

- I) V1-3 INTRO: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not  
The Bible's simplest revelation of God is that **God is love**  
This is something that the Apostle John was most clear about  
**INTERESTINGLY**
- II) In his writings, John made **three definitive** statements about God  
Jn 4:24 God is *Spirit*  
1 Jn 1:5 God is *light*  
1 Jn 4:8 God is *love*
- III) It would seem the key theme in his writings **was love**  
In the gospel of John, he used the word **love** around 29 times  
**EXAMPLES**
- IV) Jn 3:16 For God **so loved** the world...  
Jn 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**; as I  
have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My  
disciples, if you have love for one another.”  
Jn 14:15 If **you love Me**, keep My commandments  
Jn 15:13 **Greater love** has no one than this, than to lay down one's live for his  
friends
- V) In 1<sup>st</sup> Jn, he used it around 46 times  
In 2<sup>nd</sup> Jn he used the word once  
In 3<sup>rd</sup> Jn he used it 6 times
- VI) Interestingly, he only used the word love once in Revelation, to Ephesus  
Rev 2:4 I have this against you, that **you have left your first love**  
**INTERESTINGLY**
- VII) In his gospel he even referred to himself **five times** as the one Jesus loved  
Jn 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, and 21:7, 20
- VIII) By this it would seem obvious that love is a central theme in the life of a believer  
Love for God and for one other is the *mark* of the Christian
- IX) **God's love** is the fruit that actually identifies a person to be a Christian  
1 Jn 4:16 We have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love;  
**and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.**

- I) The new life we have in Jesus has one chief characteristic: The love of God  
SPURGEON: If there is one subject more than another upon which I wish ever to speak, it is the love of Christ. But if there is one that quite baffles me and makes me go back from this platform utterly ashamed of my poor feeble words, it is this subject. This love of Christ is the most amazing thing under heaven itself.
- ONE THING ABOUT LOVE**
- II) It is often revealed by its sincere **actions**
- III) Our first lessons in life are not those that are given by words, but by deeds  
We learn what love is by experiencing it through our parents
- IV) We also learn it by watching others live and give love, and define it by their actions
- V) Jesus revealed the **full extent** of His love by washing His disciples' feet (Jn 13:1)
- VI) God's love was revealed by sending His Son Jesus to die on our behalf  
Ro 5:8 But God demonstrates **His own love** toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- VII) Jn 3:16: Gives us insight into God's love and reveals three things about God's love  
**First:** It reveals that God loves us, and does not hate us  
**Second:** He so loved us that He gave His Son to ransom and rescue us  
**Third:** He came with the purpose of keeping men from perishing
- OBVIOUSLY**
- VIII) If God loved us in this manner we are **to love others**  
His kind of love is to be the earmark of our lives, if we *truly are* Christians  
1 Pe 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by *obeying the truth* so that you have sincere love for your brothers, **love one another deeply**, from the heart.
- THE SAD FACT IS**
- IX) God's love does not always characterize the *Church* or its *ministry*  
A good example of this was the Church at Corinth, a very active Church
- X) They understood salvation, the person of Christ, and the gifts flowed in them  
Yet, with all of this, they were lacking in one thing: **love for one another**
- XI) The sad fact is: It is very possible to be **very active** while remaining **very unloving**  
This is because **activity** can replace of **devotion**

- I) Sadly, the Corinthian church was slowly *leaving its first love*  
**HOW HAD THIS HAPPENED**
- II) The Church had gotten sidetracked, and forgot its first call was to *love*
- III) Ch 13 is sandwiched between Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit  
In Ch 12:31 Paul had written about the gifts of the Spirit  
He wrote of healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, helps and administrations
- IV) As he wrote of this, he emphasized that the church was to be united  
1 Co 12:23 he said the members should have the **same care** for one another  
They were to exercise their gifts to the glory of God and the benefit of others
- V) Yes, they were gifted but **still lacked** something essential
- VI) This reminds me of an encounter Jesus had with a rich, young ruler  
He approached Jesus, asking what good thing he must do to enter the kingdom
- VII) Jesus gave him a list of the commandments (Mt 19; Mk 10; and Luke 18)  
Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud: honor your father and mother  
Mt 19:19 adds You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself
- VIII) All of these commands related to man's relationship with other men  
The young man said he had kept all of these commandments since childhood  
Mt 19:20 The young man said to Him All these things I have kept from my youth.  
**What do I still lack?**
- IX) Mark tells us how Jesus responded and the young man responded  
Mk 10:21-22 Jesus, looking at him, **loved him**, and said to him, "**One thing you lack**: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." But he was sad at this word, **and went away sorrowful**, for he had great possessions.
- X) What did he still lack? Stop relying on your wealth, and care for the poor  
This will reveal your true dependence on God and love for others  
His response: he walked away grieved

- I) Love for God would be revealed by his love for others  
The cost was too great for him to pay, and he walked away  
In this, he showed his heart was securely tied to this life and not the Lord
- II) In the case of the Corinthians, they were still lacking in something important  
They exercised the gifts, but they did not love one another properly
- III) This is why Paul said and yet I show you **a more excellent way** (12:31)  
The **more excellent way** is the way God has planned for His gifts to operate
- IV) Having a spiritual gift or holding an office does not evidence spiritual maturity
- V) Having love **from God** evidences that you are abiding in Jesus  
Jn 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.
- VI) **The gifts** of the Spirit operate by **the fruit** of the Spirit  
Gal 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- VII) The Corinthian believers were not walking in the love of God  
They were selfish and self-willed: The love of God was not present amongst them  
This was clearly revealed by their striving against one another and division  
**THIS IS WHY PAUL BEGINS V1-3 IN THIS MANNER**
- VIII) He begins by using various gifts as examples  
**His point:** All of these gifts can be misused to gain *people's attention*  
Tongues, Prophecy, Wisdom, Knowledge, faith, sacrificial giving (Ro 12:8), and even martyrdom can be used as a way to gain attention  
**HIS THOUGHT**
- IX) Though I am a gifted believer, if I do not have *love*, I have nothing  
The word he uses here is the word Agape  
**Agape:** One of the rarest words in ancient Greek, the most common in NT
- X) There are other Greek words that are translated by the word love  
Phileo (friendship) and eros (sexual)

- I) Unlike friendship, or sexual love agape is self-giving, sacrificial
- II) The God kind of love is selfless with no expectation of receiving in return  
This is the kind of love Jesus showed on our behalf  
1 Jn 4:9-11 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
- III) The word love is a common word, one that all casually use daily  
The real question is: what is love? What qualities reveal it best?
- IV) V4-8 Paul begins to answer this question: What *is* love?  
Love is here defined as a pattern for Church life  
Love doesn't simply make noise, or gain attention by gifting or sacrifice
- V) Genuine Christian love is known by other qualities  
**FIRST**
- VI) V4 Love suffers long: Long tempered (2 Pe 3:9—He is not slack...)  
Love doesn't immediately react to those who continually try you  
Love inspires us to put up with the imperfections and ignorance of others
- VII) Just because someone offends us (sometimes innocently) we don't reject them  
Instead, it is kind, responding with gentleness and grace
- VIII) When Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, what is it Jesus said  
Lu 22:48 Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?  
What a gentle response to a horrible betrayal  
**SECOND**
- IX) Love is **kind**: Goodness in action, gracious, gentle  
Jesus was kind to children: people brought them, He blessed them (Mk 10:13-16)
- X) He was kind to Zacchaeus: people rejected him, but Jesus blessed him  
Zacchaeus vowed to provide restitution to any he cheated  
Lu 19:9-10 (Jesus said) Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

- I) V4 Love does not *envy*: Wishing I had what you have, and **you didn't**  
The scribes and Pharisees envied Jesus, feeling their authority was threatened  
This motivated them to accuse Jesus before Pilate: Pilate saw through this  
Mk 15:10 He knew it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered Him up
- II) V4 Love does not **parade itself**: Love does not seek attention  
Love prioritizes the needs of others and doesn't seek personal glory  
There is no hint of any desire for recognition, or acknowledgement  
Mt 12:20 A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out, till He has brought justice through to victory
- III) Love is not **puffed up**: Arrogant, self-important: **I have arrived**  
Mt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls
- IV) V5 Love does not behave **rudely**  
Love does behave in an indecent manner; is not filthy
- V) V5 Love does not **seek its own** (it is not selfish or self-centered; narcissistic)  
Love is prepared to give up for the sake of others even what it is entitled to  
Ac 20:35 I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- VI) V5 Love is not **provoked**  
Thin skinned, aroused to anger easily, always fighting for your rights  
1 Pe 2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
- VII) V5 *Thinks* no evil: Does not keep lists, doesn't catalogue people's slights  
The thief on the cross: Lord, remember me  
Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
- VIII) V6 Love **does not rejoice in iniquity**  
Takes no pleasure in seeing an opponent fall, or is harmed

- I) Instead, they will actually sorrow over their hurt  
Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do  
Pr 24:17 Don't rejoice when your enemies fall; don't be happy when they stumble
- II) V6 Love rejoices **in the truth**  
Instead of being drawn by unrighteousness, love seeks **the triumph of truth**  
The absolute truth is found in the gospel, and love rejoices in this truth  
3 Jn 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- III) V7 Love bears all things: Love supports, protects, covers, hides, conceals  
Love does not proclaim openly to others the weaknesses of others  
**ILLUSTRATION**
- IV) When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus, He could have judged  
She was caught in the very act: she may have been immodestly dressed
- V) The scribes and Pharisees demanded the death penalty, which was in the Law  
The 7<sup>th</sup> commandment is **do not commit adultery** (Ex 20:14)  
Lev 20:10 commanded capital punishment for this sin  
**FACT**
- VI) In His teachings, Jesus had upheld the prohibition of this sin  
Mt 5:27 You have heard that it was said to those of old, **You shall not commit adultery**  
He even strengthened it, **saying that lusting after** a woman was sinful
- VII) The pharisees demanded judgment: what did Jesus do?  
He told them **He who is without sin** among you, let him throw a stone at her first
- VIII) One by one, beginning with the oldest to the younger, they walked away  
He then asked: where are your accusers? She said, I have none
- IX) He then said Neither do I condemn you. **Go, and sin no more** (Jn 8:11)  
Jas 2:13 Mercy triumphs over judgment  
Pr 10:12 Hatred stirs up strifes: but **love covers all sins.**
- X) V7 Love **believes** all things: Is not cynical or suspicious: Errs on the side of grace  
**Hopes:** When people prove untrustworthy, love still hopes for their recovery  
**Endures:** It stands against all opposition, and holds fast

- I) V8 Love never fails: Love will last, through all eternity, and the gifts don't  
You have put too high a value on that which is temporary  
In heaven, we will no longer have need for them  
**FINALLY**
- II) V11-13 When I was a child, I **spoke** as a child, I understood as a child  
When I began to learn to **speak**, it was a process until it was understandable  
My **understanding**, as a child, was undeveloped and prone to emotion
- III) At this time, we cannot truly comprehend or articulate what our future is  
Its glories are still awaiting us to finally experience and understand
- IV) **I understood** as a child: I had childish ideas, my reason being undeveloped  
I thought if I jumped from the roof with a sheet, I would float to the ground  
I thought if I ate soap, I could breathe out bubbles  
I tried to dig a hole to China  
I put a plastic bag over my head as a space helmet
- V) I **thought** as a child, having little experience and valuing things that didn't matter  
As I matured, I began to grow in my understanding and gained experience  
Over time I learned to consider things in a more balanced way  
I put away childish things
- VI) V12 For now we see in a mirror **dimly**, but then face to face. Now I know in part  
The view we have of eternity is not yet clear and is more like a blurred image  
We do not have the clearest vision of what truly awaits us
- VII) V12 but then face to face  
We will have nothing clouding our sight: we will see things clearly  
Job 19:25-27 I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand on  
the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, **yet in my flesh I will see God**; I myself  
will see Him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
- VIII) Now I know in part but then I shall know just as I also am known  
My knowledge of God is not yet complete and I still have much to learn  
But there, all will be completely revealed, and I will completely understand
- IX) V13 And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these

- I) **The gifts that you rejoice in are temporary, but there is something eternal  
Love is the chief and more excellent way**
  
- II) **Jesus fits this description perfectly: pursue Him**