

The Gift of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

MEMORY VERSE

1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

What Is Love?

Ask three questions about the following phrases and write the answers on the board:

Suffers Long

Is Kind

Does Not Envy

Does Not Parade Itself

Is Not Puffed Up

Is Not Rude

Is Not Self-seeking

Is Not Provoked

Thinks No Evil

Grieves Iniquity

Rejoices In Truth

Bears All

Believes All

Hopes All

Endures All

What does each phrase mean? How is Jesus an example of each phrase? How can we as His church be an example of each phrase?

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we are going to learn about love. Love is a word we use many different ways. We can say, I love my dog, I love my parents, I love my friends, or I love pizza. Today we are going to learn what love means to God. What is God's love like? How does God define love? Specifically, how should the church be an example of the love of God?

In our text today we have a message written by the apostle Paul. Paul was correcting and instructing the Corinthian church. The church at Corinth was a lot like some churches today. The Corinthian church looked really spiritual on the outside, but they had a lot of problems on the inside.

They were not sharing with one another; they were getting drunk; they were fighting against each other, and suing each other in the courts. They were also seeking after spiritual gifts from God so they could become greater in the eyes of men.

Have you ever been around someone who claimed to be super spiritual and gifted by God, and yet you did not get the sense that they loved the people around them. The Bible says the world will know us by our love.

Paul was giving the Corinthian church a reminder that the most important gift we can receive from God is love. In the gospel of John, chapter 3:16 we read, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whomever believe in Him shall have everlasting life."

Jesus is God's definition of love. Paul wanted the Corinthian church to love one another, for "love is of God and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8). Bringing our Bibles to church every week or saying memory verses is not the most important thing to God; without love it is nothing. **God desires for us to demonstrate His love.**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Paul is speaking to the church, so let's look at this passage as if he were speaking to our church. What would our church be like without love? The Greek word for God's love is agape. It means an unconditional love, love that loves even when people are unlovable, love that loves even when we are unlovable.

God's love is agape love. It is like the energizer bunny; it keeps going and going. Our church should be an example of God's kind of love.

If we could speak all the languages of the world and could also speak the language of the angels it would be great, but without love it would just be talking, just like noise. We could know everything, including the future, but without love it is nothing. We could have faith so big it could move huge rocks, but without love we are nothing. We could give everything including our own lives, but without love we have gained nothing.

There is nothing we could ever do or say or experience on this earth greater than God's love. In turn, if we have received God's love, then even if we have nothing else, we would be the richest people on earth. **God desires for us to demonstrate His love.**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Here is the definition of love. This is an example of what Jesus is. Our goal should be that our lives and our churches would be like Jesus. Jesus is love in action, love in expression.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-12

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Love never fails because God is love! With God on our side we can never fail. "If God is for me, who can be against me?" Love is eternal; God is eternal. Not everything we do will last forever. If we prophesy, one day we will not need to know the future because we will be in eternity with God. If we speak all languages, even heavenly languages, one day we will not need them because we will all speak the same language in Heaven. If we know everything and have all the answers, one day we will not need the answers because God will give us all the answers. **God desires for us to demonstrate His love.**

So what is the most important thing to seek after? The love of God. Why? Because it will never pass away. What is the greatest goal to reach for? "To love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and love one another as ourselves" (Matthew 19:19).

1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The conclusion to all of man's pursuits are boiled down to three things: Faith, our trust in God, Hope, believing our faith will be rewarded, and love; the gift of God to us to strengthen us and sustain us. The picture of this love is the cross.

Our faith is in His love that has saved us.

Fall Back on Faith

Ask for volunteers to demonstrate faith. Have a child close his eyes and fall backward toward you; be sure to catch him. Even if everyone is too insecure to fall back without opening their eyes, illustrate that we should always be careful whom and what we put our faith in. God is the only one with a perfect track record.

Our hope is that His love will deliver us from this world and from these mortal bodies and bring us to himself to be with Him forever.

Hopping and Hoping

Have our class form a circle. Ask them to hop up and down first on two feet, then on one, then with one arm in the air, and finally with two arms in the air. Then have your class sit back in a circle.

Ask your class if any one was afraid that when they were hopping up they might not come back down again and just fly away. Of course no one thought that; we have the hope that every time we hop up in the air, gravity will bring us back down again. Our hope is in Christ because His track record is perfect.

Without God's love there is nothing to put our faith or hope in. Without God's love there is no hope. Faith, hope and love abide, but the greatest of these is love. **God desires for us to demonstrate His love.**

Love Liver?

This is a pretending game. Have everyone in your class close their eyes and pretend that their moms were serving a family meal. Everyone was getting pizza, and cheeseburgers, and cake and candy, except for your students. Their moms were serving them a piece of over cooked liver...that's all. What would you do? Would you suffer long and be kind? Envy what everyone else got? Brag because you were selfless? Behave rudely? Seek your own way? Get mad? Think evil? Rejoice in truth? Bear, believe, hope, and endure? How we would respond will show how well we are able to demonstrate Agape love.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for the great love He has shown us, and make a commitment to love those around us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.