

Sermon 64: Walking in Christian Love: 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-17 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things..."

Summary: God calls us to walk in Christian love.

Introduction:

- **Part 1:** Why is Christian love so important? **13:1-3**
- **Part 2:** What does it look like practically? **13:4-7**
- **Part 3:** What sets it apart from all other virtues? **13:8-13**

Truth 1: Christian service is hollow if done without Christian love:

13:1-3 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing..."

- **Five hollow actions without love:**
 - **Speaking in tongues:** "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal..."
 - **Speaking prophetically:** "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge... I am nothing..."
 - **Faith against impossible odds:** "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing..."
 - **Radical self-sacrifice:** "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor... it profiteth me nothing..."
 - **Martyrdom:** "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing..."
- **Three observations about hollow action:**

- **It is just making noise:** "I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal..."
- **It does not give me genuine credibility:** "I am nothing..."
- **It does not secure eternal reward:** "It profits me nothing..."
- **Conclusion:**
 - Genuine Christian virtue must always drive Christian service.
 - We should always strive to serve from the heart with pure motives.

Truth 2: Genuine Christian love is more than action or

sentimentality: 13:4-7 "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things..."

- **Love is a rich concept with several facets:**
 - **Love has a standard:** It is defined in terms of God's nature.
 - **Love is active:** It is proactive but not hollow.
 - **Love is passionate:** It is from the heart but not unguided by the intellect.
 - **Love is practical:** It does what is best for the one who is loved.
- **Paul defines love in terms of what it does or does not do:**
 - **What it does:**
 - **It is patient:**
 - "Suffereth long..."
 - "Beareth all things..."
 - **It is kind:** "Is kind..."
 - **It delights in what is true:** "Rejoiceth in the truth..."
 - **It does not give up:**
 - "Believeth all things..."
 - "Hopeth all things..."
 - "Endureth all things..."
 - **What it does not do:**
 - **It is not jealous:** "Envieth not..."
 - **It does not brag:** "Vaunteth not itself..."
 - **It is not arrogant:** "Not puffed up..."
 - **It is not rude or harsh:** "Doth not behave itself unseemly..."
 - **It is not personally demanding:** "Seeketh not her own..."
 - **It is not easily angered:** "Not easily provoked..."
 - **It does not keep meticulous records of offenses:** "Thinketh no evil..."

- **It does not enjoy seeing others suffer or it does not enjoy what is sinful:** "Rejoiceth not in iniquity..."

Truth 3: We need to ask ourselves some hard questions:

- **We need to take personal inventory of our own lives:**
 - Are we contentious and easily angered over other's offenses?
 - Do we obsess over the wrongs we have endured?
 - Do we serve because of what we can get?
 - Do we enjoy seeing others experience trouble?
 - Are we constantly talking about ourselves?
 - Do we treat life as a competition to get ahead of everyone in our lives?
- **His presentation was likely personally framed:**
 - The church was filled with rivalry and contention.
 - People were being vindictive and hoped for the worst.
 - They kept meticulous records of other's wrongs.
 - They did not want to resolve their issues Biblically.
 - They were unwilling to extend grace and endure other offenses.
 - They served to bolster their own reputations.
- **We must walk like the people we are in Christ:**
 - **Colossians 3:12-15** "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts..."
 - **Romans 12:14-19** "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep...Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil...If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men...avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath...Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good..."
 - **1 John 3:16-18** "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth..."

Conclusion:

- We must remember who we are.

- We must remember how we came to that position.
- We must live like the people we are in Christ.