

The Bible 20/20 Week 44: "The Power of Love" (11-8-20)

Reading this week: 1 Corinthians 1-13

Introduction: New Series about the Church - "Rediscovering the Power of the Church"

Romans 1:16 (ESV)

For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for it is **the power of God** for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Note: Paul's Letter to the Roman Church - Offers real, lasting hope for a deeply broken world, and a divided church. His offer? **The Power of the Gospel** - repairs what is broken by returning to God

Today: "The Power of Love" - A New Way, Love Defined, Love's Power

1) A new way of Life

The Corinthian church - experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit, but compromising with the culture, and experiencing lots of selfishness & dis-unity in the church . . .

Paul addressing his great concern for the church . . .

1 Corinthians 12:1 (ESV)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (ESV)

(4) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; (5) and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; (6) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

(7) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit **for the common good**.

1 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Real Power & the Way of Jesus . . .

1 Corinthians 12:31 (ESV)

But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still **more excellent way**.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (ESV)

(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. (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. (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.

Note: The Way of Jesus & The Power of God (through the presence of the Holy Spirit) - is all about love!

We are "**Becoming Love**" as Bob Goff puts it!

2) Love Defined

- Most, if not all of us, believe Love is of utmost importance
- The world sings its praises & longs for it's healing touch
- **The problem** is that love has not been properly defined, nor intentionally cultivated in our lives!

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (ESV)

(4) Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (6) it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (7) Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never ends.

Note: This is a biblical definition of love, and it is essential to fulfilling all we are called to as followers of Jesus

Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV)

(36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Note: Love is of utmost importance, and there are 2 primary expressions of love in our lives . . .

First - Love God

Second - Love others

Dallas Willard - "The key, then, to loving God is to see Jesus, to hold him before the mind with as much fullness and clarity as possible. It is to adore him."

- Return now to 1 Corinthians 13 - soak in it, absorb these words in light of the life of Jesus!
- Falling in love with God (as he truly is) is how we become people of love!

Galatians 5:16, 22-23, 25-26 (ESV)

(16) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh . . . (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law . . . (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Note: This connects both forms of love, God's Love permeates us, and we now love each other well

Dallas Willard - "Jesus does not call us to do what he did, but to be as he was, permeated with love. Then the doing of what he did and said becomes the natural expression of who we are in him."

If you take nothing else from today - soak in these words. Take them in as the essence of Jesus, and the fruit he longs to produce in you!

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3) The true power of Love

Love endures!

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 (ESV)

(8) **Love never ends**. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. (9) For we know in part and we prophesy in part, (10) but when the perfect comes, **the partial will pass away**.

Note: Love is eternal, the gifts of the Spirit are not (but they are for eternal purposes!)

I'm not trying to diminish the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and neither is Paul . . .

1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)

So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

Note: Paul is intentionally sandwiching this chapter on Love in-between 2 chapters on the church and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

- Compromising with the culture & dis-unity in the church are both repaired by maturing in the Love of God!
- The power of the gifts within the church and out to a world in need, will be properly utilized and effective when operating in love!
- Therefore, we must grow-up church! Into the selfless Love that Jesus offers . . .

1 Corinthians 13:11-13 (ESV)

(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**. (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. (13) So now faith, hope, and love **abide**, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Note: Mature & Abiding Love is the goal . . .

- We may see little discernible, external fruit this side of heaven. That doesn't fit our instant gratification culture. Love is changing me, and it does change the world - one person at a time.
- Love is not like a garment that we take off and put on as we see fit.
- It is the essence of eternity - therefore let us become mature in love, that it may permeate our lives!