

## The Qualities of Love 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant  
<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful*

Concerning vs 1-3, Josiah Gregory says, "People of *little religion* are always *noisy*; he who has not the love of God and man filling his heart is like an *empty wagon* coming *violently* down a *hill*: it makes a *great noise*, because there is *nothing in it*."

Charlie said last week that, "*The context is love for and within the body of Christ. Not wedding vows.*

*Love is more important than the spiritual gifts themselves because without love they are useless.*

What can we say about these verses? It may be that John 3:16 is the most well-known verse in the Bible but these verses might be the most often used, particularly in weddings.

### First: Love is A Verb 4-5

Love is described by action words, not by philosophical ideals.

This love is not simply a state of being or an emotion but a state of position, turned toward doing.

Love is defined by action.

### Second: Love Is Patient 4a

GR/makrothymeo =

- *To be of a long spirit*
- *To not lose heart*
- *To persevere through enduring misfortunes and troubles*
- *To be slow to punish*

a) How God is patient toward us

*2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

See here, how God's patience is demonstrated. Loving patience intends for our good

b) How should we respond to such patience. Should we take advantage of it? No.

*11 - Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness*

How should we respond to patience? When someone is patient toward us it should lead to:

- Repentance
- Holiness
- Godliness

We should recognize that when someone is patient with us, God is giving us the time and space, the room, to become person he intends us to be.

c) How we should be patient

*Hebrews 6:15 - For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." <sup>15</sup> And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.*

Sarah and Abraham waited 25, long years for Isaac.

*Hebrews 5:7-8 - Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

To what does he compare the coming of the Lord? – To a farmer who plants in one season and reaps in another.

For Elders – *1 Thess 5:14 - And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*

See these verses on patience: Matt 18:26, 29; Lk 18:7; 1 Thess 5:14;

### **Third: Love is Kind 4b**

*GR/chresteuomai =*

- To be mild
- To act benevolently

This word occurs only here in the NT. This makes it difficult to define. Except....

Χρηστ εὖο μαι

Χρηστ

η = e

ι = i

χρῖστός

Χρηστ and Χρῖστ

- Χρηστ = good, virtuous, benevolent, gracious, pleasant

Χρηστός = (7 times in NT)

- Fit for use
- Virtuous, good
- Mild
- Pleasant (as opposed to harsh or bitter)
- Pleasant, benevolent, gracious

Luke 5:39 - *But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. <sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'*

Isn't that interesting? Christians should age well, like wine. The older we get, the 'better' we should be.

- The older we get, the greater use we should be
- The older we get, the kinder we should be.
- The older we get more pleasant we should be.
- The older we get, the more benevolent we should be

This is so different from the world's perspective. It's counter-cultural and counter-intuitive.

**Fourth: Love does not Envy 4c.**

Gr/dzayloo = Twelve times in 7 different forms in NT

- Positively – to burn with zeal
- Negatively – to burn with jealousy, hatred, anger

a) In the context of spiritual gifts, we should remember that

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

b) In the context of life –

- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, (social media) is not real life
- God has designed your life for you

Hebrews 12:1c-2 - *...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- Look to Jesus
- Look to the joy set before you

Hebrews 11:17, Abraham, 20, Isaac, 21, Jacob, 22, Joseph, 23, Moses, 29, the people crossed the red sea, 30, the walls of Jericho, 31, Rahab

32-35 – This is the life everyone wants

36-38 – This is the life no one wants

39-40 – *“all these [even those in 32-35] ...did not receive what was promised, since, God had provided something better for us...”*

Do not envy. Your gift is the best gift.

Do not envy. Your life is the best life.

#### **Fifth: Love does not Boast 4d**

GR/perperuomai = (It occurs only here)

- To self-display
- To embellish
- To extoll one's self

Peran = 23 times = “the other side, beyond, farther side.”

“You’re really stretching it...”

Again, in the context of spiritual gifts:

- Spiritual gifts are *gifts* so we can't boast
- Spiritual gifts are *spiritual gifts* so we can't boast
- It is only 'reasonable' (Ro 12:1-2) that we use our gifts, so we can't boast

In a general context, Love can work anonymously. It does not have to have the limelight, or attention, or results. Love gives simply and only because it loves. To need the limelight, attention, or results, is to love self.

#### **Sixth: It is not Arrogant 4e**

GR/*physio* = Seven times in seven unique forms in NT

- To inflate
- To blow up
- To swell
- To be proud

1 Corinthians 4:18 - *Some are arrogant,*

1 Corinthians 5:2 - *And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?*

Colossians 2:18 - *Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind*

III – William Carey is the father of modern missions. At a dinner party a snobbish lord tried to insult him saying,

*"Mr. Carey, I hear you once were a shoemaker!"*

Carey replied, *"No, your lordship, not a shoemaker, only a cobbler!"*

Of course, such word naturally makes us think of Jesus and he is love.

I would you suggest you –

- a) Look to your own life and
- b) Look in the Bible

to think on how Jesus has been patient, kind, non-envious (and yet envious), unboastful, and unrude.

## Conclusion:

What kind of love is Paul talking about here?

GR/agape = (ag-ah'-pay) = to welcome, to love dearly, to be well pleased. It is never used of romantic love and friendship is another word.

*Agape* is almost always used to describe the love that is of and from God, whose very nature is love itself: "God is love" (1 John 4:8). God does not merely love; He is love itself.

*Romans 5:8 – God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Paul talks about love here because it is clearly evident that the Corinthians do not love each other in the way that Scripture calls us to love each other or in the way that Jesus has modeled love for the body of Christ.

Although the text is given to us in the context of spiritual gifts, I often use it in marriage counseling or weddings. These descriptions of love paint a perfect portrait of Jesus and, to a lesser degree, should also depict us.

In marriage counseling and at weddings, I always remind the couple and the attendees that 1 Corinthians 13 is one of the reasons we must be Christians:

- 1 – We cannot love this way
- 2 – The Holy Spirit in us can love this way.

If any text, this text should bring us to the end of ourselves and cause us to bow before the throne of grace.

## Community Groups:

- 1 – Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-5.
- 2 – What is the context of verses 4-5?
- 3 – Why does Paul address the issue of 'love' at this point in his epistle?
- 4 – What does love have to do with spiritual gifts?
- 5 – What kind of love is Paul referencing in this text?
- 6 – What is different about agape love than other forms of love?
- 7 – How is agape a verb, and not a noun?
- 8 – How is God patient with us?
- 9 – If someone is patient toward us, how should patience affect us?
- 10 – How should we be patient toward God's work in the world and us?
- 11 – What does it mean to be kind?
- 12 – How should 1 Corinthians 12:11 keep us from envy/

13 – What is vain about boasting (when we look to/at Jesus?)

14 – How is arrogance contrary to the Gospel?

15 – How does God demonstrate his love for us?

### **Daily Devotions:**

**Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.** How has God demonstrated patience with you? With whom in your life is patience required? How will you show it today?

**Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup>.** If kindness comes from Christ and makes you useful for the kingdom, how will you show kindness to someone today? Like wine, as the day wears on, i.e., gets older, you should become kinder. Is this true of you?

**Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup>.** Of whom are you envious? What is the root of envy (pride). Envy says, “*I deserve better/more.*” How can thinking about the cross fight envy?

**Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup>.** To boast means to stretch the truth. What about your resume? Your successes? Your failures? Why do we think it necessary to boast? How does thinking about the incarnation (Phil 2:5-8) help demolish the stronghold of boasting?

**Friday the 26<sup>th</sup>.** Why is love not arrogant? How does arrogance speak to selfishness rather than arrogance? What actions, words or attitudes do you exhibit that make you appear arrogant? What is the solution for arrogance?

