

Love Is Better than Gifts

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1 Corinthians 13:1-13

I am going to preach on the great love passage, 1 Corinthians 13. This will conclude my messages on Gifts and Service. Paul wrote the love passage to get the Corinthians to shift their attention from embattlement over gifts toward the practice of love, which is far more important. So, our title is: **Love is better than gifts.** That is, the practice of God-like love has a greater purpose than boasting over spiritual abilities.

I want you to use your gifts in service of the Lord in and outside our church. However, if you do not first come to such service out of a Christ-like love, you will likely be more of a clanging noisemaker than one who works to create symphonic harmony of the Spirit. We need people to work and volunteer. Volunteering begins with allowing God's love to fill your heart.

NIVO 1 Corinthians 13:1

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails.

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

(1 Cor. 13:1-13 NIVO)

1. The practice of Christ-like love is far more important than spiritual giftedness which prides the human heart.

Without love we are just making noise and coming up empty.

1. a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (1 Cor. 13:1 NAS)

Thayer Greek – English Lexicon.

ἡχέω v. to sound, make a noise. *ἦχος* n. sound, noise. (Modern word, echo derives from Greek *eche*, sound).

χαλκός n. brass, or what is made of brass.

κύμβαλον Cymbal

κύμβαλον, *κυμβαλου*, τό (from *κυμβος*, ό, a hollow (cf. cup, cupola, etc.; Vanicek, p. 164)), a cymbal, i. e. a hollow basin of brass, producing (when two are struck together) a musical sound (see B. D., under the word Cymbal; Stainer, Music of the Bible, chapter ix.): 1 Cor. 13:1. (1 Chr. 13:8; 15:16,19,28; Ps. 150:5. Pindar, Xenophon, Diodorus, Josephus, others.)*

ἀλαλάζω to clang, a loud noisy sound

ἀλαλάζω; (from Pindar down); a. properly, to repeat frequently the cry *ἀλαλα*, as soldiers used to do on entering battle, b. universally, to utter a joyful shout. Ps. 46:2 (Ps. 47:2); Ps. 65:2 (Ps. 66:2); and in secular writings c. to wail, lament. Mark 5:38 (לִּיִּיְיִ Jer. 4:8; 32:20 (Jer. 25:34)); cf. *ὀλολύζω*,

Latin *ululare*. (Synonyms: see *κλαίω* at the end) d. to ring loudly, to clang: 1 Cor. 13:1 (cf. *ἐν κυμβάλοις ἀλαλαγμοῦ*, Ps. 150:5).*

Love, *agape*. In the New Testament primarily used as divine love or a characteristic of divine love. The root of that love is seen in God's love for us in the sending of his Son to the cross for our salvation.

KJV Love is translated as charity. Charity has the meaning of benevolence, giving aid to the impoverished. Perhaps it is an Old English attempt to distinguish between God like love and human emotional love. However, in the Greek, *agape* carries a wide meaning and even includes love between lovers.

2. gift is understood in prophecy. Lit. If I have prophecy... Knowing mysteries, knowledge, and faith to move mountains... - The very things the Corinthians argued and boasted over, raising themselves up while putting others down.

3. *παράδιδωμι* To hand over as unto death, to judgment. KJV "hand over to be burned" NAS to the flames. These are interpretations, burn and flame are not in the Greek text. However, "hand over" does have the idea of giving oneself up to judgment or martyrdom.

καυχάομαι, to boast. The main idea here is having some great deed done for a boast. "I've got my scars for Jesus."

Like the ladies who boasted in my first church they were baptized in the cold waters of the creek in winter, and they had to break ice. That was the sure sign you were spiritual!

2. Love in practice is a reflection of God.

It applies to love in the church among members.

It applies to love in relationships between lovers.

Love is
Patient

Kind

Not envy

Not boast

Not proud

Not rude

Rude or showing disrespect, dishonoring. *ἀσχημονέω*
ἀσχημόνων; (to be *ἀσχήμων*, deformed; *τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀσχημονεῖν*, of a bald man, Aelian v. h. 11, 4); *to act unbecomingly* ((Euripides), Xenophon, Plato, others.); 1 Cor. 13:5; *ἐπί τινα*, toward one, i. e. contextually, to prepare disgrace for her, 1 Cor. 7:36.*

Not self-seeking

self-seeking. Is just that. Seeking to oneself is selfish motivation. Sin at its heart is selfish. To get toward *agape*, we must learn to set aside selfish wants in order to give the greater care and concern for the other.

Not easily angered

Keeps no record of wrongs

No delight in evil

6. rejoices not Rejoices with or together with – as with the person who is upheld in the truth.

χαίρει ... συγχαίρει (1 Cor. 13:6 BGT)

ἀδικία unjust, injustice, unrighteousness. Love does not celebrate actions that oppose God's holy purposes.

Many a Christian would not do harm to another, but they will love to dine on the delicacies of information about another person's bad news. We could easily connect gossip here. We can also apply sharing the news of another person's demise because we celebrate it, for they are our enemy. "They deserve it!" Actually, we all deserve hell. None of us want to celebrate that!

There must be justice in society if the social order is to be civil. However, in Christ we are not to celebrate another person's fall. In doing so, we have only championed the devil's cause.

Rejoices in truth

Always Protects

protects, originally, to cover.

The idea of cover is multifaceted. It means to protect. It also means to cover over the wrong imposed on you by extending grace and forgiveness. God covers our sin on the cross. He covers not only the sin we did at one time; he covers our repeated sins, our failure to stop sinning against Him.

When I hear a Christian tell me they will never forgive what someone did to them, I know that their heart is not allowing God's love to breath into them.

στέγω

στέγω; (allied with Latin *tego, toga*, English *deck, thatch*, etc.; Curtius, sec. 155 Fick Part 3:590); *to cover*;

1. *to protect or keep by covering, to preserve*: Sophocles, Plato, Plutarch, others.

2. *to cover over with silence; to keep secret; to hide, conceal*: *ταμα ἔπη*, Euripides, Electr. 273; *τόν λόγον*, Polybius 8, 14, 5; for other examples see Passow, under the word, 1 b. β.; (Liddell and Scott, under the word, II. 2);

μωρός οὐ δυνήσεται λόγον στέξει, Sir. 8:17; hence, *ἡ ἀγάπη πάντα στέγει*, 1 Cor. 13:7, is explained by some, *love covereth* (so R. V. marginal reading), i. e. *hides and excuses, the errors and faults of others*; but it is more appropriately rendered (with other interpreters) *beareth*. For *στέγω* means

3. *by covering to keep off something which threatens, to bear up against, hold out against, and so to endure, bear, forbear* (*τάς ἐνδείας*, Philo in Flacc. sec. 9; many examples from Greek authors from Aeschylus down are given by Passow, under the word, 2; (Liddell and Scott, under the word, A. especially 3)): 1 Cor. 9:12; 13:7; 1 Thess. 3:1,5

Always Trusts

Always Hopes

Always Perseveres

Perseveres lit. bear up, endures

ὑπομένει. (1 Cor. 13:7 BYZ)

Never fails

love never fails,

πίπτω fall, fall down, or in this sense, love never comes to an end, quits, walks away. Love never stops, if it is love.

"I just don't love ... anymore." Love is a choice. It is not a hormone. It is not a mystery of soul that rises up out of our being because we feel something. When I eat spicy food, I feel something! Maybe it's love? Maybe it's a burning from within that is not a true indication of the heart.

3. The completion of God's work will reveal that everything we know here and now is limited and flawed.

All human boasting over spiritual abilities is immature and worthless.

It is in fact, childish.

It is like boasting over having a new car. It's great to have a new car.

However, in 7 years, it will no longer be a new car, and in some cases, you may still be paying for it.

I saw an old 60's Chevy Impala down at the old car restoration place on Esplanade. I told my wife, there's my car! I should go drive it around. Except this one is yellow. Mine was white. But it was my first car! Standard 3 shift on the floor. V-8 engine. Huge trunk. But I would much prefer my new Jeep to that old beast.

When we get to heaven, we will realize that all the stuff we fight over is like wrestling over the possession of cow patties. We need to learn how to love. The source of that love is God. The best example is His Son, Jesus.

Love as God is Love.