

# PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

LEARNING HOW TO BE A HEAVENLY CHURCH IN A GODLESS WORLD

## 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 13:1-3

MEDIA REFERENCE NUMBER SMX755

NOVEMBER 6, 2011

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

### **LIVING THE LOVE OF GOD – PART 1**

*WHAT MAKES YOU A TRUE BELIEVER*

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

**Love, Church, Gifts, Unity, Growth, Witness, God**

**In my human effort & emotion**, I find it hard to give good things to those who cause me pain & trouble. I would much rather reward those according to their deeds if you know what I mean. But the Lord is not like me. He's not like you – amen?

**But I do find it a great pleasure** to bless those who are a blessing to me. And if I, a mere human being, can experience this, then what of God in all His perfection and grace?

**He Operates in a Totally Different Realm.** His church is His delight. When Jesus sees His church, He looks at her for the good and for the better and desires her to press on with Him toward heaven.

**In His Great Letters to the Seven Churches** He is there, instructing them and guiding them and encouraging them and yes, warning and rebuking them. – *Perfect Love does that in Perfection!*

**In That Spirit Paul Exhorts the Christians at Corinth, Greece**

**1 Corinthians 12:31**

But earnestly desire the best gifts.  
And yet I show you a more excellent way.



earnestly desire **zhlo/w caʒisma** to have the warmest of feeling or affection for. A wholesome coveting. A godly longing after.



the best gifts **krei÷ttwn kreitton**, *krite´-tohn - khar´-is-mah* the stronger, better, i.e. nobler: the better, best – gratuity, endowment, miraculous faculty or gifting- - (*implication: that which is best regarding your position or placement in the body of Christ*) *The H.S. equips all those for His divine and appointed task.*



more excellent **kataʒ kata**, *kat-ah´*; **uJperbolh/ huperbole**, *hoop-er-bol-ay* a path beyond what is seen, something greater than great. Better than the best **uJperbolh/ huperbole**, *hoop-er-bol-ay´* of absolute supereminence. Not earthly. Pre-eminent. That which is beyond or unable to be measured.



way **oJdo/B hodos**, *hod-os´*; a pathway or small road. a route, which leads to a highway which leads to a journey.

**This 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter has been more often misinterpreted  
By saying that it Defines True Love or is Love’s Definition.  
It cannot be.**

**This Chapter cannot “define” the word or act of love because it introduces us to God’s love – God is Love. That truth is so deep and infinitely beyond us - that it will take eternity to experience this God of Love Who is Himself Love.**

**Chapter 13 “Displays The Love of God” and by thus doing so  
“Displays the God of Love”**

**But let’s remember this.**

**The Greeks have a Technicolor-vivid language  
Words like eros and phileo applied to the love that  
the Greeks knew.**

**Biblically, there’s a love introduced by God Himself which cannot be separated from Him because it is His nature - like a man’s head is to his body. It is impossible for the God of the Bible to not be loving or to be less than a perfect lover. So the question arises, what is this Love like? - It is the Agape or Divine Love**

**It's not a love that is emotionally governed – that would be phileo.  
It's not a sensual, erotic love – that would be eros.  
Agape love is the love that is rooted in choice.  
In selection of the object honored.**

#### **Romans 5:8**

For God **demonstrated His own love (ajgaiph agape)** toward us,  
in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
*(humanity was the object of His choosing)*

**Why is the Knowledge of this Love Important for us to know?**

(Because it's only through the understanding of His love that we can see truth as He has intended truth to be seen)

### **LIVING FOR THE LOVE OF GOD**

#### **1 Corinthians 13:1-2**

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. **:2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **:3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

#### **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

**:4** Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; **:5** does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; **:6** does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; **:7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **:8** Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. **:9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **:10** But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. **:11** When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. **:12** For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. **:13** And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

### The Trouble within Man

The **doctrines** for what makes Christianity absolutely “separate” from all other religions are too great to speak of here, **But there is nothing more powerful than the internal witness of a longing soul that cannot rest until it finds God.**

— Aurelius Augustinus, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*  
“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless  
until it finds its rest in thee.”

**Psalm 27:4**

**One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek after:** That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, **To behold the beauty of the LORD,** And to inquire in His temple.

(The Longing Heart, The Restless Soul of a Man is Proof Enough)

**Revelation 4:10-11**

And when the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: **:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”**

And Yet There are Some Here – In This Place, This Morning who are still trying to flee from the presence of God – To find some place to hide your thoughts, your guilt, your pain, - but down deep inside of your troubled soul there is a never ending cry – “O’ God”

## **LIVING FOR THE LOVE OF GOD**

*WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN A DESPERATE PILGRIM IN THIS WORLD?*

**1.) Has His love awakened you?**

**v.1a**

## **LIVING FOR THE LOVE OF GOD**

**WOULD ASK US THIS QUESTION**

**1 Corinthians 13:1a**

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...

Several weeks ago I mentioned to you what is called **The Westminster Catechism** of the 1640s, The “Catechism” was to educate the church in matters of doctrine and belief. The catechism is composed of 107 questions and answers. But by far the most famous and all-encompassing question and answer was this: “What is the chief end of man? –  
Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

The Christian heart immediately is in agreement with this. "I want to be **(1) glorifying** God above all else and I want to **(2) enjoy** Him both now and forever.

## HAS HIS LOVE AWAKENED YOU?

### 1a.) Awakened you to the spiritual realm

:1a Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...

You and I are living in two worlds at the same time.  
And these two worlds have rival pursuits

Church Listen – Wrongly we have been conditioned by our modern day version of Christianity to "**Come to Christ**" or "**Just Receive Jesus**" as though that were the beginning and end of it all. - It is not.

God is Infinite, eternal, and He is spirit. He is not a highly evolved being.  
He's not an advanced, super developed human being.  
**He is the Creator God and we are the created!**

#### Psalm 139:6-10

*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. :7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? :8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. :9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, :10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.*

#### Hebrews 11:8-10

**By faith Abraham** obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **:9 By faith Abraham** dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; **:10 By faith Abraham waited** for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

### 1b.) Awakened you to the need for life

:1a though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...

Life After Death is a Reality!

## **The need for life.**

Wherever blood flows there will be life, even if for one fleeting moment that blood is spilled out unto an open field. For one moment that which is needed for life is available but once the flow is cut off, death soon follows. Death fills a void. And the man who is without Christ is dead and is deadened to the things of God. He cannot feel the things of God because the thought and life of God is unknown to him. He is in a reality that is far more dangerous than any medical condition; for he was born spiritually dead. Within him exists the effects of a spiritual stroke that was suffered and passed down from his heredity. Now unable to see or hear or feel – spiritual life is not flowing to his heart or mind and so he is locked inside a body where there is no real life or the attributes that accompany life as God designed it. There is a profound need for life.

### **Romans 8:11**

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

(The Holy Spirit within you Christian – is He sleepy or idle? Is He bored or tired?)

## **HAS HIS LOVE AWAKENED YOU?**

### **1c.) Awakened you to the love of Christ**

:1a Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...

**There is no greater motivation in the heart of man and in reality than Love.**

Legalism / Religion / Demands / Tyranny

## **LIVING FOR THE LOVE OF GOD**

*WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN A DESPERATE PILGRIM IN THIS WORLD?*

### **2.) Have you responded to His love?**

**v.1b-2**

### **2a.) By yielding to God's love willingly**

:1b-2 ...but have not love, I have become **sounding brass** or a **clanging cymbal**.

**:2 And though I have** the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and **though I have** all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but **have not love, I am nothing.**

## **God is a Person. He is Personal and Relational.**

In much degree, we are like Him – We love. We create. We desire. We feel. We know. We express.

**We have been created by God to interface with God.**

(The Eyewitness Accounts of Jesus' Earthly Ministry All Testify That When People Encountered Jesus – They Desired to Follow Him.)

### **Mark 10:13-15**

**And they were bringing their children to him that he might touch them,** and the disciples rebuked them. **:14** But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, **“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them,** for to such belongs the kingdom of God. **:15** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Our Response to this **Prevenient grace** or **Preceding Grace**  
is all Rooted in His love for us.

### **John 6:44**

No **one** can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise **him** up at the last day.

After 20 years of ministry, I have come to conclude that It doesn't matter how effective or well known a person is, **without a personal experience of the love of God in their own private life** – there is not much real peace in their lives or even a lasting ministry.

### **Galatians 5:22-23**

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love,** joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **:23** gentleness, self-control.

### *Jack 5:22-23*

**But where there is no fruit of the Spirit there will be no love,** no joy, no peace, no longsuffering, no kindness, no goodness, no faithfulness, **:23** no gentleness, no self-control.

### Romans 5:5b

...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.



**poured** grk *ejkce÷w ekcheo, ek-kheh'-o,*

To gush out and flow over. A crescendo, to spill over with violence.

**God has made a divine deposit into our hearts and lives.**

### John 7:37-39

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. :38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." :39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive;

## HAVE YOU RESPONDED TO HIS LOVE?

### 2b.) By accepting God's love personally

With the veil removed by the rending of Jesus' flesh, with nothing on God's side to prevent us from entering, why do we tarry without? Why do we consent to abide all our days just outside the Holy of Holies and never enter at all to look upon God? We hear the Bridegroom say, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely." We sense that the call is for us, but still we fail to draw near, and the years pass and we grow old and tired in the outer courts of the tabernacle. What doth hinder us?

The answer usually given, simply that we are "cold," will not explain all the facts. There is something more serious than coldness of heart, something that may be back of that coldness and be the cause of its existence. What is it? What but the presence of a veil in our hearts? A veil not taken away as the first veil was, but which remains there still shutting out the light and hiding the face of God from us. It is the veil of our fleshly fallen nature living on, unjudged within us, uncrucified and unrepudiated. It is the closewoven veil of the self-life which we have never truly acknowledged, of which we have been secretly ashamed, and which for these reasons we have never brought to the judgment of the cross. It is not too mysterious, this opaque veil, nor is it hard to identify. We have but to look in our own hearts and we shall see it there, sewn and patched and repaired it may be, but there nevertheless, an enemy to our lives and an effective block to our spiritual progress.



# HAVE YOU RESPONDED TO HIS LOVE?

## 2c.) By allowing God's love publicly

It's not humanly possible to love others with real agape love without loving **God first**.

I can't love my wife rightly unless I love God more.

### **I Love God So Much**

*(but I can't stand my stupid neighbor and my uncle John)*

#### **John 13:34-35**

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

#### **1 John 4:7-11**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **:8** He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

**:9** In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. **:10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

**:11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

## **LIVING FOR THE LOVE OF GOD**

*WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN A DESPERATE PILGRIM IN THIS WORLD?*

## 3.) Have you become more like Jesus?

**v.3**

**:3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

**I Fear that far too many Christians know just enough about Jesus** and just enough about the Holy Spirit and just enough about the evidence of the faith – but to say that they've experienced God intimately and personally they cannot say.

They may be **in love with the doctrines and teachings of God and the Bible** much like a young woman may be more in the love with the idea of marriage than that one standing beside her at the altar.

**This is where things like goodness and morality and fairness all break down.**

Without going to the source of these things you will only orbit the idea of them and never know and experience the Person from which they emanate.

## **ARE YOU BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS?**

### **3a.) You will by coming into His presence**

**:3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,  
and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

**The cathedrals and temples built to the glory of God** are wonderful things. But without that personal interaction and reality of God - these things are dead.

It's Like Us Circling the Temple / the Sanctuary / Church

Imagining there's a God versus experiencing there's a God are polar opposites.

Imagining there's a god allows me to create a god that tolerates me and my self-life. My imaginary god is always approving of how I live my life and what or whatever I do. This god is never saddened or grieved by my actions and is always there for me when I need him but conveniently not there when I don't. He is my beautiful servant god, my genie in a bottle. I call him forth when I need him and put him away out of sight when I don't. I have created my god in my own image. But to experience the reality of the true and living God is altogether different. God in person steps down and into my world and life and by doing so upsets the whole cart. His invasion awakens all kinds of strange and new thoughts within me. I become keenly aware that I am as helpless and needy as when an earthquake rattles the foundations beneath my feet. I am moved to absolute and total awe of this infinite, invisible yet truly real presence. He, in one second of thought, exposes me to my need of all that He is and offers - even though I hardly know a stitch of theology. He is the encounterable God, like when Moses discovered Him at the meeting of the burning bush or General Joshua in the field of battle. He is the one who was before anything was. He transcends and evades our earthly limits, even death itself. He is absolute reality. He is God and God is Love.

# ARE YOU BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS?

## 3b.) You will by bowing your knee before Him

:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,  
and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

### John 12:19-21

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" :20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. :21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "**Sir, we wish to see Jesus.**"

I've been asking that the Lord would make us more like prophets and less like scribes. Scribes write about the things that they've learned. Prophets speak about the things that they have seen.

## 3c.) You will by singling out your heart's desire.

:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,  
and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

### Please Allow Me to Challenge You This Morning.

To all of you who have accepted Christ, have become born again and have come to the light of Christ - - don't stop there. Keep coming into His glory.

### 2 Peter 1:10-11

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; :11 for so **an entrance will be supplied to you** abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**This Is No Small Entrance "By Faith".**  
(God has no secret passageways or back door entrances)

It's Like Us Circling the Temple / the Sanctuary /  
Church

Notice: The physical entrance became smaller, narrower, and very simple but at the same time the light became brighter and more brilliant until there – in the midst of the cherubim, above the blood-covered mercy seat – was the Shekinah glory of God's presence manifested.

**Hebrews 10:19-20**

Therefore, brethren, having (to have, to be in possession of) **boldness** to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus Christ, **:20** by a new and living way which **He consecrated for us**, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

So Christian – Why Stand Ye Here Gazing Up to Heaven?  
Press on into a Greater walk with Jesus.

All You Need to do is **Come and Be Coming** to Him. **Come and Be Coming** to rest. **Come and Be Coming** to hear, **Come and Be Coming** to see. – It's all through the veil of Jesus Christ Himself – that You Get to the Other Side

————— *End of Study* —————

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