

The Greatest Gift is Love – Part B

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 13

5/15/22

Last week we talked about love for Mothers' Day. We talked about what things love does. Today we will focus again on 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 13 and we are going to be talking about the things love does not do.

Paul provides us with a short list of what love does not do in verses 4 to 6. Paul tells us that love is not jealous or boastful. Love is not arrogant or rude. When I hear these words it strikes me that all of these attitudes are centered on the self! You know that attitude:

*when other people receive a prize we ask – ‘Why didn't I get a prize?’

*When others receive an award we ask – ‘I did as much as they did, where my award?’

Little children are very much in this attitude - I want it! Give me it! But let us be honest with ourselves, we have this same attitude in life. Jealousy is about honoring ourselves instead of rejoicing in the honor another receives. Jealousy does not celebrate with others. Jealousy pulls back from rejoicing and sulks in the corner because it did not receive the honor.

Boasting does the same kind of damage to the community. For some reason, no one likes a braggart. Even the kindest person in the community gets tired of listening to someone tell for the umpteenth time about his exploits as an athlete, or an investor, or about how wonderful his/her children are. Love does not boast. Instead, love seeks out ways to lift up the other person. Love seeks out the one who is rather shy and introverted and rarely receives notice or praise from the community.

In a similar fashion, love is not arrogant. Love does not put other people down. Instead love seeks to build up. I believe this is the one we have been struggling as a nation for the past few years. During our difficulty within our nation, we have found ourselves tearing down our brothers & sisters in Christ instead of build them up. Love does not appear in the loudest voice calling other people names and saying how smart one is while calling others dumb. Let us not be arrogant! Let our national leaders not be arrogant!

Love is not rude Love does not run over others in conversation. Love never interrupts another when he/she is making a point. Love does not push for its own advantage but seeks to give others a chance.

None of this means that love is a push over! Love does not mean that a Christian is a second class citizen because he/she is a wimp. Love is, in fact, strong! It takes a stronger person to be kind than to be rude many times!

Love does not insist on its own way. Love does not seek an advantage. This is amazing in a world where we all want what we want when we want it with no questions asked. The kind of love Paul describes does not insist on having its own way because love is a gift from God, through the Holy Spirit.

God leaves us free to make our own choices. We have freedom of choice! Freedom of choice is both a blessing and a curse! We have the choice to rebel against the divine will.

Parents with little children have a glimpse of what rebellion is like when one of their children wants his own way and says no to the parent. Often wise parents stand back and allow their children to make choices that they would not consider good ones. This is hard to do sometimes! However, our love for our children does not insist that they be just like us.

The key to all Paul has said in our passage is this – Love lasts! Or as Paul stated – Love never fails!

And Paul concludes his passage on love with these words – ‘Now faith, hope, and love remain, of these three things; the greatest of these is love!’

These are the three great pillars of our relationship to God - faith, hope, and love. These are the three great pillars of our relationship with the world - faith, hope, and love. These are the three great pillars of our relationship with each other - faith, hope, and love.

The greatest of these pillars is LOVE!

Let us conclude this message with this – God is love!

God is love in creation. His voice is in the air. We see God in the rising and setting of the sun. We see God in the singing of birds and in the love of human hearts. The voice and love of God is in nature.

God is love in his wisdom. God created us out of his overflowing love and goodness. God made us able to receive all the blessedness which he has ordained for us. God’s love is in his great heart!

God is love in his power. The whole world moves to God’s great will because for in God all things were created, both in heaven and earth and both invisible and visible. All things have been created through him and for him.

God is love in his holiness. God walks and talks with mankind. God shows us the path in which we must walk in order to enjoy the happiness he has ordained for us.

And finally, God is love in his justice. God showed to humanity that compliance with his will would always mean eternal bliss and unspeakable joy, life, and knowledge forever. But if we fail to comply, God is always there to give us forgiveness.

In the world's brightest mornings or in the stars at night, God's love is apparent and it leaps with joy into our lives. But there is a great gulf between us and God. So God sent us his one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to bridge this gap.

The gift of his Son surely reveals to us his love in an amazing degree! God did not spare his own Son, but God gave all of us Jesus as a gracious gift to follow.

Let us pray:

May we, O God, follow Paul words on what love does not do. May we remember these three great pillars of faith, hope, and love in our relationship with you, others, and the world. But let us truly take into our heart the greatest of these - love.

Your love, O God, is in your very nature and your love is revealed in many ways. Thank for your steadfast love for us.

AMEN.