

Love. – 1 Corinthians 13

Please stand and open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 13

Before we get into one of the most defining words and subjects in the entire Bible I want to ask you, did you know there are things that God hates? I hear people say all the time to hate the sin but love the sinner. But how do you separate the two? A gun is inanimate by itself. It is not evil until someone picks it up and murders someone with it. Same with a bottle of booze or a bag of dope. By themselves they might represent a sin but until someone abuses them it does not infer God's wrath. God is going to pour out His wrath on people not people's sin. Why? Because they have rejected His love. But to show you some of the things that God hates...

Proverbs 6:16-19

These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

A proud look,

A lying tongue,

Hands that shed innocent blood,

A heart that devises wicked plans,

Feet that are swift in running to evil,

A false witness who speaks lies,

And one who sows discord among brethren.

Paul is writing to a church that was very dear to his heart. It was a work of God that only He could do. It was also one of the times he was at his lowest if you remember...

Acts 18:9-10

Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

For the next year and a half Paul would see a revival break out in one of the most sin filled cities in the world. He would build a church and be its lead Pastor for a season until it was established. Now Paul is away probably in Ephesus and gets word that discord, division and strife had entered in. The fallout was evident in sin running rampant in the church and people devouring one another. In the section we opened with they had turned Spiritual Gifts into a competition, pitting each other against each other. They had turned what God meant to unify and edify the church into a show of “Look at me, look at me!” They had turned the Love of God and the Love for each other into something God hates. This wasn’t a problem of unbelievers and believers in the church together; this was a

case of immaturity. Believers that have allowed themselves to get into the flesh and to resort back to their old natures and it was destroying the fabric of the church and also its witness to the world.

This brings us to talk about what biblical love is and how important it is for us to strive to not only practice it toward our God but also to each other.

At the time of Jesus, the world was what was known as “Hellenized”. Meaning that after the conquests of Alexander the Great, this left behind a culture that spoke Greek and practiced its customs. The New Testament was written in what was known as “koine” or common Greek. It was what everyone used to read and write and speak. It was the common language of the day. Paul, of course, was very educated in both Greek and Hebrew cultures and would understand this language very well. It was also the context in which the Holy Spirit used to bring us God’s word.

The word Love in our language is assumed to have multiple meanings as we use it in context. I love my wife, but I also love chocolate. I love my sister, but I also love sunsets. Obviously, these are all different in the ways that I love these people and things. I would die for my wife, but not for chocolate. You get

the point. But koine Greek is an extremely descriptive language and uses words differently than we do. The Greeks look at love in many ways and made words for each one. I have heard many teachers talk about 4 different words they used for love, but I found at least 8. Only three are used in the New Testament. Here are the ones not in the New Testament...

Philautia (φιλαυτία): Self-love, which can be healthy or unhealthy (obsession).

Ludus (ερωτοτροπία): Playful, lighthearted, or uncommitted love.

Pragma (πρᾶγμα): Enduring love that has developed over a long period, built on commitment and understanding.

Mania (μανία): Obsessive and possessive love.

Now one of the four that is always mentioned in teaching about biblical love that was used the most in ancient Greek writing outside of the Bible...

Eros (ἔρως): Passionate, erotic, or romantic love, characterized by desire and intimacy. The New Testament writers did not use this term for romantic love, though the Septuagint does in some instances.

Now the three we see in our Bibles are...

Storge (στοργή): Natural, familial affection, the bond between parents and children or siblings.

Philia (φιλία): Brotherly love, loyalty, and friendship. It represents a deep bond between friends, to be fond of one another.

Agape (ἀγάπη): Unconditional, selfless, and sacrificial love, often considered the highest form of love. It is the love God is said to have for humanity, as described in John 3:16, and the love Christians are commanded to show each other.

This last one was never really used much in Greek literature. It wasn't until the New Testament and the emergence of the church that this word finds its ultimate definition.

(Go Back now and review 1 Corinthians 13)

Paul is telling us that we can be the best teachers, the best givers, the best of anything but if it is without agape love, it is worthless. That takes us to a point I want to bring up today. I have been watching our church recently and have heard that some of you have had problems with one another. We should all understand that the church is comprised of people and

people don't always get along. We all have differing personalities and opinions. We are all at differing levels of our growth in the Lord and many of us are struggling with past life stuff, myself included. And all of this when put into a family environment and shaken up together are going to cause sparks and reactions. Add to this the fact that we strive to be a very biblical church and teach the full council of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we will have opposition from the enemy. But what is the remedy? Understanding the Love that God has for us and allowing that love to be the rule we use in our relations with one another. Jesus told us....

John 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.”

How did He love us?

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Think about that. The same sacrificial love that God has for us through Christ we are commanded to have toward each other. “But you don’t understand pastor that person gets me so angry!” or “All that guy talks about is his problems!” or “How come I can’t be the leader of this group or that?” or “That person is always such a downer!” or “That guy never takes anything I say seriously” or they never seem to listen or they talk all the time and so on and so on. If I had a dime for every Christian brother or sister that got under my skin, we could afford to buy our own building! Do I always handle it the right way? NO! That is why we have to allow the Holy Spirit and the instruction of the word to guide us in these situations. We have clear parameters in Matthew 18 on those that have offended us and Matthew 5 for those of us that have offended others. Both of which explained clearly in the Membership Handbook of our church. But then there is just our everyday interaction with each other that we need to learn to handle with God’s Love.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

The world holds a grudge over each other. Talks about people's failures and defines them by it. But that should never be the way of a Christian! The world will not put up with one another, but you and I HAVE to love one another.

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Philippians 2:3-4

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Romans 15:1

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Do you know what the evidence of the Holy Spirit in you is?

Galatians 5:22-23

But the **fruit (Singular) of the Spirit is love**, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

How can I tell if you are maturing in the Lord and are growing in His grace? How well you put up with people and show them the same love as Christ had for you.

1 John 4:7-11

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this 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 also ought to love one another.

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

1 Corinthians 11:25

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.