

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

May 28th, 2023

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1 Corinthians 13:1-13 – The Most Excellent Way

1. Why is love essential? (vv. 1-3, 8-12)

2. What is love, essentially? (vv. 4-7, 13)

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper

2. Read verses 1-3. How were the Corinthians seeking to establish their spiritual status (see 1 Corinthians 12:29-30; compare 1 Corinthians 8:1-3)? How does Paul correct their thinking? Why is love the proof that we are genuine followers of Jesus (compare John 13:34-35)?
3. Read verses 8-12. According to Paul, why should the Corinthians pursue love (rather than gifts) as their highest priority? What will endure into eternity? What won't? How should this reshape the Corinthians' use of the gifts? How should it reshape the way we look at all of our goals and life ambitions?
4. In verses 4-6, Paul lists some of love's characteristics. Why did the Corinthians need to hear this list? How were they being envious (v. 4; compare 3:2-3), boastful and arrogant (v. 4; compare 3:18, 8:1-2; 14:37), rude (v. 5; compare 11:2-16), self-seeking (v. 5; compare 10:23-24), and resentful (v. 5; compare 6:6-8)? How were they delighting in evil rather than rejoicing with the truth (v. 6; compare 5:1-2)?
5. In verse 7, Paul says that love, "*believes all things,*" and "*hopes all things.*" How *shouldn't* we understand these statements? What connection is Paul making between faith, hope, and enduring love? How does this help us understand Paul's summary statement in verse 13; "*So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*" Why is love the "*greatest*" of these three?

Application:

6. Read again through vv. 4-7, but replace the word "*love*" with your name (e.g. "*Jeff is patient and kind*"). What stands out to you from this exercise? Where do you need to grow in showing love?
7. Love is not something we can manufacture. It is a response to believing in Christ's love (Galatians 2:20) and hoping in Christ's future (Colossians 1:4-5). Where is hard for you to show love right now? What truth about Christ's love, or Christ's future, do you need to meditate on?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?