

You may remember—several months ago—we began to consider this chapter of Scripture—and it's my intention—to continue our break from Romans long enough to complete it—I assume it will take somewhere between 8-10 sermons...

If you recall—I introduced this series—by providing a threefold justification for considering this chapter—[1] love is often misunderstood, that is—love is often reduced to a mere feeling or emotion—where here we learn that while love includes our emotions it also entails our actions as well, [2] love is often neglected—that is especially true of us who call themselves reformed Christians—in that we can over-react to the contemporary misuse and abuse of love—we can be tempted to think—love is for the liberal and non theological Christian, and [3] love is absolutely essential—that is—it's at the heart of true religion—it is both a summary of the law and the end of the gospel...

Furthermore—you may recall—I suggested the chapter can be divided into three parts—[1] the importance of love (vv1-3), [2] the character of love (vv4-7), and [3] the permanence of love (vv8-13)—having already considered the first part (vv1-3)—what I want to do today—both this morning and evening—is begin to examine the various attributes of love as found in vv4-7—considering the first one this morning and the second one this evening—yet I want to preface this sermon with some introductory thoughts on love in general—thus our two heads for this morning will be—An Introduction (to the theme of love), and An Examination (of the first attribute)...

- I. An Introduction (to the theme of love)
- II. An Examination (of the first attribute)

- I. An Introduction (to the theme of love)

1. Here I want to provide three important facts—that must be kept in mind—throughout our study of this section...
2. I want to consider these facts—under the three questions [1] how are we to love?—that is—where do we get the strength to love...
3. It is absolutely essential to remember—the love described in our text—is what we might call an evangelical love...
4. That is—a love that is produced by the gospel—a distinctly Christian love—a love know only to Christian people...
5. Thus—my point is this—we are not able to imitate this love—by merely willing it—or working hard enough...
6. Perhaps I can put it this way—the only way the law can be fulfilled—is by the gospel—or abiding in Christ...
7. Rom.3:31—"do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law [by faith]..."
8. That is—faith which unites us to Christ—establishes the law—or it puts the law upright—or in its proper place...
9. How can Christian people do the law—or love—but by faith in Christ—or trusting Christ and abiding in Christ...
10. Thus—throughout this study—we must keep in mind—I am not merely exhorting us—to try harder to love...
11. If you and I—are to grow in love—we must look to Christ—we abide in Christ—we must find strength in Christ...
12. Now—I mention this on the front end—because in looking at love—we are looking at the law—what we are to be and do...
13. And the law can only be done (in a right that is pleasing to God)—by those who are not under law but grace...

14. They are in union with Christ—indwelt by the Spirit—have a new heart—and constrained by the love of Christ...
15. Thus—at the risk of sounding like a broken-record—we obey the law as Christians—who are in union with Christ...
16. Notice [2] who are we to love?—that is—what is the primary context wherein evangelical love is to be seen...
17. Well obviously—the law demands that we love God and our neighbor—which can be best defined as—every one...
18. We are to love our husbands, wives, children, parents, literal neighbors, extended families, and even enemies...
19. Yet—I want to point out something—that is often overlooked—the primary context of love is the local church...
20. This would become evident—if we were to read straight through this letter—some within the church were unloving...
21. They lacked everything that love is—they were quick to seek revenge, unkind, proud, self-seeking, and jealous...
22. Thus—Paul basically exhorts them to love—what they needed above and behold all else—was more love...
23. 1Cor.12:31—"but earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way"—the way of love...
24. The specific problem Paul was addressing—was the issue of spiritual gifts—gifts exercised within the church...
25. They were seeking and exercising these gifts in a haughty and selfish manner—thus ch.13 is between 12 and 14—chapters that address spiritual gifts...
26. My point—just as spiritual gifts are intended primarily for the local church—so is the outworking of love...
27. Let me put this as plain as I can—first and foremostly—you and I have an obligation to love those in this church...
28. If you are a member of this church—you covenanted to take this church as your immediate spiritual family...
29. Let me illustrate—all Christians comprise a single family—yet—local churches comprise immediate families...
30. For example—my extended family includes siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, and nieces...
31. These—are my extended family (family yes—but extended family)—my wife and children are my immediate family...
32. So too—while all Christians are members of our extended family—this church—is our immediate family...
33. Here's my concern—there are some of you—who only associate with those in church—who think just like you...
34. Yet—let me ask you—do you ignore those in your immediate family—who think or act differently than you...
35. For example—I have children who like rocks, stars, cooking, and reading—yet—they comprise one family...
36. God has providentially—put them in one family—while they love their cousins—they love each other more...
37. You see—it's rather easy to move through a passage like this and agree—this is how love is to look and act...
38. Yet—it is altogether another thing—to look around you and say—I am to love these people in this manner...
39. Thus—as we move through these attributes of love—keep in mind they are manifest primarily in the church...
40. Notice [3] where is love perfectly illustrated?—here of course I refer to Christ—the embodiment of true love...

41. Thus—it's my goal—throughout these sermons—to constantly and consistently—point you to Christ—our example...
42. For brethren—we must remember—that while Christ is foremostly our Savior—He is also our perfect example...
43. Some months ago—I preached two sermons on the subject—Jesus our Law-fulfiller—He perfectly obeyed the law...
44. This perfect obedience answers the just demands of the law and serves as the only basis of our acceptance with God...
45. Thus—I suggest to you—as we work through these verses—we find in them a picture of our beloved Savior...
46. In other words—what is true of love is true of Him—He is patient, kind, does not envy, does not parade himself, etc...
47. Perhaps I could put it like this—what we find here in 1Cor.13:4-7—is a beautiful portrait or picture of Christ...
48. Thus—we must ever be mindful—our hope before God is not our love—but Christ's love—which is perfect...

## II. An Examination (of the first attribute)

### A. Meaning

1. The Greek word rendered "patience" or "suffers long"—is literally a compound word—meaning—to long suffer...
2. The English word patient is a good word—yet—it can be misleading—as patience is often reduced to mere waiting...
3. For example—if I told my children they were to the zoo next week—I might say—they needed to be patient...
4. Yet—our word (long suffering)—implies opposition and a cause for suffering—of suffering long before anger...
5. Thus—related to longsuffering is the phrase—"slow to wrath"—we suffer long—without becoming angry...
6. Necessary to this word—is longsuffering of mistreatment—fornearance and endurance—are related words...
7. Thus—longsuffering—is the endurance of mistreatment by others—for the right reasons and in the right way...
8. Notice [1] it endures mistreatment—that is—it tolerates and endures abuse by those who mistreat and harm us...
9. Lev.19:17-18—"you shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD..."
10. Before I go further—I would have you notice on the front end—this passage is bookended with hate and love...
11. In other words—between them—we find what hate and love look like—which may or may not—surprise you...
12. Notice [a] confronting, v17—"you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin [share] because of him..."
13. This is an evidence of hatred—failure to mention and rebuke sin when seen—"he who spares his rod hates his son..."
14. Notice [b] longsuffering, v18—"you shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people..."
15. To take vengeance is to get even, Rom.12:17—"repay no one evil for evil...(19) do not avenge yourselves..."
16. Thus—necessary to Biblical longsuffering—is the refusal to seek vengeance—against those who mistreat us...

17. Love enables us—to suffer long without seeking vengeance—to bear reproach—without repaying evil for evil...
18. Yet—love enables us to—bear mistreatment without holding a grudge—without becoming resentful and bitter...
19. It isn't merely enduring mistreatment—but it's enduring mistreatment—for the right reasons and in the right way...
20. Notice [2] it bears with others—that is—it bears long with others—even with all their weaknesses and faults...
21. 1Thess.5:14—"now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all [cp.Eph.4:1-3]..."
22. Now—what we find here are—three kinds of people—found in the church—the unruly, fainthearted, and weak...
23. Individual counsel with regards to each one is given—warn the unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak...
24. He then provides a general statement—which describes how these things are to be done—"be patient with all..."
25. That is—we are to be patient (or suffer long) while warning, comforting, and upholding—those in the church...
26. For brethren—I hope it goes without saying—that Paul is speaking about those in the church—not outside it...
27. Thus—without being overly dramatic—I suggest to you that most churches—have all three of these within it...
28. Notice [a] warn the unruly—that is—those who walk out of order or place—they transgress God's word or law...
29. Such people are to be warned, exhorted, or cautioned—we are to point out to them—they right and good way...
30. Now—this does not refer to those who are acting contrary to our opinion—but contrary—to the word of God...
31. Such people are to be warned or exhorted—with all patience and longsuffering—we are to bear long with them...
32. Notice [b] comfort the fainthearted—the timid and fearful—perhaps the best word would be—discouraged...
33. Such people easily grow downcast and dejected—they often doubt their condition—their standing before God...
34. Such people need comfort—they need encouragement—they need to be reminded of the great gospel truths...
35. Do you know anyone like this—what does such a person need—they need the comfort of the gospel of God...
36. Notice [c] uphold the weak—the feeble and frail—those without strength—those who easily stumble or fall...
37. Such people as this must be distinguished from the unruly—as they are humbled by and because of their sins...
38. Yet—they are weak—they need help—they need people to come along-side—they need support and help...
39. Such people need help this week—and such people will need help next week—and they may need it the next week...
40. How are we to work with such people—we are to suffer long with them—we are to show patience towards them...
41. Notice [3] it forgives quickly—that is—it extends forgiveness again and again—to those who seek it in truth...
42. Prov.10:12—"hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins" Prov.17:9—"he who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends..."
43. 1Pet.4:8—"and above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins..."

44. Col.3:12-13—"therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do..."

#### B. Motives

1. Here—I simply want to provide three general motives or means—to grow in love—and thus—in patience...
2. Notice [1] ponder the beauty of longsuffering—that is—longsuffering renders a person morally attractive or beautiful...
3. Fewer things will distinguish you from this evil world—than a patient, forbearing, and longsuffering spirit...
4. Native and foolish man—is quick to anger—and swift to get even—proud man—refuses to be mistreated...
5. O but what saving and sanctifying grace does to a man—it renders him supernatural—slow to anger—patient...
6. Prov.16:32—"he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city..."
7. Prov.19:11—"the discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory *is* to overlook a transgression..."
8. Notice [2] remember God's longsuffering—since love is longsuffering and God is love—God suffers long...
9. Rom.2:4—"or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness [kindness] of God leads you to repentance..."
10. Here we find both attributes of love—that we are considering today—longsuffering and goodness (kindness)...
11. That is—God not only forbears or suffers long with man sin—but He is kind toward Him—every and all day...
12. Oh—dear brethren—how patient is God toward hell-deserving sinners—how slow He is to wrath or anger...
13. Ps.103:8—"the LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy"—patient toward sinners...
14. Oh—dear Christian—contemplate how patient the Lord was to you—how long did He bear with your sins...
15. Yet—dear Christian—Isn't it true that God—your heavenly Father—still exercises great patience toward you...
16. How can we—who so desperately need the patience of God—become so quick to grow angry against others...
17. Notice [3] behold Christ's longsuffering—by this I refer to—Christ's endurance of the wrath of man and God...
18. 1Pet.2:18-24—"slaves, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed..."
19. Notice two things about Christ's longsuffering—[a] it endured man's wrath, v23—"who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten..."
20. Notice [b] it endured God's wrath, v24—"who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed..."