

Christian Love

(Matthews Barnabas Metropolitan)

The most fundamental thing we must know is the real purpose of our existence.

We are created in the image of God. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27) Not only Christians, but also all human beings are created in the image of God. God is love. (1 John 4:16) Hence all human beings have the potential to grow to perfection in love. Jesus Christ has manifested what real love is and He has commanded us to love one another as He has loved us (St. John 15:12) This is Christian love.

Christian love has mainly four aspects: 1)Self-Sacrifice 2)Whole-hearted Forgiveness 3) Supreme Respect and 4)Implicit Obedience. When we have this kind of love we will inherit heaven.

- 1) Self-Sacrifice: Our Lord identified Himself with the sinners and offered Himself as a sacrifice for them. His whole life on earth was sacrificial. When we try to follow His example, we will sacrifice our time, talents, and money for the welfare of others.
- 2) Whole-hearted Forgiveness: Our Lord prayed for those who crucified Him. He prayed saying "Father forgive them, for they don't know what they do" (St. Luke 23:34) When we have this kind of forgiveness, we will be able to forgive even the worst criminals and the worst enemies.
- 3) Supreme Respect: Our Lord washed the feet of His disciples like a slave. When we have the spirit of humble service, we will respect everyone speaking all the good of others and refraining from speaking ill of anyone.
- 4) Implicit Obedience: Our Lord obeyed the heavenly Father unto death, even a death on the cross. The first sin of mankind was in the Garden of Eden. We must try to obey God and His children in everything and gain their love. Through Christian love, we have to glorify god. Our Lord said, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (St. Matthew 5:16)

The more we have Christian love, the more we will have heaven. The less we have Christian love, the less we will have heaven.