

Be Charitable
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At this time, if you'll take your Bibles and open with me to **First Corinthians chapter 13**, you can remain standing as well. And if you need a pew Bible, you can look in front of you or right down from you, grab one of those and turn into the New Testament a few books in and you'll be in First Corinthians and turn to chapter 13 and read with us if you need a Bible. Take that as a gift. We'd love for you to have it. And thank you for being here today. **First Corinthians chapter 13**. Uh, today's message is Be Charitable. And I'll go into great detail of that this morning based off of this passage. So we'll begin in verse one.

“¹If 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. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant⁵ 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.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 (ESV)

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for this passage on love and the importance of being the church, and using the gifts that you have bestowed upon us through your grace and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Father, we cry out to you. What good are our gifts if we do not have your love leading us, guiding us, and bringing us together? Father, I pray that today this message will just bring to the surface anything that may be hidden or just pushed beneath that needs to be exposed, whether it be envy or pride or an arrogance or just a spirit of rudeness, being irritable or resentful. Father, if we're a people that rejoice at wrongdoing, heal us. And instead, may we be a people who rejoice with the truth. May we be a people that will bear all things together. Believe all things together. Hope all things together. Endure all things. Help us to understand these things in its right context, so that we may live according to your word. And we may be known for our love, a love which was given to us by you. When, by your grace, you poured your love into our hearts. You allowed us to see you, allowed us to call out in faith and trust in your Son, Jesus. Father, this love does not stop at the cross, but calls us to pick up our cross and continue to trust in you. Day after day, the spirit of Love. Bless us now, and I pray for the unbelievers who are here today. Thank you that they are here, and I pray that they will hear your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may have a seat.

Years ago, I was exposed to a training called Fish Philosophy, and it dealt with, uh, Fish Market Company out of Seattle. They're in the fish markets of Seattle. There was this one company who set up a counter, and they went about their work day after day, and they realized it could grow stale. Uh, it could be a rude environment, very unfriendly at times. Also competitive. And

they decided they wanted to change the environment. They wanted to change their work. They wanted to enjoy their days. And so they decided that instead of focusing on the fish and focusing on the price that they would focus on the customer, and they would treat their customers with kindness and they would work hard to make them laugh. In fact, they brought them into the process of selling the fish and being able to catch fish with newspapers. It's not uncommon that people would take off their lunch break just to go to the market to watch the show. And while you were there, you would be given a newspaper, and they'd ask you to step a few feet back and they would throw you a large salmon or whatever it may be that's out west. And they would catch these fish and they'd wrap them up, and people would go with all arms in their business attire. It did not matter. And everybody's laughing and they're joking. They're having a good time. And so people want to know, what is it? What is it about this company that's so different than everyone else? And it's because they cared about their customers. They showed kindness, which made them distinct from all of the rest, and that left a lasting impression upon me that if a fish market could be that way, why not the church? That when you walk into the church house, there should be something different about our fellowship. There should be a certain kindness. There should be a certain laughter and joy that we have together that is distinct from being out in the community or being out in the world.

There are many great organizations to be a part of, companies to be a part of. But yet when you come to the church, the very love that we have in our hearts because of the way in which God has loved us, should propel us to love one another differently than all of the rest. What's sad is that if you were to walk into a local church and you would say, well, no one would speak to me, no one looked my way or I was a part of that local church for years and never had any friends in that congregation. Those are sad testimonies, but real testimonies even from some of you as you've come from different places. But let us not kid ourselves. That could be Perimeter Road Baptist Church, a place that we love dearly and that many of us are comfortable. But I hope that what this message will do, it will bring an awareness to us that we need to be charitable towards one another. And this needs to continue to grow in our lives and in our hearts. The longer that we are here, the more time that we spend together. We ought to be more charitable towards each other.

And Paul, as you are familiar, if you've been here for a length of time, when we study through **First Corinthians**, he's writing to the church at Corinth, and they have many gifts. They were very talented. They had been delivered from much, and now they're taking their liberties and using it as a license to go and live how they. Well, please. And Paul's not well pleased with the way that they are living. And so he is actually calling them out here in this letter. And he's saying if you if you had all of these gifts, all of these powers, if you could do these amazing things but you don't have love, then what good is it? Paul refers to the spiritual gifts of the church while highlighting something vitally important for everyone to see. If you do not have love—and this love in the Greek is agape love—if you do not have love accompanying these gifts, then they will become more of a distraction instead of a valuable aid in our worship towards God. To be charitable towards one another means that we truly love and care for each other. This word does not include, uh, generosity alone. Just as in financial gifts. But the encouragement behind this message today is for us to be generous towards one another. The

opposite of being charitable would include a harsh and inconsiderate attitude towards one another.

Now that we get naturally, it's easy to be irritable, it's easy to grow frustrated. And I want to say right from the very beginning that if it's your experience of attending church and then on your way home, you have more negative things to say than pointing out that the joyful times that we had together, um, this message is indeed for you. Uh, it's for all of us in the room. But it's especially for you, brother or sister in Christ. I have found that those who complained the most, who get upset over the tiniest of things, who have a hard time reconciling with others, who hold on to bitterness. It's not an issue with the other people. It's more of an issue of your own heart. And so would you allow the Lord to work in your heart today? Because it is possible to be the church in the 21st century and have a love that is far distinct than any other place? And I would hope that we would enjoy that. And so in order for us to fully enjoy it, we must first understand that the first point is the vanity of serving without love, the vanity of serving without love.

But if I have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. This could be referring and being in relation to the noise makers in the idol temples, which many I'm sure of this church were delivered from, as they would continue to hear the symbols go off in the community. They would be reminded of their past. It would be something that was unpleasant for them to hear. It could have brought up their own past behavior in practice. For an example, you may have traveled back home during Christmas season, or you ride by an old establishment where you used to hang out. Many of you who have been born and raised here in Valdosta used to cruise Ashley Street, I believe. And when you look at those old places, you're reminded of your old behavior. And it's not pleasant. It's nothing. Not something that you enjoy looking back on. In fact, it can be mixed in some bad memories of who you used to be, but are no longer. Well, this noisy gong or a clanging cymbal could have been something very familiar, a familiar noise, but a noise that brought up the past. So could it be, maybe that what Paul is saying here with the noisy gong and cymbals is he's saying, hey, when you have these gifts, but you have not love, you're showing that you have not changed. And that's sad for those who would confess that they trust in the one true Christ who showed the greatest love by going to the cross for them. It's a reminder to the people that, hey, you are no longer who you used to be. You are free in Christ. Do not just make noise. If you are serving without love, then have you really been changed by Christ?

I ask that question again. Maybe it will land freshly upon our hearts. If you are serving without love, then have you really been changed by Christ? Again, church, we're not here just to be heard or to be seen or to make a noise. He says, 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. I am nothing meaning nothing of value to the body of Christ. Now, if you're not familiar when we say the body of Christ, we mean men, women, children who have been redeemed by Christ. We're brought into a live, active body just like this. Throughout the room, many people who believe in Jesus, who have been transformed by the grace of God, we're part of the body of Christ. It's a gathering. And so when he says, I am nothing. Meaning nothing of value to the body of Christ. Which leads to this question. Do you bring value

to the body of Christ with your gifts, but with your heart, with your love, your love for the Lord, and the love for your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Our great gain comes from receiving and sharing in the love of Christ. And remember, this is not a love that we were born with. This is a love that we received when we were born again.

Romans 5:5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. These gifts were provided for the glory of God and for the good of one another. That's why we have gifts in the church, not for the opportunity to inflate egos or exalt one's own name above others. Instead of the message being beautiful and edifying, it ends up just being noise, meaning empty of any conviction or power from the Holy Spirit. The result causes people to cover their ears.

Now this must first be said of pastors who preach. It's not enough to prepare a message each week. It's not enough to make sure you have your points in order. It's not enough that you have a story that may keep someone's attention. No. We must pray. And we must rely upon the Holy Spirit to bring the conviction and to bring the change. Many pastors, we can fall into this trap of preparing and getting pretty good and experience with preaching a message. But yet our messages are powerless because the Holy Spirit is not at work. And yet that goes for the church as well. That goes for the community group teachers, that goes for the children's teachers, the youth teachers, the college teachers, all throughout this campus, all throughout this church body. We're not just relying upon experience and what Paul is telling this church in the first century. He's saying it's not just the gifts themselves. If you're lacking love. You're just being noisy. You're just making sounds. Sounds that do not bring repentance, sounds that do not bring conviction.

It is safe to say that Satan is more highly intelligent than any human being. I think we'd all agree with that. But he's still Satan. Which means that he's powerless over the church. The age in which we live in Satan has no authority or power over you, Christian. There's no excuse. Just as Eve tried to give the excuse in the garden. He tricked me. Well, there's no excuse for us to get before God. If we allow the enemy to come in and to divide the congregation, or to bring a spirit of hostility or jealousy or just a rudeness. For Satan has no power over the church. Because Christ triumphs over him and we rely upon the work of Christ. Paul is using one of these gifts, as he's pointing out, for his own benefit and namesake. If anyone does this, it is actually satanic work. It's not godly work. It's work of the enemy. So how does the enemy divide the church through lies? Manipulation? Allowing us to rely on our own efforts and not upon the power of the Holy Spirit. Sacrifice that is intended to be self seeking is not acceptable before God. That's what Paul is pointing out to the church. Charles Hodge said thousands indeed are deluded on this point and think that they can substitute what is outward for what is inward. But God requires the heart, and without holiness, the most liberal giver or the most suffering ascetic can never see God.

Now that's the negative of this teaching that Paul is pointing out to not do these things. It is vanity to serve without love. Let's look at it in a positive. Number two, the humility of serving with love. Once again he says, love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. Leon Morris points out that the Greek word was not common or commonly

used before the New Testament, that being agape. But the Christians took it up and made it their characteristic word for love. It occurs 116 times in the New Testament, 75 times. Paul uses it in his writings. Whereas the highest concept of love before the New Testament was that of a love for the best, one knows the Christians thought of love as that quality we see on the cross.

Let's play that out for a minute. Maybe the love that you know is the love that you have been shown growing up. A lack thereof, or maybe an abundance. Maybe the love that you show is a love that when things are going well, you show a lot of love. When things are not going well, you hold back that love. Maybe your love is indeed performance based as we just explained. Maybe you weren't shown a lot of love growing up, and so you hold back that love towards others. There's many ways in which we try to love things based on our own experience. But what Paul is writing to the church at Corinth, this agape love, this sacrificial love, is the one that was displayed on the cross. And so for the church, they have an example, meaning that regardless of however we were raised or whatever we faced in life, we can have an abundance of this type of love because it was freely given, freely shown, and then received by the church. Christ takes away all of our excuses to not love. **Philippians 2:5–8** have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now you may hear that, and you think, what's so bad about becoming human in the likeness of men? Well, you may ask that question from a human point of view, but from God's point of view, one who is holy and without sin, he would take on a body as man and live in the midst of sinners every day. A people that he created to give him glory and honor and praise which he is due. And yet he would take on a body and come live in their midst. and they would ignore him. They would laugh at him, they would scoff at him, and then they would nail him to a cross. But yet this is the greatest love that one has ever shown. **Second Corinthians 8:9**, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. And so in line with that passage, and as we bring it all together, if we have an abundance of love, then indeed we are rich. Jesus sacrifice on the cross displayed a supreme standard of love. So when we're talking about loving each other as the church and it being a distinct mark in the community, it doesn't begin with each other. It begins with Christ. This is where we receive our love.

Jesus displayed love for the utterly unworthy, a love that proceeds from a God who is love. A love lavished on others without a thought, whether they are worthy or not. And originating from the nature of the lover. Not from any attractiveness in the beloved. Little side note we watched a Christmas movie this year that was a theological train wreck. It was Christmas Eve and my wife said, hey, would you like to watch a movie? I said, sure. Let us watch The Magic of Christmas because we had watched all the other movies out there, and she said, what is that? I said, I don't know. It's something from like 1984. I remember when I was a kid watching it, I can't even remember the storyline. It's just, let's just give it a shot. And as most movies go, as soon as the movie started, I was asleep within ten minutes. Anybody else like that? Okay. It was. It was a pretty bad movie. And in fact, there was an angel named Gideon in the movie. Um, he was an

angel of Santa, which tells you how bad this movie was. And at the end of it, I woke up and my wife said, why did you recommend that movie? I said, babe, I, I'm telling you, I don't remember why, but I just remember as a kid, I remember Gideon, I remember I just remember certain parts of it. I don't know, I don't know why, actually. I'm sorry.

But it got me thinking, like there were a lot of things that were circulating within that time. That just brings a lot of confusion as to who is God. Who are his messengers? In fact, the reason why in this movie, Gideon became an angel is because he lived a really good life. This isn't the point of the passage, but you may actually believe, and I sure hope it's not from our preaching. But you may believe that when you die, you become an angel. And you don't. You weren't created as an angel. Uh, God made you in his image, and God made you in his image so that you would bring him glory. And the greatest way that as his image bearers, that we can bring him glory is to love him and to love his people. But you see, just like that, and I can say it wretched movie. We also may have been brought up with this idea that we're actually very attractive people. That if God would love anybody, then he's going to love me. Why? Because I obey the law. I have good manners. I may even think I'm a good looking person. If anybody's religious, it's me. Maybe today you believe that. But there's enough in God's word that points us and shows us that no, we fall short of that attractiveness. We are not beautiful people in the eyes of God.

You may hear that and you think, well, I don't like the sound of that. Or there's good news that can follow it. But first, before you understand good news, you must understand that we're not beautiful people in the eyes of God. God does not take delight in our sin. You know, we can point to all types of sin today. I could start naming them. And you go, yeah, that one's bad. Oh that's bad. Let me just name this one. God does not delight in our pride. Look what I've earned. Look what I've done. Will somebody just acknowledge me? He doesn't delight in that behavior, because pride never brings us closer to God. What pride does is it builds us up as our own gods. And so when Paul is pointing to the church, he's saying, you can do all of these things, but if you're not careful, that whole life that you were delivered from, where you worship other gods, you can fool yourself into becoming one. Thinking that when you walk into a room, everybody's there because of you, or that when you pray, God loves you more than he loves everyone else in the church. He said, Brian, that just sounds silly. Are these things real? Are they real church? Man, we convince ourselves of them all the time.

Let me give you an example how pride works. You can look in the Bible and you can see sins in the Bible, and you can go. God is not pleased with them. And you can teach other people about those sins and how God's not pleased with them. And then you go and you make room for those very sins in your life. See a lot of heads going, yeah, that's right. That's pride. See, that's not attractive to God. That's a serious problem. If you're here today and you're not a follower of Christ, hear me? That's a serious problem. You're not attractive to God. But the good news comes when you can confess that to God and say, I know, I know, I'm not attractive, I know I am a sinner, I know that I fall short, and I need your love, God, so that I can love you back. That is the humble cry of salvation, trusting what Christ did so that we indeed can truly love God and be found. As beautiful and attractive in the eyes of God through the lens of Christ. As Christians, we have come to know and appreciate this fateful love in which God would love us, a love for us

while we were still in our sins. As **Romans 5:8** points out, and we have been transformed by this love so that we can be lovely in the eyes of God.

Paul sees the Corinthian church as those for whom Christ has died. The objects of God's love. So first love represents the power of the new age breaking into the present, the only vital force which has a future. Love is that quality which distinctly stamps the life of heaven, where regard and respect for the other dominates the character of life with God as the communion of saints and heavenly host. As one commentary points out. To sum it up, Morse says that love is concerned to give itself, not to assert itself. It's not always having the final word or the most words or being heard by all. It's concerned with giving itself, not asserting itself. And so our rejoicing in wrongdoing increases when our rejoicing in the truth decreases. When we are no longer rejoicing in the truth. We begin to rejoice in wrongdoing. And this shows up in many ways, but it will show up in our conversations. It will show up in our conversations with one another. It will show up in our conversations throughout the week. You'll catch yourself doing it. If you're rejoicing in the truth decreases, then you're rejoicing in wrongdoing increases. You'll start talking about individuals more and more, and you'll point out more of their flaws. And you'll even say, I hate to say this, but I'm going to say it anyway. And it becomes the topic of conversation. It can be even the topic of the dinner table. And you just pull your chair back, and you and you look and you go, whoa, whoa whoa, whoa. What's fueling our fellowship right now is not love, but hatred.

And what Paul is telling to the church in Corinth, he says, hey, our fellowship is not fueled by hatred. It's fueled by love. And so he gives some examples. He's saying, hey, this is what it looks like, church, to have this love. It means you bear all things. Bearing all things means to conceal instead of gladly disclosing them. I know what you may be thinking when you hear that. You may possibly be thinking, oh, so we don't hold each other accountable anymore. We just do whatever we want to do and we don't talk about it. Are you are you indicating, Brian, that we just go with the approach and mind your own business? No, not at all. Because again, throughout Scripture, we see church discipline and we see ways in which we are to hold each other accountable and sharpen one another, all of that within its proper context. But what this is saying is that, look, there are going to be things in our lives that we recognize about each other that aren't so pleasant. But instead of always calling them out and making them a topic of conversation or a reason for division, to bear all things means that we could actually conceal it. We could hold it close to the vest to keep confidential. That there could be a confidentiality. Hey, I need to share something with you. Okay. Can we keep this confident? Yes. And then they share it, and then you go. Oh. Oh my goodness. Oh, who can I tell? She's going to tell one person. Maybe I'll tell two. Before you know it. 3 or 4 now. And you know, that's exactly how it works.

If we're to hold each other accountable, if we're to say, hey, I'm here for you, and somebody reveals the ugliness in their life, that does not become the entertainment for the week. Our hearts should break for one another. And we should be able to say, hey, you got it. I will keep this in confidence, but we're not going to leave it here. We're going to take steps to grow, to get past this. But if there's anything within us when we walk away and go, oh, wow, I'm not the only one. Man, I'm so glad that there's suffering. That's pride. The love is that man. I'm here for you.

Let's walk through this together. It's not going to be pretty. It's not going to be easy. But let's do this together.

Now, I do think it's important within this teaching to say this to you. Sometimes you come to a pastor or to an elder and you say, hey, I need to share something with you, but you can't share this with anybody else. The proper response that we should give on that, I firmly believe this is to say, well, it really depends on what you're about to share. And you may not like that, but it may not be good of what you're about to share, that you put all that burden on one person. And so the least we can do is you say, hey, I need to share something with you, but you can't tell anybody else. Well, listen, that really depends on what you share. I want to let you know that I'm all about confidentiality, but if this is something serious of nature that I can't help you with, then don't put that burden on me. Are we good? Do you want to keep talking? Okay. That's loving. That's the same thing as when somebody says, hey, I want to meet with you this week. I want to meet this week. Can we meet at 4:00 Tuesday? Okay. What would you like to meet with? We'll talk about it when we get there. Don't do that. Don't do that. Hear me? Now, don't do that. Because I'm going to say, well, what do you want to meet about? Well, it's just going to have to wait. That's not loving. Prepare your brothers for what they're about to hear. Let them be praying in advance so they can be of the greatest good to meet with you. Don't leave them guessing for two days. Power play. We know what that is. All right.

Galatians 6:1–3 brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourselves, lest you to be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. I see a lot of this at Perimeter Road. We do bear one another's burdens in a healthy way, walking alongside each other, correcting one another in a spirit of gentleness. I have had to correct some of you in a spirit of gentleness. You have had to correct me in a spirit of gentleness. And that's that's loving. That's a picture of bearing all things.

Believes all things. Uh, it's not open ended. It's not having an open mind. That's not what Paul is saying. Believes all things with each other, meaning that he gives one the benefit of the doubt to begin by thinking the best of someone. Is that where you begin? When you meet someone? You try to think the best of them. Or are you immediately pointing out their flaws? They don't seem trustworthy. I don't know about them. I am terrible at first impressions and maybe you are too. The Lord has taught me much about not judging too quickly someone. But for the church, we're to give each other the benefit of the doubt. Caring for them but not always quick to accuse and giving patience. Showing patience to someone. Allowing them to grow. Allowing them to mature. Giving them space to serve without being hyper critical of everything that they do. When we're hyper critical of someone, once again it's revealing our own hearts. For I have been around some of the most mature, loving Christians who have given me so much room to serve. And many of you in this local church for 20 years. My pastor that I served under when I was 17 years old, he let me preach. He let me preach from the pulpit. Never want to see that tape again. Buried deep somewhere. But he was patient. He gave the benefit of the doubt. He came alongside and says, hey, man, I'm showing trust in you. And I know you have a lot of room to grow, but unless you're given the opportunity, you're not going to grow. Give the benefit of the

doubt to your leaders more often. Give the benefit of the doubt to your community group teachers more often. Teachers give the benefit of the doubt to those in your class more often.

Which leads us to. Get to know one another. If we've been members here at Perimeter Road Baptist Church for a number of years, and you look across the room and you see somebody else who's been here that same time and you don't know their name. Go show love and get to know them. Church body. We ought to know each other. And it's not just for leadership to know the congregation. It's for the congregation to know each other. And you say, oh, you're going to get to talking about our assigned seats here. No, I'm not going to talk about your assigned seats. Assigned seats are fine. It's good. It's good that you have a place that you love to sit, and you love to hear the word. And you love to sing in worship. Just get up from Madison Seat every now and then and go talk to other people in their assigned seats as well. **Hebrews 10:25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another all the more as you see the day drawing near.

This verse was thrown at me. **Hebrews 10:25** when I was a young teenager, anytime I missed a Wednesday night service or something came up as **Hebrews 10:25**. Brian, if you're a Christian, you will not miss all Sunday morning and Sunday night. We're automatic. There was no missing for anything at all in those things. Wednesday night was the same pressure, So I didn't really appreciate this verse until I got older to understand it. What? What is the importance of us not neglecting to meet together? That we may encourage one another? Love each other. We're not passing out attendance pencils around here. No, it's that we love one another. Take care of each other and we go. Man, I can't wait until we get back into town to go be with the church.

Believes all things. We're just the people who give each other the benefit of the doubt. Hopes all things. Meaning not quick to give up on one another. Maurice, from his commentary says this is the forward look. This is not an unfair reasoning optimism which fails to take account of reality. It is rather a refusal to take failure as final. It is the confidence that looks to ultimate triumph. By the grace of God. And then finally endures all things. This is a military word which means to sustain the assaults of suffering or persecution in the sense of bearing up under them and enduring them patiently. Is to patiently endure together.

You remain in a local church long enough, and you too will face trials and difficulties. You will have your ugly moments. I will have my ugly moments. We will have our hard seasons. We have experienced this at Prbc. There's been moments where some of you have even openly confessed. I am struggling to believe. Pray for me, help me, and and to see you grow in those seasons. How amazing. Where you are right now. Trusting in the Lord. Even you, by your own testimony would say that was not a pretty season, but we endured it together. Church can we be? A local body of Christ that will endure all things together, that will be patient with each other, that will be hopeful together and for one another, and enduring all things together until the end.

The encouragement is this May we be known for our charitable hearts. When people speak of Perimeter Road, they'll say, that's a, that's a that's a people who love. They love each other. Love is clear to see there. May we be known for our charitable hearts, for our love for Christ, which grows our love for one another. God has been so good to us, church, family, and we're

not perfect in all of these areas. I will openly confess I'm not perfect in all of these areas. There's many times where I lack patience. And ask for your prayers in that. But we need to be patient with one another. And the biggest thing is that it can be none of us. Hey! Be charitable. Speak kindly of your brothers and sisters in Christ. You know that we can offer each other critique. We can say hard things to each other. But we can do it in a kind way. So what we're not hearing today is that, hey, mind your own business. Don't worry about caring for each other. No, it's the. It's the opposite. Mind the church. Care for the church. Get to know each other even more. Great relationships that you already have. Expand those within the church. And yet, when we say hard things to each other, may we be truthful. But not prideful. There's a big difference.

And I firmly believe if we're taking this instruction that Paul gave to the church in the first century, and we apply it here in the 21st century, God will continue to do a great work in our midst. There will be many more who trust in Christ, but not just trust in him and not just go through the baptism of waters, but will grow in this same love. And this is how you truly purify the church and penetrate the culture. May we give the culture something different that they're not used to, beginning with the love of Christ. Be charitable. Church. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for our time. Lord, will we look into your word. And we are. Not only reminded, but once again taught the importance of loving each other. This. This runs much deeper than than one message could cover. So, father, I pray that what's been shared today. What is good and glorifying to you will enter into our hearts. And father, we will build upon this. I am so grateful for a loving church, a church that has been patient in so many ways. My prayer, father, is that we would not change, that we would not make the gathering of the saints about something else, but that it would always be centered on Christ, and we would be a rejoicing people of the truth, and that we would rejoice together. I pray for strong fellowship. A word that may seem old fashioned to many, but fellowship is biblical. It's the gathering of the saints to take care of each other, to look after each other, to delight in your word together, to affirm together your word every time we gather. We thank you that through Christ this is made possible. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.