

A Still More Excellent Way

Intro:

1 cor 13:13

The scandal of this passage is not that love is the greatest gift - but that love is a gift in the first place

Love is the most overused word in our social vocabulary - we use the same word to talk about hair products as we do our significant other. The question is not however whether we love God with the same kind of love as we love ice cream? It is whether He love us with this same kind of weak, fickle, worldly, love?

We think of something else when we think of love- something coming from us, fickle and weak and prone to failure - no wonder speaking foreign languages seemed so cool...

Problem:

1 cor 12:27-31 (a more excellent way)

The Corinthians were boasting about their gifts and making themselves seem great - they all wanted bigger gifts to be recognized so Paul pointed them to the biggest gift of all to humble them- a gift essential, exclusive and eternal... the gift of love

Main Idea:

Love makes an essential claim

Love wears an exclusive name

Love remains an eternal aim

Implication:

The scandal of this passage is not that love is the greatest gift - but that love is a gift in the first place

Love is not from you -

Application:

Before you can use a gift you must receive it and unwrap it.

Do you truly believe the love God has for you?

End:

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-love-of-god/>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/is-god-for-us-or-for-himself--2>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-love-of-god/>

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/sermons/1008.cfm

A Still More Excellent Way

Text:

Love makes an essential claim

1 Corinthians 13:1 ¶ **If I** speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but **have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.**

1 Corinthians 13:2 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.**

1 Corinthians 13:3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but **have not love, I gain nothing.**

ecc 1:14; 2:11, 17 (this is the language of ecc applied to love)

jn 13:31-35 (love makes an essential claim)

(num 22-24 (how could this man not be a believer look at his gift look at his words?))

(num 31:13-20 (just like Judas - he was a noisy gong, he was nothing, he gained nothing))

1 jn 2:7-11; 3:11-15; 4:20-5:1, 21 (love is the essential evidence of His work)

1 cor 8:1-3 (demonstrates you are His known by Him - not merely a hymn to love - Paul is rebuking them here and using love to point them back to the heart of the gospel)

Love wears an exclusive name

1 Corinthians 13:4 ¶ **Love is** patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; **it is** not arrogant

1 Corinthians 13:5 or rude. **It does** not insist on its own way; **it is** not irritable or resentful;

1 Corinthians 13:6 **it does** not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

1 Corinthians 13:7 **Love bears** all things, **believes** all things, **hopes** all things, **endures** all things.

rom 13:8-14 (matt 22:34-40 - - put your name in this section...portrait of perfection that condemns you)

matt 5:17-20, 48 (before you celebrate it let it really speak to you...sound familiar cause it is...)

1 jn 4:7-11 (it is about His love personified...His perfect portrait - love has a definition (jn 3:16) love has a name)

1 cor 4:6-7 (of all the gifts they received and were boasting about love was the greatest gift of all - The scandal of this passage is not that love is the greatest gift - but that love is a gift in the first place)

rom 5:1-8 (He showed it - His love for you has been declared for all eternity)

Love remains an eternal aim

1 Corinthians 13:8 ¶ **Love never ends.** As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

1 Corinthians 13:10 but **when the perfect comes**, the partial will pass away.

1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke like a **child**, I thought like a **child**, I reasoned like a child. **When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.**

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then **face to face**. Now I know in part; then I shall **know fully**, even as I have been **fully known**.

1 Corinthians 13:13 ¶ **So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

Ps 136 (1 cor 13 is not the first ode to love in the Bible there are many...(Read response)

This is not a celebration of steadfast love as an abstract concept but the steadfast love OF THE LORD.

The psalmist presents us here with something different than mere love but the kind of love that comes from God...it is amazing

ps 139:13-18 (this is not a celebration of love as an impersonal concept - His specific thoughts towards us our personally - this is not like our love...how can we believe this?)

Jn 17:15-26 (His gift is more than His sacrifice however - an eternal aim - perfectly one - goal of holiness and maturity - an eternal aim never ending relationship - what is higher than this? Invited into the perfect love of the Trinity - the corinthians were divided because they were looking to themselves)

1 Jn 3:1-3; 4:12-19 (the perfect is His love manifest given to us and perfected in us - come to believe in His love)

(gal 2:20 (come to believe His love - faith points to His love poured out))

jn 21:15-17 (Peter knew his love failed but his love was never the point - he had to believe in God's love for him Before you can use a gift you must receive it and unwrap it. Do you truly believe the love God has for you?)

Application Questions

MESSAGE RECEIVED
(Do you understand what you learned?)

- What is the main point of this message? (Could you summarize it in your own words?)
- What is something new that you learned?
 - What was your knowledge in this area before you heard this message?
 - Any change you will make in your daily life based upon this new knowledge?
- What reference verse stands out to you and why?
- How did this message encourage you? Why do you think that is?
- Did the message pair with your weekly bible reading in any way?
- What is a struggle you had with this message? It's content or it's application?
- What are some truths that stand out to you in this message?
 - Any life testimonies that you can think of that are good examples of these truths?
- What character/attribute of God stands out to you the most in this message and why?
 - Any specific verse that puts this attribute on display?

MESSAGE APPLIED
(What are you going to do with what you learned?)

Culture

- What are the lies of the world/devil that we need to be aware of that are antithetical to this message?
- What do you think the cultural animosity is towards this message if we apply it rightly?

Church

- How do you see this message impacting the church corporately? (locally/globally)
 - What prayers would be good to pray for the church body based on this message?

Individual

- Is there a sin in your life that this message convicted you of?
 - Why do you think this was a blind spot in your sanctification before this message?
- How did the message address any specific life circumstance you are going through right now?

- Select two questions from the below list and write down your answer to them:
 - How does this message change or impact your:
 - Prayer Life?
 - Evangelism?
 - Bible Reading?
 - Christian Relationships?
 - Non-Christian relationships?
 - Parenting?
 - Role as a Husband/Wife?
 - Workplace?
- **How have you been changed by this message? What is your one memorable takeaway. If I ask you “How did God sanctify you through the preaching of this message, how would you respond?”**