

The Greatest Example Of Love

No One Loved Like Him

VPB 04/28/13

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

The simplest things sometime become the most difficult to express. Humility and love at times seem to be alien to human character and thinking.

Rather than humble we sometimes reflect the attitude of the song from the 70's; "It's Hard To Be Humble When You're Perfect In Every Way".

Paul seems to be dealing with just this type attitude in his first letter to the church at Corinth. The members there had become "clannish" so to speak and prideful as to whom they had become. There was a competitive attitude among them that Paul addressed very early in the letter.

Chapter 1:10-13

10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. **11** For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. **12** What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." **13** Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

So there were divisions among the people as to who they belonged to and possibly they thought that one person either Apollos, Paul, or Cephas was superior to the others and that it was more beneficial for them to be members of that particular group.

It had even lead to an attitude of jealousy among the church which had produced strife and unspiritual behavior. With this evident they were displaying a very immature attitude which prompted Paul to question whether they had grown past infancy in the faith.

Chapter 3:1-7

1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, **3** for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? **4** For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? **5** What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. **7** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

So what he is saying is that it doesn't matter who does what because it all is because of God and the Gospel. Then in chapter 4 he reminds them of one very important fact.

4:7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

That pretty much puts an end to the argument of "I belong to this one" or "I can do this or that". There is nothing that we have not received as a gift of Grace and there is noting that we can do outside of the Spirit of God in Christ.

Then in chapter 12 Paul addresses the various spiritual gifts that those in the church have.

Some had the gift of wisdom, of knowledge, of faith, of healing, of preaching, and so on.

But he has one thing to say about all the gifts.

12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

He has a wonderful illustration in chapter 12 about the parts of the body (expound).

Now understand one thing very clearly. There is no implication here about Vineland Park Baptist Church. I want you to clearly understand that. I have no hidden motives here and actually the opposite I believe that we demonstrate just the opposite attitude than what was on display at the church in Corinth.

However in order to understand why I think we have to remember what Paul said in 4:7. "What do we have that we have not received"? If we do display this attitude it's because God has given this to us.

Now so that we don't become full of ourselves at my remarks we must remember that we also have to work to maintain this attitude or it will slip from us. Especially if we allow personalities and pride to invade our thinking. So there is a very good lesson here for us.

Now to my point of the introduction I think it is important that we establish why the Holy Spirit prompted Paul to place chapter 13 where he did in this letter. It is not here by accident or just as a coincidence. It's placed here to teach a lesson and that lesson is that love is superior about all other things.

And that if Christians have love, true love, for one another then all pride, jealousies, selfishness, self-centered thinking, and arrogance will be absent from our churches.

If we truly love one another we won't care what gifts each of us have.

So this brings us to our text this morning. Paul starts off with this. "If I have all the gifts imaginable and even give my self as a sacrifice but don't have love I'm nothing more than just a noisemaker.

Because whatever gift I have that makes me think I'm special means nothing if I don't have love.

A. THE DEFINITION OF TRUE LOVE

Love (N) (ag-ah'-pay) = brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence love feasts.

Root: (ag-ap-ah'-o) (V) = to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly of things to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing

Root: (fil-eh'-o) = to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, befriend. To like someone or to approve of them.

Root: (fee'-los) = to be friendly to someone or to wish them well.

Agahpay would contain all of the thoughts of the complete meaning to bring the word to the point that it would indicate that it's a love of total affection that was fond of someone and affectionately considered them a friend. Also going even farther it would indicate that a person would wish that someone would have a happy life and that no harm would befall them.

B. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS LOVE

1. LOVE IS PATIENT:

Patient (V) (mak-roth-oo-meh'-o) = Someone who does not lose heart, who bravely endures misfortunes and troubles. One who bears the offenses of others and is very slow to avenge, and to anger.

Paul uses this word in Hebrews 6:15 when speaking of Abraham and the promise where he said; "And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

So love is patient and waits for the promise to come. And that can apply to us as well as the promises of God. Be patient with one another beloved. Wait and be slow to become angry or to have an avenging attitude.

2. LOVE IS KIND:

Kind (V) (khraste-yoo'-om-ahee) = basically means what it says to show kindness but also to be a mild person and to use kindness toward others. (*This is the only use of this work in the NT*)

Root: (khrase-tos') = To be a manageable person or one who can manage their emotions. To be virtuous in which you would show this as a standard practice. To be mild and pleasant in contrast to sharpness and bitterness.

Paul uses this word in Romans 2:4 when speaking of the kindness of God that lead us to repentance.

Peter uses it in 1 Peter 2:3 also speaking of the kindness of the Lord.

So love is kind to the point that it even shows this kindness to someone who may not have done anything to deserve it as in what God did for us as stated in Romans 2:4.

3. LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS:

Jealous (V) (dzay-lo'-o) = To be heated or to boil with envy, hatred, or anger. To desire something earnestly and to pursue it.

This word is used by Luke in Acts 7:9 which describes the outcome of this jealous attitude. "*The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him.*"

So jealousy can have a very bad outcome. It makes us realize how important it is when the Scriptures tell us to be satisfied with what God has given us. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:11 – "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."

Jealousy and envy are contrary to the Christian's attitude of being satisfied with God's blessings and when matured can lead to disastrous outcomes in the church.

4. LOVE DOES NOT BRAG:

Brag (V) (per-per-yoo'-om-ahee) = to boast one's self. A self-display, employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one's self excessively. (*This is the only use of this work in the NT*)

Rhetorical Embellishments = A loud and obnoxious story that has added details that are false in order to make to person telling the story seem more important or influential than is actually true.

Root (per'-an) = To go beyond on the other side.

(*John uses this word in his Gospel to describe Jesus going to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, or beyond the Jordan.*)

In application here it's way out and to excess.

Braggers want to make themselves seem more important than anyone else. You ever known someone like this? If you've seen an automobile accident they've seen one worse? If you suffer with pain they have the same thing but worse?

Paul is saying here that loves doesn't act like this. Love doesn't make itself out to be more than what it really is. In fact it is quite about its abilities and accomplishments. Because, going back to what Paul said, love knows it possesses abilities only because they are gifts from God.

5. LOVE IS NOT ARROGANT:

Arrogant (V) (foo-see-o'-o) = to inflate, blow up, to cause to swell up or to be puffed up. To make oneself proud or to cause others to think of oneself as more lofty than is actually true.

Root (N) (foo'-sis) = nature of something, or being natural.

So arrogance is the opposite of what is natural and is an attempt to show superiority over others weather the fact is true or not. One can be arrogant and still be truthful in their arrogance.

Paul uses this word in Colossians 2:18 - "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind."

So arrogance is a "first cousin" to bragging in that it wants to make itself the focus of attention even if it has to make up facts in order to do so.

6. LOVE DOES NOT ACT UNBECOMINGLY:

Act Unbecomingly (V) (as-kay-mon-eh'-o) = To act unbecomingly.

Root (ADJ) (as-kay'-mone) = to be deformed or indecent.

A person acts unbecomingly with arrogance and bragging are the basis of their lives. This is a display of immaturity similar to a child when they don't get something that they want.

Bottom line: as comprising everything in a person which strikes the senses, the figure, bearing, discourse, actions, manner of life. In other words being a total jerk.

7. LOVE DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN:

Two words that when combined means that one searches ways or strives to draw attention to themselves or to their achievements. And in context here even at the expense of someone else.

8. LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED:

Provoked (V) (par-ox-oo'-no) = to exasperate or burn with anger. To make something sharp.

Luke uses the word in Acts 17:16 "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols."

This is a good use of the word in Acts but it shows that the word is in reaction to something observed by a person. In Acts Paul was justifiably provoked because of the idols.

However in the context of Ch. 13 the word carries a negative meaning in that a person is provoked because of the abilities or gifts of another. Also it's a product of jealousy, arrogance, and bragging that is a demonstration of one who seeks their own instead of being more concerned about someone else.

9. LOVE DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WRONG SUFFERED (KJV "THINKS NO EVIL")

Wrong (ADJ) (Kak-os') = something that should not be.

It gives no consideration to something done to it even though the action is undeserved and is totally wrong. An accusation or action that reflects a bad light on someone and they give no consideration to it.

Bears (V) (steg'-o) = to protect or keep by covering. As a roof covers a house.

Believes (V) (pist-yoo'-o) = to trust God through Jesus Christ for saving faith. A conviction of the truth.

Hopes (V) (el-pid'-zo) = to wait for salvation with joy and full confidence. A joyful confidence of eternal salvation.

Endures (V) (hoop-om-en'-o) = continually hold fast to one's faith in Christ through misfortunes and trials.

When love does these things what is the outcome? When love protects, believes to saving faith, hopes in the promises of God, and endures trials what will be evidenced in that life?

B. THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF LOVE

The greatest example of love is that we love each other more than we do ourselves.

Do we know Someone in Whom all of these characteristics exist?

C. THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF LOVE

And the Ultimate Example of Love is the sweet Lord Jesus Himself!

Who was ever more?

Patient or Kind.

No jealousy, although He had nothing yet everything was His.

Never bragging, although He could have.

Never acting unbecomingly, but was always in complete control.

Never arrogant, but rather had the heart of a Servant.

Who never took into account a wrong suffered, although He was denied and deserted and no One in history was wronged more than He.

Never seeking His own, instead He said; "I have come to do the will of Him Who sent Me".

No one ever protected, hoped, believed, or endured like He did.

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Beloved let us have the mind of the Apostle John as he wrote.

1 John 4:7 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."

Beloved do we love as we should?

I have to say that I have failed in all these at one time or another.

Can we confirm that we care more about each other than we do for ourselves?

Paul says this is what it important.

13:13 "But now faith, hope, love abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Do you know Him?

Amen