

## LOVE AND THE HIGHEST GOOD OF OTHERS

### I. 1 Corinthians 13:18a Romans 5:6-8 1 John 4:7-11

**A. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a (ESV) may sound familiar:** *1 If 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. 3 If 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 arrogant 5 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. 8 Love never ends...* (NIV "Love never fails.")

**B. Last Sunday I talked about our purpose as a church. What are we all about. How the *Great Commandment* and the *Great Commission* remain our ground zero. Our mission remains to *preach the Gospel to every creature, going forth and making disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; teaching them to obey what Jesus taught His disciples* who also laid it out for us in God's Word. Our vision? To be a family of believers who *love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love our neighbors as ourselves.***

**C. So what kind of Love are we talking about here? The kind of love we just read about in 1 Corinthians 13. Agape Love. The sacrificial kind of love that is committed to the highest good of another. We hear these verses read most often at weddings. (*And so they should be!*) But they originally weren't written for a marriage ceremony. They were written to a not-so-loving church in Corinth where people got drunk at Communion, disrespected the poor, openly engaged in immorality, wore spiritual gifts like badges, and boasted about how awesome they were. But know this, those words were also written for every church! And that includes this one!**

**D. When Jesus said to His disciples on the night He was betrayed, "*By this shall all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*" (John 13:35) this is the kind of love He was talking about. This kind of love is marked by humility, generosity, sacrifice, and once again, the highest good of others. The day after He spoke these words, Jesus went to the cross and demonstrated exactly what this kind of love looked like. To walk in that kind of love means picking up our crosses and following Him!**

**E. This Love most certainly applies to our marriages. It also applies to our parenting and grand-parenting. It applies to our neighbors--the next door variety and the kind encountered by the Good Samaritan who rescued a dying, bloody Jew on Jericho Road. It applies to strangers. Even enemies. Oh God help us!**

**F. The late D.L. Moody said:** "The world does not understand theology or dogma, but it understands love and sympathy."

**G. In the original Star Trek series back in the late 60s, the crew of the Enterprise are abducted by aliens on Talos IV. The Talosians have gigantic heads and communicate telepathically. Besides being ultra intelligent, the Talosians use illusions as trickery.**

They're condescending, deceptive, mean, and full of themselves. **Christians are not meant to be Talosians!** Like Paul said in 1 Cor. 8:1: "*Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*" The challenge we have as believers is to grow in theological depth even as we grow in our love for others. That means to become like Christ, who was *full of both grace and truth.* (cf John 1:14)

I. How do we manifest this kind of love? In a thousand different ways. Love prompts us to pray, (**really pray!**) when someone's in need. It prompts us to give. Or sometimes to withhold. It prompts us to forgive. To be merciful. To show compassion. It prompts us to encourage. To exhort. Sometimes confront. It prompts us to tell someone what they need to hear even if it's not what they want to hear. It prompts us to discipline our children--to sometimes say, *no*--and other times, *yes*. It prompts us to be patient, to wait on someone as long as the Lord is willing to wait on them. Love helps us to release someone into God's hands because He ultimately knows what's best and loves them most. Love sometimes prompts us to speak. Other times to be silent. "*There's a time and place for everything under heaven!*" Love increasingly knows what time it is!

J. The greatest way we can actually love someone is to make sure they hear the Gospel. **John 3:16** says it so succinctly. (*Quote*) That Jesus would die for sinners and enemies, in order to save their souls from eternal punishment, making them friends, even family, is the epitome of God's Love. Your highest good in the eyes of God is for you to live with Him forever! He sent His Son to make that happen! **Romans 5:6-8** (NIV) is crystal clear: **6** *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.* **7** *Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.* **8** *But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* **No one should drive out of this parking lot today without realizing what Jesus has done for you! And the sun should not go down on this day without someone you truly love knowing what Jesus did for them as well! Who do you have in mind right now? Whose face are you seeing right now? How much do you really love them?**

K. **1 John 4:7-11** (NIV) is an apt summation: **7** *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.* **8** *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.* **9** *This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.* **10** *This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* **11** *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* **12** *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us. ("Faith, Hope, and Love; but the greatest of these is Love...")*

\* Close with a Song...

## **Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff**

### **1 Corinthians 13:1-8a (ESV)**

**1** If 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. **3** If 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 arrogant **5** 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. **8** Love never ends...

### **John 13:34-35 (ESV)**

**34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

### **Quote by D.L. Moody**

"The world does not understand theology or dogma, but it understands love and sympathy."

### **Romans 5:6-8 (NIV)**

**6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

### **1 John 4:7-11 (NIV)**

**7** Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. **10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. **11** Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.

### **Video Clips & Important Articles**

"And Can It Be" - Glad (The Acapella Project - 1988)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txD\\_EpFIfXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txD_EpFIfXQ)

"Love One Another" - Jake Ballentine, Randy Slaugh, & Kellen Maxwell

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_TiTXxQu6Gc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TiTXxQu6Gc)

"Our Business is People" - Danny's Blog, Another Small Stone

<https://anothersmallstone.com/2020/07/02/our-business-is-people/>

How Do We Make Sense of the Coronavirus? - John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-do-we-make-sense-of-the-coronavirus>

## Bonus Stuff

### Romans 12:9-13 (AMP)

**9** Love is to be sincere and active [the real thing--without guile and hypocrisy]. Hate what is evil [detest all ungodliness, do not tolerate wickedness]; hold on tightly to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another with [authentic] brotherly affection [as members of one family], give preference to one another in honor; **11** never lagging behind in diligence; aglow in the Spirit, enthusiastically serving the Lord; **12** constantly rejoicing in hope [because of our confidence in Christ], steadfast and patient in distress, devoted to prayer [continually seeking wisdom, guidance, and strength], **13** contributing to the needs of God's people, pursuing [the practice of] hospitality.

### Romans 13:8-10 (ESV)

**8** Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

### Romans 15:1-7 (NIV)

**1** We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. **2** Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. **3** For even Christ did not please Himself but, as it is written: "*The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.*" **4** For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **5** May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, **6** so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **7** Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

### 1 Peter 4:8-10 (NIV)

**8** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **9** Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

### Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV)

**1** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **2** And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

### John 15:9-17 (ESV)

**8** By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples. **9** As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that My

joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are My friends if you do what I command you. **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. **17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

### **Quote by St Augustine**

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like."

### **Quote by John Calvin**

"For where love is wanting, the beauty of all virtue is mere tinsel, is empty sound, is not worth a straw, nay more, is offensive and disgusting."

### **Quote by R.C. Sproul**

"In the New Testament, love is more of a verb than a noun. It has more to do with acting than with feeling. The call to love is not so much a call to a certain state of feeling as it is to a quality of action."

### **Quote by D.L. Moody**

"If we have got the true love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we will show it in our lives. We will not have to go up and down the earth proclaiming it. We will show it in everything we say or do."

### **C.S. Lewis on Love**

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket--safe, dark, motionless, airless--it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside heaven where you will be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love is hell."

- C.S. Lewis, from [The Four Loves](#).

### **Quote by John Wesley**

"Though we cannot think alike may we not love alike?"

### **Quote by Donald Danford**

"Love is the light that casts a shadow on the sun."

- Christian Herald, June 1975, p. 20.

## **And Can It Be**

GLAD - *The Acapella Project* © 1988

A rendition inspired by the 1738 hymn by Charles Wesley with the same title.

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in my Savior's blood?  
Died He for me who caused His pain!  
For me who scorned His perfect Love.

Amazing love! How can it be  
That You, my God, would die for me!  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That You, my God, would die for me!

You left Your Father's throne above,  
So free and infinite is Your grace!  
Emptied Yourself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.

Amazing love! How can it be  
That You, my God, would die for me!  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That You, my God, would die for me!  
Amazing love! How can it be!  
Amazing love! How can it be!

Boldly I come before Your throne  
To claim Your mercy immense and free,  
No greater love will there be known  
For O my God, it found out me!

Amazing love! How can it be  
That You, my God, would die for me!  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That You, my God, would die,  
That You, my God, would die,  
That You, my God, would die for  
Amazing love... Amazing love...

- GLAD is one of the pioneers of Christian pop/rock and a cappella music, having formed as a progressive rock group in 1972 and discovered a large audience for their a cappella music in 1988.

## **Love - 1 Corinthians 13**

The Reformation Study Bible

New Testament Christianity is the human response to the revelation of the Creator as the God of love. Out of love for those who did not love, the Father gave the Son, the Son gave His life, and the Father and Son together have sent the Spirit, to save sinners from misery and lead them into glory. Believing in and being overwhelmed by this amazing reality of divine love sustains the love for God and neighbor that the two great commandments require (Matt. 22:35-40). Our love expresses our gratitude for God's gracious love to us, and imitates it as a model (Eph. 4:32-5:2; 1 John 3:16).

The indispensable mark of Christian life is Christian love. The measure and test of love to God is whole-hearted obedience (John 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 5:3); the measure and test of love to our neighbors is laying down our lives for them (1 John 3:16; cf. John 15:12, 13). This sacrificial love involves giving, spending, and impoverishing ourselves for their well-being. Jesus' story of the Samaritan's kindness to a traditional enemy is His model definition of how to love one's neighbor (Luke 10:25-37).

Christian love is described in 1 Corinthians 13. Its total lack of self-concern is breathtaking. It seeks the neighbor's good, and its true measure is how much it gives to that end. Love is a principle of action rather than of emotion. It is a matter of doing things for people out of compassion for them, whether or not we feel personal affection for them. It is by their active love to one another that Jesus' disciples can be recognized (John 13:34, 35).

- Theological Note on 1 Corinthians 13; *The Reformation Study Bible*, R.C. Sproul General Editor, Reformation Trust p.1663.

### **Theological Note on 1 John 4:7-12**

The Reformation Study Bible

*7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.* - 1 John 4:7-12 (ESV)

**4:7-12:** The love of God the Father for "His only Son" (v. 9) is the source of the love that binds the fellowship of believers together as a family. By giving us His Son, the Father introduced us to the perfect love and eternal life that the Father and the Son have always enjoyed.

- Theological note on 1 John 4:7-12, *The Reformation Study Bible*, R.C. Sproul General Editor, Reformation Trust, p. 2273.