

11/4/26

So… I haven't talked about reasons to rehearse the gospel to ourselves in a while, but I would say today's passage is a massive one!!! The love of God is displayed all over 1 Corinthians 13. Even the first few verses… Jesus speaks in the tongues of men and angels, He has prophetic powers, He understands all mysteries, He delivered up His body for us… and it is all done in His love. Not one speck of what He does is without love. I pray that you and I will have the Spirit infused power we need to grasp the breadth and width and length and depth of the love of God for us that is beyond anything we can imagine (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Blessings,
Jonna

1 Corinthians 13

What is the love God calls us to have for each other? What is this agape love that He has for us? What happens when that love is the motivation of my heart? 1 Corinthians 13 will tell me. And as I look at it, it looks impossible. But with God, all things are possible.

From vs. 1-3, I learn that even the best behavior or knowledge means absolutely nothing without love ~ "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not 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 remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

If I speak with the most excellent language of men or angels, without love, I'm just noise… like the sound of chalk on a chalkboard.

I can have the gift of prophecy. I can understand mysteries. I can be filled with all kinds of knowledge. My faith can move mountains. But if I don't love, I AM nothing. I exist as nothing.

If I give away everything I have. If I "deliver up my body to be burned…" Okay… I don't know why the ESV translates it this way. The actual transliteration is, "If I deliver up my body that

I may boast." Ahhh there's a clue to why doing all these things without love gets me NOTHING…

Whatever my speech is, whatever my powers are, whatever my understanding and knowledge are, whatever my faith is, whatever I offer myself as… without love, I have a different motive. Any motive that isn't love is not from the Lord because God IS love.

What other motives would I have? Making myself look good, feel good, or show me off. Prophetic powers done without love are about making me look awesome. Giving away what I have makes ME feel good. Understanding mysteries and knowledge show me off. But then it's all about ME. Love is all about US. God's agape love, His unconditional, sacrificial, supernatural, affectionate, tender, divine love is all about relationship. God's love is HUMBLE love.

So… what does this love look like? Vs. 4-8a tell me…

Love is…

- *Patient - long tempered; having the power to avenge, but not doing it*
- *Kind - serves, willing, helpful*
- *Not envious - but content, satisfied, happy for others*
- *Not boastful - not showing myself off, but building others up, giving considerate attention to others*
- *Not arrogant - but humble*
- *Not rude - but respectful*
- *Not insisting on my own way - not selfish, but thinking what's best for US, not just ME*
- *Not irritable - not easily angered, but cheerful, even tempered*
- *Not resentful - not holding grudges, but extending grace*
- *Not rejoice in wrongdoing - not delighting in what God hates and rejecting what He loves, not enabling sin, but speaking the truth in love*
- *Rejoices with the truth - delights in what is right and not what is wrong, looks for reasons to rejoice*
- *Bears all things - supports, helps carry the load*
- *Believes all things - trusts, is willing to rebuild trust when broken, is a cheerleader*
- *Hopes all things - actively waits with eager expectation*
- *Endures all things - perseveres*
- *Never fails*

Once again… that is IMPOSSIBLE!!! But with God, ALL things are possible, even loving like this.

Let me not forget that when I read in 1 John 4:8 that God IS love, I get a fuller understanding of what that means here. God is patient with me. God is kind to me. God isn't easily angered with me. God holds no grudges against me. That is the motivation for me to grow in love… because of how He loves me!

In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul prayed for the believers, that our love would abound more and more SO THAT our knowledge and understanding and righteousness would grow. Truly, none of the things talked in the first 3 verses of this "love chapter" in 1 Corinthians can even be genuine without love.

I have to be careful when I look at this definition of love, as well as when I look at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, which starts with the word "love" and includes other attributes of love. My natural tendency is to pick and choose which part of love I am good with or which fruit of the Spirit I'd like to work on. But it's not fruits of the Spirit, it's one fruit. It's not pick and choose which attribute of love I'm willing to have. All of these together make up agape love. I need the Lord to grow all of these IN me.

Vs. 8b-10 tell me why the pursuit of prophecies or special languages or lots of knowledge mean nothing without love. They are temporary, imperfect… placeholders until the perfect comes ~ "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."

Understanding prophecy from God's word is really cool, but when I get to heaven I'll see Jesus face to face. I won't need anymore prophecies. I won't need special languages. I won't need the finite knowledge I understand now because I'll see the infinite, perfect everythingness of God who IS love.

In vs. 11-12, Paul relates my understanding to that of a child ~ "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."

Through what lens does a child speak and think and reason? Through the lens of "MINE". What does it mean to "become a man" in the eyes of God? It's to stop thinking MINE and think US… It is to mature into the fullness of agape love.

Right now, while I don't have the perfect fully before my eyes, I see as through a looking glass as seeing an "enigma" or a "riddle", not understanding the whole perspective. This is why I need to walk by faith, not by sight. Someday my faith WILL be sight. I will see Jesus face to face. Right now I have a personal, intimate relationship with the Lord, but there's still a lot I don't really understand. When Jesus comes for me and takes me home, I will know the Him fully, as He knows me fully!

This makes me think 2 things right away…

1. *This is PAUL speaking!!! If HE didn't think he knew the Lord fully, I certainly don't! But I praise God that the more I grow in Him, the more I grow to know Him better… and how awesome to know that there's always more to know!!!*

2. *How many times have I said to the Lord that I just wish I could hear Him speak and know exactly what He wants??? I have the promise that someday this desire of mine will come to fruition!!! And until then, He loves me and is patient and merciful with me, and He promises to grow this love in me as I stay close to Him… even in my finite, temporary tent of a body.*

So… the bottom line from vs. 13 ~ "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Faith, hope, and love live now and forever. They will never pass away. They are all mine in the Lord Jesus.

Jesus is the author of my faith (Hebrews 12:2).

He is the God of hope (Romans 5:13).

He IS love (1 John 4:8).

The most important of all of these three is love.

O Lord, how would my life change if every motivation of mine was Your love? Please let me find out. The prayer of my life is 2 Corinthians 5:14, that the love of Christ would control me. With me, this is absolutely impossible. With You, all things are possible. One degree of the glory of love to the next. Praise Your name!