



Weekly Booster

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Love Beyond Words: Exploring the Depths of 1 Corinthians 13

In the vast repository of biblical wisdom, few passages capture the essence of love as beautifully as 1 Corinthians 13. Often read or recited at weddings, this chapter transcends the romantic context, offering profound insights into the nature of love that extends far beyond human attraction, emotion, or effort.

There are two facets to Paul's short dissertation on love that we will examine in this post. First, we will look at the different verses and statements Paul writes in the context of the wider letter. Second, we will explore what these statements mean to us today as we look at ourselves in the mirror of our network of relationships.

But first, to set the context for this discussion, let's start at the beginning.

God Is a God of Love

The reason why Paul can say what he does about love in the context of his letter to the church at Corinth is that God, our Creator and Sustainer, is first and foremost a loving God. He loved us so much that he sent his only Son to come to earth to live, teach, suffer, die, and be resurrected. In so doing, he saved us from our sin and opened the way for us to have an eternal life spent in a relationship with him. In all this, he demonstrated the kind of cosmic sacrificial love that should fire any discussion of love among us and our spouses—or anyone else with whom we come into contact.

Continued page 2.

Quote

“Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.” Oprah Winfrey

Reminders**February 18th**

Sunday Service 9:00 a.m.
Men's Breakfast – 8:00 a.m.

February 20th

Ad Board Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

February 21st

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.
Choir – 5:30 p.m.
Bell Choir – 6:30 p.m.

February 22nd

T.O.P.S.

February 27th

Lenten Study begins with
Bishop Kennetha
See Booster for more information

****No Men's Saturday Bible Study
Until Spring - TBA**

****Worship Assistants are needed
for February 18th, 25th**

**** Fellowship Volunteers needed
sign-up in Fellowship Hall**



**Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday
to Deliver Meals
Sign-Up Sheet is on the
Welcome Center Counter**

Love Beyond Words - Continued from page 1.

In short, God calls us to love one another (see John 13:34–35; cf. Romans 13:10; 1 Corinthians 8:1; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 4:16; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 4:8). When we do, we model what it means to be loving in a sacrificial way toward others in our lives, even when they are decidedly unlovable (as we all are at times).

Jesus was as clear as he could have possibly been when he said, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). He is our ultimate example and inspiration.

1 Corinthians 13 in Context

The letter to the Corinthians that Paul wrote addressed the church that he, Silas, and Timothy had established on his second missionary journey. Corinth was a prosperous town that was situated at the crossroads of commerce in its surrounding region. Therefore, the members of the church to whom Paul wrote this letter were a little further socioeconomically removed from other early church congregations: They lived in relative comfort and had most of their basic needs met.

The church at Corinth was set in a Hellenistic (Greek) context, both culturally and religiously. There were twelve places of worship to multiple deities in the city at the time Paul lived and worked there with his Christian friends Aquila and Priscilla. Because of these and other influences, the fledgling church struggled with immaturity and immorality, and Paul wrote this letter in response to what he had heard about the church after his tenure in Corinth was over.

When we look at this wonderful chapter today, we can easily find aspirational concepts to integrate into our lives. Again, that's why this passage is so often read at wedding ceremonies. But Paul wrote these words to the church in the context of how they used their spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–11) and how they communicated with one another. To a church that was rife with conflict, Paul spoke these words to encourage them to love one another as an act of preserving the unity of the body of believers in their town (see 1 Corinthians 12:11–30).

Continued page 6.

Quote

“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, ‘What? You too? I thought I was the only one!’” C.S. Lewis

Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church
Please wear your name tag on Sunday mornings




Church Office Hours

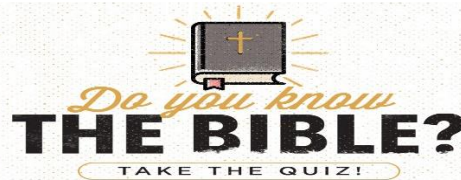
**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School – PK-6 during service, Jr/Sr High at 10:30 a.m.**

****Choir –** Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m.
****Bell Choir –** Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch.

Monday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Tuesday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Wednesday
CLOSED
Thursday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Friday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in advance if you need in the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine please leave your name, number, and a brief message and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned the next business day.



Out of what has God called us into his marvelous light according to the book of 1 Peter?
a) luxury lifestyle
b) our comfort zone
c) darkness
d) ignorance

Which city's walls collapsed on the 7th day?
a) Jericho
b) Samaria
c) Jerusalem
d) Shechem

How did Jacob deceive his father?
a) his father was deaf
b) his father couldn't see
c) his father was drunk
d) his father was in a dark tent

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



19th – Sharon Hiser, Barb Williamson
21st – Darin Athen, Larry Cowherd
23rd – Linda Haldane
24th – Anna Priebe, Ryan Richardson

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the office, or send an email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

**Leader: The time is fulfilled; the reign of God has come near.
Repent, and believe the good news!**

People: Lead us in your truth, O God of our salvation.

**L: We come to worship the Beloved, the true child of God, with
whom God is well pleased.**

P: Help us to know your ways, O God, and teach us your paths.

“EXPAND YOUR MIND”

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:9-15

Songs

This Is My Father's World #144

Spirit Song #347

Down to the River to Pray #3164

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship – 72

On-Line Worship – technology issues

Our Mission:

“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”

Our Vision:

**“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a
difference in our world.”**

**Answers for Jan 11th are b) leprosy c) Jacob b) sin offering
Quiz hints – Q1) 1 Peter Q2) Joshua Q3) Genesis**

February 2024

Jelly, Spaghetti Sauce and Pasta (any kind), Potato Flakes, Boxed Potatoes, Cake, Brownie, Cookie, and Muffin Mixes, Hot Chocolate Mix, Pancake Mix and Syrup, Soda & Snack Crackers, Cereal, Bar Soap, Deodorant, Shampoo & Conditioner.



There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals with their food items home. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

Bring Your Change to Make a Change

*Collected each Sunday after
the children's message*



"Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and also teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children's Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from your pockets or purse. The money donated in February will go to the Meals On Wheels program.

Each Sunday attendance is taken electronically by checking of names of individuals in attendance that Sunday. Our guest each week is then added in for a final count. You can look at your attendance record in OneChurch. Each of you has individual accounts so you can look at your information at any time you like. You are not able to see other members' information unless they have agreed to share only their contact information.



Taking attendance online is difficult each week but only concurrent numbers are recorded. The church must report certain information each year and online attendance is one of the requirements. Starting this Sunday if you are watching online will you please just type your name in the chat area so a better count can be taken? If you have others watching with you, please list their names as well. Your help is appreciated.

Love Beyond Words - Continued from page 2.

That said, let's look at this amazing chapter and unpack it part by part.

1 Corinthians 13 Today***Our Best Efforts Fail Without Love***

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing (vv. 1–3).

Paul uses hyperbole in his instructions to his readers in the church, establishing a comparison between doing something with love as opposed to doing it without love. (Think of Mother Teresa without the acts of service.)

Here Paul speaks to an individual's motivations as much as anything else. Evidently in the church, there were reports of people using their material and spiritual gifts to make others feel small of setting up comparisons and feeding personal pride rather than considering the abilities and situations of others. Here Paul asserts that even if he had superhuman knowledge paired with all the sacrificial goodness one could ever hope to demonstrate, none of it would mean anything without the gracious foundation of love underneath it.

How often do the littlest, tiniest things in our relationships trip us up? How often do we make molehills into mountains, and in so doing make others feel "less than"? This happens in our everyday relationships—both in our marriages and families and in our work relationships. Consider the husband whose eagle eye on the bank account makes his wife feel controlled, her generosity restricted; the boss whose dogged determination to prop up his or her image leaves peers and employees swimming in a wake of despair; the mother whose sole focus seems to be on whether or not her children present the right image of her to the other families at school and at church.

Each of these situations is loaded with potential for good, but each of them can also be corrupted when love isn't present. So, when we go above and beyond for someone and expect their gratitude—or worse, make them feel like they now owe us a favor—that's the kind of situation Paul is talking about here.

Try as we might, all our efforts to build into the lives of others will backfire unless the foundation underneath those efforts is love consideration, and concern for the people with whom we live our lives.

What Love Is

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (vv. 4–7).

Here Paul's instructions were specific for the people in the church at Corinth. As they related to one another, this was the standard they were being called to uphold. In every single facet that Paul described, they were to treat each other in a way that built unity, that pulled their church family closer together, that demonstrated and reflected Jesus' love.

Please take the time to look carefully at each statement in this passage. As we interact with others in our families and our wider relational circle, how do we demonstrate the patience, kindness, humility, and consideration for others that we as Christians are all called to reflect?

Are we ever self-seeking? Easily angered? Do we keep a ledger of wrongs that other people have inflicted against us? Do we ever rejoice when something bad happens to someone we know? As we relate to our spouses and children, is our first instinct to protect them, to trust that they are in God's care and doing the right thing, to hope for the best for them? And during those times when they are unlovable, do we persevere in showing them love?

Imagine the looks around the room when this letter was read to the gathered congregation for the very first time. These words convict us today just as much as they did the people who first heard them. Paul's call to love is a straight-up call to self-sacrifice, to trust in God, and to hope for the best, brightest future for all whom we encounter daily.

This constitutes a call to a perspective on life that relentlessly puts the needs of others before our own. Why? Because that's what Jesus did for all of us, and that's how we reflect his love to others. And when we do, unity is encouraged; family grows closer; marriages are healed; estranged relationships are restored.

Think about this: What is the first fruit of the spirit? "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)).

Here Paul again reinforces his main point: no matter our situation or circumstance, followers of Jesus should have love as their first impulse.

Love Is Permanent

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears (vv. 8–10).

Here Paul speaks directly to the issues that plagued the early church at Corinth. While some people put their gifts on display to perhaps fuel their pride, the only result was division and dissension. Paul reminds these gathered people that all gifts and all knowledge will eventually pass away. After all, no one on this earth throughout history, let alone in that early church, had a handle on God's full revelation. How could they and how could we? We are, after all, imperfect human beings living in a fallen world.

Paul also speaks to priorities here. Unity amid diversity is a calling for all believers who find themselves in a community. Is there a worship leader who hangs on to his or her Sunday spotlight like it's a right instead of a privilege? That voice, that ability to play an instrument, and even that passion to lead others in worship will pass away. What won't pass away? The love shown to others when we allow them to participate, and even make way for them to lead in their way. This is just one example of many we could point to in the context of church life.

As the authors of the *NIV Study Bible* write, "Love supersedes the gifts because it outlasts them all. Long after these sought-after gifts are no longer necessary, love will still be the governing principle that controls all that God, and his redeemed people are and do."

How many of us can read "Love never fails" and look in the mirror and say, "Yeah, that's me. I never fail to show love to my family or friends or coworkers." Truly, the wise writer of Ecclesiastes said it best: "Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Any parent will tell you that they fail. Sadly, for most of us, the memories of times we have failed to show love far outweigh the memories of the love we've shown to others.

Yes, we fail. We are human. But there is another who was just like us, and he understands what it's like to live in our context. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:15–16).

What never fails? The love of God for his people. For those of us who fail—and that's every single one of us—God's love and grace never has failed, and it never will fail.

The Pursuit of Maturity

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 the ways of childhood behind me. For now, we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known (vv. 11–12).

Mentioned earlier was the widely held belief that the members of the church of Corinth were immature in their understanding of the Christian life. They allowed deviations from God's commands to infiltrate their congregation and normalized unacceptable behavior on many levels. Here Paul called them to understanding, to maturity, and to a perspective that looked beyond the petty issues that caused division in the church. Paul called them instead to look to the example of Jesus himself, who demonstrated for us in his teachings and in his actions just what sacrificial love for one another looks like.

In our own families, how often do we see maturity issues? This question is different for families who have toddlers than it is for families whose kids are adults. But the realities are the same no matter what the circumstances are: We are called to move forward in the ways we relate to one another, not backward.

When our little kids move into a new phase of life, we encourage their growth and celebrate those milestones. As adults, do we do the same? Does the discovery of the first gray hair elicit the same celebration? Okay, maybe that's a bad example, but Paul calls believers to maturity and the pursuit of Bible-centric wisdom and knowledge with Jesus as our shining example. As we prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to help us to become more like Jesus, our position should be one of expectant forward motion in the Christian life: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

All That's Left in the End

And now these three remain faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love (v. 13).

How did the first hearers of this message respond to this last statement? One would hope that they would engrave it in stone and hang it in the front of their gathering place. As should we all.

Of all the things that Paul has talked about in this chapter—superhuman knowledge, sacrificial attitudes, and actions, prophecies, tongues, gifts, and abilities—only three things will last. In the Christian life, these three summarize all of the fruits of the spirit and stand alongside Jesus' call to love God and love others.

In response to a question about which commandments were the greatest, Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest

commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37–40). Place these three things in that same category.

Among those who pursue a relationship with Jesus, faith, hope and love will always endure, no matter what else disappears. But the greatest of all Christian virtues—the one that most reflects the heart- and soul-altering life of Jesus in the life of a believer—is the ability and the motivation of the individual and the congregation to give love away.

When we show the love of Jesus to a broken and hurting world, we defy the darkness of our current age. Hearts are changed; people get the help they need; the message of the gospel moves forward; and our personal lives, our families, our workplaces, and our church homes move toward a higher and better standard.

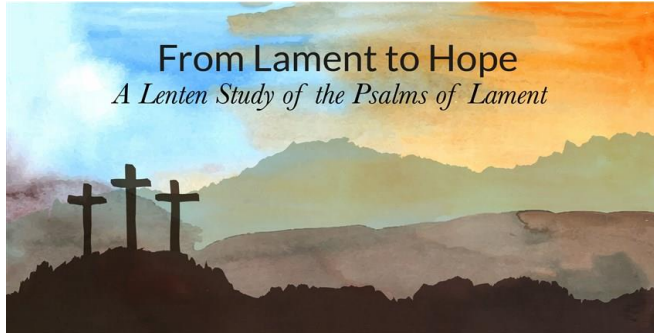
When we pursue Christian maturity in our hearts and lives, we will also foster the best aspects of love in our lives. As love for Jesus and love for others grows in our hearts, we will demonstrate patience, kindness, and lack of envy, boastfulness, or pride. We will not dishonor others, be self-seeking, be easily angered, or keep any record of wrongs. We will not delight in evil but rejoice with the truth. We will always protect, always trust, always hope, always persevere.

What believer in Jesus; what Christian parent, boss, leader, or influencer wouldn’t want to build those Spirit-inspired attributes into their lives? As Jesus himself said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

At the end of our lives, the one thing that believers in Jesus would most want to be known for is the love they showed for Jesus and the love they showed toward others. Here again, we look to the words of our Savior for inspiration: “By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

Adapted from the article by Mike Vander Klipp, senior editor with the Zondervan Bible Group. HarperCollins Christian Publishing. NIV Weekly Blog, All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, February 12, 2024





From Lament to Hope: A Lenten Study with Bishop Kennetha of the Psalms of Lament

The psalms were Israel's hymnbook. And psalms of lament were Israel's expression of grief in the midst of trial. For this season of Lent, Bishop Kennetha invites you to join her for a conference-wide online study that will explore both personal and communal psalms as we focus on events impacting our world and our lives. In particular, we will pray for peace in the Holy Land, Ukraine, and our own nation. As we move from Lent to Easter, we will see how the psalms can lead us to hope.

This Lenten study will give us the opportunity to strengthen our relationships with each other and with our worldwide United Methodist connection as we invite special guests to share on the topics we address. We will conclude with an annual conference-wide opportunity to worship together and take action for peace.

Sessions will be held over four Tuesday nights (February 27, March 5, March 12, and March 19) on Zoom beginning at 7:00 pm. Participants will have an opportunity for conversation and prayer in breakout rooms.

Register here <https://bit.ly/4bjalA6> or scan the QR code





We have begun the season of Lent. Historically this is a season of conversion. Often, we think of conversion as a one-time event, but the reality of our walk with Christ is that there is a need for continual conversion. Every day, Christ calls us to lay down our lives and take up our cross. For many of us this might look like letting go of our need to be right, our need to receive praise from others, our need to feel comfortable, or our need to fit in with others. The cross is the embodiment of the faithfulness of Christ. This Lent, will you heed the call for conversion? The call to lay down your life and take up your cross?

Grace and peace,
Pastor David B. Clark

