

9/16/12

1Corinthians 13-14

Paul has gone to great length spending, pointing out in great detail the diversity in the body to magnify unity by the gifts for the edification of the body, as it has pleased God.

Now he turns to point out the more excellent way of agape love, as the source behind the exercise to manifest the gifts.

This chapter is not teaching that love replaces the gifts as some teach, but rather that the motivation and intent for the exercise of the gifts is to be agape love.

Then Paul will focus on three of the gifts, which were the greatest problem in the church at Corinth, prophecy, tongues and interpretation.

13:1-3 **The greatness of love by it's absence.**

13:1 The apostle Paul turns to show the Corinthians a more excellent way, agape love.

- 1) The chapter break should be in the middle of the previous verse of the last chapter, “

And yet I show you a more excellent way”. vs. 31b

- 2) The chapter is not teaching that love is replacing the gifts.
- 3) The chapter is teaching that love is to be the motive of the gifts.
- 4) The verse is teaching the agape is superior to speech.
- 5) The person who speaks in human or angelic languages is nothing without agape love, but a noisy instrument without God's agape love.
 - a) The word sounding “echeo” means a roaring and used for the sea.
 - b) The word clanging “alalazo” means to ring loudly, from the root “a shout”, “alala”, as soldiers used to do on entering into battle.
- 6) Agape is superior to speech and coined in the New Testament of God's love for sinners. Jn. 3:16
* Distinct from eros, phileo and storge!

- 13:2** The apostle Paul declared agape is superior to gifts endowment by the Spirit.
- 1) In view of the gifts of revelation, “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge.” vs. 2a-b
 - 2) In view of the gifts of power, And though I have all faith, so that I

could remove mountains, but have not love. vs. 2c-d

- 3) The person without agape love is nothing before God. vs. 2e

13:3 The apostle Paul declared agape is superior to works kindness and great sacrifice.

- 1) Though I feed the poor.
- 2) Though I give my body to be burnt.
- 3) The person doing all this without love is profited in nothing.
 - * Love is the only motive God honors and rewards. 1Cor. 4:5

13: 4-7 **The greatness of love by it's presence.**

13:4a The positive characteristics of agape love.

- 1) Love suffers long “makrothumeo”, means to be able to endure long to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others, not circumstances.
 - * The ability to control resentment in the face of provocation.
- 2) Love is kind “chresteuomai”, means to be mild, gentle, tender and gracious as God is to us.

a) One of the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit is kindness “chestotes” Gal. 5:22e

b) The name of Jesus can be substituted for agape love and nothing will change but when I place my name I can't even start!

13:4b-6 The negative characteristics of agape love.

- 1) Love does not envy “zeloi”, means to be zealous for a person or thing the root word “zeo” means to boil, to be heated or to boil with envy. vs. 4b
 - * The word is used by Paul in the pursuit of the gifts. 1Cor. 12:31, 14:1. 39
- 2) Love does not parade itself “perpereuomai”, means to boast and brag. vs. 4c
 - * The act of extolling oneself excessively and being insolent before others.
- 3) Love is not puffed up “phusioo”, means to blow, puff with the idea of being inflated with pride with the sense of one's importance. vs. 4d
 - * The Corinthians were seeped in it. 1Cor. 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; Prov. 6:17
- 4) Love does not behave rudely “askeemoneo”, means disgraceful, improperly, dishonorable and indecent. vs. 5a

* The agape love of God courteous and honorable.

5) Love does not seek its own “zeteo”, means one’s own benefit as a priority. vs. 5b

* The nature of God’s love is not to be self-centered, pursuing personal happiness, welfare, safety as the chief thing of life but the benefit and good of others.

6) Love is not provoked “paroxunomai”, means to stimulate, spur on, urge, to irritate, arouse to anger, in order to exasperating, irritating someone by the wrong done, the injury or insult.. vs. 5c

* The same word is used on the positive side as the Holy Spirit stirred in Paul at Athens. Acts 17:16

7) Love thinks no evil “logizomai”, means to reckon or to take no account off something. vs. 5d

a) The agape love of God does not keep a ledger of wrong done due to confession and forgiveness covering and cancels the debt, confirmed by genuine repentance.

b) The parable of the evil servant is a case in point of keeping a record while ignoring his own! Matt. 18:23-35

8) Love does not rejoice in iniquity “adkia”, but rejoices in the truth means in the sins, calamities, failures of other, but rather in the truth of the gospel to restore them. vs. 6

13:7 The power of agape love describes.

* The qualifying adjective “all” that is repeated four times distinguishing it from human love!

1) Love bears “stego” all things, means to cover, pass over in silence or to keep confidential. vs. 7a

a) Love conceals what is displeasing and endures what is unpleasant. 1Pet. 4:8

b) But love is not gullible, naive or suspicious, due to envy or self love.

2) Love believes all things means to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, to place confidence in. vs. 7b

* The love of God is not gullible or nice or suspicious but it believes the best.

3) Love hopes all things means to wait expectantly. vs. 7c

* The agape love of God hopes “elpizo”, means to wait expectantly, never gives up expecting the best, failure is not seen as a final end, optimism and steadfast confidence is its character.

- 4) Love endures “hupomeno”, all things means to take patiently and remain under. vs. 7d
- a) To stand one’s ground with the sense of great perseverance while not losing heart or courage.
- b) Four times the word all “pas”, any, every and anything, the potential is of God, not man.

13:8-13 **The greatness of love by its contrast.**

13:8 The permanency of agape love.

- 1) Agape love never fails.
- 2) I fail when I do not yield to agape love.
* God is love, it is His very nature. 1Jn. 4:8
- 3) Gifts will fail, cease and vanish away one day. vs. 8b-g
* Prophecies, be it in the proclamation of the word of God or futuristic in nature, will come to a close, tongues and knowledge.

13:9-10 The present imperfect state in contrast to the perfect state to come.

- 1) Man in the present state is imperfect and knows only in part, regardless of how much he continues to learn as well as when he prophecies. vs. 9

- 2) The times of doing away with the gifts and man’s imperfection will be when Christ returns for His church. vs. 10
- a) The word perfect “telios” means that which is complete or brought to an end but some have attempted to interpret the word “perfect” as the closed canon of Scripture in order to prove that the gifts ended with the apostolic age.
- b) The context rejects such dishonesty, verse twelve refers to our presence before Jesus.
- c) Prior to the beginning of this century all commentators understood and interpreted as Jesus Christ and so do all the major Greek scholars.
- d) If it is speaking of the ceasing of the gifts, why hasn’t knowledge ceased like prophecy and tongues?
- e) Why does Paul tell the Corinthians that the gifts are till Christ returns and to seek the gifts as a continuous habit? 1Cor. 1:7, 12:31
- f) Why does Paul close the letter with the command to not forbid to speak with tongues? 1Cor. 14:39

13:11 The process of the present state is illustrated.

- 1) The life of a Christian begins as a spiritual child, in need of milk and care.
- 2) The process of time results in a grown man in Christ and maturity.
 - * The Christian experience is a process of growth and development with levels of maturity for each level.

13:12 The present state is explained in view of hope of the future. vs. 12

- 1) Man's present state is like looking into a mirror dimly.
- 2) The mirrors of the day were made from polished metals and the Corinthians were know for their mirrors.
 - * The word dimly "ainignati" means a riddle, suggesting an "enigma" or an obscure intimation of reflection at the present time not with full clarity but when we are with Jesus face to face, all will be clear and fully revealed and faith will be turned into sight.

13:13 The permanent priority of love among the three prominent virtues is proclaimed.

1. Faith is essential for life and fellowship with God, it speaks of the present, for our daily walk.
2. Hope is essential for trust and expectation, it speaks of the future.

3. Love is essential for quality of life, it is what ties faith and hope together.
 - * A trinity of life for man in this partial stare!
4. Love is superior to everything and is greater than faith and hope due to the fact that it is the very nature of God in us by His Holy Spirit. Jn. 13:35; Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:14; 1Jn. 4:7-8; 17-19

14:1-5 **The introductory remarks about prophecy, tongues and interpretation.**

14:1 The proclamation about the priority of the gift of prophesy.

- 1) He tells them to pursue agape and desire spiritual gifts, bringing the two together, not a replacement. 1Cor. 1:7; 12:11, 14
- 2) He places a premium on prophecy.
 - a) He opened up the section accusing them of their ignorance about the gifts. 1Cor. 12:1
 - b) The word especially "mallon", means more or to a greater degree. 1Cor. 5:2; 6:7; 14:1, 5, 18

14:2-4 The explanation about the function of the three gifts.

- 1) One who speaks in tongues speaks to God not man and no man understands him,

unless it be interpreted, for he or she speaks mysteries. vs. 2

- a) Mysteries “musterion”, hidden things, he does not know what he is saying either!
- b) He does not know what he is saying!
- 2) One who prophesies speaks edification, exhortation or comfort. vs. 3
* For strength, encouragement and assurance!
- 3) One who speaks in tongues edifies himself and one who prophesies edifies the church. vs. 4

14:5 The distinction between prophecy and tongues.

- 1) He expressed his desire was that they all could speak in tongues. but he pointed out the he desired more that they prophecy, it had a greater value.
- 2) He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, not greater in importance but in benefit to the body.
- 3) He who interprets serves the same benefit as prophecy.

14:6-25 **The instructions on tongues and interpretation of tongues.**

14:6 The reasonable argument regarding tongues.

- 1) If Paul came to them speaking in tongues what benefit would they receive? Nothing!
- 2) But if he spoke a human language, to be understood, they it would benefit
 - a) Either by *revelation*, “apokalupsis”, unveiling truth through Inspiration of the Spirit.
 - b) Either by knowledge, “gnosis” general intellectual understanding. through illumination of the Spirit.
 - c) Either by *prophecy*, “propheteia”, through the unction of the Spirit.
 - d) Either by teaching “didache”, by the gift and anointing of the Spirit.

14:7-8 The illustration through musical instruments.

- 1) The sound that comes forth from a flute or harp must be a distinct sound to be recognized. vs. 7
- 2) The trumpet that calls men to battle must have the recognizable sound or no one will respond. vs. 8

14:9-11 The application is made regarding tongues.

- 1) Unless they speak in a know language so as to be understood, how will people understand the words. vs. 9

- 2) The various languages of the world all have a significant meaning to those who know the sound and words that communicate the particular language. vs. 10

* I can speak two languages and my ear picks up the significance of the words immediately but if I hear any other language the sounds and words have no meaning!

- 3) The conclusion is that both the hearer and the speaker become barbarians to each other, unable to communicate with meaning and effectiveness.

* A barbarian was anyone who could not speak the Greek language!

14:12-13 The practical application to their use of tongues in their public assembly.

- 1) Even so you, don't be a Barbarian in church to those present by speaking in tongues. vs. 12a
- 2) Let your eagerness to excel in spiritual gifts be for the edification of the church. vs. 12b-c
- 3) Let the one who speaks with a tongue pray that he interpret, in order that the church be edified. vs. 13, 5d-e

14:14-19 The elaboration on tongues.

- 1) The gift of speaking in tongues is a form of praying. vs. 14a
- 2) The spirit of man is praying by the gift of the Holy Spirit. vs. 14b
- 3) The intellect of man is not cognizant of what is being prayed at the time. vs. 14c
- 4) The option is in the choice of the one praying, either in tongues or a language understood as well as singing. vs. 15
- 5) The reason for the choosing to pray with the understanding instead of tongues is that those present might understand and agree at the giving of thanks rather than not understanding. vs. 16
- 6) Though the one speaking in tongues is doing it and being edified, the hearer is not. vs. 17
- 7) The concluding wisdom is given.
- a) Paul affirms that he spoke in tongues more than all the Corinthians. vs. 18
- * Some take this to mean natural languages, such as Hebrew and Greek but the context is Tongues as well as the clear contrast in the following verse.
- b) Though he could speak in tongues, he would rather speak five words in a language understood, in order to teach others, rather than ten-thousand words in a tongue. vs. 19

* The norm of tongues is for private devotion!

14:20-25 The seeming contradict of tongues as a sign to unbelievers.

14:20 Paul pleaded for their mature understanding regarding the exercise of tongues.

- 1) He calls them brethren.
- 2) He calls them to be ignorant and simple in malice, not in the gift of tongues.

14:21-22 Paul quoted Isaiah.

- 1) The Jews would not believe God's judgment through the prophets of God, so the Jews were told that for their sins they would be carried into the Assyrian captivity, where they would hear strange languages. This was a judgment. vs. 21
 - a) The Law refers to Deuteronomy which prophesied about future judgment by foreign nations. Deut. 28:49
 - b) The prophet Isaiah records such a judgment by the unintelligible Assyrian tongue. Is. 28:11
- 2) Paul declares that as the Assyrian tongue was a **sign** of judgment to the unbelieving Jews, so tongues are a sign to the unbeliever in the church and prophecy a sign to the believer. vs. 22

- a) In this verse Paul is merely distinguishing the two different signs, one to the unbeliever and the other to the believer.
- a) Paul has up to this point been talking about the believer and tongue, **now he switches to the unbeliever and tongues.**
- b) To the **believer** he declared it edifies the person speaking and is beneficial only if interpreted.
- c) To the **unbeliever** he declared that it will **be a sign of madness.**
 - * This is the only way I can clear up the seaming contradiction that exists between verse twenty-two and twenty-three!

14:23-25 The conclusion of Paul's council.

- 1) In the public assembly there will be unbelievers and if people speak out in tongues, both the believer that is not informed about the gift of tongues as well as the unbeliever will conclude "They are out of their minds an mad". vs. 23
- 2) On the contrary if prophecy takes place, the act of speaking forth the word of God, the unbeliever will be convicted and repent as God reveals the secrets of

his heart and worship God and confess
His existence in the midst. vs. 24-25

14:26-40 The order for the three gifts in the public gathering.

14:26 Paul pointed out their practice of exercising various gifts in such a way that they did not edify the body, but rather confusion.

14:27 Paul gave the order for tongues.

- 1) Two or at the most three.
- 2) Each in turn.
- 3) One is to interpret, so as to have the body receive edification through understanding.

14:28 Paul gave the condition to speak out in tongues.

- 1) If there is no interpreter, the person is to keep silent.
- 2) And he is to speak to himself and God to see if it is God or just their own imagination.

14:29-30 Paul gave the order or prophecy.

- 1) Those who prophecy were to do so two or three. vs. 31
- 2) The others were to judge the content and order. vs. 31

3) Those sitting by are to wait to speak in order if God speaks to them. vs. 30

14:31 All could prophecy one by one that all may learn and be encouraged.

- 1) Prophecy meaning speaking forth the word of God.
- 2) Prophecy meaning forthtelling the mind of God.

14:32 The Holy Spirit of God is orderly.

- 1) The Holy Spirit is subject to the prophets, He is not forcing any person to speak out in prophecy or tongues against their will or uncontrollably.
- 2) The exercise of any gift through a manner that is out of order is man's doing through his emotions and desire for attention to be thought of as spiritual to impress people!

14:33 The principle is simple and straight forward.

- 1) God is not the author of confusion but of peace.
- 2) God is consistent in all the churches because they are all part of His body.

14:34-36 The order of women in the church.

- 1) The women were to keep silent in the church, for they are not permitted to speak. vs. 34a-b
 - a) The cultural background is important, men and women sat as in the synagogue, men on one side and women on the other, they were disrupting.
 - b) The apostle has already pointed out that women can and do pray and prophecy, so he is not teaching that women are never to speak at all in church. 1Cor. 11:5
- 2) The woman is to be submissive as the law says. vs. 34c-d
 - a) The reference is to the order of creation. Gen. 3:16
* Paul has mentioned it already. 1Cor. 11:3
 - b) The woman is not to usurp authority over the man, going against God's created order, especially as a teacher over men in the church. 1Tim. 2:12-15
- 3) The problem is indicated, the woman was to ask her husband at home if she did not understand and not be disruptive in the gathering, this is the context! vs. 35
 - a) It was shameful for a woman to speak in the church, a sign of unsubmitiveness!

- b) Paul tells Timothy, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission". 1Tim. 2:11
 - 4) The apostle in sarcasm asks the Corinthians two things. vs. 36
 - a) Or perhaps the word of God originated with you as the standard for women!
 - b) Or perhaps you are the only who it came to!
* The implication being obvious they were doing things contrary to the standard of the Scripture!
- 14:37-40** The concluding ruling principles regarding these gifts.
- 1) If any one thinks they are spiritual and understand biblical truth, then he or she will know that I am speaking the commandments of God, not my own opinion. vs. 37
 - 2) If any person does not recognize this instructions of from the Lord, then do not recognize him or her. vs. 38
* The translation of allowing one to remain ignorant does not even come close to the original meaning.
 - 3) The priority for the church is prophecy and all should seek to covet it, in order to build up the body of the church. vs. 39a-c

- 4) They were not to misunderstand what Paul had said and forbid to speak with tongues. vs. 39d
* The letter was corrective not to prohibit the gift!
- 5) The allowance of everything in the church is to be orderly, especially in this context, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. vs. 40