

Intro

- ~ Use the example of the one supreme quality that's necessary – whether it's pizza, spaghetti, coffee
- ~ The one essential quality in our relationship with God and with others is love
- ~ FB Meyer calls love in this chapter, "the one essential for all."

Context

- ~ Context teaches us more than we see at just a service level view
- ~ Context is taking a deeper dive into the passage and seeing the surrounding
- 1 Deal with the immediate context of chapters 12-14 is that of the gifts. More importantly than the gifts is love.
 - 1 Cor 12 – The spiritual gifts and their diversity
 - 1 Cor 13 – Love is the greatest gift
 - 1 Cor 14 – Prophecy and tongues
- 2 Deal with overall context of Corinthians
 - ~ Paul established this church in Acts 18 and if it wasn't for the Lord admonishing Paul to stay in Corinth this church wouldn't have had the benefit of Paul's ministry
 - ~ Paul writes to the carnal Corinthian church to instruct them in all aspects of the faith
 - He corrected them in chapter 1-14 concerning – division, immorality in the church, marriage, misusing Christian liberties, abuses concerning the Lord's supper, selfish use of the spiritual gifts, the importance of love in the expression of the spiritual gifts
 - He corrected many problems and doctrinal misunderstandings
 - Ch1 – Division, a love for eloquence in the pulpit (ch1,2,) and celebrity Christian worship and the preaching of the cross
 - Ch2 – A need for spiritual discernment and how God teaches wisdom
 - Ch3 – They were carnal and still babes in Christ, they were playing favorites amongst the churches preachers, and God gives the increase in a church and they misunderstood they must give account
 - Ch4 – They looked down on Paul and thought they were better than him, they gathered to themselves many teachers, they were puffed up, they needed to be spiritually disciplined by Paul and they needed to learn it's required of a steward that he be found faithful
 - Ch5 – They boasted that they could tolerate immorality in the church, they were treating the sinful fornicators as if they were ok with the Lord, and needed to learn a little leaven (sin) affects the whole loaf. Here, immorally affected the whole church
 - Ch6 – they were taking each other to court, Paul tells them to flee fornication because their bodies are a temple of the HS
 - Ch7 – They misunderstood marriage and divorce
 - Ch8 – They misunderstood and abused their spiritual liberties and caused their brethren to stumble and needed to know knowledge puffs up but love edifies
 - Ch9 – While Paul labored and established the Corinthian church yet the church needed to know that the church had a responsibility to compensate Paul because the workman is worthy of his wages and they needed to learn to compete spiritually and not be an athletic dropout
 - Ch10 – learn from the example of the Jews in the OT who fell prey to lusting, idolatry, fornication, and murmuring
 - Ch11 – Paul again deals with division and treating the Lord's Supper (communion) in as unholy
 - Ch12-14 – The misused their spiritual gifts
 - Ch15 – the Corinthians misunderstood the doctrine of the resurrection. There were pagan intellectual who said there was no resurrection from the dead. So Paul spends 58 verses instructing them concerning the resurrection
 - It's unfortunate they misunderstood the resurrection of Christ but it's for our benefit because we have the benefit of Paul's instruction to them concerning the resurrection of Christ
 - Ch 16 – Paul instructed them concerning the collection of tithes, all things should be done with charity, they should submit themselves to those who are addicted to the ministry
- ~ So, Paul couldn't speak to them as spiritual but as carnal...so we find that Paul spends more time talking about the resurrection with this church than he did in any of his other epistles

Different types of love in the New Testament

1 God' love – (agapao – 25) John 3:16

2 Sensual love (eros) Doesn't appear in the New Test., but was the Greek god of love

3 Brotherly love or love based on common interest (Phileo - 5368) John 15:19

4 Love that family may have for each other or natural affection (Storge - 5387) A derivative is in Rom 12:10

Text Foundations

~ Read 1 Cor 12:31 The more excellent way is what we discover in chapter 13 – Love

~ He also built to a climax in 1Co_13:1-3 moving from the less to the more difficult actions. Evidently Paul used the first person because the Corinthians believed that they did speak with the tongues of men and of angels (cf. 1Co_14:14-15).

~ Vincent - Mentioned first because of the exaggerated importance which the Corinthians attached to this gift.

~ Paul moves from that which seems to be glorious to the not so glorious (sacrifice of belongings and life)

Outline

Love must accompany spiritual speech (v1)

Love must accompany spiritual service (v2)

Love must accompany spiritual sacrifice (v3)

Text

V1 – Love is greater than eloquence/ Love must accompany our speech

~ My accomplishments, success, gifts, and attainments are nothing if I don't have love.

~ We must not substitute speech for love

~ Tongues of angels and men probably are meant to be taken to be It was a statement of hyperbole concerning exalted eloquence, which if void of love might be momentarily electrifying like a clash of gong or cymbal but then vanished just as quickly. Love on the other hand produces eternal effects (cf. v. 13).

- It is evident that among the Corinthians the power of speaking a foreign language was regarded as a signally valuable endowment; and there can be no doubt that some of the leaders in that church valued themselves especially on it; see 1 Cor. 14. To correct this, and to show them that all this would be vain without love
- Perhaps the languages of men
- The Corinthians were occupied with eloquence. For this reason he spends so much time talking about the misuse of tongues. Why else would the Corinthians be consumed with tongues? It's because they were consumed with eloquence.
- Evidence for Corinthians fascination with eloquence is the Corinthians thought Paul was plain speeched (1 Cor 2:1, 4; 2 Cor 3:12; 10:10) and his bodily presence was weak. They said his speech was contemptible
- Perhaps Paul could also been referring to what he may have heard when he was caught up into the 3rd heaven.
- Paul could have boasted about what he heard and saw in heaven but yet he still would say that love is greater
- The tongues of angels may refer to the highest form of language. Maybe the idea is the languages angels would use when communicating with their creator I heaven
- The expression tongues of angels is an hyperbole. In essence Paul is saying that even if he did speak in an angelic tongue—which he did not Grace New Testament Commentary

Souding brass and tinkling cymbal

~ Sounding Brass

- Alford - Any kind, struck and yielding a sound
- Vincent - Corinthian bronze was known as mixed copper. The word here does not mean a brazen instrument, but a piece of unwrought metal, which emitted a sound on being struck. In the streets of Seville one may see pedlers striking, together two pieces of brass instead of blowing a horn or ringing a bell.

~ Tinkling cymbals

- Vincent - The cymbal consisted of two half-globes of metal, which were struck together.
- There's the idea of a continual clanging of the cymbals

- The work tinkling is used in the sense of wailing in Mk 5:38 of the mourners who wailed greatly
- The sound is sharp and piercing.

~ We can summarize the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal as nothing but empty noise.

~ Barclay - He may have the gift of tongues. A characteristic of heathen worship, especially the worship of Dionysus and Cybele, was the clanging of cymbals and the braying of trumpets. Even the coveted gift of tongues was no better than the uproar of heathen worship if love was absent.

V2 – Love is greater than being spiritual/Love must accompany spiritual service

Though Paul could preach, understand all the mysteries of God, had all knowledge all faith – if he didn't have love he was nothing

~ We must not substitute spiritual abilities and service for love

~ Paul lists spirituals gifts and activities that love is greater than

- Prophecy – proclaiming known truth not predicting the future. I can preach without love for others
- Understanding mysteries and having all knowledge – Ken Hughes - The Corinthians were obsessed with excellence, and this carried over into their understanding of knowledge. They placed a high premium on intelligence, insight, and secret knowledge. They were intrigued with the idea that they could access some higher plane of spiritual knowledge.
- Knowledge - The permanent danger of intellectual eminence is intellectual snobbery. The man who is learned runs the grave danger of developing the spirit of contempt. Only a knowledge whose cold detachment has been kindled by the fire of love can really save men.
- Faith – Faith that is powerful. Paul reaches back into Matthew 17:20 where Jesus talks about a faith that can move mountains
 - David Guzik - A man with faith can move great mountains; but he will set them down right in the path of somebody else - or right on somebody else - if he doesn't have love!

V3 – Love is greater than sacrifice/Love must accompany sacrifice

~ We must not substitute sacrificing for Christ for love

~ If I give my bestow my goods to feed the poor

- Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give it to the poor (Mk 19:23)
- Paul could be thinking of Jesus words to this rich young ruler and use it to admonish Corinthians to love

~ He may give his body to be burned.

- Possibly Paul's thoughts are going back to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego and the burning fiery furnace (Dan_3:1-30). Perhaps more likely, he is thinking of a famous monument in Athens called "The Indian's Tomb." There an Indian had burned himself in public on a funeral pyre and had caused to be engraved on the monument the boastful inscription: "Zarmano-chegas, an Indian from Bargaosa, according to the traditional customs of the Indians, made himself immortal and lies here." Just possibly, he may have been thinking of the kind of Christian who actually courted persecution. If the motive which makes a man give his life for Christ is pride and self-display, then even martyrdom becomes valueless. It is not cynical to remember that many a deed which looks sacrificial has been the product of pride and not of devotion.
- Even if I give my life as a martyr for Christ (the highest form of sacrifice) without love it profits me nothing
- If Paul was the greatest philanthropist, gave his body as a martyr to be burned and yet did it without love he would still be nothing

Conclusion

~ Unless motivated by love, spiritual service and gifts do not benefit the believer.

~ Our love for others must be demonstrated in the way we treat them.

~ We must remember Paul doesn't devalue our spiritual gifts but emphasizes love must accompany them

~ We don't leave the house without essentials (phone, wallet, car keys, clothes) so we must also take love with us

~ Love must accompany our speech, service and sacrifice