

The Power of Love

Scripture:

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Introduction:

The Christian experience is all about love. It was love that brought us into the kingdom of God. It was love that caused someone to reach out to us when we were lost and undone. It's love that motivates us to worship God and serve Him. It's love that makes us want to touch the world with the message of the cross. It's love that binds us together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

The true test of Christianity is our love.

1 John 4:7-8 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

I. Meaningless Activities (vs. 1-3)

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ²And 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. ³And 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."

- A. Being really "spiritual" without love means absolutely nothing.
- B. No matter how much we know or how much faith we have, it's value is lost without love.
- C. Satisfaction is misplaced when deeds are done with the wrong motivation.
- D. The motivation for all that we do must be love. It must come from the heart and not just be a duty to perform.

II. A true motivation of love does no harm.

1 Corinthians 13:4-6 "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;"

- A. Love does not envy.
 - 1. Envy is mentioned as one of the works of the flesh.
Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy,"
 - 2. Cain killed Able because of envy.
1 John 3:11-12 "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹²not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother."
 - 3. Envy will cause a person to be just as wicked as Cain even though we don't use a knife or gun.
- B. Loves does not show off nor have to be "top dog".
 - 1. Arrogance is the result of a "know-it-all", "show-it-all spirit.
 - 2. It's more satisfying to have others sing your praises.
 - 3. Love esteems others rather than self.
Philippians 2:3 "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."
- C. Love is not rude.
 - 1. Who wants to hang around rude people.
 - 2. Love will cause us to be polite and courteous.
- D. Love does not always have to have its own way.

Romans 15:1-2 "We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification."

- E. Love is not provoked.
 - 1. Christians should be people of peace.
 - 2. We should always have our feet show with the gospel of peace.
 - 3. Anger problems must be dealt with if we claim to be true Christians.
James 1:19-20 "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
- F. Love does everything in its power to avoid evil.
 - 1. People may hurt us but we refuse to take vengeance.
Romans 12:21 "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
 - 2. We're even told to love our enemies.
Luke 6:27-28 "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."
- G. Love does not rejoice in iniquity.
 - 1. Because of love, I cannot help but hurt when those around me are caught up in unrighteousness.
 - 2. I can't feel good that they "will get what they deserve".

III. Love hangs in there no matter what the circumstances are.

I Corinthians 13:4-7 "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

- A. Love suffers long.
 - 1. One of the fruit of the spirit is longsuffering.
Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."
 - 2. God puts up with me, I ought to be able to put up with others.
- B. Love hangs in there with kindness.
 - 1. It's not always easy to be kind when we have been wronged.
 - 2. Love demands that we give out what we have received from God.
Ephesians 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."
- C. When things get tough love demands that we bear all things.
 - 1. When I see or experience injustice I must call upon the love of Christ.
I Peter 4:8 "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."
 - 2. When we get close to one another we make unpleasant discoveries about each other. Will we love anyway?
- D. Love helps us to believe all things.
 - 1. Why look for the faults in people when we can look for the best in them.
 - 2. Looking for the best might just bring it out of them.
 - 3. Don't discourage your brothers or sisters by sharing shortcomings of the saints with them.
- E. The love of God helps us to have hope.
 - 1. Because love is working in us, we can sing in the rain or the sunshine.
 - 2. God has been too good to us for us to be pessimistic.

High Hopes
Frank Sinatra
Writer(s): Cahn/Van Heusen

Next time your found, with your chin on the ground
There a lot to be learned, so look around

Just what makes that little old ant
Think he'll move that rubber tree plant
Anyone knows an ant, can't
Move a rubber tree plant

But he's got high hopes, he's got high hopes
He's got high apple pie, in the sky hopes

So any time your gettin' low
'stead of lettin' go
Just remember that ant
Oops there goes another rubber tree plant

When troubles call, and your back's to the wall
There a lot to be learned, that wall could fall

Once there was a silly old ram
Thought he'd punch a hole in a dam
No one could make that ram, scam
He kept buttin' that dam

'Cause he had high hopes, he had high hopes
He had high apple pie, in the sky hopes

So any time your feelin' bad
'stead of feelin' sad
Just remember that ram
Oops there goes a billion kilowatt dam

All problems just a toy balloon
They'll be bursted soon
They're just bound to go pop
Oops there goes another problem kerplop

3. All things are still working together for our good.

Romans 8:28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

F. We can hang in there because love gives us the power to endure all things.

1. Love gave Jesus the power to endure his suffering.
2. It was love that enabled Father God to endure the sacrifice of His only begotten Son.
3. Being a Christian may, at times, not be easy, but love sustains us.

I Peter 4:12-14 *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”*