

THE CHURCH THAT CHANGED A CONTINENT AND THE MAN WHO LED IT
FIRST CORINTHIANS

STUDY NUMBER 10
Wednesday, July 24, 2013

I Corinthians Chapter 13
THE LOVE CHAPTER

1 In our preceding studies, Paul discussed at some length spiritual gifts. Now, in Chapter
2 13, he qualifies all those gifts by saying if they are not motivated by LOVE (God's
3 definition - not mankind's) those gifts are a waste of time. Here is what God Almighty
4 says constitutes REAL LOVE:

5
6 1 Cor. 13:1-13 [King James Version]

7 **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am**
8 **become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of**
9 **prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all**
10 **faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [3] And**
11 **though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be**
12 **burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. [4] Charity suffereth long,**
13 **and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, [5]**
14 **Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked,**
15 **thinketh no evil; [6] Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; [7] Beareth**
16 **all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. [8] Charity**
17 **never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be**
18 **tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. [9] For**
19 **we know in part, and we prophesy in part. [10] But when that which is perfect is**
20 **come, then that which is in part shall be done away. [11] When I was a child, I spake**
21 **as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I**
22 **put away childish things. [12] For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face**
23 **to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. [13]**
24 **And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

25
26 Some commentators on this passage have rightly declared that the chapter does not so
27 much give a DEFINITION of love as it does a DISPLAY. One would be about as hard
28 pressed to define 'love' as he or she would be to define a 'rose.' You can see a rose,
29 inhale its fragrance, enjoy its magnificent beauty; but try to 'define' one.

30
31 There are three words in the Greek language which are all translated by our little word

1 “love.” Let’s take a look at them:
2

3 EROS
4

5 Eros has to do with passion. We get the word “erotic” from it. This has to do with sex.
6 Lest you recoil and shun the word, it should be said that husband and wives, married to
7 each other, should enjoy this aspect of love. It is not for unmarried people.
8

9 PHILEO
10

11 This has to do with “affection.” It has to do with proper appreciation for noble love for
12 mankind. The word “Philadelphia” (the city of ‘brotherly love’) comes from this word
13 as does the word “philanthropist.”
14

15 AGAPE
16

17 This is the highest form of the word and it means “divine love.” It not an emotional
18 word alone. It has more to do with the will, with understanding what genuine love truly
19 means and then employing it in your life.
20

21 VERSE 1:
22

23 Paul reminded us that you can speak in tongues of men and angels, but without the
24 motivation of love - God’s definition - it’s just noise.
25

26 “Sounding brass ... tinkling symbol” - used to identify the “noise” of those speaking
27 without being motivated by God’s love. (Some of the pagan worship in those days
28 involved the clanging of symbols and the braying of trumpets.)
29

30 VERSE 2:
31

32 One of the spiritual gift Paul listed previously was “prophecy.” This gift had primarily
33 to do with anointed “forth-telling” - or preaching, not telling the future. All of us in
34 ministry need to heed this verse! William Barclay once observed:
35

36 *There are two kinds of preachers. There is the preacher whose one aim is to save the*
37 *souls of his people and who woos them with the accents of love. On the other hand*
38 *there is the preacher who dangles his hearers over the flames of hell and gives the*
39 *impression that he would rejoice in their damnation.*
40

41 THE LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS / WILLIAM BARCLAY / WESTMINSTER PRESS / PP. 117-118

1 We are all probably familiar with preachers who lambaste everyone and everything.
2 While sin should always be clearly warned against, the preacher or teacher should couch
3 every remark with graciousness and tenderness.

4
5 VERSE 3:

6
7 We note in Galatians that love is among the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
8 Even good deeds we may do that are propelled by improper motivation or pride do not
9 register with God. Here is His scorecard:

10 Eloquence - 0

11 Knowledge - 0

12 Prophecy - 0

13 Sacrifice - 0

14 Faith - 0

15 Martyrdom - 0

16 The missing ingredient in that scorecard is LOVE.

17
18 **WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE?**

19 (Based on the first seven verses of this chapter)

20
21 1. Love is patient. With what? With people. Bottom line: slow to anger. Our 16th
22 President, Abraham Lincoln, knew about that ingredient.

23
24 His Secretary of War during the Civil War was Edwin Stanton who took every
25 opportunity to mock the President. He wondered out loud about those who captured
26 gorillas in Africa, saying all they had to do was go to the White House and catch one who
27 lived there - speaking of Mr. Lincoln. The President never responded but continued to
28 treat him with courtesy. When Lincoln was shot by Booth, Stanton sat beside the
29 president's death bed, weeping. He said, "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world
30 has ever seen." What an example of love being patient.

31
32 2. Love is kind. Ephes. 4:32 **And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted,**
33 **forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

34
35 The ruler Philip the Second of Spain was a very 'religious' man and yet he sanctioned the
36 Spanish Inquisition which massacred multitudes of followers of Jesus Christ.

37
38 How many church people today are filled with critical attitudes and bitter spirits? Yet
39 they might speak of 'love' as if they were filled with it.

1 The story of Jesus and the Woman of Samaria or His kind consideration of the woman
2 caught in an adulterous situation ought to spark deep inner graces in the hearts of
3 believers in Him.

4
5 4. Love Knows No Envy. Someone has said there are two classes of people: a) Those
6 who are incredibly wealthy and b) Those who want to be. I'm not sure that's true. I
7 would note, however, that with the advent of television commercials, in which we are
8 exposed to every "new thing that comes along," envy or covetousness raises its ugly head.
9 Enough sometimes seems not to be enough. But real love is grateful when others have
10 things we do not have, or for those who achieve positions in life that we cannot even
11 aspire to. If we have genuine love (God's definition of it) envy has no place in our
12 lives.

13
14 5. Love Does Not Brag.

15
16 I love the story of a young preacher up north who stood up in a preacher's conference to
17 declare, "I want you to know that I am not a trained minister. I am an ignorant minister
18 and I'm proud of it." The District Superintendent in charge of the meeting responded,
19 "I can see you have a lot to be proud of!"
20

21 I have always enjoyed a story I heard an evangelist give in our church when I was
about ten years old - I've never forgotten it: A young man had just graduated from
seminary with his doctorate of divinity. Oh my, how proud he was. He was going to
preach his first sermon in his home church. As he was introduced, he walked into the
pulpit with somewhat of a swagger, chin held high, and as arrogant as he could be.
His message was a world-disaster! He forgot where he was, couldn't find his place in
the notes, could not even read his scripture text without stumbling. He left the pulpit
with his head down, shoulders slumped, and took a seat. The old pastor met him after
service and said, "Son, if you had gone into the pulpit the way you came out of the
pulpit, you would have left the pulpit the way you went in to it." Great words of
wisdom!

22
23 6. Love Is Not Inflated With Its Own Importance.

24
25 I think of Ed and Annie Ravish, from our own church, who through the years have found
26 and nourished back to health over 300 severely injured children from many different
27 nations. This has taken place at enormous cost to themselves. It has been three years
28 since they even took salaries from the Gabriel Foundation, instead pouring the funds back
29 into the health care of those children.

1 French Emperor Napoleon once bragged, "I am not a man like other men. The laws of
2 morality to not apply to me." Contrast him with this man:

3
4 The man known as "the father of missions" poured out his life in India about 250 years ago. His ministry stands as a monument to those who have obeyed Christ's Great Commission. He began his life as a shoe cobbler. During his ministry he translated at least parts of the Bible into 34 Indian languages. When he came to India originally, he was regarded with dislike and contempt. At a dinner party, a snob, with the idea of humiliating Carey, said (so everyone could hear), "I suppose, Mr. Carey, you once worked as a shoemaker." "No, your lordship, Carey responded, "not a shoemaker - only a cobbler." He did not claim even to make shoes - only mend them.

5
6 Years ago, while pastoring in Ohio, Darlene and I attended a ministers' meeting in one of
7 the state parks. It was the dead of winter, freezing cold, and as miserable as the Buckeye
8 State can be in January/February. Darlene and I had made our reservations early and thus
9 had a place to stay in the lodge (which was beautiful and warm). Our District
10 Superintendent, Art Parsons (one of my all-time favorite people), and his wife also had a
11 place to stay inside the lodge, which was sold out. Before the first service could even
12 start, Parsons was accosted by a young cocky pastor who berated him because the lodge
13 was sold out and he (the young pastor and wife) were assigned a cabin out on the
14 perimeter of the property. They had not taken the time to reserve a room. Oh how
15 nasty he was to the superintendent (who was in no way responsible). I heard Brother
16 Parsons say to this kid, "Perhaps I can find you a room." And he did. Without ever
17 telling the young pastor, Parsons and his wife moved out of their suite to that outlying
18 cabin, giving the youthful minister their place in the lodge. I have never forgotten that.

19
20 7. Love Does Not Behave In A Grace-less Manner.

21
22 In the Greek language, the words for *grace* and *charm* are the same word. Here's a lost
23 word for you: WINSOME. Webster defines "winsome" as "innocently charming."
24 Note that adjective, "innocent." There are some people who are charming, but they have
25 an agenda in mind. Whereas "winsome" means to have grace with people simply
26 because Jesus would like it that way.

27
28 I have known professing believers who take delight in being blunt and virtually brutal.
29 One person who formerly attended here snapped at me, "Well...I just have to say what
30 I'm thinking." When I asked, "Why?", there was no response at all.

31
32 8. Love Does Not Insist Upon Its Rights.

1 A “crucified with Christ” follower has no rights. So how can we insist upon something
2 we do not have? Perhaps we would be much better off instead of insisting upon our
3 “alleged rights” if we could instead remember our personal responsibilities. I
4 understand full-well that no one owes me anything in this life; however, I have major
5 responsibilities. As one writer put it, “Whenever we start thinking about *our rights*, we
6 are drifting away from Christian love.”
7

8 9. Love Never Exhibits Temper.
9

10 You know something? When we LOSE our temper, we LOSE everything. I have
11 always loved this classic poem by Rudyard Kipling:
12

13 *If you can keep your head when all about you*
14 *Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,*
15 *If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,*
16 *But make allowances for their doubting too;*
17 *If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,*
18 *Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,*
19 *Or being hated, don't give way to hating,*
20 *And yet don't look too good nor talk too wise;*

21
22 *If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;*
23 *If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;*
24 *If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster*
25 *And treat those two imposters just the same;*
26 *If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken*
27 *Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,*
28 *Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,*
29 *And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;*

30
31 *If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,*
32 *Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,*
33 *If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,*
34 *If all men count with you, but none too much;*
35 *If you can fill the unforgiving minute*
36 *With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,*
37 *Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,*
38 *And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!*
39

40 That's a pretty good summation of this love chapter, I Corinthians 13.

1 10. Love Does Not Remember Wrongs.

2
3 Is there anyone here who has never been hurt, never suffered wrong? So, what are you
4 going to do - just shrivel up and die? Do you put into your mental ledger those things
5 done to you so that it will not be forgotten? (You know, "I forgive you....but I'll never
6 forget it!"

7
8 11. Love Finds No Pleasure In Evil-doing.

9
10 When I was still the speaker on *Revivaltime*, the pressure was always intense to sustain
11 our \$2.5 million annual budget. When two major Christian television ministries
12 collapsed because of their leaders' indiscretions, I had a person who worked with me take
13 great delight in their fall. He said, "Maybe we will get some of those offerings now." I
14 took a different perspective: Those people were friends of mine and so I grieved. My
15 friend, Christian love features the great love of forgetting!

16
17 12. Love Is Sustained By Truth.

18
19 Christianity is not a "cover-up" system - unless that which is "covering" is the blood of
20 Jesus Christ. Jesus said that "truth will set us free."

21
22 13. Love Can Endure Anything.

23
24 Love causes the follower of Jesus to "hang in there" even when all seems to be lost.
25 Love makes it possible for us to bear any insult, any injury, any disappointment. Isn't this
26 the love that Jesus showed so clearly in His trials and His crucifixion? Why did He bear
27 it all? Because of His love for you and me.

28
29 14. Love Is Trusting.

30
31 Our foundation for life is God's Word. We read it. We learn to understand it. Then we
32 trust it for our everyday life. Suspicion does not come from the Holy Spirit. I don't
33 want to go through life being suspicious of people, doubting their motivations. Jesus
34 commanded us in His Sermon on the Mount not to judge people. Matthew 7:1-5 [The
35 Message] **Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless,**
36 **of course, you want the same treatment. [2] That critical spirit has a way of**
37 **boomeranging. [3] It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious**
38 **to the ugly sneer on your own. [4] Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your**
39 **face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? [5] It's this whole**
40 **traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead**

1 of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit
2 to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.

3
4 15. Love Never Ceases To Hope.

5
6 Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son is really the story of the Loving Father who never gave
7 up hope for his wayward son. The father had been hurt, betrayed, and left behind; but he
8 never gave up hope. Then came that glorious day when down the road way he saw that
9 son coming home. What if the father had just written his son off: "Well, he's
10 gone...he'll never be back....good riddance....punk kid....I hope he gets what he deserves
11 out there....!" No....love never stops hoping.

12
13 NOW IN THE FINAL VERSES OF FIRST CORINTHIANS, VERSES 8-13, PAUL
14 HAS THREE FINAL NOTES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LOVE:

15
16 1. **Love is permanent.** It is forever. King Solomon knew the same truth: Song 8:7
17 **Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it..**

18
19 2. **Love is complete...**it is mature....it reveals us we really are - and can become. How
20 we love this familiar passage: 1 Cor. 13:9-12 [The Message]

21 **We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always**
22 **incomplete. [10] But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.**

23 **[11] When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any**
24 **infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.**

25 **[12] We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a**
26 **mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll**
27 **see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he**
28 **knows us!**

29
30 I have been around here for going on 27 years; but you don't really know me. You saw
31 a coat and slacks and a shirt with a head sticking out. But you see me through a "glass -
32 darkly." Mirrors in Paul's day were not good. They gave a distorted image. But
33 someday we will know as God knows us. Until that time we treat each other with God's
34 type of love.

35
36 3. **Love is the most powerful thing on Earth.** I Cor. 13:13 "The greatest of these....is
37 **love."**

38
39 You know, my friend, what we have really studied tonight is A BIOGRAPHY OF JESUS
40 CHRIST. This is the kind of love shown us by Him. We are His ambassadors in this
41 world. Our assignment is solid. "To be like Jesus....all I ask...to be like Him."