

The Greatest Gift of Love – Part A - The Things Love Does

Scripture: Matthew 18:1 – 5 and 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 13

Focus on verses 1 – 4a, 6b – 7

5/8/22 Mothers' Day

Preaching on Mothers' Day may seem easy, all you have to do is preach about 'LOVE'. But some people have had a mother who was unable to show them love or their mother was not present because of death or separation from their mother.

On this Mother's Day let me start out by painting a scene for you which I hope will bring you great joy and wonderful memories.

A school bus is bring a little boy home from kindergarten. You can see pure joy in the boy's face as he leaves the school bus and runs towards his mother. When the boy gets close to his Mom, he jumps up for a hug from Mom. Mom catches the boy and the boy wraps himself around her like a monkey. A wonderful embrace takes place! Can I get an AHHHH!

Another afternoon, the boy bounded off the bus and with arms wide open, he ran to his Mom yelling - 'Mommy! Mommy!' When he was four feet away he leapt in the air. This surprised Mom and she immediately reacted to her son. Can you see this situation clearly? Can you see the boy's knees bend and can you see him flying through the air? Can you see the boy flying with arms wide open and a big smile on his face? Oh, she did catch him! So it is with a mother's love! It catches you ever time!

One can only marvel at the complete trust and love the son had in his mother. The boy would risk throwing himself at Mom without fear. Do you remember a similar scene in your life? If you can, I hope you are smiling now! If you can't, look at the ladies around you with smiles on their faces.

This is how God wants us to approach the throne. God wants us to approach him with total trust and love. Many times we are too afraid to step onto the unknown path in life. The boy did not! Many times we worry about all that could go wrong. The boy did not! Many times we want to run away at the first sign of a trial. The boy did not!

God wants us to trust with the faith of a child. God wants us to bound forward in life with our arms wide open. God wants us to run to him shouting - 'Savior & Lord'.

Our God promises are true. His Holy Spirit is always with us. His arms are always wide open ready to embrace us in love. So why don't we leap into his arms? Do we think we are unworthy? Do we think God will drop us? Why don't we leap? Do we not believe the stories of Jesus? Do we have a weak faith?

Are you ready to leap into God's arms? The bus of life is pulling up to the curb and it is time for you to get off. You can see Jesus waiting there for you. Bound off the bus of life and start running towards Jesus with your arms open and a smile upon your face. Bend your knees and leap into the air. I guarantee God will catch you! I guarantee God will catch you!

Let's now look at the Apostle Paul's wonderful words which are usually read at a wedding. I would say that this passage has been read at 90% of the weddings I have presided at!

Paul was not the kind of apostle who was shy and willing to work in the background. Paul offering in 1 Corinthians 13, sets a picture of himself as a positive example worthy of emulation. Paul presents himself as a role model for us. But in this passage we receive some negatives. We feel Paul sharing as a very gifted man who is lacking in love. We hear Paul sharing that a man or woman without love is of no value or worth.

Paul shares his gifts and abilities. Paul could and did speak in tongues. Paul was a prophet. He had prophetic powers. He had a great faith in Jesus Christ. He was generous. However, without love, none of those mean anything.

In saying all this, Paul makes two points:

#1 – Love is not about getting what we want, but it is about the needs of others.

#2 – When we love and seek to meet the needs of others, it is then that our needs are met.

A mother should be a positive example worthy of emulation. A mother should be a role model for her children. These two points are what a mother should be all about. I hope your mother had these traits – A mother's love is not about getting what she want, but it is about the needs of her children. And when a mother loves, she seek to meet the needs of her children and it is then that the mother's needs are met.

Am I speaking about your mother?

Now let us look at what love is!

First, Paul tells us that love is patient. I think this means more than not looking at my watch and tapping my foot every second when it is time to move on. I think it has to do with rhythms of life. Patience is about not rushing through experiences in life, but living into them!

Patience is listening carefully to another person without wishing he/she would stop talking so you can say something incredibly profound. Love is patient because it is a gift from the God who is so incredibly patient with us – God's wandering children!

A mother's love must also be patient. She must be patience in listening carefully to her children. A mother's love is patient because it is a gift from the God who is so incredibly patient with us – God's wandering children!

Second, love is kind. This love is the kindness one shows to those people you disagree with or dislike. A mother's love must be kind to her children who often do things that are wrong or bad.

Thirdly, Paul provides us with a quick list of claims about what love does later in our passage. These claims seem a bit naïve, but when we take a closer look we find a powerful model for a mother's love.

Paul says love is not happy with injustice but love is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things. That is to mean love does not keep score of rights and wrongs. A mother's loving relationship with her children continues because she does not keep score of who owes her or what is owed to us. A mother's love does not keep score of who has hurt her. A mother's love will grow and flourish because she does just the opposite. She takes her children as they are without trying to change them. A mother does not try to earn points against those she loves.

Oh, there is room for tough love when the mother stands up for a person who has been abused or neglected no matter the cost to a relationship. Justice has to be part of a mother's love. Justice is part of love that does not bear abuse or oppression in silence but works to change the other.

Fourthly, Paul tells us that love trust all things. This does not mean that love is incredibly naïve. Rather, this is about faith. Faith is a right relationship with God. Faith is openness to the future. Faith is a confidence in God's promises especially that God will be with us always.

It is because of this faith and confidence that love indeed has hope in all things. Hope, like faith, is not believing that everything is good no matter what. Faith and hope look at the world with clear vision but see beyond today's situation with confidence in God. Because of this, we know God loves us.

And so a mother's love must trust all things. This does not mean that a mother's love is incredibly naïve. Rather, this is about faith. Faith is a right relationship with God and with her children. Faith is openness to the future. Faith is a confidence in God's promises especially that God will be with her always.

It is because of this faith and confidence that a mother's love indeed has hope in all things. Hope, like faith, is not believing that everything is good no matter what. Faith and hope look at the world with clear vision but see beyond today's situation with confidence in God. Because of this, we know God loves us.

And finally, love endures all things. Because of God's love and the love that Christians share with one another, we are able to endure more of what life throws at us than those who live apart from Christ. We can stand firm in faith and hope because we know the ground of love.

So it is with a mother's love. A mother's love endures all things. Because of her love for her children she will be able to endure more of what life throws at her than those mothers who live apart from Christ. She will be able to stand firm in her faith and her hope because she is grounded in love.

(Re-read 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 4a, 6a – 7)

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind.

Love rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, love believes all things, love hopes in all things, and love endures all things.

May we have such a love, especially for Jesus Christ because he has this kind of love for us!

Let us pray:

Loving God, thank you for the love of our mothers. Thank you for them always being there to catch us in a loving embrace.

Also dear God, help us to trust in all things you do. Help us to have the faith of a child. We pray this in Jesus' name - AMEN.

