

1 Corinthians 13

Norview Baptist Church

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The Holy Bible, New International Version. Pradis CD-ROM:1Co 13:1.

^{1Co 13:1} If I speak in the tongues ^{32 n} of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

^{1Co 13:2} If I have the gift of prophecy ^o and can fathom all mysteries ^p and all knowledge, ^q and if I have a faith ^r that can move mountains, ^s but have not love, I am nothing.

^{1Co 13:3} If I give all I possess to the poor ^t and surrender my body to the flames, ^{33 u} but have not love, I gain nothing.

^{1Co 13:4} Love is patient, ^v love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ^w

^{1Co 13:5} It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, ^x it is not easily angered, ^y it keeps no record of wrongs. ^z

^{1Co 13:6} Love does not delight in evil ^a but rejoices with the truth. ^b

^{1Co 13:7} It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ^c

^{1Co 13:8} Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, ^d they will cease; where there are tongues, ^e they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

^{1Co 13:9} For we know in part ^f and we prophesy in part,

^{1Co 13:10} but when perfection comes, ^g the imperfect disappears.

^{1Co 13:11} When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways ^h behind me.

^{1Co 13:12} Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; ⁱ then we shall see face to face. ^j Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ^k

^{1Co 13:13} And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. ^l But the greatest of these is love. ^m

Intro:

When we are visiting new churches what criteria do we use to decide on a good church. Is it a preacher who gives a rousing sermon, or maybe we look for music that is moving. Some of us might want Sunday school or small groups that speak into our lives God's truth and help us to understand the Bible better. Maybe we want a church that is exercising great faith and seeing results from it. Or it may be that we want to belong to a church that has a great outreach ministry and even has members of the congregation on the mission's field.

What ministry is essential to you?

I. The Necessity of Love

A. Tongues

^{1Co 13:1} If I speak in the tongues ^{32 n} of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

1. γλωσσωλαλια – The speaking in an unknown language, or tongue. Commentators are divided as to whether Paul is referring to actual languages or any form of ecstatic speech,
2. “men and of angels” – Paul is extending the application of his principle as far as it can go. The wider application is to any form of speech in the church that is not submitted to the principle of love.
3. Without love the speaking ministry of the church is nothing more than a noisy instrument.

B. Prophecy and Faith

^{1Co 13:2} If I have the gift of prophecy ^o and can fathom all mysteries ^p and all knowledge, ^q and if I have a faith ^r that can move mountains, ^s but have not love, I am nothing.

1. “Prophecy in its widest range and faith at its utmost stretch – in those lacking love, both ‘amount to nothing.’” – G. Findlay
2. προφητειαν και ειδω τ. μυστ. παντα και πασαν την γνωσ. – probably referring to the supernatural revelation that God discloses about himself to people and the ability to fully understand that revelation.
3. Applying this to our church is someone who God speaks to either through Scripture or some other way, and those who can fully grasp and understand it.
4. Faith is the trusting response to prophesy. When God reveals something about Himself faith is our acting on that revelation.
5. “that can move Mountains” – referring to Jesus’ teaching that one can move mountains with faith.
6. Without love am nothing – Even with supernatural abilities to know about God and His ways and a supernatural faith that acts it out a person is “nothing” without love.

C. Giving and Witnessing

^{1Co 13:3} If I give all I possess to the poor^t and surrender my body to the flames,^{33 u} but have not love, I gain nothing.

1. “give all I possess to the poor” – Someone who sells all they have and give to those without.
2. “surrender my body to the flames” – The image here is someone who is being burned alive for the faith. This martyrdom was considered the ultimate witness of a person’s life.
3. ουδεν ωφελουμαι – “Nothing do I gain/profit.” Without love neither charity nor witnessing profit anything.

II. Attributes of Love

- Love is so important Paul did not want the Corinthians to assume their obedience, but spelled out specifically what love entailed.

A. What it is:

^{1Co 13:4} Love is patient,^v love is kind.

^{1Co 13:7} It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.^c

1. Patient and Kind – Puts up with a lot as well as give out a lot of goodness.
2. Protects and trusts – Ensures the safety of another and assures the belief of another.
3. Hopes and perseveres – Hope is future trust and perseverance is consistent protection.

B. What its not

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.^w

^{1Co 13:5} It is not rude, it is not self-seeking,^x

it is not easily angered,^y it keeps no record of wrongs.^z

^{1Co 13:6} Love does not delight in evil^a but rejoices with the truth.^b

1. Envy, boast, proud – Love does not make judgments about the neighbor. Love does not wish to be better than another nor does it delight in the debasement of another.
2. Rude, self-seeking – Love does not look out for its own interest to the detriment of others.
3. easily angered, keeps wrong records – Love does not take offense easily or hold on to that offense once taken.
4. delight in evil, rejoices with the truth – Love is not concerned with the advancement of evil but is ready to celebrate the truth of God manifested in good deeds.

III. The Permanence of Love

^{1Co 13:8} Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, ^d they will cease; where there are tongues, ^e they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ^{1Co 13:9} For we know in part ^f and we prophesy in part, ^{1Co 13:10} but when perfection comes, ^g the imperfect disappears.

^{1Co 13:11} When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways ^h behind me. ^{1Co 13:12} Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; ⁱ then we shall see face to face. ^j Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ^k

^{1Co 13:13} And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. ^l But the greatest of these is love. ^m

- A. “Love never fails.” – In contrast to the rest of the Corinthians ministries love was guaranteed to succeed and endure.
- B. Prophecies, Tongues, knowledge... - The future ending of a temporal necessity.
- C. In part...when perfection come... - Clearly not referring to the Bible as that would be introducing a foreign idea to the context. Most likely talking about the return of Christ. When Christ returns the temporary ministries will pass away.
- D. Child, reflection, knowing – The contrast between the passing and imperfect temporal ministry and the superior state of the redeemed. Also implying that none of the Corinthians has all the answers. We all have pieces of the picture but none of us has the whole thing.
- E. Faith, hope, love – Faith secures our past state of justification, hope looks to the future deliverance, but love is how we should conduct ourselves daily. The greatest virtue of all three is love.