**1 CORINTHIANS 13**

**THE LOVE CHAPTER**

Becausethis chapter deserves to be heard without interruption, let’s read it through once and then come back for our verse by verse study…

**2nd time –** Paul is discussing the gifts of the Holy Spirit in chapters 12-14 and he promised to tell the Corinthian church about a more excellent way at the end of CH 12… Love is the more excellent way.

All of the gifts in the world meant nothing if they were not used in love. More excellent than tongues, prophecy, healing, and discernment is LOVE!

The gifts… without love… are just religious performance. God is not impressed with religious performance. **He IS however delighted with love**. ***Listen…***

**1 Corinthians 13:1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ***(Annoying)***

* OH MY! How marvelous to be able to speak in the language of Angels… Could ANYTHING be better than that? ***(TRICK QUESTION)***
* YES! To love one another IS better than that!
* BTW – “Love” V1 = Charity, sympathy, benevolence, ***“agape”*** as described in **Galatians 5:22** – “joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control…”
* WOW… No wonder love is the more excellent way, RIGHT?

2 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.

* OH MY! To have a prayer life that could make mountain sized problems disappear… What could be better than that? **YOU KNOW THE ANSWER - LOVE**

3 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.

* The most charitable giver of all… who does not give because of love… gains nothing in the eyes of God.
* Even martyrdom without love is without profit.
* What exactly IS agape love? Listen to Paul’s description…

4 Love (Tim) suffers long *and* is kind; **(C. Smith – long suffering is a matter of spirit, NOT mathematics. NO 3 strikes involved)** love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; **(Jealousy & pride is not how love behaves)**

**Here is what LOVE is NOT**

5 does not behave rudely, **(Weird)** does not seek its own, **(way)** is not provoked, **(Offended)** thinks no evil; **(Looking for hidden agenda)** 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, **(Aha! caught you!)** but rejoices in the truth…

**WHAT LOVE DOES…**

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

* WOW! Agape love is amazing, RIGHT?
* LORD, give us marriages like this… Give us parents like this… Bless us with children like this… Let me treat my employees like this… AND PLEASE let my boss treat me like this😊

**A MOMENT OF SELF EXAMINATION… (Insert your name in V4) (Then… JESUS)**

8 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.

* Be careful not to teach that tongues have ceased here… unless you are going to include prophecy and wisdom too… You cannot pick and choose according to what gifts you are afraid of. 😉

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **NLT - Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! (Do not be offended)**

10 But when that which is perfect ***(Complete)*** has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

* SO… What is it that is complete?
  + Our Cessationists friends say that it is the scriptures, And since we have the Bible we no longer need all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
  + We Charismatic leaning believers say that only the return of Jesus will make things perfect and until then we need and ENJOY the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The boom of Joel seems to back us up too…
* **Joel 2:28** "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” ***WHAT DAYS? The LAST days***

**OUR CURRENT SPIRITUAL CONDITION**

11 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.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then **(Someday)** face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.  **IE, Know everything.**

* When we look into our bible… IT is sweet… It is a blessing… Life changing even… BUT.. Will some of you agree with me that it sometimes leaves me scratching my head? Like: What?? Job’s friend said what??
  + Look, the more you read the Bible the more you will understand… But when will we “V 12 - **know just as I am also known?”**
* IE, when will we know everything about heaven? WHEN WE SEE JESUS! Face to face.
* Until then, we need the gifts!
* MOSTLY though… we need LOVE!

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

**COURSON** - **Faith** looks back. Faith tells me Jesus came. Faith allows me to embrace what Jesus did for me on the Cross. Faith reminds me that my sins are forgiven. Therefore, I don't have to worry about or be haunted by my past.

**Hope** looks ahead. Hope tells me Jesus is coming. Hope reminds me I don't have to be upset or uptight about the future.

**Love** looks around. Love tells me Jesus is here. Love frees me in the present.

**1Corinthians 14:1** Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts,* but especially that you may prophesy.