

Fil-Am Community Church
Barry Black
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“Love Is Never Boastful Or Proud” Building Great Relationships

Good morning Fil-Am, We are continuing on with the Series “Building Great Relationships” [an In-Depth Study of 1 Corinthians 13 –verses 1-7] and- as such – we will today cover one of the more interesting characteristics of 1 Corinthians 13 – “Where Love Is Never Boastful or Proud!” [SLIDE 2] Our key verse today is “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast;” (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Now so far we have heard that Love is and should be your Greatest Aim; Love is Extremely Patient [and Who is “Patience”? That’s right – It is Jesus Himself. So do not be like many of us when we get frustrated and say rather blatantly “I do not need patience!” Why? Because you are saying “God, I do not need your Son to show me, mold me, and teach me how to be more Patient.”] I know what you mean.... And I have said this many times myself.. But please understand - We could All learn to dance with more Patience!!! [Remember, God Knows you and what you Need]

Now to-date: We have heard that Love is Kind; that Love does not Envy; and today we will tackle that one side of us that we all have a great relationship with – Our own Egos; AND experience How We can Get Ego out of the Way in the Message titled “Love is Never Boastful or Proud.” Everybody say Proud! -----

Now say “I am proud to be here today.” ----- That is the good type of pride - Why? Because GOD wants you here and, as Pastor Dave says numerous times, no one is here by accident.

So as we peel this onion back on the Series “Building Great Relationships “I want to share with you a different slant to all this;

One I can assure you – you have likely never heard.

But, to set the stage, before I do, I want to introduce you to the writer of First Corinthians – Paul [formerly known as Saul of Tarsus) so we can see what was actually going on here. We know thru history that Paul – formerly known as Saul of Tarsus – was a unique and very experienced bible student, teacher, and evangelist.

He studied under a leading teacher of the day - a Pharisee by the name of Gamaliel [GA-MEL-E-AL]. Paul claims to have been educated by Gamaliel, one of the premier teachers of the Law in the first century. Gamaliel taught between A.D. 22-55, giving us a fairly good idea for when Paul began his education. So, if the young Paul began study at the latest age of 16, we can guess a birth year of about AD 6 at the earliest.

Now Gamaliel – taught many things in the Bible but, when we look at the Misnah – which is the Oral Law, and a guide or legal commentary on the Torah, in explaining how the 613 commandments [which make up the Torah] are to be carried out - we see that Gamaliel was most grounded in his teaching on marriage and divorce. Why is this important? Well, today you will find that relationship psychologists [just to name a few.... Lisa Blum “Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love”; John Gottman “Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work”; and one you are all familiar with “The Five Languages of Love” by psychologist Gary Chapman.] tend to use these same descriptions of Love as they explain how we are to get along with our mates, our significant others, and our family members. Being Kind – Not Being Envious – and Not Being Boastful or Proud – are recipes for Success. And God knew this as well when He conveyed this message to Paul thru the Holy Spirit.

Paul was a Diaspora Jew, [A Jew who was dispersed from the homeland as a Judahite, An ancestral Jew by Heritage, and who came into his own when he returned to Israel]. He claimed to have been raised in a family which kept the Jewish traditions without fault. He was an ultra-conservative reacting to what he perceived as a dangerous liberal view (that Jesus was the Messiah and the High Priest killed him!)

Paul – Focused – Bold – Detailed – Well studied – Unafraid! All these could be used to describe him as he went on a Sabbatical to bring the Jews, who

followed this radical Jesus, into submission; They, after all were heretics, and He – Paul, was doing them a favor by catching and persecuting each and every one!

Could Jesus use such a wild one? A wild weed who was out of control? Well Jesus could, and did, but first He had to do one thing..... He had to break him; Completely! Without hesitation! He literally knocked PAUL off his horse in the middle of the desert and Blinded him!

Whoa! Everybody say Whoa!

But it didn't end there.... No; Paul was broken but, just like the services, who take young men and women from every walk of life into their profession and livelihood, break them down one by one, and then begin building them into mean, lean fighting machines - Jesus began building him back up;

He confronted him - [Acts 9:4] "Saul, Saul, Why are you persecuting me?" he asked him. And Paul said; "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And thus began Grace - Why? Because Jesus had gotten Saul – who He gave a new name to - to that point where he was able to see how much Grace – Charity – and Love was demonstrated. [When do you think we are going to get a new name? Revelations 2:17] At the end of time when we – BEGIN TO SERVE CHRIST TO THE FULLEST.

[And who else was given a New Name by Christ???)

Other Examples in the Bible were: Abram to Abraham (Gen 17:5)

Sarai to Sarah (Gen 17:15)

Jacob to Israel (Gen 32:27-28)(Gen 35:10)

Simon to Peter (Mt 16:17-18)

Jesus - by virtue of His Steadfast and Demonstrated LOVE got Paul to that point where he was able to see how much Grace – Charity – and Love was available thru the Creator.

It wasn't easy; Jesus had to break him in order to get him prepared for Service; And there is a whole MESSAGE – A WHOLE SERMON SERIES –

Involved in this; Jesus made him go to a disciple called Ananias – whom Jesus appeared to in a vision – and told him of Paul's situation and how Paul was coming to see him for healing;

Now – Another Parallel I want you to see here is this: During this breaking down of Paul for service to the Lord he followed a pre-determined path to restoration;

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. Who else was three days in the tomb before being fully restored? That's correct; Jesus!

[Now just to be clear; Let's quickly just mention some of the other instances in the Bible where this number 3 was mentioned:

1/ The No 3 is associated with the Holy Spirit; It always identifies some important event in Salvation History. In addition to relating to the Holy Trinity, the number three is associated with actions of God, since such actions are manifestations of the Father working through the Son or the Holy Spirit.

2/Jonah – was 3 Days in Belly of the Whale before he was ready for what? Evangelism!

3/In Genesis we read where the Earth was separated from the waters on the 3rd Day!

4/The Great Flood where ManKind comes out of the Ark to Repopulate the Earth - Involves 3 Men - Shem, Ham, and Japeth – Sons of Noah.

5/ 3 Angels come to Abraham to tell him that he will have a son of promise – his Isaac – who will be of the lineage of Christ – will be Born to his wife Sarah.

6/ When Abraham takes Isaac and a servant on their journey where he is told to sacrifice His only begotten son – Isaac - Is a 3 DAY JOURNEY; Why? This event is about to become one of the most significant tests of Abrahams life and a fore-runner of what God will do for us in sacrificing His Own Son.

7/ There are 3 Divisions of the Tabernacle in the desert as described to Moses and for the Holy Temple in Jerusalem - the Outer Court - the Holy Place - and the Holy of Holies.

8/ When Jesus is missing from His Parents [For How Long? 3 Days] and they go back to get him and Find Him in the Temple talking to the Teachers - Jesus is "Coming Out" - Learning to teach others and becoming well known as a Scholar.

9/ Jesus takes how many up to the Mount of Transfiguration to see him talking to both Moses and Elijah? - 3 Men - Peter- James- John.

10/ Jesus Ministry covered how many Passovers? THREE

11/ Jesus, in Matt 12:40, speaks of His release from the bowels of earth being akin to Jonah's release from the Belly of the Whale; It is Him coming thru what was the greatest act of kindness and Love demonstrated on earth and in Heaven!

Now; back to Paul:

Ananias was somewhat concerned as well of Paul's notoriety; He Says "I have heard, Lord, that this is an evil man who does evil things."

"¹¹ And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight, [This is like Pilgrims Progress for real] [Look this up in the scriptures - Acts 9:11] - and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ¹² And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Go thy way: [Now watch what Jesus says here] for he [Paul] is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:" Jesus has already decided what Paul is to do and how He will do it.

"¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." [BOOM - His healing is Completed - He was Broken and is now Restored!]

“19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway, he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

Now the point of all this is I want you to see the parallel between what happened to Paul in being broken – being prepared for ministry – and being used by Christ as a remarkable vessel for the gospel - Now we get to the good part!

In Chapter 12 of First Corinthians, Paul – by virtue of the Holy Spirit – speaks of an analogy when Paul compares the body of a man to the Body of Christ; And he does so to make a point; He states

“8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; KJV 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; KJV 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: KJV 11” “But ALL [Everyone say ALL]

these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. KJV 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”

These are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit folks and LISTEN: Christ had them ALL WITHOUT MEASURE; - No limitations! "Wisdom and understanding," the ability to perceive moral and abstract truth;

(2) "Counsel and might," the power at once to carry out thought into act;

(3) "The knowledge and the fear of the Lord,"

And he goes on to say.... “KJV 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. “

He Goes on to state: “KJV 14 For the body is not one member, but many.”

If the foot or the ear or the eye thought themselves to be superior, what would happen? Things wouldn't work out so well; We would just be a huge foot; or a huge eye; or a huge ear and would not be able to work as designed.

All parts of the body are honourable and need to get along with the other parts for the body to be complete... And that is how the Body of Christ works as well.

God places gifts in each person; He calls each person to be His Disciple and to work as an Apostle; Prophet; Teacher; Worker of Miracles; etc. as YOU WANT IT TO BE – Absolutely NOT! But ONLY AS HE DEEMS Necessary.

Now Corinth, built originally in 730 BC – Was burned in 146 BC- And was rebuilt by the Romans in 46 BC [They had a 100 year rule whereby no city could be rebuilt until 100 years had passed when they took it over from an enemy force.] It was a large city that rivaled Athens and Thebes in wealth - THAT HAD MANY VICES – For instance, the Temple of Aphrodite and later Venus with 1000 Priestesses who practiced Prostitution; And the Corinth Church was started by Paul in approx. 51-52 AD.

Paul wrote perhaps 4 letters to Corinth and these that we have in the CANONIZED Bible are letters 2 and 4 – 1 & 3 are missing from our Bible; The “Letter of Tears” [part of the 1st Letter to Corinth] is perhaps Chapters 10-13 of our 2nd Corinthians Book;

And the church was adversely affected by the immoral environment found in the city. The Corinthian church contained some Jews, but more Gentiles, and the apostle had to contend with the superstition of the one, and the sinful conduct of the other. The peace of this church was disturbed by false teachers, who undermined the influence of the apostle. Two parties were the result; one contending earnestly for the Jewish ceremonies, the other indulging in excesses contrary to the gospel, to which they were especially led by the luxury and the sins which prevailed around them. Pride caused division in the church and disruption in the services.

Immorality and immodesty found its way into the church, which gave it a bad reputation (1Co 5)

The brethren were taking their personal problems with each other before the heathen courts instead of working them out among themselves (1Co 6).

Other issues presented themselves such as:

Questions about marriage (1Co 7);

Meats sacrificed to idols; (1Co 8-10);

Women praying and prophesying with heads uncovered (1Co 11);

The use of spiritual gifts (1Co 12-14);

The resurrection from the dead (1Co 15);

and the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (1Co 16).

So the Church had numerous Problems; that needed to be answered and dealt with.

Now, Paul transitions to the next theme of his letter to the Corinthians as he knows how puffed up people are getting in the church of Corinth by pretending to be this and pretending to be so much better than others due to their gifts or pride in what they can do.

He paints the picture of what the body does – how the foot complains that it is not a hand and says I am not of the body; And if the ear says I am not an eye, I am not of the body; But if the whole body were an eye, where would we be now and how would we hear..... And so on and so on; but the lesson is this..... For all parts are needed to function and the members need to have respect and care for one another in order to function as God has placed these parts together. And so it is with the Body of Christ. And then he states: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” “KJV 29 Are all apostles? prophets? teachers? workers of miracles? KJV 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? KJV 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.]”

And it is Hammer Time! Now Paul sets the record straight - and it is what I call an Ahaaaaaa Moment!

Let's go to another verse in the very same letter: [Slide 3]

First Corinthians 4:5; which says this; When Jesus comes again, "he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart.

At that time each will receive their praise from God." And First

Thessalonians 2:4 says, "Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts" (NLT). God is interested in our motives even more than our actions.

God wants us to know that He sees what no one else sees. He knows why we do what we do and desires to reward those whose hearts are right toward Him. We can ONLY keep our motives pure by continually surrendering every part of our hearts to the control of the Holy Spirit.

He says: In a nutshell - God knows what you do; God knows you; and God knows WHY you do it!

And if it is done not with a good loving, serving, attitude and motive to serve the Lord - Jesus Christ - it is worthless. Because our God is MOTIVE based.

'There is a day coming, that will bring men's secret sins into open day, and discover the secrets of their hearts. Then every slandered believer will be justified, and every faithful servant approved and rewarded. The word of God is the best rule by which to judge as to men. Pride commonly is at the bottom of quarrels. Self-conceit contributes to produce undue esteem of our teachers, as well as of ourselves. We shall not be puffed up for one against another, if we remember that all are instruments, employed by God, and endowed by him with various talents.'

He cares about Motives - the Why you do What you do; And Works do not Matter unless they are done in Love for the One who is providing you the Means to Serve.

Let me say this again.... God judges the heart - not the act/work/or event;

If you want to serve Him - do it out of pure unadulterated Love for the Father and the Son. Not to be seen; not to be recognized; not to be singled

out..... No – No - No! That will all come someday in Heaven when He recognizes you at the Bema – Judgement when He gives you your reward. Even then all we will be able to claim is that a Gracious Lord honored us by Allowing us to Accomplish His Work thru Us!

I want you to see these verses and think about what I just said; This is how God sees us..... [Slide 4]

Proverbs 21:2 - Every way of a man [is] right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

[We think we are doing good but the Lord looks into our hearts – and He judges them.]

Proverbs 16:2 - All the ways of a man [are] clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

1 Samuel 16:7 - But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

[The Lord has a unique way of looking at things – unlike man – The Lord looks into our hearts and spirit and weighs the motives thereof.]

Without Love - YOU can do ANYTHING but it doesn't matter; Love – And Paul uses the word “Charity” [King James translation] in the close of the previous chapter to explain this; But he explains it as Agape Love : love—agape: Definition: not what is meant by charity in our common use of the word, which most men understand as alms-giving, but love in its fullest and most extensive meaning, true love to God and man, a benevolent disposition of mind towards our fellow-Christians, growing out of sincere and fervent devotion to God.

This living principle of all duty and obedience is the more excellent way of which the apostle speaks, preferable to all gifts.

Without this the most glorious gifts are nothing, of no account to us, of no esteem in the sight of God.

[Slide 5] God Cares ABOUT HOW YOU DISPLAY LOVE

I. Charity is this: It is long suffering—makrothymei. [Mak-roth-e-me]

It endures evil, injury, and provocation, without being filled with resentment, indignation, or revenge. It makes the mind firm, gives it power over the angry passions, and furnishes it with a persevering patience, that shall rather wait and wish for the reformation of a brother than fly out in resentment of his conduct.

It will put up with many slights and neglects from the person it loves, and wait long to see the kindly effects of such patience on him.

II. It is kind—chresteuetai. [Slide 5] [Crest -tu-a-tie]

It is benign, bountiful; it is courteous and obliging. “The law of kindness is in her lips; her heart is large, and her hand open. She is ready to show favours and to do good. She seeks to be useful; and not only seizes on opportunities of doing good, but searches for them.” This is her general character. She is patient under injuries, and apt and inclined to do all the good offices in her power. And under these two generals all the particulars of the character may be reduced.

III. God’s Love/Charity suppresses envy: It envieth not; [Slide 6]

It is not grieved at the good of others; neither at their gifts nor at their good qualities, their honors nor their estates. If we love our neighbor we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased with it, that we shall share in it and rejoice at it.

His bliss and sanctification will be an addition to ours, instead of impairing or lessening it. This is the proper effect of kindness and benevolence: envy is the effect of ill-will. The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never do ill to any.

IV. God’s Love/Charity subdues pride and vain-glory;

It vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, is not bloated with self-conceit, does not swell upon its acquisitions, nor arrogate to itself that honor, or power, or respect, which does not belong to it.

“It is not insolent, apt to despise others, or trample on them, or treat them with contempt and scorn. Those who are animated with a principle of true brotherly love will in honor prefer one another;” Rom. 12:10. “They will do nothing out of a spirit of contention or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind will esteem others better than themselves.” Phil. 2:3

True love gives us an esteem of our brethren, and raises our value for them; and this will limit our esteem of ourselves, and prevent the tumors of self-conceit and arrogance.

The Syriac interpretation is — it does not raise tumults and disturbances. Charity calms the angry passions, instead of raising them. It does not act insidiously with any, seek to ensnare them, nor tease them.

It is not stubborn and untractable, nor apt to be cross and contradictory. Some understand it to be of flattery, when a fair face is put on, and fine words are said, without any regard to truth, or intention of good. Charity abhors such falsehood and flattery.

Here is your answer as to why Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life; No one comes to the Father except through me.” [John 14:6] Only by having His Grace; His Love living inside of you; can you do anything that is worth being written down in a book of works in Heaven.

It doesn't matter whether you are a good person; whether you do good deeds; or whether you are a wonderful father, mother, or son, or daughter; God knows why you do what you do; If it is for fame; fortune; or power; or hobby... It is in vain!

[SLIDE 7]

God is Love; He wants us to Love our brethren -to treat him with respect-with love – and without envious comparison of what he does; what he has; or what he believes. We need to believe that our fellow man is our brother and treat him as such - without judging him;

God saw Saul of Tarsus and saw him as an opportunity to invest Himself in Paul's teaching; Saw him as a Holy Advocate in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles; and saw him as Demonstrating how God can take the most despicable enemy of the Cross and turn him into its greatest evangelist.

We should listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit; Get on our knees daily church and ask Him; What are you doing today where I can join with you and assist you in partaking of your spirit – becoming a partner with you in accomplishing your will; Now ask Him this.....

Use me Lord Jesus to be the best person I can be; to be the best Father, best Mother; best Son and Daughter; best worker; best Preacher; best teacher; just fill in the blank;

1/Do everything you do FOR CHRIST; Just as if you were personally doing it unto Him. No shortcuts; No I'll get to it tomorrows; No excuses.

2/Ask Him to burden you with His Spirit so you know how He feels about this whole mess down here that we call a world;

3/ And ask HIM TO Break you; To prepare you for service – HIS SERVICE;

4/And ask Him to give you His Direction and Purpose for a new road to venture down - to live a life of Grace giving of yourself to Christ for His use.

We will pray and then I want you to know The Altar is open:

Please ask Him today as the prayer team stands ready to pray with you – EITHER UP HERE OR AS YOU STAND BY YOUR CHAIR; Ask and you will receive, for His direction, restoration, and answers concerning your life and mission in serving Him.