

## Sermon 2-3-19 I Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13

### Love that enriches, edifies and is enduring

Dear Loved by God:

Have you ever found it difficult to love other people? Have you ever found it difficult to forgive?

- My spouse needs my forgiveness
- I'm supposed to love my neighbor
- How can I put up with my troublesome co-worker?

Our new person in Christ desires to be...

- More loving to the people around us
- More eager to forgive those who sin against us
- Willing to put others first before our needs
- More patient with those around us
- More generous and kind with others

The problem is our old sinful nature fights to keep us...

- From forgiving others
- From loving others
- From putting others first
- From practicing patience
- From being kind to others

As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 7 the "good I want to do, this I don't do, but the evil I don't want to do, this I do."

Who will rescue us and help us? Paul says "But thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

God loves you...Personally...Powerfull...Passionately --- His love will fill you and leave you with a love worth giving.

As we grow in faith we will grow in love...

- A growing love for God
- A growing love for God's people
- A growing love for lost souls

Love is the circulatory system of the Body of Christ.

In the context of these verses on love, the Apostle Paul was dealing with problems in the church in Corinth...

- The abuse of the gift of speaking in tongues
- Division in the church
- Envy of others spiritual gifts
- Selfishness
- Impatience with each other

The believers in Corinth lacked love for one another. The Apostle Paul explains what real love is. In I Corinthians 12:31 Paul calls upon the believers in Corinth to desire the greater gift of God which is love.

I. **God's love is enriching** vv1-3

Without love the exercise of our spiritual gifts is nothing. We are taught to love one another.

- God the Father taught us to love by sending His Son to die for us I John 4:19
- God the Son taught us to love by giving His life for us John 13:34-35
- God the Holy Spirit teaches us to love one another by pouring God's love into our hearts. Romans 5:5

God's love enriches all that it touches.

Love was absent in Corinth...

- It led to quarrels
- It led to selfishness

- It led to pride

The gift of tongues was a gift highly prized by the Corinthians. But it was a gift that was so highly abused. It became a gift of pride and arrogance. Without love any gift of tongues is just noise. Whatever gift we have if it is not used for the welfare of others it then means nothing. Even if I give all I have and sacrifice myself if it is not done in love for God and others it means nothing.

## II. **God's love is edifying** vv4-7

The purpose of spiritual gifts is the edification of the church. We must not think of ourselves but of others. This demands love.

- The Corinthians were impatient in public meetings....but love would make them long suffering.
- They were envying each other's gifts but love would remove that envy
- They were puffed up with pride but love would remove pride and replace it with a desire to promote others Romans 12:10
- They were suing each other but love would cover over sins...v5

Forgiveness means that we wipe the record clean and never hold things against people. Eph 4:26, 32 Love does not rejoice in sin yet the Corinthians were boasting about sin in their church. I Peter 4:8

Our society confuses love and lust. Unlike lust God's kind of love is directed outward toward others not inward toward ourselves. This love is not natural for us. It is possible only if God supernaturally helps us set aside our own desires so we can give love while expecting nothing in return. The closer we come to Christ the more love we will show to others.

## **Love is action not abstraction...**

- Love is patient with people and gracious to them with generosity
- Love never envies or brags or is arrogant
- Love is never rude or overbearing
- Love never wants its own way

- Love is not irritated or angered in personal offense
- Love finds no pleasure in someone's sin, even the sin of an enemy

V4 **Love suffereth long**....love has an infinite capacity for endurance

- It is not readily put out but endures patiently ---especially with people
- It reacts with goodness towards those who ill-treat it
- Love gives itself in service to others
- Love is not displeased at the success of others
- Love is not a “wind-bag”
- Love will give itself rather than assert itself

V5 **Love is the exact opposite of self-seeking**

- It is not touchy, not ready to take offense
- Love is always ready to think the best of people
- Love keeps no record of wrongs and does not harbor a sense of injury

V6 **Love sees joy in the truth**

- Even love cannot rejoice when the truth is denied
- Love rejoices in the truth of God, in the truth of the Gospel

V7 **Love bears all things**

- Love conceals what is displeasing in another
- Love always sees the best in others
- Love is always ready to give the benefit of the doubt
- Love refuses to take failure as final
- Love is the endurance of a soldier who is in the thick of battle undismayed
- Love is not overwhelmed but manfully plays its part whatever the difficulties

V8 **Love cannot fail**

Love is devoted to truth in everything...love protects, believes, hopes and endures.

III. **God's love is enduring** vv8-13

All other gifts will cease because they are limited in their scope and time. All others gifts serve their purpose for a certain time and space.

- The gift of prophecy will cease
- The gift of tongues will stop
- The gift of knowledge will pass away

V10 When perfection comes....(in heaven)....the imperfect disappears.

### **Put away childish things v11**

The Corinthians were like children playing with toys that would one day disappear. The day comes when children must “put away childish things.” Children live for the temporary but adults live for what is permanent. Love is enduring and what it produces will endure. Faith, hope and love go together but it is love that energizes faith and hope.

Love never fails. Love outlasts all failures. I Peter 4:8 and I John 4:16

Love is permanent while other gifts were temporary for a time to serve a purpose. In heaven we will not need them because we will have perfect knowledge of God.

### **God never stops loving you.**

- You cannot keep God from loving you
- You cannot stop God from loving you

Faith and hope will be fulfilled and perfectly realized in heaven but love ---- God’s love ----is everlasting. I John 4:8

V12 A great many people ask, “Will I know my loved ones in heaven?”

YES - We will have perfect knowledge and see clearly in heaven.

The Apostle Paul is not describing an abstract term --- love. He is writing a biography of Jesus Christ. Of Him it was written, “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them right on through to the very end.” John 13:1  
The love of Jesus is an eternal love. V. McGee

Of faith, hope and love....the greatest of these is love.

**“God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” Romans 5:5**