

Love Fulfills the Law

Various Scriptures

BI: The whole of the Law of God is fulfilled in us when we love one another.

I want to begin this morning by laying down a foundation for the significance of love. Why is loving one another so important? Why does Paul make such a big deal about it and why are we spending so much time methodically working through each of Paul's descriptions of love?

Really, the roots of the believer's call to love go all the way back to the O.T. When we think about the Bible we think of two Testaments - the O.T. and the N.T. What you may not realize is that the word Testament means "Covenant." So in reality, the Bible is made up of two covenants - the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Both were inspired by God and both were given at the appropriate times to accomplish specific purposes that God the Father established for redemptive history. What we need to understand, however, is that the law of God finds its essence in two very simple commands.

Consider this: What was the prime directive of the Old Covenant? You may remember its clearest presentation in Deut. 6:4-5. If you are a Jewish person, you know this passage as the Shemmah. Listen to what it says:

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

Beloved, this is the summary of the entire Old Covenant law. The greatest command the O.C. issued was to love God and love one another with every fiber of our being.

Now that may sound like an over-statement, but consider a few Scriptures from the New Covenant.

Matthew 22:36–40 A lawyer asked Jesus a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Romans 13:9 Paul wrote: "For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, *it is summed up in this saying*, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:14 "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

James 2:8 "If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well."

You see, beloved, according to the inspired authors of Scripture, the whole Law of God is fulfilled when we love God and love one another. Consider it this way. How many commandments did God give Moses on Mt. Sinai? Ten, right? But let's think about what those commandments say:

Commands 1-4

1. You shall have no other god's beside Me.
2. You shall not make for your selves an idol.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

These four commands are a call to love Whom? God! If a Jewish man loved God, he would have no other god before Him, he would not make for himself and idol, he would not use the Lord's name in a trite or flippant manner, and he would keep the Sabbath. So the first four commandments are about loving God. But what about the rest of the commandments?

Commands 5-10

5. Honor your father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness.
10. You shall not covet.

What's God calling us to do here? He is commanding us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. If you love your parents, you will honor them. If you love your neighbor you won't murder him. If you love your wife you won't commit adultery. If you love other people, you won't steal what is theirs, or lie about them, or covet what they have. All of this is simply to say that we should love our neighbors as ourselves.

So you see, the "two-fold law" (Love God and Love your Neighbor) is amplified into the "ten-fold law" (the Ten Commandments). But then God gave what might be called the "Manifold Law." Jewish Rabbis say that the Law of God contains 613 commandments. Whether that is true or not, I don't know. What we do know, however, is that God gave many more in addition to the Ten Commandments.

For our purposes this morning, however, its important to realize that all of God's law can be boiled down to one imperative: Love. The problem in the O.C., however, was that while it commanded people to love, it could not empower people to love.

This was no surprise to God. In fact, from the beginning He planned on establishing a second covenant. The purpose of the first covenant was to enable man to see that he was incurably sinful and in desperate need of a Savior. Turn with me to the book of Romans.

Rom. 3:20 “because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.”

Rom. 7:7. Paul writes, “I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” Again in verse 13 he explains that through the commandments, sin became utterly sinful.

You see, the commandments of the O.C. could not make anyone righteous. It was designed to expose our unrighteousness and show us our need for a Savior. The second covenant, however, would not only command, but would actually empower us to obey.

Turn with me to Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God reveals that one day He was going to do a new thing in the hearts of His people. (Read Jer. 31:31-34)

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. ³³ “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Now someone will ask, “When is this going to happen?” Good question. And the answer is even better! When will the N.C. come? It already has! Jesus Christ is the mediator of the N.C.!

Turn with me to Luke 22:20. Here Jesus is instituting the Lord’s supper and he is about to pass the cup. Watch this now: Luke writes: “And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the *new covenant* in My blood.”

With those fifteen words, Jesus announced the greatest news in all of redemptive history! The O.C. is gone! The N.C. has come! The tablets of stone are replaced by the regenerate heart. The letter is replaced by the Spirit. Condemnation is replaced by reconciliation. The ministry of death is replaced by the ministry of the Spirit who gives life. The fading glory is replaced by surpassing glory! The promised N.C. has come! And the most glorious thing about it is that it hasn’t come to change us. It has come to empower us.

Now, let me take you to one more Scripture that ties all of this together. 2 Cor. 3:14-18

You see, beloved, while the O.C. condemns us, the N.C. Transforms us. The O.C. commands us to love God and people, but it does nothing to empower us. The N.C. however, commands and empowers us to love by transforming us into the image of Christ.

Do you know what is the most often repeated command in the N.T? “Love one another.” It is the same great command of the O.C., only now we have the empowering H.S. resident inside us to make it happen.

John 13:34-25, Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.³⁵ “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 15:12 “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

John 15:17 “This I command you, that you love one another.

Romans 13:8 Paul writes, “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.

1 Peter 1:22 “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart...”

1 Peter 4:8 Peter writes, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

1 John 3:11 John writes, “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

In fact, John goes out of his way to impress upon us that if our lives are not characterized by love for others, we may not be real genuine believers at all! Listen to how he says it.

1 John 3:14 “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.”

1 John 3:23–24 “This is His commandment, *that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another*, just as He commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”

1 John 4:7–8 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

1 John 4:11–12 “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.”

You see, beloved, loving people is not a secondary by-product of being a Christian. It isn't optional! It's central to who we are as followers of Christ. If you are a child of God there is no good reason for not being a loving person. Please hear this! The supreme mark of the N.C. child of God is *NOT* Bible knowledge, or spiritual giftedness. Rather, it is holiness expressed in sacrificial love.

This is why 1 Corinthians 13 is such a big deal. If you are not a loving person, you may not even be a child of God! If you don't have any impulse to serve others and to give whatever they need that you have because God want you to, the problem might be that your religion is humanly contrived and false.

This is why Paul hammers the church at Corinth with these 15 characteristics of love. He wants us to be able to evaluate our lives to discern whether our profession of faith in Christ is true, or whether we are simply religious unbelievers.

How do I know if I'm a true child of God? One of the most significant ways is to ask yourself, am I a loving person? Has God changed my heart in such a way that has given me the capacity to love, thereby fulfilling the law. Here is the text: 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 “Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Beloved, every child of God has room to grow in all of these areas. The issue is not perfection, but direction. Nevertheless, if you are a true child of God, there should be clear evidence that the Spirit of God is at work in you to make you a more loving person. A person who loves the way Christ loves you.

Becoming a loving person is a really big deal because the whole of the Law of God is fulfilled in us when we love one another.

The Roots of Love:

Does not take into account a wrong Suffered

III. Does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth.

Key Scriptures:

V. 26

Key Terms

Exegetical Outline

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is **patient**,

love is **kind**

and is not **jealous**;

love does not **brag**

and is not **arrogant**,

⁵ does not act **unbecomingly**;

it does not **seek its own**,

is not **provoked**,

does **not take into account a wrong** *suffered*,

⁶ does **not rejoice in unrighteousness**,

but **rejoices with the truth**;

⁷ **bears** all things,

believes all things,

hopes all things,

endures all things .
