

In the Name of Love!

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide#1** Goodwill update: Ramos family to Brazil (Lorie Holman helping 375-7101)
1. Thanks \$3,540 so far. 2nd chance for those who still want to participate.
 2. This Sat April 7th, 10-4pm, Tuscany Hills Tennis Courts.
- B. **Slide#2** Bake sale Easter Sunday: Bake or buy & bring. For H.S. To Belize. (no Peeps!)

II. Intro:

- A. **Slide#3** Twisted Mouth, by Richard Selzer, M.D., *Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*. I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. She will be thus from now on. The surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh; I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had to cut the little nerve. Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are they, I ask myself, he and this wry mouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously, greedily? The young woman speaks. “Will my mouth always be like this?” she asks. “Yes,” I say, “it will. It is because the nerve was cut.” She nods and is silent. But the young man smiles. “I like it,” he says, “It is kind of cute.” All at once I know who he is. I understand and I lower my gaze. One is not bold in an encounter with a god. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth and I am so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show her that **their kiss still works**.¹
1. **Pray:** Ps.2:12 **Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, ...blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**
- B. We long for a day when the **abstract** will be made **concrete**; where **narrative** will boldly illustrate the **didactic**(teaching). (adapted from R.C.Sproul, *Love by God*, pg.209)
- C. **Last week** we looked at **Love's Preeminence(1-3) & then defined Love's Ingredients(4-7)**.
1. **This week Love Lasts(8-13)**.
- D. **Quote vs.1-7 from (Msg)**
If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. **If** I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, “Jump,” and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. **If** I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

¹ Richard Selzer, M.D., *Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*, 1978, pp. 45-6

Slide#4 Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end.

- E. One of the ingredients we looked at last was, "love endures all things".
1. L.B.Cowman writes in her famed *Streams in the Desert* devotional (which she put together for herself while her husband Charles was dying, after coming home from the mission field). From Prov.10:12 **Love covers over all wrongs (sins; broken covenants; a breach in relationships between 2 parties)**. **Read** pg.243.
 2. Many heartaches will come our way, and the desire to give up and quit will often pass through our minds. **But** God's love for us endures even our shortcomings. **How can we do any less?**

III. **Slide#5 LOVE LASTS!**

- A. It is special that God would have us land here in the **Passion Week**.
1. **Love never fails...**all the way to the cross It goes! *[It's permanency & lasting nature]*
- B. **Slide#6** (8-10) **That which is perfect** –
- C. Is this, **Jesus' 2nd Coming**; **or**, the **perfect age** in which these gifts will no longer be needed.
1. Some interpret it to be the **completion to the NT**, **thus** they are not for today.
 - a) **But then what about vs.12?** Now, we are already know as we are known? Nope.
 2. Some interpret it to be **Jesus' return**, which similar wording is found in 1Jn.3:2 **Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**
 3. Some interpret to be the **completion/maturation/perfection of the Church**.
 - a) I think this holds most weight as it flows best in its context to the following verse(11).
 - (1) **Then** Paul would **see God** as God now saw *Paul*.
 - (2) **Then partial knowledge** would be displaced by the **perfect knowledge** of God
 - (3) i.e. **A slow maturing process from infancy to adulthood.**
 - b) Mt.5:48 **Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**
- D. Some of the gifts were **foundational** (prophecies and knowledge)
1. Eph. 2:20 **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.**

E. Some of the gifts were **confirmatory** (tongues)

1. Heb. 2:4 **God also bearing witness** both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?
 - a) **Every gift** is linked in some way to building up the church *to maturity*.
 - b) These have been functioning in the Church Age & will continue till the church is perfected.
 - (a) When that perfection is achieved, the gifts will have served their purposes and will be rendered obsolete.
 - (b) **But...this will not happen to love!**
2. Remember context of this whole chapter? **Love** is greater than **gifts**.
 - a) One is **temporal** & one is **eternal**.

F. (11,12) 2 Illustrations:

1. **Slide#7,8 Child to Man** - Until Jesus comes, we'll continue to think like children; **but** when He comes we will have adult/mature understanding.
 - a) **Childish things**: I no longer play with Tommy Turtle, Rock-em Sock-em Robots, G.I.Joe.
 - (1) Now I play with more expensive toys! *ipad, iPhone, Canon Cameras* :)
2. **Slide#9,10 Cloudy mirror to clear mirror** - Corinth was famous for their mirrors.
 - a) The modern mirror, w/its perfect reflection as we know it today didn't come around until the **13th century**.
 - b) The Corinthians mirror was made from *highly polished metals*. And even at its best, gave but an *imperfect reflection*.
 - (1) Much like the blind mother, who after her eye operation, saw her son for the first time. She said, "I thought I **knew** you, but today I **see** you." Before, limited to touching him & hearing his voice. Now if he entered her dreams at night, she would recognize him.²
 - c) **Slide#11** Today, we know Christ like the clarity of seeing our own reflection in a stream. But one day face to face!
 - (1) **The Priestly blessing**: The Lord make His **face** to shine upon you. Numb 6:25
 - (2) **Job's confidence**: For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh **I shall see God**. Job19:25,26
 - (3) **David's assurance**: As for me, I will **see Your face** in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. Ps.17:15
 - (4) **Jesus' promise**: Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall **see God**. Mt.5:8

² Adapted from Fearfully & Wonderfully Made, by Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, pg.116

(a) When we see the Savior face-to-face *our question marks will all be changed to exclamation marks!!!*

G. (14) Love is greatest because God is Love!

H. Faith = is trust that rests upon evidence & leads to action.

I. Hope = is confidence in the future.

1. Slide#12 Faith w/o love is cold, & hope w/o love is grim.

Love is the fire which *kindles faith* & it is the light which *turns hope into certainty*.

J. Faith will be replaced by *sight*, & hope replaced by *possession*.

1. Or, some see **all 3** of the full Triad of Christian virtues, will abide.

K. Does **Love** come to the surface of *your life* **more often** than any other virtue?

L. If those around you were to choose *one virtue* to describe *you*, would it be **love**?

M. Slide#13,14 End: (14:1) **Pursue love!**

N. To hunt, to pursue. The pres. imp. calls for a habitual action!

1. Everyone who *follows(pursues)* the way of love *finds* “*the most excellent way*” (31), **because** every individual characterized by love carries that mark eternally.

O. Practice Love in daily life.

1. Take every opportunity to love your **God**, love **one another**, love **others**, love your **neighbor**, love your **enemy**.

a) Here's the test: “I suffer long and am kind; I do not envy; I do not parade myself, I am not puffed up; I do not behave rudely, I do not seek my own, I am not provoked, I think no evil; I do not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth; I bear all things, I believe all things, I hope all things, I endure all things. I never fail when it comes to Agape love!”

P. A man will love a dog or a bird sooner than be *loveless*. Captives have been known to fall in love with rats, & even spiders on the wall have been the objects of their affection. A little flower that could not speak has been the prisoner's beloved friend. *We must have something to love.*

1. Oh, & what wealth of love Jesus brings into the heart when He enters it!³

Q. Quote vs.8-13 from (Msg)

R. **8-10** Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

11 When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant.

³ Spurgeon at his Best, #803, pg.122

When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

12 We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

13 But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: **Trust steadily** in God, **hope unswervingly**, **love extravagantly**. And the best of the three is love.

In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity. - Augustine