

**Intro**

- ~ Spurgeon calls these four virtues *love's four sweet companions*.
  - ~ Love is four things on top of what we've already seen from the previous descriptions in v4-6
  - ~ Sports teams sometimes have a player on the team that is called a "utility player". Here is love totally utilitarian
  - ~ Love serves many purposes
  - ~ We might have hoped Paul would have chosen any phrase but this! **All things** encompasses everything! We can all *bear some things*, we can all *believe some things*, we can all *hope some things*, we can all *endure some things*.
  - ~ Love is not like a utility player that plays all positions but it's also like a soldier that goes to battle and takes with it these four descriptions of love. It takes with it patience to bear all things, it takes with it faith to believe all things, it takes with it hope to hope all things and it takes with it perseverance to endure all things
  - ~ We must once again read these characteristics in relationship to fellow man
  - ~ I believe Paul had in mind the problems that existed in the Corinthian church when he wrote this. He was thinking of their pride, their worship of celebrity preachers, boasting about their spiritual gifts, everyone's desire to have the gifts that are most noticeable, their lack of love for one another. While we don't possess the problems the Corinthian church possessed we can learn from their mistakes
  - ~ Paul's ministry exemplified these characteristics. He had to bear, believe, hope and endure all things for the sake of the churches
  - ~ Paul put up with childish nonsense from this church yet he we can see his heart of love for this church
- ~ Throughout the bible "all things" is an oft used phrase. It occurs 220 in the OT and NT
- ~ "All things is used 173 of those 220 occurrences in the NT
  - ~ "All things" is used by Paul in his epistles in 67 verses for a total of 86 times
  - ~ "All things" is used 3 times in 1 Corinthians by Paul

**1 Bears all things - Love covers faults and can tolerate injury and insult**

- ~ Stego - to roof over, that is, (figuratively) to cover with silence (endure patiently): - (for-) bear, suffer.
- ~ Robertson – Stegō is old verb from stegē, roof, already in 1Co\_9:12; 1Th\_3:1, 1Th\_3:5 which see. Love covers, protects, forbears (suffert, Vulgate).
- ~ Vincents - It keeps out resentment as the ship keeps out the water, or the roof the rain.
- ~ Stegō (to bear) basically means to cover or to support and therefore to protect. Love bears all things by protecting others from exposure, ridicule, or harm. Genuine love does not gossip or listen to gossip. Even when a sin is certain, love tries to correct it with the least possible hurt and harm to the guilty person. Love never protects sin but is anxious to protect the sinner.

There's a two-fold sense of this word: 1 Covers the faults and mistakes of others 2 it can bear any insult, injury

**1 Love covers the faults and mistakes of others**

- ~ "love can cover anything," in the sense that it will never drag into the light of day the faults and mistakes of others. It would far rather set about quietly mending things than publicly displaying and rebuking them. More likely it means that love can bear any insult, any injury, any disappointment. It describes the kind of love that was in the heart of Jesus himself,
- ~ Paul brings an important truth also mentioned by Peter in 1 Pet 4:8, " *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*
- ~ Love covering faults doesn't mean we should let people get away with violating, hurting and taking advantage of others. Abuse and the Bernie Madoffs shouldn't be tolerated. The should be dealt with by our legal system
- ~ Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lip
- ~ Love covers and it never proclaims the errors of others. If we want to proclaim anything it should be the gospel.
- ~ Some people are more eager to publish slander than the gospel

**2 Love can bear insult and injury**

- ~ Love can bear any insult, injury, disappointment. It describes the kind of love that was in the heart of Jesus
- ~ To bear with others means we're not so easily offended at all the little things others do

~ I say to our dog Jack all the time, "Are you offended again?" When a car goes by and honks the horn or has their radio playing loudly he growls as if that loud noise was directed at him. "Are you offended again Jack?"

~ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown – "Literally said of *holding fast* like a watertight vessel; so the charitable man *contains himself* in silence from giving vent to what selfishness would prompt under personal hardship."

~ It's one thing to simply bear things but to bear them well we don't get bitter, angry, resentful, hateful

~ Spurgeon - "You must have fervent charity towards the saints, but you will find very much about the best of them which will try your patience; for, like yourself, they are imperfect, and they will not always turn their best side towards you, but sometimes sadly exhibit their infirmities. Be prepared, therefore, to contend with "all things" in them."

~ Oysters make pearls in response to an irritant, such as a grain of sand or another object. When any irritant makes its way between the mollusk's shell and mantle, the creature produces nacre, a protective coating that helps reduce irritation.

~ "I would, my brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate the pearl oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil, and what does it do but *cover* it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which has harmed us." (Spurgeon)

## **2 Believes all things - Love is ready to believe the best of every person**

~ Believe (pisteuo) to have faith in (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, credit; by implication to entrust (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ): - believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with.

~ This characteristic has a twofold aspect. (1) In relation to God it means that love takes God at his word, and can take every promise which begins "Whosoever" and say, "That means me." (2) In relation to our fellow men it means that love always believes the best about other people.

### 1 In relation to God

~ that are to be believed, all that God says in his word, all his truths, and all his promises; and even sometimes in hope against hope, as Abraham did, relying upon the power, faithfulness, and other perfections of God

~ The one thing that is trustworthy is the promises of God

### 2 In relation to men

~ Thankful, prayerful and ministerial to others

~ Is ever ready to believe the best of every person, and will credit no evil of any but on the most positive evidence; gladly receives whatever may tend to the advantage of any person whose character may have suffered from obloquy and detraction; or even justly, because of his misconduct.

~ Robertson -Not gullible, but has faith in men.

~ "This does not mean . . . that a Christian is to allow himself to be fooled by every rogue, or to pretend that he believes that white is black. But in doubtful cases he will prefer being too generous in his conclusions to suspecting another unjustly." [Note: Robertson and Plummer, p. 295.]

## **3 Hopes all things - Love has confidence in the future, not a pessimism**

~ el-pid'-zo From G1680; to expect or confide: - (have, thing) hope (-d) (for), trust.

~ Robertson - Sees the bright side of things. Does not despair.

~ Love has a confidence in the future, not a pessimism. When hurt, it does not say, "It will be this way for ever, and even get worse." It hopes for the best, and it hopes in God.

~ Heb 11:1 *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen*

~ Heb 11:1 shows us there's a connection between faith and hope

~ Jesus believed that no man is hopeless. Adam Clark was one of the great theologians but at school he was very slow to learn. One day a distinguished visitor paid a visit to the school, and the teacher singled out Adam Clark and said, "That is the stupidest boy in the school." Before he left the school, the visitor came to the boy and said kindly, "Never mind, my boy, you may be a great scholar someday. Don't be discouraged but try hard, and keep on trying." The teacher was hopeless, the visitor was hopeful, and--who knows?--it may well have been that word of hope which made Adam Clark what he one day became.

~ The story is told of a dog who stayed at the airport of a large city for over five years waiting for his master to return. Employees and others fed the dog and took care of him, but he would not leave the spot where he last saw his master. He would not give up hope that someday they would be reunited. If a dog's love for his master can produce that kind of hope, how much longer should our love make hope last?

~ Love is hopeful that those who have failed will not fail again rather than concluding that failure is inevitable

~ Jesus had hope for the woman taken in adultery, Peter, the disciples, God wouldn't take Israel's failure as final, nor Paul the Corinthians carnality as final

~ When faith runs out it holds on to hope. As long as God's grace is operative human failure is never final.

#### **4 Endures all things - Love bears everything with triumphant fortitude**

~ Because love is bearing, believing and hoping all things it now is enduring all things

~ Hupomenō From G5259 and G3306; to stay under (behind), that is, remain; figuratively to undergo, that is, bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere: - abide, endure, (take) patient (-ly), suffer, tarry behind.

~ Hupomenō ("to endure") was a military term used of an army's holding a vital position at all costs. Every hardship and every suffering was to be endured in order to hold fast.

~ Robertson – "Love perseveres. It carries on like a stout-hearted soldier."

~ Love holds fast to those it loves. It endures all things at all costs. It stands against overwhelming opposition and refuses to stop bearing or stop believing or stop hoping. Love will not stop loving.

~ Love endures persecutions in a patient and loving spirit

~ Love bears everything with triumphant fortitude. The verb used here (hupomenein, G5278) is one of the great Greek words. It is generally translated to bear or to endure; but what it really describes is not the spirit which can passively bear things, but the spirit which, in bearing them, can conquer and transmute them. It has been defined as "a masculine constancy under trial." George Matheson, who lost his sight and who was disappointed in love, wrote in one of his prayers that he might accept God's will, "Not with dumb resignation but with holy joy; not only with the absence of murmur but with a song of praise." Love can bear things, not merely with passive resignation, but with triumphant fortitude, because it knows that "a father's hand will never cause his child a needless tear."

~ Love can bear up under all persecutions and mal-treatment from open enemies and professed friends; bears adversities with an even mind, as it submits with perfect resignation to every dispensation of the providence of God; and never says of any trial, affliction, or insult, this cannot be endured.

#### **Conclusion**

~ There is a reason why Paul put this chapter in the midst of his discussion of spiritual gifts. Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to remember that giftedness is not the measure of maturity, the display of love is.

~ The best way to understand each of these is to see them in the life of Jesus. We could replace the word *love* with the name *Jesus* and the description would make perfect sense. We can easily say, *Jesus suffers long and is kind; Jesus does not envy . . .* and make it through the whole chapter.

~ All these requirements of love are only made possible through Christ – because he's the only one who can love so completely, thoroughly, consistently, patiently

~ Only Christ can perfectly exhibit all these

~ This long list shows us it's only possible through Christ