

# ***“Building the Body Through Love!”***

## ***1 Corinthians 13***

**Intro.** – A few years ago the police in Ft. Wayne, IN were called to a house. Upon arriving, the police were met by a little girl yelling, “My mommy has been shot...” The police ran into the house to find they were too late. There on the living room floor was the little girl’s mother who had been murdered. Beside her was the man who had shot her and then had turned the gun on himself. Further investigation by police revealed this scene was the climax of an argument that began in the parking lot of *The True Love Baptist Church*.

I use this to introduce the idea that if there is anything we need in our churches today, it is the need to develop a genuine spirit of Christian love!

Again a few years ago in Texas, a woman in a front yard stabbed her husband. As the police came and a crowd gathered, they saw her standing over the body crying, “I loved him so, I loved him so!” Someone in the crowd that gathered was reported to have said, “I hope she never falls in love with me!”

Too often we who are a part of Christ’s Church have been proclaiming a message of “true love” to a sin troubled world, but, behind the scenes we have been shooting at one another. Some of the worst fights I personally seen have been right in a local church setting. Thus, there is a need to build the Body of Christ through love! But, how are we going to do that here?

*Purpose: to see how we can build the Body of Christ here through love*

How are we going to accomplish this at Christ’s Church in Eaton? The following five areas explain how:

### **I By Impressing the Body With the Importance of Love**

#### **A. As Revealed in the Bible**

1. Appearing over 500 times in the N.T. (50 times in 1 John alone), shouldn’t be too difficult to see that love is significant in God’s sight:
2. Peter’s epistle
  - a. 1 Peter 1:22 “...*fervently love one another from the heart.*”
  - b. 1 Peter 2:17 “*Honor all men; but love the brotherhood.*”
  - c. 1 Peter 4:8 “*Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins.*”
3. John’s epistle
  - a. 1 John 3:14-16 “*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren... We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*”
  - b. 1 John 4:7 “*Brethren, let us love one another, for love is of God...*”
4. Paul’s epistle
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:19 “*Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.*”

On and on we could go, quoting verse after verse hearing from God how important love is. The point though is clear, if you really love God, you’ll love one another...

#### **B. As to Its Promised Results**

- John 13:35 “*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*”
- 1. Jesus, in essence, has given us an identifying badge – love. The world won’t have to be convinced, they’ll know it *by our love for each other...*
- 2. How does this correspond with *truth*? – Average man on the street conceives that God is love. However imperfect an understanding he may have, he’s right that God is love .
  - a. thus, the world reasons: “If God is love and you claim to be His, you ought love each other!”
  - b. if we fail to wear this badge, the badge of love, we’ll never get the world listen to truth!

### **II By Teaching the Body the Meaning of Love**

- world’s concept of “love” is warped – why so many have little or no concept of what true *love* is!

- Illus. – J.E. Connif gives this definition: “Love is that deliberate and fixed attitude of the whole being which puts the best interests of the one we love above our own interests no matter at what cost to ourselves.” This is “agape” love (N.T. word for defining God’s love) – text gives us that meaning:
- A. Act of the Will
    1. Not a feeling you lose... or wake up with... not something zapped into you...
    2. Deliberate choice of putting your *self* aside!
  - B. Comes Before and Goes Beyond
    1. Comes before and goes beyond all human desires – Illus:
 

Human Loves Says...	Agape Love Says...
a. when you’re loveable	a. when you’re not loveable
b. when you’re good	b. when you’re bad
c. when you treat me right	c. when you treat me wrong
  - C. Based Upon One Fact
    1. Love is not based on merit, likeable personality, family ties, attractive body... it is a *choice*!
    2. Mankind CREATED in God’s image – whether we’re sinful, imperfect, cruel or wrong, we nevertheless are created in God’s image!
    3. Agape love does NOT go out seeking the lost for our sake or even their sake = ultimately for God’s sake!

Thus, if the Body of Christ is ever to be built up – must come through this meaning of love!!

### III By Demonstrating to the Body the Practice of Love

- love is visible, far more than an attitude, it’s an action!
- A. It’s More than Kind Words
    1. 1 John 3:17-18 “*But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*”
    2. The world knows that if you really are a Christian, your *actions* of love will give you away!
  - B. It’s Disciplining Its Members
    1. Any parent really loves their kids will discipline them – e.g. teach them truth... example to them... won’t give them everything... teach them the world doesn’t revolve around them... spank them on the rear when they get out of line...
    2. One of the biggest proofs we don’t really love one another is the fact that brothers and sisters are permitted to come and go and participate in matters not becoming of our Lord and we do nothing (positively or negatively) about it!
  - C. It’s the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)
    - “*In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*” Though quoted/misquoted still best example of Christ like love in action!

### IV By Warning the Body the Risks of Love

- the cost is very high in this business of loving. Ask any married person...
- Illus. – young man asked his girl friend to marry him... “Yes!” Then he asked if she could live on his income. She responded, “Yes, but what are you going to live on?”
- C.S. Lewis – “To love is to make oneself vulnerable”
- Illus. – Jerry Paul while preaching at Christ’s Church George Town, Ft. Wayne – helped an individual family with 65 bags of groceries etc. Found out both parents were alcoholics
- someone has likened loving humans to kissing a frog. Remember story of princess kissing the frog?... Trouble is when you kiss a frog it may not turn into a hansom prince. It may be a frog keeping a tally as to how many suckers will kiss a frog or how many times same sucker kisses the same frog.

- A. Keep Kissing Frogs
    - beneath those warts etc. is the potential of a fine prince for God's glory!
  - B. Don't be Timid
    1. Those afraid may preserve themselves from hurt, but they'll never show the spirit of Christ.
    2. Our Lord wept, He ached, He was wounded, He loved even to the point of death on the Cross!
- Thus, a local church wanting to grow must do so through love even though this comes with risks!

#### V By Pointing the Body to the Source of Love

- Sigmund Freud *"It's impossible to fulfill Christ's command to love. Nothing is more opposite to human nature because all men are savage beasts at heart."* He's right to a degree.
  - Freud may have known something about human nature, but one thing he didn't know = God is love!
  - God has reached down making it possible for you and me to be loosed from slavery to sin...
- A. Love is Lived by the Power of God
    1. Galatians 5 makes this abundantly clear
    2. Not by human ingenuity or wisdom – love is the harvest of God's Spirit in us!
  - B. We are Rich Indeed
    1. Rich in God's love for us – even while we were yet His enemies He loved us!
    3. Point: we're often poor in reciprocating that love to Him and demonstrating that love to each other!!!

**Conclusion:** Returning to our text and focusing our attention on the last verse, we find that Paul said without love you, me and the Church of Christ at Eaton would be worthless. We may have faith to move mountains, we may even give away all our possessions, or even become a martyr for Christ, but until we are motivated, captivated and constrained by the love of Christ, we are nothing!

Thus, if we are going to grow as we should and could, we must build the Body here through love. How?

- I By Impressing the Body with the Importance of Love
- II By Teaching the Body the Meaning of Love
- III By Demonstrating to the Body the Practice of Love
- IV By Warning the Body the Risks of Love
- V By Point the Body to the Source of Love