

## **“THE GREATEST GIFT”**

**(1Corinthians 13:1-13)**

*February 12, 2017*

*“Now about Spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.”*

Paul taught that **EVERY** believer in Jesus has received at least one gift, but that **NO** believer has received every gift.

*“And now I will show you the most excellent way.”*

Simply put, the excellent way Paul is going to teach us is **LOVE**.

The Greek language has several different words for love. *Eros* is the Greek word for intense physical desire, the root of our word **EROTIC**. Another word for love is *philos*, a more **BROTHERLY** kind of love.

But Christians experienced a different kind of love in their relationship with God through Christ, a love that was **UNDESERVED**, but freely given. *Agape* love.

### **I. The IMPORTANCE of Love**

- The gift of **TONGUES** is useless without it.

Corinthian believers were most impressed by the spectacular gifts, and **WANTED** them. Jealousy of those with it arose and those who had it looked down on those who didn't.

Paul says that if he used the gift of tongues, without love, he is just as useless as a gong or symbol trying to arouse a **NONEXISTENT** god.

- The gift of **PROPHECY** is useless without it.

To share the gospel with those who need Jesus was his primary calling. Yet again, to do so without love, was a waste of **BREATH**.

- The gift of **KNOWLEDGE** is useless without it.

Paul was a brilliant, educated man, yet he declares to understand **ALL** mysteries and have **ALL** knowledge is useless without love.

- The gift of **FAITH** is useless without it.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the **KEY** to salvation, yet even it is of no value without love.

- The gift of **GIVING** is useless without it.

The early church, based on the teachings of Jesus, understood that our faith leads us to a life of giving, even **SACRIFICE**, rather than a focus on personal gain. But, even the gift of giving, if not accompanied by love, is useless.

## **II. The IMPECCABILITY of Love**

- In relation to **SAINTS**.

Love helps us be patient with each other, kind to **ONE ANOTHER**.

- In relation to **SELF**.

Love **REORIENTS** our thinking and speech. Nothing but love can change us so **DRAMATICALLY**.

- In relation to **SIN**.

The sinful life we once lived becomes **ABHORRENT**, rather than appealing.

- In relation to **SITUATIONS**.

Love **ALWAYS** does some crucial things: It always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres.

## **III. The INDESTRUCTIBILITY of Love**

- Unlike other gifts, it is **PERMANENT**.

Human love can **FAIL**. Godly love **NEVER** gives up.

- Unlike other gifts, it is **COMPLETE**.

Paul uses two illustrations:

-Childhood is not **PERMANENT**. As we grow older, we begin to mature. We are not yet complete.

-Mirrors are **IMPERFECT** reflections.

## **IV. The INVINCIBILITY of Love**

- Faith and hope are beautiful gifts **FROM** God.

Jesus will bring them to fulness.

- But love is the **GREATEST** gift of all.

It will never end, it will never give up, it will **NEVER FAIL!**