

“GOD’S LOVE AIN’T NO NOISY GONG”

I. 1 Corinthians 13

A. Today we look at a short but very powerful chapter in the Bible on Love...

1) You hear it at many weddings... It’s been penned into songs...

2) Paul slipped these verses between his admonitions on spiritual gifts.

3) 1 Cor. 13 Commentary from *The Voice* Translation...

B. Listen to some of the 1 Cor. 13 chapter headings from various Bible versions...

1) Paul’s segue into 1 Cor 13: *“And I will show you a more excellent way...”*

2) ESV = *The Way of Love*; NASB = *The Excellence of Love*; Phillips = *Christian Love-The Highest and Best Gift*; HCSB = *Love: The Superior Way*; NLT = *Love is the Greatest*; CEB = *Love: The Universal Spiritual Gift*; ERV = *Let Love Be Your Guide*.

C. 1 Cor. 13: Let’s unpack these powerful, deep, and beautiful words...

1) Noisy gongs and clanging cymbals. (*Remember the Gong Show?*)

2) Remember, this was initially written to a church where people were getting drunk at communion, mistreating the poor, and tolerating sexual immorality...

3) Some become mystics, take vows of poverty, become isolated hermits... Some view martyrdom as self gain-- blow themselves up to receive virgins in heaven... Old Larry Norman song: *“Righteous Rocker-Without love you ain’t nothin’...”*

4) This is huge: spiritual gifts, Biblical knowledge, great faith, selfless generosity, martyrdom, are nothing without Love...

5) The attributes of Love are ultimately the attributes of Christ: V4-8b: *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”*

6) Love manifested now is our glimpse beyond the dim mirror & dark glass.

7) These words find me wanting and cause my head to sag...

D. But the words we just read never miss the mark with Jesus. He wears them like a perfectly tailored suit. Jesus perfectly personifies what Love truly looks like...

E. Welding together the last several weeks--if we Abide in His Love; let the full impact of His Love saturate us; if we see Christ Jesus as the ultimate Loving Neighbor (even to His sworn enemies); if we allow His Love to restore us (over and over again) our loved ones as well--we will see all the attributes, adjectives, and qualities of 1 Cor. 13 embodied fully In Jesus Christ our Lord... May they also be found increasingly in us!

II. Communion

A. And that brings us to the Bread & Cup this morning...

1) Things may be going terrible in your life right now... Troubles, trials, & tribulations. But the Bread & Cup remind us that we are loved...

2) Things may be going pretty well for you right now, but should they turn south, it won’t mean you are loved any less than you are right now. The Bread & Cup remind us that we are loved no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in...

3) As we take the Bread & Cup, we acknowledge the most profound demonstration of Love ever--Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for our sins...

B. 1 John 4:9-12... Lyrics to: *“You Are My King (Amazing Love)”* by Billy Foote...

C. Pray & serve Communion... Benediction Verse: Ephesians 5:1-2...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (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. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. **13** So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13 Commentary from *The Voice*

Gifts of the Spirit, which are intended to strengthen the church body, often divide the body because members of the church elevate those who possess the more visible gifts over those whose gifts function in the background. In fact, this is the very problem facing the Corinthians. So while talking about the importance and function of these gifts in [chapters 12](#) and [14](#), Paul shifts his focus to the central role love plays in a believer's life in [chapter 13](#). Love is essential for the body to be unified and for members to work together. Members of the body that are very different, with little in common, are able to appreciate and even enjoy others because of the love that comes when a life is submitted to God.

1 John 4:9-12 (Amplified)

9 In this the love of God was made manifest (displayed) where we are concerned: in that God sent His Son, the only begotten or unique [Son], into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God loved us so [very much], we also ought to love one another. **12** No man has at any time [yet] seen God. But if we love one another, God abides (lives and remains) in us and His love (that love which is essentially His) is brought to completion (to its full maturity, runs its full course, is perfected) in us!

"You Are My King (Amazing Love)"

Author: Billy James Foote - © 1996

I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me
Because You died and rose again

I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me
Because You died and rose again

Amazing love, how can it be
That You, my King, should die for me?
Amazing love, I know it's true
It's my joy to honor You
In all I do, To honor You

I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me
Because You died and rose again

Amazing love, how can it be
That You, my King, should die for me?
Amazing love, I know it's true
It's my joy to honor You
In all I do, To honor You
In all I do, To honor You

You are my King
You are my King
Jesus, You are my King
You are my King

Amazing love, how can it be
That You, my King, should die for me?
Amazing love, I know it's true
It's my joy to honor You

Amazing love, how can it be
That You, my King, should die for me?
Amazing love, I know it's true
It's my joy to honor You
In all I do, To honor You

In all I do, To honor You,
In all I do, To honor You,
In all I do, Let me honor You.

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.

Some Excellent Video Clips

"Amazing Love-How Can It Be?"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9l87nVp040>

"You Are My King-Amazing Love"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dooif2-yAol>

"Love Never Fails" Brandon Heath (Live)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro3dirBIOyw>

"One Thing Remains" By Kristian Stanfill (Passion 2012)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_o6s5X5LSw

"Righteous Rocker (You Ain't Nothin' Without Love) - Larry Norman

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn0kWX8w-2c>

Bonus Stuff

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.

Love

The Reformation Study Bible - 1 Corinthians 13

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).
- The Reformation Study Bible; Theological Note on 1 Corinthians 13; p.1663.

"Righteous Rocker" (Without Love You Ain't Nothin)

By Larry Norman

You can be a righteous rocker, you can be a holy roller
You could be most anything,
You could be a Leon Russell, or a super muscle,
You could be a corporate king,
You could be a wealthy man from Texas, or a witch with heavy hexes,
But without love, you ain't nothing without love
Without love you ain't nothing, without love.

You could be a brilliant surgeon, or a sweet young virgin,
or a harlot out to sell,
You could learn to play the blues, or be Howard Hughes
or the Scarlet Pimpernel,
Or you could be a French provincial midwife,
or go from door to door with a death-knife,
But without love you ain't nothing, without love,
Without love you ain't nothing, without love.

You could be a woman feeler, or a baby stealer,
you could drink your life away,
Or you could be a holy prophet, get a blessing off it,
Or you could fast for fifty days,
You could shake hands with the devil, or give your life to God on the level,
But without love you ain't nothing, without love,
Without love you ain't nothing, without love.