

LXXXVIII. LOVE NEVER ENDS: 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

INTRODUCTION. Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and visitors:

In 1 Corinthians 13, God says through Paul

I. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE LOVE, YOU ARE NOTHING AND PROFIT NOTHING (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

I) You may have extraordinary *Gifts* but if you do not have love, you are simply loud and proud

(1 Corinthians 13:1).

1 Corinthians 13:1

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

II) You may have extraordinary *Graces* but if you do not have love, you are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

1 Corinthians 13:2

"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."

III) You may *Sacrifice* extraordinarily but if you do not have love, you profit nothing (1 Corinthians 13:3).

1 Corinthians 13:3

"If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

God also says through Paul here that

II. [HE] DEFINES LOVE (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

BOYS AND GIRLS, LISTEN

I) Love is patient and long-suffering (1 Corinthians 13:4a).

1 Corinthians 13:4a

"Love is patient"

II) Love is kind and friendly (1 Corinthians 13:4b).

1 Corinthians 13:4b

"and kind;"

III) Love does not envy nor become jealous (1 Corinthians 13:4c).

1 Corinthians 13:4c

"love does not envy"

IV) Love does not boast nor brag (1 Corinthians 13:4d).

1 Corinthians 13:4d

"or boast;"

V) Love is not arrogant nor prideful (1 Corinthians 13:4e).

1 Corinthians 13:4e

"it is not arrogant"

VI) Love is not rude nor inappropriate (1 Corinthians 13:5a).

1 Corinthians 13:5a

"or rude."

VII) Love does not insist on its own way nor seek its own benefit (1 Corinthians 13:5b).

1 Corinthians 13:5b

"It does not insist on its own way;"

VIII) Love is not irritable nor easily provoked nor easily offended (1 Corinthians 13:5c).

1 Corinthians 13:5c

"it is not irritable"

IX) Love is not resentful nor does it keep a record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5d).

1 Corinthians 13:5d

"or resentful;"

X) Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing nor injustice nor any kind of iniquity (1 Corinthians 13:6a).

1 Corinthians 13:6a

"it does not rejoice at wrongdoing,"

XI) Love rejoices when the truth is spoken or lived in harmony with (1 Corinthians 13:6b).

1 Corinthians 13:6b

"but rejoices with the truth."

XII) Love bears all things, especially burdens for other's good (1 Corinthians 13:7a).

1 Corinthians 13:7a

"Love bears all things,"

XIII) Love believes all things, especially giving the benefit of the doubt (1 Corinthians 13:7b).

1 Corinthians 13:7b

"believes all things,"

XIV) Love hopes all things, confidently expecting future salvation (1 Corinthians 13:7c).

1 Corinthians 13:7c

"hopes all things,"

XV) Love endures all things calmly and bravely, especially ill-treatment (1 Corinthians 13:7d).

1 Corinthians 13:7d

"endures all things."

So, you and I are nothing and profit nothing without love, and God defines what love is. That is 1 Corinthians 13:1-7. Now in verses 8-13 God is showing you and I

that love is greater than all spiritual gifts and even the greatest of all spiritual graces!

CON(TEXT). Look at the first part of **verse 8**: "Love never ends." Now look at the very last clause of **verse 13**: "The greatest of these is love"

DOCTRINE. Love is more excellent than gifts and graces because they will end but love will not.

OUTLINE.

I. LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN *GIFTS* BECAUSE THEY WILL END BUT LOVE WILL NOT (**1 Corinthians 13:8-12**).

II. LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN *GRACES* BECAUSE OTHERS WILL END BUT LOVE WILL NOT (**1 Corinthians 13:13**).

I. LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN *SPIRITUAL GIFTS* BECAUSE THEY WILL END BUT LOVE WILL NOT (1 Corinthians 13:8).

There are seven particular points Paul makes here, yet his main point is Love is more excellent than spiritual gifts because they will end but love will not.

I) The need for *Preaching* will pass away, but not love (1 Corinthians 13:8a).

1 Corinthians 13:8a "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away;"

– **GILL:**

"The gifts of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, will be no more, because there will be no need of them in a state of perfection."

– Gill, John. Gill's Bible Commentary. *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:8a*. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

BOYS AND GIRLS,

II) The need for diverse *Tongues* will cease, but not love (1 Corinthians 13:8b).

1 Corinthians 13:8b "Love never ends. . . as for tongues, they will cease;"

– **GILL:**

"In the resurrection, that member of the body, the tongue, will be

restored as the rest, and be everlastingly employed in celebrating the perfections of God, in singing the hallelujahs of the Lamb, and in joining with angels and other saints in songs of praise to the eternal Three;

but the gift of speaking with divers tongues will cease, indeed it has already; nor will there be any use for such an extraordinary gift in the other world; when probably, and as it is thought by some, there will be but one language. . . as the whole earth was of one language and speech before the confusion at Babel."

— Gill, John. *Gill's Bible Commentary. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:8b*. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

BOYS AND GIRLS,

III) The need to grow in *Knowledge* will pass away, but not love (1 Corinthians 13:8c).

1 Corinthians 13:8c "Love never ends. . . as for knowledge, it will pass away."

– **GILL:**

"That peculiar gift of knowledge of divine things, by which some are qualified to be instructors of others; the present means both of communicating, and of obtaining and increasing knowledge by the preaching and hearing of the word, will be no more used: and besides, imperfect knowledge of every sort will disappear, it will become perfect."

— Gill, John. *Gill's Bible Commentary. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:8c*. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

BOYS AND GIRLS,

Now Paul moves on to explain by illustration why he has said what he did just previously.

IV) Christians have partial knowledge and limited preaching now, but one day we will have full knowledge and no need of sermons (1 Corinthians 13:9-10).

1 Corinthians 13:9-10 "9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."

– **GILL:**

"The true meaning is, that though the rule of knowledge is perfect, and all the saints have knowledge, and every truth of the Gospel is known; yet by those that know most, it is known but imperfectly."

— Gill, John. *Gill's Bible Commentary. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:9-10*. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

BOYS AND GIRLS,

V) Our life this side of eternity is likened to a child, but in the eternal state we will be fully grown (1 Corinthians 13:11).

1 Corinthians 13:11 "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."

– **GILL:**

"When the saints shall be grown to the full age of Christ, and are become perfect men in him, tongues shall cease, prophecies shall fail, and knowledge vanish away; and in the room thereof, such conversation, understanding, and knowledge take place, as will be entirely suited to the manly state in glory."

— Gill, John. *Gill's Bible Commentary. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:11.* OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

BOYS AND GIRLS,

VI) Christians' sight of God is currently obscure at best, but one day we will see Jesus face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12a).

1 Corinthians 13:12a "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face."

- Paul is speaking comparatively, not substantially. Substantially we see everything we need to see for eternal life and godliness!
 - **But compared to how clearly we will see Christ and His excellencies with our glorified bodies and perfected souls in the New Earth, we only now see Christ like looking through a dirty window at dusk.**

Think of the excellencies of Christ:

I) Think of Christ's divine eternity! "Before Abraham was, I AM"

II) Think of His gracious lawgiving! "His commandments are not burdensome"

III) Think of His humble incarnation and perfect sinlessness! "Which one of you convicts me of sin?"

IV) Think of Jesus' substitution for you on the cross! "I give my life as a ransom for many"

V) Think of His resurrection from the dead! "I have the keys of death and hades"

VI) Think of Christ's ascension and intercession! "We do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with us"

VII) Think of His Kingly footstooling! "He must reign until all His enemies become a footstool for His feet"

VIII) Think of Jesus' sleepless providential preservation of you, and me, and all His saints, and the entire universe, every single second of every single day! "Not a hair of your head will perish...All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose"

IX) Think of Christ's exaltation and second coming! He will throw unrepentant sinners into eternal fire. . . He will wipe away every tear of His

saints. . . And we will reign with Him in perfection for all eternity.

Even at our best of times, when we can rightly meditate on Christ's excellencies, we are still, at best, like the sick woman in Mark chapter 9 who touched but the fringe of Christ's garment.

But one day, the dirt will be wiped off; no, the glass will be removed entirely, and we will see Jesus face to face! And this sight of Him will heal all harms, suffice for all sorrows, and banish all sadness for ever!

VII) Christians' knowledge of God is partial, but one day it shall be full (1 Corinthians 13:12b).

1 Corinthians 13:12b "Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."

- **HENRY:** "It is the light of heaven only that will remove all clouds and darkness from the face of God. It is at best but twilight while we are in this world; there it will be perfect and eternal day."

[RECAP] **I. LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN SPIRITUAL GIFTS BECAUSE THEY WILL END BUT LOVE WILL NOT (1 Corinthians 13:8).**

II. LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN SPIRITUAL GRACES BECAUSE OTHERS WILL END BUT LOVE WILL NOT (1 Corinthians 13:13).

1 Corinthians 13:13 "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

- **These three graces are what theologians call *principle graces*. Thomas Adams called them "The Three Divine Sisters."** Faith, hope, and love are the most excellent of all the graces because they are most necessary for the Christian life, yet love is more excellent than all.

Q. Why are Faith, Hope, and Love principle graces?

A.

Without faith you cannot become nor remain a Christian.

Without hope you cannot stand firm nor persevere as a Christian.

Without love you cannot live the life nor die the death of a Christian.

BOYS AND GIRLS, LISTEN

I) Faith is an excellent grace (1 Corinthians 13:13a).

1 Corinthians 13:13a "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

BOYS AND GIRLS, LISTEN

- **Faith is the grace that we use to embrace Christ alone for salvation! Faith is the grace that we use to trust in all the promises secured for us by Christ!**
 - **(i) Faith says,** "I know God accepts me as righteous because Christ lived without sin for in order to give me His righteousness!"
 - **(ii) Faith says,** "I know God forgives me all of my sins because Christ died in my place for my sins as my substitute to pay my sin-debt to God and secure my forgiveness!"
 - **(iii) Faith says,** "I know Jesus is my Savior and King who will one day raise me from the dead because *HE* was raised from the dead!"
 - **(iv) Faith says,** "I know what Jesus wants me to do in this life because His Law is perfectly sufficient!"

II) Hope is an excellent grace (1 Corinthians 13:13b).

1 Corinthians 13:13b "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

BOYS AND GIRLS, LISTEN

- **Hope is the grace that confidently looks to the future and rests secure because "He who promised is faithful."**
 - **(i) Hope says,** "I will not fear abandonment because Christ promised to not leave me as an orphan."
 - **(ii) Hope says,** "I will not be afraid of affliction because Christ has promised to work all things together for His glory and my good."
 - **(iii) Hope says,** "I will not be afraid of sickness or degeneration because Christ has promised to give me a new glorified body."
 - **(iv) Hope says,** "I will not fear sadness because He has promised to heal all harms and make everything sad come untrue."
 - **(v) Hope says,** "I will not be frightened at my sins because He who began a good work in me will bring it to completing at the day of Jesus Christ."
 - **(vi) Hope says,** "I will not fear persecution from mine and Christ's enemies because He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet."

III) Love is a more excellent grace (1 Corinthians 13:13c).

1 Corinthians 13:13c "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

BOYS AND GIRLS, LISTEN

- **Love is the grace we use to both have and show our affection for God and others.**

It is in the affections and in the actions.

- I) Love forever says, "I will be patient with you" (1 Corinthians 13:4a).
- II) Love forever says, "I will be kind and friendly to you" (1 Corinthians 13:4b).
- III) Love forever says, "I will not envy or be jealous of you" (1 Corinthians 13:4c).
- IV) Love forever says, "I will not boast nor brag about me" (1 Corinthians 13:4d).
- V) Love forever says, "I will not be arrogant nor prideful toward you" (1 Corinthians 13:4e).
- VI) Love forever says, "I will not be rude nor inappropriate to you" (1 Corinthians 13:5a).
- VII) Love forever says, "I will not insist on my own way nor seek my own benefit" (1 Corinthians 13:5b).
- VIII) Love forever says, "I will not be irritable nor easily provoked nor easily offended with you" (1 Corinthians 13:5c).
- IX) Love forever says, "I will not be resentful nor keep a record of wrongs with you" (1 Corinthians 13:5d).
- X) Love forever says, "I will not rejoice at wrongdoing nor injustice nor any kind of iniquity with or for you" (1 Corinthians 13:6a).
- XI) Love forever says, "I will rejoice when you speak or live in harmony with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6b).
- XII) Love forever says, "I will bear all things, especially burdens for your good" (1 Corinthians 13:7a).
- XIII) Love forever says, "I will believe all things, especially giving you the benefit of the doubt" (1 Corinthians 13:7b).
- XIV) Love forever says, "I will hope all things, confidently expecting your future salvation" (1 Corinthians 13:7c).
- XV) Love forever says, "I will endure all things calmly and bravely for your good" (1 Corinthians 13:7d).

– GILL:

"In the other world, faith will be changed for vision, and hope for enjoyment, but love will abide, and be in its full perfection and constant exercise, to all eternity."

— Gill, John. *Gill's Bible Commentary. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:13c*. OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

– TRAPP:

"That was a memorable saying of Elizabeth Folks, martyr, at the stake, 'Farewell all the world, farewell faith, farewell hope;' and so taking the stake in her hand, she said, 'Welcome love.'"

– HENRY:

"Note, Those border most upon the heavenly state and perfection

whose hearts are fullest of this divine principle, and burn with the most fervent charity. It is the surest offspring of God, and bears his fairest impression. For God is love, 1 John 4:8, 16. And where God is to be seen as he is, and face to face, there charity is in its greatest height – there, and there only, will it be perfected."

[Recap] **II. LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN SPIRITUAL GRACES BECAUSE OTHERS WILL END BUT LOVE WILL NOT (1 Corinthians 13:13).**

CONCLUSION.

Exhortation.

"Love one another as Christ has loved you."

TEXT WORK

ccel/whitefield/sermons.xlix.html

- ✓ **13:12, 1 Corinthians** - Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 1, pg. 419
- ✓ **13:12, 1 Corinthians** - Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 3, pg. 286
- ✓ **13:13, 1 Corinthians** - Thomas Adams - THE THREE DIVINE SISTERS: FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY 1 COR. 13:13 - The Works of Thomas Adams (3 Volumes), Soli Deo Gloria, vol. 2 pg. 274 - <https://www.monergism.com/three-divine-sisters-faith-hope-and-charity-thomas-adams>

PURITAN QUOTES

- GEORGE WHITEFIELD:

"Nothing is more valuable and commendable, and yet, not one duty is less practiced, than that of charity."

— **George Whitefield - The Great Duty of Charity Recommended [1 Corinthians 13:8] - *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (2 vols.) by George Whitefield. Edited by Lee Gatiss. Published by Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2012. vol. 2 pg. 250**

- GEORGE WHITEFIELD:

"We were created to be a help to each other; God has made no one so independent as not to need the assistance of another; the richest and most powerful man upon the face of this earth, needs the help and assistance of those who are around him; and though he may be great today, a thousand accidents may make him as low tomorrow; he that is rolling in plenty today, may be in as much scarcity tomorrow."

— **George Whitefield - The Great Duty of Charity Recommended [1 Corinthians 13:8] - *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (2 vols.) by George Whitefield. Edited by Lee Gatiss. Published by Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2012. vol. 2 pg. 250**

- GEORGE WHITEFIELD:

"Our charity comes from a right end, when it proceeds from love to God, and for the welfare both of the body and soul of our fellow- creatures.

When this is the sole end of relieving our distressed fellow- creatures, then our charity comes from a right end, and we may expect to reap advantage by it: this is the charity which is pleasing to God. God is well pleased, when all our actions proceed from love, love to himself, and love to immortal souls."

— **George Whitefield - The Great Duty of Charity Recommended [1 Corinthians 13:8] - *The Sermons of George Whitefield* (2 vols.) by George**

Whitefield. Edited by Lee Gatiss. Published by Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2012. vol. 2 pg. 250

– **THOMAS ADAMS:**

“These are three strings often touched; Faith, whereby we believe all God's promises to be true, and ours; Hope, whereby we wait for them with patience; Charity, whereby we testify what we believe and hope. He that hath faith, cannot distrust; he that hath hope, cannot be put from anchor; he that hath charity, will not lead a licentious life, for love keeps the commandments.”

— **Thomas Adams - THE THREE DIVINE SISTERS: FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY 1 COR. 13:13 - The Works of Thomas Adams (3 Volumes), Soli Deo Gloria, vol. 2 pg. 274 - <https://www.monergism.com/three-divine-sisters-faith-hope-and-charity-thomas-adams>**

- **THOMAS BROOKS:** “When believers come to heaven, then they shall have a more clear vision and sight of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, ' For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'" Now we see him obscurely, as in a glass, but then we shall see him distinctly, clearly, immediately; we shall then apprehend him clearly, though, even then, we cannot comprehend him fully. Some sense those words, I shall know even as I am known, thus: Look, as God knoweth me after a manner agreeable to his infinite excellency, so shall I know God according to my capacity, not obscurely, but perfectly, as it were, face to face; and this is the greatest height of blessedness and happiness. Now all veils shall be taken off, and we shall have a clear prospect of God's excellency and glory, of his blessedness and fulness, of his loveliness and sweetness. Now all masks, clouds, and curtains, shall be drawn for ever, that saints may clearly see the breadth, length, depth, and height of divine love and that they may clearly see into the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Christ's incarnation, the mystery of man's redemption, the mystery of providences, the mystery of prophecies; and all those mysteries that relate to the nature, substances, offices, orders, and excellencies of the angels, those princes of glory, who still keep their standings in the court of heaven; and all those mysteries that concern the nature, original, immortality, spirituality, excellency, and activity of our own souls, beside a world of other mysteries that respect the decrees and counsels of God, the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, and the fall of angels. Now the most knowing men in the world are much in the dark about these things; but when we come to heaven, we shall have a close and a clear sight and knowledge of them. Now we shall know, as we are known; now we shall see God face to

face. Oh blessed sight! to behold the King of angels, the holy of holies, the God of heaven, the Ruler of the earth, the Father of the living! Oh blessed vision and contemplation, wherein we shall see God in himself, God in us, and ourselves in God." — **Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 1, pg. 419**

- **THOMAS BROOKS:** "Consider this, That in divers men there are divers degrees of assurance, and in one and the same gracious soul there are different degrees of assurance at divers times, but there is in no man at any time in this life perfection of degrees; for our understanding and knowledge in this life is imperfect both as to the faculty and its acts. 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly (Gr., in a riddle), but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even' as also I am known. A clear, distinct, immediate, full, and perfect knowledge of God is desirable on earth, but we shall never attain to it till we come to heaven. This well is deep, and for the most part we want a bucket to draw withal. The best of men can better tell what God is not than what he is; the most acute and judicious in divine knowledge have and must acknowledge their ignorance. Witness that great Apostle Paul, who learned his divinity among the angles, and had the Holy Ghost for his immediate tutor, yet he confesses that he knew but in part. Certainly there is no man under heaven that hath such a perfect, complete, and full assurance of his salvation, in an ordinary way, as that one degree cannot be added to the former. Neither is there any repugnancy in asserting an infallible assurance and denying a perfect assurance; for I infallibly know that there is a God, and that the rod is holy, just, and true, and yet I have no perfect knowledge of a deity, nor of the holiness, justice, and truth of God, for in this life the most knowing man knows but in part. Dear friends! in the church of Christ there are believers of several growths: there are fathers, young men, children, and babes, 1 John i. 13, 14; 1 Peter ii. 2. And as in most families there are commonly more children and babes than grown men, so in the church of Christ there are commonly more weak, stag-full assurance. Some think that as soon as they be assured, they must needs be void of all fears, and filled with all joy in believing, but this is a real mistake; for glorious and ravishing joy is a separable accident from assurance; nor yet doth assurance exclude all doubts and fears but only such doubts and fears as ariseth from infidelity and reigning hypocrisy." — **Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 3, pg. 286**

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening / Big-Picture Questions

1. The sermon reviews 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and then moves into verses 8-13. Why does the preacher say love is "more excellent" than both spiritual gifts and even other spiritual graces like faith and hope?
2. The main doctrine is: *"Love is more excellent than gifts and graces because they will end but love will not."*
Which part of this statement is most encouraging to you? Which part challenges you the most?
3. The sermon contrasts temporary things (gifts like preaching, tongues, and knowledge) with what lasts forever (love). In your own life or church, what "temporary" things sometimes receive more attention than love?

Section 1: Love Is Greater Than Spiritual Gifts (vv. 8-12)

1. The preacher explains that preaching, tongues, and the gift of knowledge will one day "pass away." Why will these no longer be needed in the eternal state? How should this affect how we value them now?
2. Paul uses the image of seeing "in a mirror dimly" but then "face to face." What does this comparison teach us about our current knowledge of God versus what it will be like in heaven? Why is this encouraging rather than discouraging?
3. The sermon warns against misusing "we see in a mirror dimly" to avoid strong doctrinal convictions. How can we hold firm beliefs while still humbly acknowledging our current limitations?
4. Why does the preacher spend time describing Christ's excellencies (eternality, incarnation, substitution, resurrection, etc.)? How does meditating on these things help us long for the day when we will see Him face to face?

Section 2: Love Is Greater Than Other Graces (v. 13)

1. Faith, hope, and love are called the "principal graces" or "three divine sisters." Explain the unique role of each one in the Christian life, according to the sermon. Why is love the greatest?
2. The sermon says we will need **no faith** and **no hope** in heaven, but love will continue forever. Why is this the case? How does this make love uniquely excellent?
3. The martyr Elizabeth Folkes said, "Farewell the world. Farewell faith. Farewell hope. Welcome love." What does this story illustrate about the sermon's main point?

Personal Application & Self-Examination

1. The preacher encourages us to “give ourselves to faith, hope, and especially love.” In which of these three areas do you most need to grow right now? What is one practical step you can take this week?
2. Using the 15 attributes of love from verses 4-7 (reviewed at the beginning), which 2–3 characteristics challenge you most personally? How can remembering that “love never ends” motivate you to grow in them?
3. How has Christ loved us (as described in John 13:34 and the sermon’s closing exhortation)? How should this shape the way we love one another in our church/family?
4. The sermon warns that without love we are “nothing” and “profit nothing.” On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate your own love for God and others right now? What would growth look like?

Group Application & Prayer

1. How can our small group (or local church) better prioritize love as the “more excellent way”? Brainstorm 1–2 concrete ways we can encourage one another in patient, kind, truth-rejoicing love.
2. Close by praying through the sermon’s closing prayer. Ask God to help us grow in faith, hope, and especially love, and to make us a people who love one another as Christ has loved us.

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SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and visitors, we continue in 1 Corinthians 13. And I want to begin today by just reminding you what we have previously studied in verses 1-7. In 1 Corinthians 13, God says, first of all, he says through Paul, ***if you do not have love, you are nothing and profit nothing.*** If you do not have love, you are nothing and you profit nothing. He says in verse one, “If you may have extraordinary gifts, like speaking in the tongues of men and of angels, but you do not have love, you are just loud and proud. You are useless. You are nothing. You profit nothing. You are a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” Verse two, he is saying, “You may have extraordinary graces, but if you do not have love, you are nothing. If I have prophetic powers, look at it. Verse two, 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.” In verse three, he says, “You may sacrifice extraordinarily, but if you do not have love, you profit nothing.” You may think you

are sacrificing by giving away all you have, delivering up your body, even as a martyr for Christ. But if it is not out of love for Christ and love for others, you are laying up no treasures in heaven. You profit absolutely nothing unless you have love.

But then he also says in verses 4-7 what the definition of love properly is.

Boys and girls, listen to this again as we remember what we studied last week. Boys and girls, look up here. God says, "Love is patient and long-suffering." Love is patient and long-suffering. He says, "Love is kind and friendly. Love is not envious. Love does not envy. Love does not become jealous. Love does not boast or brag. Love is not arrogant nor prideful. Love is not rude or inappropriate. Love does not insist on its own way or seek its own benefit. Love is not irritable, which means easily provoked like someone you have to walk on eggshells around. Love is not irritable, nor easily provoked, nor easily offended. Love is not resentful. It does not keep a record of wrongs. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, nor at injustice, nor any kind of iniquity. Love rejoices when the truth is spoken or lived in harmony with. Love bears all things, especially bearing burdens for other Christians. Love believes all things, especially giving the benefit of the doubt. Love hopes all things, confidently expecting future salvation. And love endures all things calmly and bravely, especially when you are treated poorly by other people." So you and I are nothing and profit nothing without love. And God defines what love is. That is 1 Corinthians 13:1-7.

Now look at verses 8 through 13 as we move to this second part of this chapter and see in it that God is showing you and I that love is greater than all spiritual gifts and greater even than all spiritual graces. Spiritual gifts are the gifts that God has given us to use to build up the body of Christ. Spiritual graces on the other hand are graces gifts that God gives us individually to help ourselves trust in him alone for salvation to persevere in the faith such as faith, hope, love. Those are spiritual graces. And then things like preaching or knowledge or tongues are spiritual gifts. Gifts that are given to you. Spiritual gifts are for others. Graces are for you, for you to have and use to be built up. And they come out of course, but gifts are primarily for others. Graces are primarily for you. And in verses 8 through 13, he is saying love is better than all the gifts. And love, even though it is in a different category than spiritual gifts, it is in the category of what we call spiritual graces. He says it is the most excellent of all the spiritual graces. That is what he is saying in this passage of Scripture.

Look with me at the very last clause of verse 13. Very last clause of verse 13. Boys and girls, if you have your Bible, look at that last part of verse 13 just before chapter 14 starts. But the greatest of these is what? Love. But the greatest. So he mentions gifts. Love is way better than them. Then he mentions three, the three principal graces, faith, hope, and love. And still says, "But the greatest, the most excellent of all the spiritual graces is love." And his whole point is what he says at the beginning of verse 8. Look at the beginning of verse 8 in your own Bible. That is the thesis. Everything else is explaining why Paul would say that. It is really like the beginning of verse 8. He says this statement, "Love never ends." Or some

translations say, "Love never fails." But it is not having to do with failing like I tried to do something and I failed at it. If you are translating it fails, it would mean it never goes away. It is not like we were not successful and so he is not saying if you love you will always be successful or if you act loving to someone else you will never fail. That is not what he is saying at all. It is not some kind of weird Disney the way people I think translate that love never fails. It just always works. That is not what he means. It fails as in like a bridge and you drive over a large body of water and if someone says that bridge will never fail, you are like that is good because I would like to keep driving over it and not plummet into the lake. That is a sense in which it means fails. A better word would be ends or perishes. You could even use the word ceases. Love never perishes. Love will never end. It is about perpetuity. It is about the length of love. Love will never go away. And you are going to see why he is saying that because he is going to bring up other things and say, "These things are going to go away. Do not need them anymore." Love will never go away and it is the greatest of even all of the graces.

So the doctrine that we should learn from these verses is this. Love is more excellent than gifts and graces because they will end but love will not. Love is more excellent than gifts and graces because they will end but love will not. So there are two main things we need to make note of. The first is in verses 8 through 12. Love is more excellent than gifts because they will end but love will not. This is why it is more excellent. It is his argument because at the end of chapter 12 when he has been discoursing on spiritual gifts, at the end of it he says, "And I will show you a way still more excellent." So he transitions out of spiritual gifts to love, the love chapter as we call it in 1 Corinthians 13 by saying, "I will show you a more excellent way. Love is far more excellent than spiritual gifts." And that is why he says what he does in verses 1-3. You can have all these gifts. You do not have love, pointless. You are nothing. You are annoying. You are proud. You are loud. You profit nothing. You are nothing. And so he continues now and he is showing us why love never ends. It is more excellent than spiritual gifts because they will end but love will not.

Look, look at verses 8 through 12 with me and let me point out to you these. There are actually seven things that you need to make note of in verses 8 through 12. Seven reasons or arguments he is giving and helping us understand his logic, what he means and why we need to understand it. **First, the need for preaching will pass away, but not love.** The need for preaching will pass away, but not love. Love will not. Love never ends. Verse eight. As for prophecies, they will what? They will pass away. You could take it as if he means prophecies like direct revelation from God like that happened under the old covenant and in the age of the apostles. You could take it like that. I think he simply means preaching as we have looked at for the this Greek word does not just mean like foretelling the future or giving new revelation directly from God. It can be easily translated preaching. Take it either way. It is still preaching. That is what it means. It means proclaiming the word of God. So whether or not you think it is new revelation that was happening

in the first century, that is what he is talking about. Or preaching in general like I am doing now, just explaining what God has already revealed. Take it either way. I think he means preaching. But he is saying the need to hear preaching will one day pass away. It will be gone. One day you will never need to hear another sermon. It will pass away. The gifts, John Gill said, the gifts of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament and of preaching the doctrines of the gospel will be no more because there will be no need of them in a state of perfection. Christians in heaven, you will not listen to sermons. You will not need them. Sermons help you understand who God is and what God requires of you. But in heaven, in the new earth, even when you have a glorified body and a perfected soul, you will have absolutely no need for preaching. You will see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. So preaching is necessary right now because you and I are not in a state of perfection. You are not yet glorified. You do not yet know God as you should. You do not yet obey God as you should. You do not yet love God as you should. And so preaching is a constant necessity before our glorification. But he is saying, remember though, one day you will not need it. It will pass away.

Boys and girls, you and I need preaching, the preaching of God's word to explain it and apply it to us because we need to better understand who God is, what he requires of us, what he promises us, what Christ purchased for us, and how we can live to glorify God. But after you die and go to be with Jesus, if you are a Christian, if you truly trust in Christ, you are going to die and then you are going to receive a new glorified body, a perfect body. You will have a perfect soul and you will perfectly love God and obey God. And so you will have no need to listen to sermons because you are going to know him. So you do not need anyone to tell you more about God because you are going to know him perfectly. You are going to obey him perfectly. You are going to love him perfectly. So one day, boys and girls, you will never have to listen to a sermon ever again. You will not need them. But for right now, we need them.

Look what he says next, though, in verse 8. Remember, all this is from love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. The "tongues," that is also connected to the love never ends. Love never ends. As for tongues, diverse languages, they will cease. They will cease. Now, adults, this verse in no way is arguing for what we call cessationism. It is not about that at all. And so if you are talking to people about the cessation, the ceasing of the miraculous sign gifts in the first century and that they are not in operation today do not go here. That is not his point. His point is, of course, the gift of preaching that is going to pass away. The gift of speaking in tongues, that is going to pass away. But he is not making an argument as to when. He is just saying one day this will be totally unneeded. And he is especially looking all the way forward to the second coming and the eternal state for all three of these things. He is saying one day it will not matter if you speak different languages on the earth because we are all going to understand one another. And as it seems most clear in the Scriptures, we are all going to speak one language in the kingdom of God consummated. Do

not know what that language is. We are all going to understand one another. ***The need for diverse languages will cease, but not love.*** Listen to what John Gill says about this. In the resurrection, he is talking about in the eternal state, that member of the body, the tongue, will be restored as the rest, and be everlastingly employed in celebrating the perfections of God, in singing the hallelujah of the Lamb, and in joining with angels and other saints in songs of praise to the eternal three. But the gift of speaking with diverse tongues will cease. Indeed, it has already. Nor will there be any use for such an extraordinary gift in the other world, when probably, as it is thought by some, there will be but one language, as the whole earth was of one language and speech before the confusion at Babel. The need for diverse languages will cease, but not love. Love never ceases. Love will never end.

Look what he says in the next part of verse eight at love never ends. As for knowledge, it will pass away. As for knowledge, it will pass away. By which he is surely meaning the spiritual gift of knowledge that he has outlined in chapter 12. He is not saying as for knowing anything, you will not know anything. That is not what he means. He is talking about the gift of word of knowledge. Those who are able like a computer brain with a fast processor or a large hard drive to just accumulate knowledge and share it with you. That will pass away. You will not need that. You will not need that anymore. Again, Gill, that particular gift of knowledge of divine things, by which some are qualified to be instructors of others. The present means both of communicating and of obtaining and increasing knowledge by the preaching and hearing of the word. This will be no more used. And besides, imperfect knowledge of every sort will disappear. It will become perfect. ***As for the need to grow in knowledge and benefit from someone else's spiritual gift of knowledge, that will pass away, but not love.*** He is having to do this to the Corinthians especially because they so prized their own particular spiritual gifts and took it as an occasion for their own pride that he is having to show them you really love your spiritual gift but you are really unloving to others and to God. But love is the thing that if you do not have it, you are nothing. You profit nothing. This is what love is. Love will never end. All these gifts you are excited about, those are going to end. But love never will. It is love is more excellent. It lasts longer. Without it, you are nothing.

Now, look in verses 9 and 10. He is just said things that when you first read it, as the Corinthians first read it, would go, "What? I mean, just like when you probably when you first heard something like there is not going to be a church building in heaven on the new earth, there will be no sermons. No one will be preaching in the eternal state. Probably the first time you heard that, you are like, 'Wait, what? What do you mean?'" Or when he says the need to have someone communicate knowledge to you, the gift of knowledge, the gift of preaching, diverse languages, you are probably like, "What are you talking about? Are you serious?" So Paul realizes that and goes on to explain what he means and why he said these things.

For is the very first word of verse 9, which is the conjunction that should be could be translated "because." When you see the word for in the Scriptures, you need to think in our vernacular, you need to think "because." "For," I mean, that is what it means. But I just think people easily miss that in our day. "For;" "because;" "this is why I have said all these things." We know in part and we prophesy in part. That in part just means partially. But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

For we know in part. That is why we need to keep growing in knowledge and benefit from those with the spiritual gift of knowledge. And we prophesy in part. Well, the preaching we even get because we only know in part. The preaching that we get is still prophesying partially, not the total full knowledge that we will have. But he says, "But when the perfect comes," talking about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal state, "the partial will pass away." We will not just know partially. We will know fully. When the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. So Christians, **we have partial knowledge now and our preaching is only limited.** So we need more preaching so we can keep growing because our knowledge is not perfect. Our preaching is not perfect. But he is saying, "But when the perfect comes," when we are with Christ, when we are glorified with Christ, we will give up those childish ways. We do not need that anymore. We will be full grown. **Our life this side of eternity is likened to a child. But in the eternal state, we will be fully grown.** And so, we will not have need for the gift of knowledge. We will not have need for diverse tongues. We will not have need for preaching to grow more. We will be full grown.

Look next at the first part of verse 12. See how his argument keeps flowing. All of this is just to explain how the things they prize so much are going to pass away. But they have been neglecting the thing that will last forever, which is love. Loving one another, loving God. He is still having to build on this whole argument. Again, verse 12 starts with the word for. So, he is giving more reasons for now we see in a mirror dimly. But then at that time, face to face. For now, at this present time is what that word means. At this present time we see in a mirror dimly but then which means at that future time then we will see face to face. This is what he is saying. **Christians' sight of God is currently obscure at best but one day we will see Jesus face to face.** That is what he means. Your sight of God, your knowledge of God, your knowledge of God's ways, of who he is. It is like looking through a window that is extremely dirty and it is almost dark outside. He says a mirror dimly. It is a looking glass dimly. And it is looking through something dirty that you can make out something. When you are looking through a dirty window and it is almost dark outside, somebody is standing in there. You can kind of make it out, but you cannot see them as well as you can if you are standing face to face with them and the sun is right overhead, right? So, think of looking through a dirty window at dusk and trying to make out somebody's face and what they look like compared to standing right in front of them when the sun is straight up overhead. Adults, that is what he is saying. Now, we see in a mirror dimly. And again, hear me. He is speaking comparatively compared to how well we will know God in our eternal

state in heaven compared to now. It is like looking through a dirty window at dusk. He does not mean that we should all go, well, we cannot really take any stances on anything too seriously. We cannot take any doctrines or commands too seriously and be dogmatic about it because all we do is see in a mirror dimly. That is what people do with this verse. They say, "Well, at best we see in a mirror dimly, so you are making such a big deal about the virgin birth of Christ, but we just see in a mirror dimly." How are you so sure that that is a crucial doctrine? You cannot do that. That is not what he means. He does not mean you know nothing about Jesus. You know nothing about his commands. You cannot take any strong stances on any doctrines because we only see in a mirror dimly. That is not what he is saying. He is speaking comparatively to how amazing it will be that right now it is just a dim mirror but then face to face. That is the comparison that he is making. You understand? Do not be duped or do not think I do not want to take a strong position on anything too much because at best we just see in a mirror dimly. Do not do that. What it should do though is make you think I do actually know a lot about God because of what he has revealed in his perfectly sufficient word. I know a lot of things about him. And though I have seasons of ebbing and flowing and my affections are sometimes awesome and sometimes terrible, I really love God. He is excellent. Just thinking about his excellencies, his attributes, his perfections, and his works, his perfect law, his amazing gospel. Just thinking about that. I know a lot of things about God and things that get me excited. You should think that when he says this and just think and all that is a dirty window compared to how excellent it will be when I am face to face with Jesus. You should think there is a mirror dimly. I have had some pretty exciting things just hit me and that have stirred up my love and excitement for the glory of God. Jesus is amazing. I think about his gospel. I think about his incarnation. Think about all this and like I know a lot of things and that is still a drop in the bucket compared to what you will know when you see him face to face. So this verse is not an excuse to pull back from any doctrinal controversy and say we only see in a mirror dimly. But it is an exhortation or an encouragement rather to say I know a ton of things now. You are telling me this is only a mirror dimly compared to what it is going to be. I am really excited to die. I am really excited to be with Jesus because that is going to be amazing.

Beloved, just think with me for a few minutes of these things that you know and compared to the eternal state and the knowledge when the perfect comes when we are face to face with Jesus that these things are like looking through a dirty window. Think of Christ's divine eternity. He was never created. He has always existed. You and I can understand that proposition but not comprehend it. We accept it. We understand what is being said but we cannot comprehend it. Yet we still know it. And we read things even in the gospels that we go whoa. Like when Christ is speaking to the Jews who were attacking him and he says before Abraham was I am and they knew what he was saying. He is saying I am eternal. I am the one true God before Abraham was. Then he just says I am which is the Greek translation of the Lord saying I am to Moses. They knew exactly what he meant. I am eternal. Think of his divine eternity. Think of Christ's gracious

lawgiving that he explicitly tells you how you have been created to live in order to love others and glorify the Lord. His commandments are not burdensome. Think of his humble incarnation that the eternal God, God the Son, took on flesh and tabernacled among us. God became man. The hypostatic union. Do you understand that? Again, we understand the proposition, but we do not comprehend it. But we understand that one person, two natures, God and man. God strong enough to save us. Man weak enough to die for us. Think of his humble incarnation. That the king left his throne to come and get in the mud with us in order to save us from our sins. Think of his perfect sinlessness that in his humble incarnation, the Lord Jesus Christ never sinned and even at one point looks out at his accusers and says, "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" And they are all silent. Think of Christ's substitution for you on the cross that he every step of the way willingly lets himself be arrested. Willingly lets himself be falsely tried and lied about. Willingly lets himself be scourged and have the flesh ripped off of his back and legs. Willingly lets himself be spit in the face and beaten with rods with a crown of thorns placed on his head and a purple robe for mockery. Willingly carries a cross beam upwards of a half a mile until he collapses under its weight and they have to compel Simon of Cyrene to carry it the rest of the way. Willingly laid down on the cross and lets himself be nailed through in the most sensitive nerve endings in the body, the hands and the feet. Willingly stays there as they jar the cross into the ground and willingly hangs there suffering not only the worst physical pain imaginable but suffering under the wrath of God for all of his people's sins for all eternity in a span of a few hours. The God-man. He stayed. He suffered. He substituted himself and he said, "I give my life as a ransom for many." Think of Christ's resurrection from the dead. That after he arises from the dead, when he sends John this vision when John is on the island of Patmos, we have the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the revelation, he identifies himself as the resurrected king and savior. He says, "I have the keys of death." Think of his resurrection. Think of Christ then ascension back to heaven to the right hand of the Father and his intercession every day for you and me who belong to him. We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us. Think of Christ's kingly footstooling. He is footstooling all of his enemies. And he must reign until all of his enemies become a footstool for his feet. Think of Jesus his sleepless providential preservation of you. You woke up this morning because Jesus did not sleep last night. He is providentially preserving you and protecting you believers and me and all of his saints and the entire universe every single second of every single day. He says, "Not a hair of your head will perish. All things will work together for your good." Think of his exaltation. Think of his second coming. He will throw unrepentant sinners into eternal fire. He will wipe away every tear of his saints. And we will reign with him in perfection for all eternity. Just think of how excellent the Lord Jesus Christ is.

Beloved, even at our best of times, when we can rightly meditate on Christ's excellencies, we are still at best like the sick woman in Mark 5 who could just touch the fringe of his garment. That is all we have got right now compared to how

much we will have. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. There will be no more need of the gift of knowledge, no more need of the gift of tongues, no more need of the gift of preaching because we will see Jesus face to face. One day the dirt will be wiped off. No, the glass will be removed entirely and we will see Jesus face to face. We will make out the lines in his face. We will embrace him and this sight of him will heal all harms, suffice for all sorrows and banish all sadness forever. Now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face.

Look at the last part of verse 12. Now, now that means at this time. It is not like the rhetorical device when you are transitioning and you say now. It is not like that. It very explicitly means right now at this present time I know the knowledge I have in partially then at that time is what it means at in the future state in the eternal state I shall know fully even as I have been fully known. The whole purpose of him saying that is **Christians knowledge of God is partial but one day it shall be full. It shall be full.** Now hear me. It shall be as full as capable for a created being like you and me. It will not be full in the sense of you will understand everything you can possibly understand about God. That is not possible. God is still going to be incomprehensible even in your glorified state. But you will be able to understand and know as full as a glorified human being can possibly know. You are not going to be omniscient. That is an incommunicable attribute of God. Meaning you do not have any part in that kind of perfection or attribute of God. You will not be omniscient all knowing. So it does not mean that. So do not think you are going to be omniscient but it will the knowledge you have will be sufficient be as full as it can possibly be for you and for me. Now I know in part then I shall know fully even as I have been fully known. He is just reminding us at that last part. We are already fully known by God, but one day I am going to fully know him as full as I can possibly know. So his whole point in all this again is that love is more excellent than spiritual gifts because they will end. But love will not. Love never ends.

Now look, look at verse 13. He not only speaks of spiritual gifts and that there will be no more need for them because we will know as we should know. But then he moves on to speak of spiritual graces. And his point here in verse 13 is love is more excellent than spiritual graces because others will end but love will not. So it is not only that the spiritual gifts are all going to end in the eternal state but it is even that some of the spiritual graces will end in the eternal state. You will not need them. Look what he says. Verse 13. So now again at this time is what that word now means. Right now faith, hope and love remain or abide. I think people read that verse and I have asked them to explain like grammatically what is he saying? And I have very rarely gotten a good explanation. It is like, uh, I do not really know. I do not know what he means by so now faith, hope, and love abide. These three. I am like, what does that mean? And it simply means this. At this present time, faith, hope, and love are still in continual operation. That is what abide means. Remain. They stay at this present time. So now faith, hope, and love remain. These three and he is saying these three because he is highlighting the

fact that these are what theologians call the principal graces that God gives us. Principal graces. Thomas Adams called them the three divine sisters, faith, hope, and love. He is saying, "But right now, faith, hope, and love remain." And his point is, so these are the things you really need to be focusing on, faith, hope, and love, the principal graces. But then he says at the end, but the greatest, the greatest of these, it is *megas* in the Greek. You know what that means. It is where we get our word mega. But the mega grace is love. The mega grace is love. The greatest of these is love. His point is faith is excellent. Hope is excellent. Love is even more excellent because it never ends. What he goes back to in verse eight at the beginning. So faith, hope, and love are the most excellent of all the graces because they are most necessary for the Christian life. Yet love is more excellent than faith and hope.

Now I want you to think with me. Why are faith, hope, and love principal graces? Why are these the chief of all the graces? Listen, without faith, you cannot become nor remain a Christian. Without faith, you cannot become a Christian nor remain a Christian. Without hope, you cannot stand firm nor persevere as a Christian. If you do not have hope, you cannot stand firm. You cannot persevere. Without love, you cannot live the life nor die the death of a Christian. The whole Christian life is summed up in love. Love God, love neighbor. No love, no Christian life, no Christian death. Without hope, you are not going to stand firm. You are not going to persevere. Without faith, you are not a Christian. That is why these are the principal graces.

Boys and girls, look at me. Faith. That means a trust and dependence in Christ and what he has done to save us. That is what faith is. A trust, a dependence on Christ and what he has done to save us. Without faith, you cannot be a Christian. Faith is how you become a Christian. You trust in Christ alone for salvation. And faith is how you remain a Christian. You do not just, boys and girls, you do not just trust Christ on the day you get baptized. But you and I trust Christ for salvation every single day, we continually trust in him alone for salvation. So it is not like I trusted this person one time because I jumped off something and they caught me. I trusted them one time. No, for Christ it is we trust him every day. That is how you become a Christian. That is how you stay a Christian. You keep we keep trusting in Christ alone for our salvation. So that is faith. Faith is how you become a Christian and you remain or stay a Christian. Children, hope is how you do not give up. Hope is how you persevere. You keep going. You endure. Hope means not I hope it is going to work out. But boys and girls, hope means a confident expectation of future salvation. Means God has promised this. It is not here yet, but I know it is going to happen. So hope is how we keep persevering because we look at the promises and we say, "I do not have it yet, but it is going to happen because God has promised." And then love, boys and girls, love is the entire Christian life. How do we live a life that God likes, that pleases him? We love him and we love other people. So you have to have faith to become a Christian or stay a Christian. You have to have hope so that you do not give up. And you have to have love to live the Christian life and die a Christian death. That is why these are the principal graces.

Now, as we get closer to conclusion, I just want to lift up for you these three divine sisters and show you what faith, what hope, and what love say, and what they are like. And my prayer is that God would just use it to encourage you and that you would take it as I have got to give myself to these principal graces, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. So I just want to lift them up before you.

Faith is an excellent grace, beloved. Faith is the grace that we use to embrace Christ alone. It is the grace that we use to trust in all the promises secured for us by Christ. Faith says, "I know God accepts me as righteous because Christ lived without sin for me in order to give me his righteousness." That is what faith says. I know God accepts me as righteous because Jesus lived without sin so that I would be counted righteous. Faith says, "I know God forgives me of all of my sins because Christ died in my place for my sins as my substitute, paying my sin debt to God. I know my sins are forgiven because Christ did that for me." That is what faith says. Faith says, "I know Jesus is my savior and king who will one day raise me from the dead and glorify me because he was raised from the dead." Faith says, "I know what Jesus wants me to do in this life because his law is perfect and clear." Faith not only trusts Christ for salvation. Faith also receives the law of God as the pattern by which we walk. Faith says, "I know what Jesus wants me to do because his law is perfect and clear." Faith is an excellent grace, beloved. Give yourself to faith.

Hope is also an excellent grace. Hope is the grace that confidently looks to the future and rests secure because he who promised is faithful. Hope is the grace that confidently looks to the future and rests secure because he who promised is faithful. Are you insecure? You need hope. Are you worried about the future? You need hope. Hope says, "I will not fear abandonment because Christ promised never to leave me nor forsake me." He said, "I will not leave you as orphans." Hope says, "I will not be afraid of affliction because Christ has promised to work all things together for his glory and my good." Hope says, "I will not be afraid of sickness or degeneration because Christ has promised to give me a new glorified body." Hope says, "I will not fear sadness because Jesus has promised to heal all harms and make everything sad come untrue." Hope says, "I will not be frightened at my still indwelling sins because he who began a good work in me will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." Hope says, "I will not fear persecution from mine and Christ's enemies because he must reign until he puts all of his enemies under his feet." Hope says, "I have nothing to fear. He who promised is faithful. It is going to happen." Hope is an excellent grace, beloved. Give yourselves to hope.

But even greater, **even more excellent is love**. Look at me. You will need no faith in the eternal state. Do you get that? There will be no faith. Faith receives and rests in the promises and what God has said. There are no more promises. There is just face to face full knowledge. You will need no faith in heaven. You will need no hope in heaven because all the things that we were hoping for are fulfilled. All the things we were resting in are now ours. You will need no faith. That will not be in

heaven. You will need no hope. That will not be in heaven. But you will love. You will love God. And you will love your neighbors forever. That is Paul's whole point, saying love never ends. You dummies are so concerned about spiritual gifts, but you are not concerned about the thing that lasts forever. You are going to love God and love other saints forever. So start now. This is the thing that is most excellent. This is the thing that will never pass away. You are giving yourselves to temporary things but not engaging in the eternal. Love is the grace, beloved, that we use to both have and show our affection for God and others. Love is not just about actions. It is affection. And this is one of the greatest arguments for it because when he defines love in verses 4-7, a lot of it has to do with just loving in this present state. When the believers around you have indwelling sin and you got to put up with a lot of their junk, they have to put up with your junk, your sin. That is a lot of the definition. Like the first one is long-suffering, being patient with people when they treat you poorly. Well, that is not going to happen in heaven. I am not going to treat you badly. You are not going to treat me badly. So, my point is a lot of these definitions like love is going to look differently in heaven because it is not going to be someone is going to sin against you and you are going to be long-suffering towards them or enduring with them or something. But that is a greater even argument for the fact that love is not just what we do. But love is even in the affections what we feel. That is what love even most chiefly will be in the eternal state, will not it? Because we will not have to forgive people. We will not have to be patient with people. Nobody is going to boast or brag. Nobody is going to be jealous or envious. Not going to have to worry about being inappropriate or anything like that. But it is in the affections and in the actions. In the affections, it just means like a delight. A delight for the person. Delight for God. And actions, it looks like what is detailed here in verses 4-7. And in actions to God, it just looks like obedience to God's commands. That is how we love God. We delight in him and we do what he tells us. But love is the grace that is more excellent because it will never end. And so I leave you with this.

Love forever says, "I will be patient with you." Love forever says, "I will be kind and friendly to you." Love forever says, "I will not envy or be jealous of you." Love forever says, "I will not boast nor brag about me." Love forever says, "I will not be arrogant nor prideful toward you. I will not be rude nor inappropriate to you. I will not insist on my own way, nor seek my own benefit. Love forever says, I will not be irritable, nor easily provoked, nor easily offended with you. I will not be resentful, nor keep a record of wrongs with you. I will not rejoice at wrongdoing, nor injustice, nor any kind of iniquity with or for you. Love forever says, "I will rejoice when you speak or live in harmony with the truth. I will bear all things. I will believe all things. I will hope all things. I will endure all things." Love never ends. The greatest of these is love. John Gill said in the other world faith will be changed for vision and hope will be changed for enjoyment but love will abide and be in its full perfection and constant exercise to all eternity.

I will leave you with this one quick story and then one simple exhortation. There

was a lady, a martyr who was burned at the stake. Her name was Elizabeth Folkes. And as she would not recant her faith, she was being brought to the stake. And she said this, "Farewell the world. Farewell faith. Farewell hope. Welcome love." Then she grabbed the stake in her hand and they lit it on fire. Goodbye world. Goodbye faith. Goodbye hope. Welcome love. That is your future. That is my future if we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust in him alone for salvation and you will never be put to shame.

Here is my one exhortation for you believers. ***Love one another as Christ has loved you.***

Let us pray. Our Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your Son. We thank you for the Spirit. We thank you for sending Jesus into the world to save sinners like us. We ask you to save every single person here to open their eyes to the sinfulness of their sin and the sufficiency of Christ's blood. Give them faith. Give them that grace so that they would trust in Christ alone for salvation. We ask you to help all of us grow in faith, hope, and especially in love because love will never end. And it is this chief of all the graces. Help us to be a people who constantly love you and love one another. Help us to love one another as Christ has loved us. Now we offer up all these things to you. Our songs, our prayers, the Lord's Supper, our offerings, our fellowship. We offer them all up for Christ's sake and in his name. So we ask that you receive them for Christ's sake. Make us more like him for your glory. We ask all of it in Jesus name. Amen.