

I'd like to look at two or three passages as we start this morning. The first is Mat. 22:36-40. "One of them an expert in the law tested him with this question: Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus replied, Love the Lord you God with all your hear and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is likeit: love your neighbor like yourself. All the law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments."

Then turn to 1 Cor. 13 and read the first and last verses: "If I speak in the tongue of men and angels and have not love I am only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol. . . And now these three remain: faith, hope and love but the greatest of these is love.

Then I'll remind you of the verse in Gal. that speaks of the fruit of the spirit and begins with the word love. The word love is to some extent characteristic of Christianity all through its history. Great stress has been laid upon it and indeed we find great stress upon it in the NT. There are many many references to love. The English word love as used today has quite a breadth. I think it is unfortunate that our word love has such a breadth of meaning. Perhaps that's why the KJV translators when they came to some of the most wonderful passages about love preferred the world charity which they took from the Latin *charitas*. Previous English translations had used the word love, as our modern *w* translations all do.

But perhaps the word love had already then begun to be degraded as it has to quite an extent in recent times, and they thought that by using the word *charitas*(charity) that they would give it a special meaning, a special significance. They translate the word *agape* which occurs 114 t. in the NT as love 86 t., and charity 27 t. They did not say God is charity! That would sound very silly to us today, yet that would be exactly the meaning in which it is used in 1 Cor. 13. Today this word charity in these contexts makes absolutely no sense to us.

To me one of the clearest proofs that it is utterly absurd to speak as if the KJV were sufficient to use as the final test for an English version today is the fact that in 27 cases this word *charity* occurs and makes absolutely no sense to anyone today who is not familiar with the passages.

The word *agapo* in Greek occurs 135 t., *phileo* also used and translated love, 22 t. This shows how very frequent the word is in the Greek NT. Today you might say the word love is used in 4 senses, two of which have been common for a long time and two of which were not used so much until comparatively recently. In recent years more and more the word love is coming to be used for mere sensuousness. Its always been used a little for that, but it's used more and more for that as our moral climate degenerates and people sometimes wish we could use another word, because it is such a tremendous breadth of meaning.