

From Sinners to Saints

1 Corinthians 13:1-4

- First Corinthians chapter thirteen is one of the most quoted chapters in all of scripture, even unbelievers know some of the verses > love is patient, love is kind, speaking them at weddings, anniversaries, and celebrations. But this chapter is so much more than what the world and many in the church thinks its saying, what the Apostle Paul will share should lay a foundation from which everything we do stands.
- Paul has just described in detail that every believer is a gifted saint, that we possess supernatural traits that allow us to carry out God's will for our lives and for the furtherance of the gospel. But what has been given to us **individually**, is for the benefit of the whole body **corporately**, which means that the mere **possession of gifts** is not as important as the **exercise** of these **gifts in love** according to Ch 13.

V1-4

- Which is why at the end of Ch 12 an interesting phrase appears > “**and yet I show you a more excellent way**” it's with these words that the Apostle introduces to us what is commonly called “**the love chapter**”. **V1-2** that as powerful a thing it is to possess heavenly gifts from The Father above, distributed by The Holy Spirit Himself, that without the presence of love that the person doing them is **empty**. So that means that in and of themselves love is superior to spiritual gifts Wow!
- Like today the Corinthians were enamored with spiritual gifts especially the gift of tongues, and Paul tells them that even the gift which has all of their attention is meaningless without love, for without love a person may speak both an unknown human or heavenly language and it will be nothing but empty noise to The Lord.
- I read a quote from a man who lived long ago who said “**he who has not the love of God and man filling his heart, is like an empty wagon coming violently down a hill; it makes a great noise, because there is nothing in it**”. But he doesn't stop there he includes Prophecy, Knowledge, and faith, even faith that could move mountains referring to Jesus quote > **Math 17:20**, and still without love its irrelevant.

- The word for love here is “**agape**” it is a love that loves without changing, an unconditional love, one that allows us to say we can’t cause God to love us anymore than He already does or any less, because He loves us perfectly just as we are. This is important for us to know as it protects you from wrongly thinking that our salvation is based upon performance and not trust, it takes the pressure off of you and allows us to surrender not from **obligation** but through **appreciation**, voluntary.
- **V3** even if we give all our possessions to benefit others, sacrificing my life as a martyr, if it’s not for love it means nothing. This shows that even self-sacrifice can be self-centered, in early Christianity people arrogantly thought that if they take a vow of poverty or endure immense suffering for Jesus, that alone will prove my love of Jesus. But what they ignored was we cannot impress The Lord by outdoing or outperforming others, if it’s not done because I simply want to please God it’s not love.
- We just read about five spiritual gifts in these first three verses > Tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith and giving, and the Christian virtue of self-sacrifice, that if you possess them and try and operate in them without love its vain empty. This really illuminates the importance of why God says love is so important when it comes to relationships > **1Jn 4:19-20** God demonstrates His love for us by sending His Son and in turn we voluntarily love each other because of how He loves us.
- **V4** the Greeks used four different words to translate love > Storge- used for affection you may have for a parent or child, Philia- a brotherly love reserved for a good friend, Eros- was a physical or sexual love, and Agape- unconditional love that doesn’t change or demand a repayment. Paul says Agape love is > **1.** Long suffering or Patient, **2.** Kind. Love suffers long meaning it will endure and doesn’t have an expiration date, it’s the kind of love shown by God when dealing with the unsaved.
- **Rom 5:8**- while we were sinners at war with Him, He still loved us the word here is Agape, just in case y wondered, and He was willing to wait for you and I to surrender > **2 Pet 3:9**- in our own strength we don’t possess this type of patience, we need The Lord to empower us to love like this, to remind us of what He did for us, so that we don’t become so arrogant to think its because of something that was good in us.

- So if God's love is in us then we will be patient with those who annoy and hurt us, this also takes the second thing love is "**Kindness**". It means tenderness, one that you show toward children, where you are willing to stoop to their level in order to get them to trust, that you want to be a blessing to them, and not a problem for them.
- That was two things love is, now we are going to read about eight things love is not, three of which is in this verse. **1. Love is not envious-** envy is one of the least productive and most damaging of all sins, as it accomplishes nothing except hurt. Love keeps its distance from envy, remember back in **1Cor 12:26-** if one member suffers we all suffer and if one member is honored we all rejoice, envy resists this.
- Envy murdered Abel **Gen 4:3-8**, and enslaved Joseph **Gen 37:11**, envy even put Jesus on the cross **Math 27:18**. **2. Love is not self-seeking-** doesn't parade itself with a look at me attitude, so it doesn't seek the limelight or attention to do a good job, to be satisfied with the result. Love gives not out of a sense for praise or recognition, it gives because it loves to give and be a blessing to others.
- **3. Love is not arrogant-** knowledge puffs up, but love edifies, both parade itself and puffed are rooted in pride, the difference is one wants attention for what they have done while the other wants recognition for who they think they are. As their opinion of themselves is so overblown there is no room for anything else.
- William Carey is thought of as the founder of the modern missionary movement, today Christians all over the world know who he was and honor him. But he came from a humble place; he was a shoe repairman when God called him to reach the world. Once at a dinner party a snobbish man with a title tried to insult him by saying loudly Mr. Carey, I hear you once were a shoemaker, Carey replied, No sir, not a shoemaker only a cobbler, cobbler were assistants to the shoemaker, that's humility