our Heavenly Father considers the loving of our neighbor so important that Jesus added that second commandment to show that love is the intent and the result of the law and the prophets.

What are the characteristics of this Godly agape love that we are to show to others? In his first epistle to the Corinthian congregation, the Apostle Paul gave us an outline on the characteristics of Godly agape love that we should be showing in our daily lives.

**1 Corinthians 13:4** *“Love [Godly agape love] is patient, love [Godly agape love] is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

5) *It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs.*

6) *Love [Godly agape love] takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth.*

7) *Love [Godly agape love] never fails. (NLT)*

Continuing in verse 13

13) *And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love [Godly agape love]. (NLT)*

Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment on the last night of His physical life. That commandment was centered on the Godly agape love that the Father and Jesus have for us and on the Godly agape love that They command us to have for others.

**John 13:34** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

*35) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (KJV)*

Jesus instructed His disciples and by extension He instructs us today to have Godly agape love for one another. It is the very sign that we are Jesus' disciples. Does our Heavenly Father see His love reflected in us?

In today's sermon, we have explored the concept of God Our Father being able to see Himself reflecting back to Him through us. We explored this concept in four questions.

**1)** Does our Heavenly Father see His faithfulness reflected in us? Are we trusting and faithful in God Our Father? He is faithful to us and will never leave us or forsake us. Let us be striving always to be faithful to Him in all we do every day.

**2)** Does our Heavenly Father see His holiness reflected in us? God Our Father is holy. Are we exemplifying the holiness of our Heavenly Father by our actions, our words, our thoughts, and our attitudes? Do we live holy lives? Do the people in the world see a difference in us that represents our separation by the Father from the world for a special and holy purpose?

**3)** Does our Heavenly Father see His mercy reflected in us? God Our Father is so merciful to us. He desires to forgive us through the blood of His Son, Jesus. He blots out our sins and completely removes them, never to think of them again and never to bring them up again. But are we quick to forgive and to show mercy to others, and are we slow to be offended by others?

**4)** Does our Heavenly Father see His love reflected in us? God Our Father loves us with an unselfish Godly agape love so much that He was willing to sacrifice His own Son so that we may have everlasting life with Him. Do we show that love for one another in the way that we treat one another each and every day?

Brethren, just as a silversmith patiently purifies the silver in the fire with an intense focus on the silver as the purification process unfolds in the fire, God Our Father patiently is purifying us in the fiery trials of life with an intense focus on us.

Again, this purification process that we are undergoing now is the Work. The most important task that our Heavenly Father is undertaking right now is our transformation into His likeness, so that at the end of the purification process, when He looks at us, He can see His own face reflecting back to Him. Where are we in this process?

In the weeks ahead, in preparation for Passover, let's honestly ponder and meditate upon living our lives more and more in subjection to and in alignment with our Heavenly Father's characteristics, His unwavering faithfulness, His perfect holiness, His immeasurable mercy, and His infinite love.

Brethren, does our Heavenly Father see His reflection in you?