

Session 13: The Love Chapter...

1 Corinthians 13

A Tribute to Jehovah God and His Son

Some great biblical scholars believe that the 13th Chapter of 1 Corinthians is the greatest chapter in the New Testament.

Love = Webster's

- (1) *A feeling of strong personal attachment induced by sympathetic understanding, or by ties of kinship; ardent affection.*
- (2) *The benevolence attributed to God as being like a father's affection for his children; also, men's adoration of God (agape)*
- (3) *Strong liking; fondness; good will; as, love of learning; love of country.*
- (4) *Tender and passionate affection for one of the opposite sex.*
- (5) *A synonym for God (Christian Science)*
- (6) *Nothing...i.e. Tennis*

- (7) **Beyond the attributes described as a trait or character...it is the attribute of an unblemished, undemanding, unconditional, dying-for kind of love (agape).**

Ties of kinship.... "dying for" kind of love:

God's love for us (willingness to sacrifice His Son whereby we might be saved to kinship with Him); Jesus' love for us (willingness to die for us so we might be Brothers with Him).

Love is more than compassion...Love is more than Faith....Love is more than the Hope that we have in a hereafter with the Lord.

The Gift of Lasting Love
Love is much more than a tender caress
And more than bright hours of gay happiness,
For a lasting love is made up of sharing
Both hours that are "joyous" and also
"despairing"...
It's made up of patience and deep understanding
And never of selfish and stubborn demanding,
It's made up of climbing the steep hills together
And facing with courage life's stormiest weather
And nothing on earth or in heaven can part
A love that has grown to be part of the heart,
And just like the sun and the stars and the sea,
This love will go on through eternity---

For "true love" lives on when earthly things die,
For its part of the spirit that soars to the sky.
Helen Steiner Rice

**LOVE IS GREATER THAN ANY OTHER TRAIT OR CHARACTERISTIC
ONE CAN POSSESS.**

LOVE IS MORE THAN OUR FAITH CAN IMAGINE...

1 CORINTHIANS 13

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, *"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."*

Paul begins by declaring that a man may possess any spiritual gift, but if it is unaccompanied by love it is useless.

- **He may have the gift of tongues....**

A characteristic of heathen worship was the clanging of cymbals and braying of trumpets. Even the coveted gift of tongues was no better than the uproar of heathen worship if love was absent.

- **He may have the gift of prophecy....**

Prophecy corresponds most closely with preaching.

There are two (2) kinds of preaching. There is the preacher whose one aim is to save the souls of his people and who woos them with the accents of love.

There is the preacher that dangles his hearers over the flames of hell and gives them an out by accepting God's love for us...

Both are acceptable...both have their place. However, if there is a preacher that has words that puts fear into people...but there is no love, it is worth nothing.

There are those that have the gift of forth telling...giving God's plan for coming days....but, without presenting God's love as a way out of the coming despair of burning fire and brimstone...or God's wrath, then it is worth nothing. Love must be in the equation.

- **He may have the gift of intellectual knowledge.**

The permanent danger of intellectual knowledge is intellectual snobbery. The man who is learned runs the grave danger of developing the spirit of contempt.

Only knowledge which has been kindled with the fire of love can readily save the lost.

- **He may have a passionate faith.**

There are times when faith can be cruel. If we flaunt our faith...and put down those that are going through trials....and build up or try to edify ourselves by bragging about our faith, then love is not there...only pride.

Love along with faith will move mountains...and move hearts.

- **He may practice what men call charity....**

He may give to the poor....but wants the glory for it all. To give as a grim duty, to give with a certain contempt, to stand on one's own accolades and successes and throw scraps of charity as to a dog, to give to balance your tax bill....is not charity at all...it is pride (arrogant and selfish pride).

Giving with a loving heart is not requiring or expecting anything in return.

- **He may give his body to be burned...**

The terrorist...the radical Islamic code of ethics....preaches that giving of one's life in order to eliminate the enemy ("Big Satan" and "Little Satan") will guarantee a place in Allah's kingdom (along with 70 virgins)....I don't know what the girls, women martyrs get.

This is the height of paganism...or Satan's deception.

Where is the love?

What is "true love"?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

15 Characteristics of Christian love:

(1) Love is patient.

One who is slow to anger. One who does not seek revenge.

Patience is not the sign of weakness but the sign of strength.

Lincoln never sought revenge or sought to pay-back his enemy...

One of his most staunch critics, a man named Stanton...who called Lincoln a "low cunning clown"....an "idiot...an original gorilla."

Lincoln said nothing....and made him his war minister...because Lincoln said, "he is the best man for the job."

When Lincoln lay dying with an assassin's bullet in the brain, Stanton looked down on Lincoln's silent face and said through tear, "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen." The patience of love had conquered in the end.

(2) Love is kind.

Love is "sweet to all." This does not mean that in being kind, we might have to be cowardly. Sometimes love is discipline...even to the ultimate penalty (the death penalty).

*There are those church leaders and political heroes that dealt with those that challenged their ideals with punishment and death.
So many good Church people would have sided with the rulers and not with Jesus if they had to deal with the woman taken in adultery.*

(3) Love knows no envy.

Someone said that there are really two classes of people in this world—"those who are millionaires and those who would like to be."

There are two (2) kinds of envy:

- ✓ The one who covets the possession of other people (a very human thing);
- ✓ The worse one...the one who not so much wants things for himself as wish that others had not gotten them.

(4) Love is no braggart.

True love will always be far more impressed with its own unworthiness than its own merit. Love is kept humble by the consciousness that it can never offer its loved one a gift which is good enough. "I offer God my all...but if there is more that I can give, I want to gain it...and give it."

(5) Love is not inflated with its own importance.

The really great man never thinks of his own importance.

Napoleon always advocated the sanctity of the home and obligation of public worship....for others. Of himself, however, he said, "I am not a man like other men. The laws of morality do not apply to me.".....Sounds like a few preachers and many politicians to me.

(6) Love does not behave gracelessly.

In Greek, the words for grace and charm are the same.

True grace goes beyond the charm one might possess.

(7) Love does not insist upon its rights.

There are two kinds of people in the world—there are those who always insist upon their privileges and those who always remember their responsibilities; those who are always thinking of what life owes them and those who never forget what they owe to life.

It would be the key to almost all the problems which surround us today if men would think less of their rights and more of their duties.

(8) Love never flies into a temper.

Christian love never becomes exasperated with people.

Exasperation is always a sign of defeat. The man who is master of his temper can be master of anything.

(9) Love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received.

One of the great arts in life is to learn what to forget. People sometimes nurse their wrath to keep it warm; they brood over their wrongs until it is impossible to forget them.

(10) Love finds no pleasure in evil doing.

It is one of the queer traits of human nature that very often we prefer to hear of the misfortune of others rather than of their good fortune. It is much easier to weep with them than to rejoice with those who rejoice.

Christian love has none of that human malice which finds pleasure in ill reports.

(11) Love rejoices with the truth.

There are times when we definitely do not want the truth to prevail; and still more times when it is the last thing we wish to hear.

(12) Love can endure anything.

Actually “love can cover anything” in the sense that it will never drag into the light of day the faults and mistakes of others.

(13) Love is completely trusting.

This love has a twofold aspect:

✓ *In relation to God. It takes God at His word....His promises and His chastisement.*

✓ *In relation to our fellow men. It means that love always believes the best about other people. You are free...but you are responsible. God says that to us....Can He trust us?*

(14) Love never ceases hope.

Jesus believed that no man is hopeless. It is God’s desire that “all men come to repentance.” Why can’t we have that type of love...and hope for those that are lost, those that are considered a handi-cap?

Until our dying day, we must love the unlovely and hope for their healing....physically and spiritually.

(15) Love bears everything with triumphant fortitude.

Love can bear things, not merely with passive resignation, but with triumphant fortitude, because it knows that “a father’s hand will never cause his child a needless tear.”

ONE THING REMAINS TO BE SAID—WHEN WE THINK OF THE QUALITIES OF THIS LOVE PAUL PORTRAYS THEM WE CAN SEE THEM REALIZED IN THE LIFE OF JESUS HIMSELF.

The Supremacy of Love....1 Corinthians 13:8-13, “Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways

of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

Paul has three (3) final things to say of this Christian love:

(1) He Stresses Its Absolute Permanency.

When all the things in which men glory have passed away...love will still stand!

Song of Solomon 8:7 states, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.”

Reason for believing in immortality—when love is entered into the equation, there comes into life a relationship against which the assaults of time are helpless and which transcends death.

(2) He Stresses Its Absolute Completeness.

“As things are, what we see are reflections in a mirror.” That would be even more suggestive to the Corinthians than it is to us. Corinth was famous for its manufacture of mirrors. The modern mirror as we know it, with its near perfect reflection, did not emerge until the 13th century. The Corinthian mirror was made of highly polished metal...and even at its best, gave but an imperfect reflection.

In this life, Paul feels we see only the reflections of God and are left with much that is mystery and riddle. The finite can never grasp the infinite. Perfection is only seen in Jesusthe perfect reflection of God. We are to pursue holiness, to pursue the traits and wholeness of Jesus, and to seek that which Jesus states is the perfect life....found in Christ and Him alone.

(3) He Stresses Its Absolute and Pre-eminent Supremacy.

Great as faith and hope are, love is still greater.

Faith without love is cold.

Hope without love is grim.

Love is the fire which kindles faith...and it is the light which turns hope into certainty.