

BECOMING THE CHURCH

“The Excellence of LOVE” (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

Last week: 1 Cor. 12 = Spiritual Gifts 3 Categories: 1) Offices 2) 9-Church Gifts 3) 9-Supernatural Gifts (establish Ch)

- Cessationist vs. Continuationist
- Every Believer is sealed, indwelt by Holy Spirit. At least 1 Sp. Gift. No one has them all. They can change. =Use it!

***Try to Define love! Feeling? Love your spouse, your kids, your animals, the cowboys**
- sacrifice X for her, why? Give something just to bless her, please her, show her I'm hers.

MAIN POINT: Love is God's indescribable gift to humanity to show us His nature toward us and that we would demonstrate His loving nature toward others. W/o love, there is no creation, no condescension, no rescue

John 3:16 “For God SO loved the world...that He GAVE His one and only Son

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

1 John 4:9-10 “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

1 John 3:1 “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

By God's action of love toward us, we can know and experience Him; IN HIM (Union), we have been given a part of Him through His Spirit who puts love within us. **Divine** Love. What are we to do with that love of God? = **Worship**

- Our Worship and Work for the Savior are motivated by our love of God (not fear, not rules, not duty -BUT love)
- Our Love for God is to be shown in how we interact with others (family, friends, neighbors, & even our enemies)

READ 1 Cor. 13:1-13 – Paul reminds us in doing the WORK of God to establish and build up His Church = our motivation and results need to be Divine LOVE. – Spiritual gifts, miracles, signs, power are meaningless w/out showing God's love to those whom experience the divine power of God and His message:

“If I speak with the tongues of mankind and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have *the gift of* prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give away all my possessions *to charity*, and if I surrender my body so that I may glory, but do not have love, it does me no good.

Paul describes the characteristics of Divine Love: ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. ⁵ It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own *benefit*; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ **Love never fails**; but if *there are gifts of* ^[c]prophecy, they will be done away with; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away with. ⁹ For we know in part and prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away with. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I also have been fully known. ¹³ But now faith, hope, *and* love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

-As a defining mark of spiritual maturity, Paul states that LOVE needs to be a defining characteristic of your motivation and action toward all. That a spiritually mature man/woman shows Divine Love consistently in their life.

- They LOVE God
- They LOVE what God loves (people). **Redemption. Rescue. Rebirth. Renewal. Restoration.**

1 Peter 1:22 “You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. **Love each other deeply with all your heart.**” To love God is to love His Ch.

Col. 3:12-14 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive any complaint you may have against someone else. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And above all, [over all these virtues] put on love, which is the bond of perfect unity.”

Divine love is: 1. Action (it is more than just a feeling, an idea, a desire) =it must be shown to be experienced

-1 John 4:8 “we love because He first loved us” = God showed us His love by revealing His SON to us

2. Giving = it has to be given away (can't be hoarded; too much self-love is aberrant) -Sea of Galilee vs. Dead sea

3. Honoring = giving special honor to the recipient, the highest honor you can bestow Serve (self-sacrifice) Jn 15:13

4. Sacrificial = we love those we choose; AND we are called to love our enemies (b/c we LOVE God most) Mt. 5:44

5. Love and Forgiveness are twins: Can't have one without the other. Both are supernatural. Not instinctive.

1 Peter 4:8 “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

Prov. 17:9 “Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.”

Prov. 10:12 “Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.”

Application:

- How are you showing others Divine LOVE versus selfish, self-serving “love”
- Who is God calling you to engage with the Love of God? Friend, neighbor acquaintance, enemy?
How? = SERVE/SHARE gospel
- Who do you have unforgiveness towards? Who do you need to make right that relationship to show God's love?
- Remember, God pursued you first. He showed you love first. He forgave you and invited you into RELATIONSHIP = Go and do likewise.

Romans 2:4 “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

Community Group Discussion Questions:

1. What is the relationship between Spiritual Gifts and Love?
2. What do you think was happening in the Church of Corinth for Paul to have to make this statement in Ch. 13?
3. How as a Church are we doing a good job demonstrating divine love? Where do we need to grow in this? As a community group? In my personal life?
4. Which of the spiritual gifts would be most challenging to show Christ's love through, if any? i.e Prophecy . . .
5. What is one action step you will commit to in order to better show God's love to _____ ...