

LOVE NEVER FAILS

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The Necessity of Love (vvs 1-3)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

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.

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 Corinthian Christians liked dramatic spiritual experiences. They loved supernatural gifts like speaking in tongues and miracles and healings. They possessed enough faith to do spectacular things, but at the same time they were spiritual show-offs.

A variety of other problems in the Corinthian church existed, which included the suing one another in public courts, abuse of the Lord's supper, sexual misbehavior, party factions because of preacher preferences, and unruly women. Consequently, the apostle Paul was constrained to write to them demanding higher moral and principled standards on account.

Paul's main trust for the epistle was to tell them about the pre-eminence of love, and how gifts should be exercised with love for one another.

The Nature of Love (vvs 4-7)

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

The Supremacy of Love (vvs 8-13)

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. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

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. 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.

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Paul proves that because of its enduring quality, love is God's greatest gift. It is the gift above all other gifts. In contrast to love's permanence, spiritual gifts are temporary, partial, and elementary.

He stresses its absolute permanency. Throughout eternity love will never expire.

In heaven we will have no of faith and hope. Faith will have turned into sight, and hope will have been realized. But there will also be no need for the gifts of teaching, preaching, helps, prophecy, discernment, knowledge, wisdom, tongues, miracles, healings, faith, mercy, or leadership. None of these gifts will have a purpose in heaven. The gifts are given for the building up of the church. The church shall be complete once in heaven.

He stresses its absolute completeness. Paul says the things that are now and what we see now are reflections in a mirror.

Corinthians were famous for manufacturing mirrors. The Corinthian mirror was made of highly polished metal and, even at its best, gave but an imperfect reflection. They were poor mirrors.

Paul is saying the believers' present spiritual understanding is like a reflection in a poor mirror. They see very poorly now: what they know is partial and incomplete. While believers' knowledge is still growing and maturing, God already knows each person completely.

Instead of boasting about their spiritual gifts the Corinthian believers should realize that these gifts were nothing compared to what they would experience in heaven.

He stresses its absolute supremacy. Great as faith and hope are, love is still greater. Faith without love is cold, and hope without love is grim. Love is the fire which kindles faith, and it is the light which turns hope into certainty.

John, the apostle of love, who references love no less hundred times in his writings, quotes Jesus in 13:34-35 of his gospel this way—

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another, By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

We are instructed to—

Pursue love (1 Cor 14:1)

Put on love (Col 3:14)

Increase and abound in love (1Thess.3:12)

To be sincere in love (2 Cor 8: 8)

To be unified in love (Phil. 2:2)

To be fervent in love (1Peter 4:8)

To forbear one another in love (Eph 4:2)

To stimulate one another in love (Heb. 10:24)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:7-9).
