

1 Corinthians 13:8-13, “The Supremacy of Love”

11.1.20

This is the chapter that’s called the “Love Chapter.” A chapter stuck right in the middle of a discussion about spiritual gifts that the Apostle Paul was having with the Corinthian Church, very divided, immature church. He stops mid-stream and says, “Guys, we’ve got to stop arguing about all these peripheral things and focus on the ‘MORE EXCELLENT WAY.’” What is that way: The way of love!

Last week, we covered the 16 qualities of love...agape love...unconditional love. And today we will build from that message as move to through the remaining verses of this beautiful chapter.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

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. 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.

It’s true, Love...agape...never ends. Everything else will. All the gifts the Corinthian Christians had been arguing about will one day cease to exist. Now the Greek word for “cease” means to fade away:



like this flower...the petals are falling off, withering away. Eventually they’ll all fall off and the flower will die. One day the need for knowledge will pass away. The need for prophecy will pass away, the need to teach the Word of God will pass, the need to speak in all kinds of languages...languages that were confused at the Tower of Babel...that will pass away. But, love will never end. See it again...verse 8.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

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.

Church family, Paul's point is emphatically this: LOVE NEVER ENDS...it will last for eternity. It's eternal...the more excellent way. But, the question comes in verse 10. When will this happen? What does it mean, "when the perfect comes?" What is "the perfect?"

Well, the word in the Greek is **teleios**. Jesus said a derivative of it on the cross when He said, "**tetelestai**," it is finished, complete, done. So, what does it mean, "when the perfect comes?" Well scholars offer four basic alternatives.

First, some believe "when the perfect comes" means the completion of the Bible, the NT Canon. Now, this is Kevin, I don't believe this. I don't believe the Corinthians would have thought about this at all. Remember, the Apostle Paul was basically writing to a group of people to get a message to them that they would understand and could apply to their lives, and help them as a church. So you see, I don't believe the Corinthians had any idea that this letter to them from Paul, (that elders were reading), would eventually be considered part of what we call the Bible.

Now think about it, where in the mind of the Corinthian believers, would perfection be found? Where do YOU think it's found? Is that found in the completion of the Bible or perhaps (#2) Heaven? Jesus said, "Be perfect for I am perfect." Where does that happen? Where are we fully matured? Where do we receive our full inheritance, perfection: Heaven. And that's what I believe Paul is saying in vs 11-12.

1 Corinthians 13:11-12

¹¹When 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. ¹²For 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.

You see, the Corinthians would understand exactly what Paul was talking about regarding an analogy about a mirror that they could see their reflection in, because the city of Corinth had a mirror trade and in those days, they made mirrors out of metal. They would take metal and would flatten it out, and then would polish it to a high shine and it would be used as a mirror. But, of course, if you've ever looked in a metal mirror, you know it's a poor, distorted reflection. Kind of like the way we see things now on this earth, right?

One day church, this mirror...this mirror we call life...will be finished and we'll see Jesus face to face. Yes, I'm convinced the "perfect" of verse 10, is not the completed canon, but heaven. Yet, some say, (#3) "Well it could be the Rapture. Because Jesus comes then." The problem is: prophecy still continues on this earth during the Tribulation, after the Rapture. We know there will be the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 and the 144,000 witnesses of Revelation 7. So, in my mind, the perfect coming cannot be the Rapture.

"Okay, well, some might say, (#4) 'What about the Millennial Kingdom...Jesus will rule and reign on this earth in power and all will be at peace, is that when the perfect comes?' No, because at the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed and mount up one last rebellion. No that's not perfection.

Church, again, I am convinced when the perfect comes...teleios, is the Eternal State. Indeed, love never ends...it's eternal! You see, I believe Paul is contrasting that which is temporary (temporal) with that which is eternal, love, because one day we will be known as we are known...in heaven...we'll know who Paul is on sight...King David, Matthew, Queen Esther...and Jesus...we'll be known as we're known. That a powerful, awe-inspiring thought! Watch verse 13 how he ends...

1 Corinthians 13:13

13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Right now, church family, we walk by faith and not by sight. But someday we'll walk by sight and not by faith. And right now, we hope, don't we? But Paul says in Romans 8, "That which is seen, we don't hope for." And thus, someday we'll see and there won't be the need for hope. So, faith will turn to sight, hope will turn to reality...so what will be left? Love. The greatest of these is LOVE.

Paul is saying to the Corinthians and to us: your spiritual gifts, your abilities, your ministries, your talents, your faith, your hope, all of these things, as important as they are, are only for a "time" on this earth. But love is forever. And that is the point of this entire chapter... And that point is this, as brothers in sisters in Christ, we'd better learn to love right here, right now, because it's the only link we will have with eternity... Love, Love...Love that's embedded in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...who is the embodiment of LOVE! And He is THE MOST excellent way.

Faith, hope and love...but the greatest of these is love. And dear church family, it's out of love that I'm going to do something now that I seldom do. I'm going to take the rest of our time together and share some thoughts with you that are burdening my soul. Earnest thoughts...heartfelt thoughts that I have about what is happening in our country as we lead up to Tuesday and the Election.

Again, I want to share this in love. For you see, I believe love motivates us as believers and followers of Jesus Christ to do what is right. I believe love motivates us to speak the truth, even when it's not popular or politically correct. I believe love, as we have seen revealed in Scripture to us for the past three messages, is not just an emotion or feelings. No! Love means we will stand for the truth even when we might be maligned for it.

So here goes. For centuries, America has stood as a shining light for liberty and freedom here in our country and throughout the world. We continue to be, (as a nation), the largest evangelistic/mission tool for Christ that the world has ever known. God has blessed us and prospered us a nation and we have sent out more missionaries for the cause of Christ than all the other nations combined. Yet, as time has gone along, in our 244th year of existence, we continue to discard and abandon the values and principles our nation was founded upon. No longer is it true: IN GOD WE TRUST.

Thus, on this Sunday, November 1, 2020, just 2 days before the election, we stand at a crossroads in our nation. Indeed, America is standing at a political, ideological, and moral fork in the road. And the question is: Which road will country take? Will we take the road that moves us closer to God, or the road the moves us further away?

Many of you, (as I have), have already voted...that's good...some of you haven't... I urge, I plead with you...go vote. But understand something...as you vote, you are not voting for a homecoming queen or 5th grade class president. You are not voting for a new neighbor or a pastor. This election is not about a junior high popularity/personality contest. No...church family...this is referendum about a platform, a set of ideas...a direction for the nation. Yes...two men...old men at that...(both in their 70's), are at the top of these two platforms. Yes, we should definitely care and be concerned how these men act...behave...conduct business...but, we should also look at how these men govern. What their policies and what their platforms stand for? Listen, platforms matter, because that dictates governance. And this is true not only national level...but, the state and local levels, as well.

I was listening to an Indian pastor (a man from India) via a video I was sent by a man in our church earlier this week. This Indian pastor was visiting in America and he shared in a church service,

about a friend, a fellow Indian, who was also a follower of Jesus...who was recently riding on an airplane, beside a man who told the stewardess when asked if wanted anything to eat or drink...said, "No." The Indian man asked the gentleman: "Sir, are you fasting?" The man replied, "As a matter of fact, I am." The Indian man responded, "You must be Christian." The man hastily replied: "No, I'm not. I'm Satanist...and I'm fasting and praying for the destruction of Christian pastors and their homes."

The Indian Pastor, speaking to that church here in America, said, "Do you Americans really understand the battle you are in? Do you really understand the darkness that you're battling in this nation? Do you really understand the fact that Satan wants to destroy everything moral and everything good in this nation?"

The Indian pastor continued: "Ah, you Americans...you go vote and you post it online and say, 'I voted...' and then you cross your fingers and hope it all works out, and then you go get a Starbucks. What is wrong with you American Christians...you are not serious...you are asleep at the wheel...don't go get Starbucks...get on your knees...get on your faces before God and beg him to save your nation before it's too late."

I was listening to this message on my phone as I drove back through town on Wednesday. It stopped me in my tracks. I'm that an American Christian! I'm that American Pastor...that Satan wants to destroy...me and my family...and I am that man who has been lulled to sleep by Satan...not truly grasping the severity and the absolute war in the spiritual realm that is taking place in our nation. Oh church family...never forget...

Ephesians 6:12

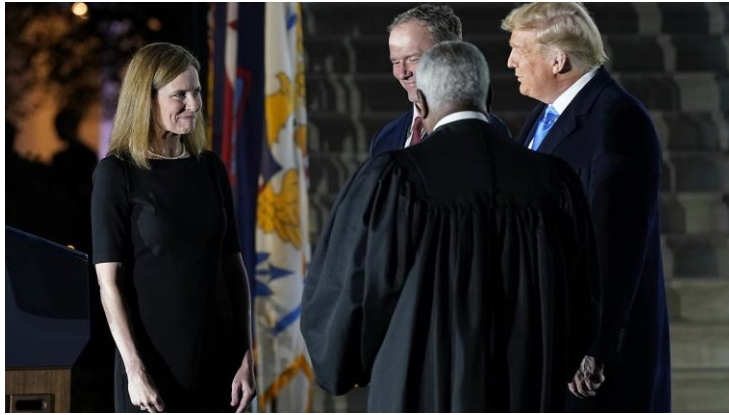
¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Now listen to me...(so that you don't misunderstand me)...(believe me...I get it)...I know the Kingdom of Jesus is greater than America. I'm no fool. We're a nothing but a speck in history and I know that one day, Jesus will be on the throne and all things will be known. But, listen...I also know that God uses nations for His purposes and for His kingdom business to bring souls to His family. God uses men and women for His purposes...some of whom aren't even followers of His. Men like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and Cyrus of Persia, who God used to bless and help His people. Men, who were not believers in God; and yet, **because the people of God were praying for mercy, God answered!**

Do you understand church family...the Lord God of the universe is seated on His throne in heaven and He is waiting for us to get serious!

You know we've supposedly been praying with our prayer cards each week now, for four weeks? But, have we REALLY PRAYED? Are we praying like everything depends on us! **Do you understand, God at this very moment, is waiting to see if anyone will have any fervency and any burden to intercede and beseech him for mercy on this nation, or do we just want a Starbucks?**

Church, do you understand what happened in this country on Monday? This!



This is a miracle... Amy Coney Barrett is a miracle.

You see, the way our country is set up right now...in that almost everything ends up at the Supreme Court...that lady will have more to do with what the direction of this country will be in the next 40 years than Trump or Biden. That's why her being nominated, confirmed and sworn in, in less than month is a miracle for this nation. A blessing from God, because she is someone who actually believes in God and Biblical principles. You see, I am convinced God put his hand on that whole process that brought Amy Coney Barrett to the bench of the Supreme Court. The very court that might decide this election and the future direction of our country. It's a miracle, the hand of God! Because people prayed!!

Church, let me tell you what else is at stake in this country... This...



The lives of the unborn. That's a baby, at 20 weeks, inside of a momma...No! That's not a fetus. That's baby that has heartbeat of about 140 bpm that you can listen to on an ultrasound machine. A blob of tissue doesn't have a heartbeat! But you do understand, in the platform of one of the party's, that baby can be dismembered...up to the 9th month, which was just voted in this year in Illinois and the state of NY.

See this man:



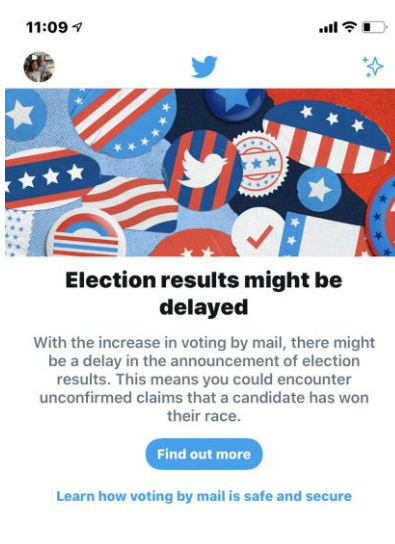
that's Dr. Albert Mohler, the President of Southern Bapt. Theol. Seminary in Louisville, KY, he's also a past President of the SBC. I want you to see what he says about this election. I really respect Dr. Mohler. He was very candid...

“President Trump's behavior on Twitter and his divisive comments and sub-presidential behavior are an embarrassment to me. Constantly. His arrogance and ego and constant need for adulation drive me to distraction. But character is some strange combination of the personal, the principled, and the practical. Let me put it another way—I cannot accept the argument that a calm man who affirms the dismembering of babies in the womb has a superior character to a man who rants like Genghis Khan but acts to preserve that life. In my ideal world, I would vote for a candidate in whom the personal, the principled, and the practical earn my admiration. I do not live in that world. I live in this world, and I must act accordingly.” Dr. Albert Mohler, President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

I say, “Amen, Dr. Mohler! Amen!”

Church family, let me tell you what else is at stake in this country. The ability to do this. (Have service.) Who knows if they'll try to shut us down again. Well, they won't shut me down. Our right as Christians, supersede the rite of Government that says you can't worship freely as you choose. Yet, we are to “forsake not the assembling of ourselves.” But this happened all all over this country during this pandemic...while our churches were closed by the liberal bureaucrats, people marched, rioted, looted and destroyed, shouting “Defund the Police,” desiring to get rid of law and order...it was anarchy...and that was okay...as long as you're protesting...but couldn't go to church. Not again...not on my watch!!

And let me tell you something else, the mainstream media runs cover these progressive, liberal, elitist bureaucrats. Oh, there is NO longer a free, fair and impartial press. No! The mainstream media is not even pretending anymore to be fair and impartial...and what is worse, 64% of Americans get their news from where? Social media...like: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram...all of them are in the bag for the socialist, progressive liberals, who are indoctrinating our children with their lies and garbage. Take a look at this...



This showed up on my Twitter feed Wednesday night as I was plugging up my phone to go to bed. Twitter says: **“Election results might be delayed. With the increase of voting by mail, there might be a delay in the announcement of election results. This means you could encounter unconfirmed claims that a candidate has won their race.”** Hey folks...Twitter is liberal as all get out and their priming the pump to delay this thing as long as it takes to get the outcome the way they want. They’re all that way...Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the Tech Giants: Amazon, Google, Apple...all of ‘em.

You say, “Pastor you’re talking about politics...you’re not supposed to do that.” Well, I’ll grant you church family...this is not something I to talk about every week...and you know it. I teach the Bible as it reads, but for such a time as this, these things must be said. I agree Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool.”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We, the church, are the conscience of the state. And Jesus said, “Render unto Caesar’s that which is Caesars,” that’s the government. So, I’m rendering right now about Caesar...our government. Dear Church family, I get it. If politics become primary, the church is reduced to a political party. But, that’s not what I’m talking about here. You know what we preach here: Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! No, I don’t make a habit of talking about politics, but Tuesday is on the minds of every American, and for me as one of your shepherds...as a leader of this church to side-step these things FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS would be cowardice on my part. And I won’t do that!

Romans 13 tells me that I have a responsibility as citizen of a nation to be involved in prayer for the government that oversees that nation. And just as Daniel in chapter 9 of his book cried out to God for God to intervene for his nation... we must cry out to God today! See the screens. Daniel said...

Daniel 9:3-8

³Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. ⁴I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and

keep his commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. ⁷ To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. ⁸ To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you.

Church family, do you think it's time to pray or go to Starbucks? Do you know what happened to Daniel? You know, he was a government in the administration of the King...a pagan king, and as he was praying, God sent the angel Gabriel to him and Daniel records these words:

Daniel 10:12-14

¹² Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. ¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

Do you understand church family, **God moved because Daniel prayed!** Let that sink in! Are you praying? Have you humbled yourself and confessed your sin? Listen, God will move if we are clean before Him and pray.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

As it is working...that means you can EXPECT God to move! Are you praying like everything depends on you? Or do you want to go get Starbucks?

Church family, we're going to pray in just a moment. But, I want to tell you what else is on the ballot... Religious freedom and conscience protections. Whether or not Christian cake-bakers, wedding photographers, pharmacists, and adoption agencies, can run their businesses as their consciences dictate, or will they be forced to go against their beliefs so as to suit a godless, liberal government agenda?

You see, the liberal elites...if they have their way...they'll pack the courts and ram down our throats their godless revolution...pushed by socialists, communists, foreign governments and sexual revolutionists...who want to steamroll their godless agenda through our entire society leaving no area of life untouched.

But, I get it...I get it...there will be evangelicals, Christians who say they cannot in good conscience vote for either candidate. I understand their predicament. But I'll say this again, you're voting not for a homecoming queen, you are voting for a political agenda, a political platform that will dictate a political direction for this nation that could last for a generation...in fact, this election could change this country **irreparably forever!** You see, when I voted last week:

- I voted for the Second Amendment.
 - I voted for the next Supreme Court justice.
 - I voted for the electoral college.
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- I voted for the constitution to remain our guiding document and not the fickle winds of culture.
 - I voted for Law and Order and our police and I voted AGAINST the cancel culture.
 - I voted for the military and those who protect our country and for the veterans who fought and died for our country.
 - I voted for the right to speak my opinion and not be censored for it.
 - I voted for marriage, by God's design, one man and one woman for life.
 - I voted for secure borders.
 - I voted for Israel and strong, sound international leadership.
 - I voted for school choice and parental rights
 - I voted for keeping "In God We Trust" on our money and "One Nation Under God" in our Pledge of Allegiance.
 - I voted for the right to teach and preach the Bible, the Word God, without fear of being arrested.
 - I voted for every unborn soul that's at risk of not ever being born.
 - And yes, with my vote, I voted with a prayer that God would spare our nation!
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No! I didn't vote just for a person, I voted for a platform. I voted for the future of my children and grandchildren, and the grandchild that's in the womb of my daughter. I voted for a nation that I pray with all my heart will remain free and not run by those who want to control the populace from the womb to the tomb.

Church...do you know what we need to do now? We need to be like Daniel... Watch it...

Daniel 10:12

¹² Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words."

"Because of your words." He prayed. And we're going to do that now. I don't know about you, but I want to pray like it all depends on me and how I pray...just like Daniel...believing God will actually move because we asked.

So, if you're able I'm going to ask you to get uncomfortable. I know prayer can take place in any posture...but, if you're able...I'd like for you to stand and turn around and get on your knees with your hands resting in your seat. You'll have to maneuver to do so and if you don't feel comfortable or can't, that's okay. Just stand. Whatever you need to do. It's time TO GET SERIOUS!!!

We're going to pray. Some of you will pray out loud...some of you might listen to me...but, I want you to know the Lord hears it all...and I want us to pray with all we have for the Lord to have mercy on this nation for such a time is this! I want to pray and Starbucks can wait... After we pray, you are dismissed.
