

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor David Bennett
8 November 2015
1 Corinthians 13:13

"Living Lovingly"

Good morning Fil-Am it is so good to see so many of you here this morning, for time's sake let's get into the word of God by more importantly let's get the Word of God into you!

This morning we are continuing on the series that Pastor Rolly started last week called "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous (in God's eyes)."

Pastor Rolly started the series with a sermon called "Living Positively" and today we are going to continue with Living Lovingly.

The key verse for today's message is **1 Corinthians 13:13** NASB that says,

¹³"But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is LOVE."

There was a story I heard a while ago about an actor who was playing the part of Christ in a passion play. As he carried the cross up the hill a bystander in the crowd began heckling him, & shouting insults.

Finally, the actor had taken all of it he could take. So he threw down his cross, walked over to the bystander, & punched him in the face.

After the play was over, the director told him, "I know he was a pest, but I have to fire you. We just can't have you behaving this way while playing the part of Jesus."

The actor begged, "Please give me one more chance. I can handle it if it happens again." So the director decided to give him another chance.

The next day he was once again carrying his cross up the street. Sure enough, the heckler was back. You could tell that the actor was really trying to control himself, but it was about to get the best of him. He was clinching his fists & grinding his teeth.

Finally, he looked at the heckler & said, "I'll meet you after the resurrection!"

The above illustration is humorous, however holds a deep truth that we all need to pay attention to. That truth is that sometimes it is hard for those who profess to be Christians to behave like Christians should.

We try to carry our crosses, but if someone crosses us, we tend to lose our composure & behave in much the same way the rest of the world behaves.

That is what we are going to try and deal with today as we explore how the Bible teaches that we are to be people who exercise love in all of our relationships with one another.

Saints listen to these words,

Ephesians 4:2 (NASB)

² ***“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, “***

Hebrews 12:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ ***“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”***

Each of the above verses says the same thing in a slightly different way. It may be difficult sometimes, & not everybody will be easy to love, but if it is possible, we are to live in peace & harmony with everyone.

I was going to read a poem about Love, however as I searched I came to the conclusion that the best poem on Love was found within chapter 13 of Corinthians from verses 4-7,

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NASB),

*⁴ “Love is **patient**, love is **kind** and is not **jealous**; love does not **brag** and is not **arrogant**, ⁵ does not act **unbecomingly**; it does not **seek its own**, is not **provoked**, does not take into account a **wrong suffered**, ⁶ does not rejoice in **unrighteousness**, but rejoices with the **truth**; ⁷ **bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**”*

So this morning we will focus on 1 Corinthians 13, the "Love Chapter" of the Bible, to see how we can “Live lovingly.”

The first point we will discuss this morning is...

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE IN OUR LIVES

We will start with the first 3 verses which Paul begins by saying, "Now I will show you the most excellent way."

For starters Paul is saying, I want to show you the best way to take care of virtually every situation, you will face and that is the way of love."

Then he points out that love is more important than four other things that Christians at that time consider very important.

Paul starts by saying....

A. LOVE is more important than spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 13:1 NASB

*¹³ **If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.***

Saints on the day of Pentecost, God gave the apostles the special gift of being able to speak in tongues, speak in languages that they had never learned so that the people gathered there could hear them and could understand what was being said in their very own native language.

Notice here in 1 Corinthians, Paul says that if God gave him the gift of speaking every human language, & even the heavenly language of the angels, but he didn't have love, then he would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Now what did he mean by that?

We have been discussing some of this in IMPACT class as we are looking over many instances where back in the 1st Century, there was a big gong or cymbal hanging at the entrance of most pagan temples.

When people came to worship, they hit them to awaken the pagan gods so they would listen to their prayers.

Here, Paul is saying that even if he were so blessed that he could speak with the greatest of eloquence in every language, but didn't have love, then his life was as useless as this ridiculous act of pounding on a gong to awaken nonexistent gods.

The point you need to take away is that love is more important than any spiritual gift.

Paul continues by saying...

B. LOVE is more important than knowledge.

1 Corinthians 13:2 NASB

² “If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

Paul says that even if you know it all, if you know everything there is to know about...

- ✓ nuclear science, and
- ✓ about medicine, and
- ✓ philosophy, and
- ✓ psychology, and
- ✓ every other kind of “ology”, and
- ✓ if you know it all, but have not love,

Then you are nothing at all.

I don't think we need more knowledge near as much as we need more love. For the hearts of people need to change before society will ever change.

Paul continues by saying...

C. LOVE is more important than faith.

1 Corinthians 13:2 NASB

2 “If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

Saints notice Paul doesn't say that faith is not important; he says that love is **more important**. He said, "If I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

What is your faith? What do you believe for sure this morning?

- ✓ Do you believe that God is the creator of the world?

- ✓ Do you believe that Jesus Christ is His only begotten Son, & that He came into our world & lived a sinless life
- ✓ Do you believe that he died & was buried & on the third day rose again?
- ✓ Do you believe that He is now at the right hand of the Father, & is preparing a place for us,
- ✓ Do you believe that one day He will come again?

If you believe all those things, then well & good & I commend you for it. But the Bible teaches that if you believe all the right things, but do not have love, then **you are nothing.**

Because even faith is of no value unless it is backed up by love.

The priest & the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan had faith. The problem was they had **no love.**

So they walked by on the other side & just left the man lying there to die.

In **Galatians 5:6** Paul says, "*The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*"

Paul concludes with...

D. LOVE is more important than generosity.

1 Corinthians 13:3 NASB

³ "*And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*"

Paul says, "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

Now notice that he doesn't say, "If I give 10%." He says, "If I empty my

checking account, if I cash in my insurance policies, if I give everything away to help the poor, & even sacrifice myself, but I don't have love then I gain nothing at all."

You see, generosity by itself is not enough.

We need to ask ourselves today why do we give?

- ✓ Do you give because you heard an appealing sermon on stewardship?
- ✓ Or, because you feel guilty if you don't give?
- ✓ Do you simply give because you want to impress others around you?

If the only reason that I give is to receive or to benefit myself, then love is absent, & giving is empty.

The motive for giving should be love, love for God & love for God's people.

So Paul is saying that love is more important than...

1. More important than **Spiritual gifts**,
2. More important than **Knowledge**,
3. More important than **Faith**,
4. More important than **Generosity**.

The first point was the Importance of Love in our lives, the next point is...

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING A LOVING LIFESTYLE

Here is an illustration back in the days before everyone had access to vaccines and medicine.

The doctor looks down at the little girl in the hospital bed, and knew that her only hope of survival was to receive some blood from someone who had recovered from the same disease.

They checked all the records and realized that her little brother Johnny had recovered from the same issue when he was a very small child and therefore his blood might be able to do the trick if it were introduced into her system.

The doctor and the rest of the family knelt down beside Johnny and said, Johnny, your sister is very sick and needs your kind of blood in order to make her well. Would you be willing to give her your blood so she can live?

Johnny's eyes grew big, and the doctor watched them well up with fear, then a small tear drop fell from his eye.

Johnny hesitated just long enough to swallow the lump in his throat, then replied, Sure Doctor I will do it.

After the doctor and nurses hooked them both up and started the blood transfusion, they had received the amount of blood needed, and Johnny laid there in silence as he was told.

After a few minutes he looked up and asked the Doctor if he could say Goodbye to his sister before he died.

It was then that the doctor and the rest of the family realized the extent of his sacrifice; you see he thought he would have to give her all of his blood. So he laid down his life willingly for his sister.

This is what Jesus talks about in **John 15:13** (NASB)

¹³ ***“Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends.”***

Ok getting back to the sermon, how do we develop a loving lifestyle?

A. Accept others unconditionally

Romans 15:7 (NASB)

⁷ *“Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted [a]us to the glory of God.”*

B. Encourage others continually

1 Thessalonians 5:11 NASB

¹¹ *“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”*

C. Forgive others freely

Colossians 3:13 (NASB)

¹³ *“Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”*

D. Share Christ verbally

1 Peter 3:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ *“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”¹⁶ and keep a*

good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”

One thing you need to keep in mind is that, LOVE is not activated until it is expressed.

People around us will only be impacted by LOVE in action.

1John 3:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

It is only when you put this into action that the transformation begins...

The first point was the Importance of Love in our lives,
The second point was how to develop a loving lifestyle and the last point is...
The last point we will discuss today is...

III. IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICING LOVE IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

Saints as we can see that obviously, love is very important, much more maybe, than we ever realized.

Listen to what Jesus says in John 13:34, "***A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.***"

Now notice that Jesus says that this is a **commandment**, not a **suggestion**...

We tend to think that love is something that just happens, because that is what the world teaches.

- ✓ You fall in love like you fall into a ditch,
- ✓ Or you fall out of love like you fall out of a tree.

You can't help it. It is something that just happens to you.

But the Bible teaches that love is something we can control. God commands us to love each other. Which means that I can decide to love you, & you in turn can decide to love me?

Now, what kind of love is being talked about here?

In Philippians 2:4 Paul tells us, "*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*"

In other words, to love in the same way that Jesus loved.

Think about others & their interests just like you think about yourself & your interests. You become unselfish. Now let's apply that in several different areas.

A. First of all, see how that would work in the family.

Let's suppose that someone in every family represented here this morning would say, "I'm going to go home & put this into practice."

Start with your spouse. You ought to love your husband or your wife first & most. You ought to be kinder, more tender, more gentle to them even if they're behaving like a jerk. Begin first in your marriage relationship.

And pretty soon it filters down to the relationship you share with your

children; maybe even you're in laws & everybody else in the family. Just because you love them.

B. It begins in the family, & it spills over into the church family & into the world.

Designers are known for their trademarks and logos of varying kinds, so much so that even if you don't read the name, it still becomes crystal clear who made it.

Look at a few slides with very familiar logos.

God likewise, has established a mark, a very clear mark by which his children who have been birthed by the Spirit ought to be known.

LOVE is the birthmark of the Christian, without the birthmark of LOVE, other people really don't know who you are.

Jesus said, in **John 13:35**

"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

That's the way the world will find out that the message of Jesus Christ is valid. And if we really love each other the way Jesus loved us then we have to develop in our own lives the same kind of compassion for people that Jesus had.

There is a story about a missionary, Doug Nichols that I want to share with you because I think it illustrates what I have been trying to say this morning. Doug Nichols went to India, but while he was just starting to study the language he developed tuberculosis & had to be put in a sanitarium.

It was not a very good place to be. It was not very clean & conditions were difficult because there were so many sick people there. But Doug decided to do the best he could in that situation. So he took some Christian books & tracts & tried to witness to the other patients in the sanitarium.

He tried to witness, but he was handicapped because of his inability to communicate very well in their language, & he felt so discouraged. He tried to pass out Christian tracts & books, but no one would take them.

Here he was. Because of his illness he would be there a long time. But it seemed like the work that he had come to India to do would not be done because no one would listen to him.

Because of his tuberculosis, every night at about 2 o'clock he would wake up with chronic coughing that wouldn't quit. Then one night when he awoke he noticed across the aisle an old man trying to get out of bed.

He said the man would roll himself up into a little ball & rock back & forth trying to get up the momentum to get up & stand on his feet. But he just couldn't do it. He was too weak.

Finally, after several attempts the old man laid back & wept. The next morning Doug understood why the man was weeping. He was trying to get up to go to the bathroom & didn't have enough strength to do that. So his bed was a mess & there was a smell in the air.

The other patients made fun of the old man. The nurses came to clean up his bed & they weren't kind to him, either. In fact, one of them even slapped him in the face. Doug said that the old man just laid there & cried.

Doug said, "That next night about 2 o'clock I started coughing again. I looked across the way & there was the old man trying to get out of bed once more. I really didn't want to do it, but somehow I managed to get up & I

walked across the aisle & I helped the old man stand up."

But he was too weak to walk, so Doug said, "I took him in my arms & carried him like a baby. He was so light that it wasn't a difficult task. I took him into the bathroom, which was nothing more than a dirty hole in the floor, & I stood behind him & supported him in my arms as he took care of himself."

"Then I carried him back to his bed & laid him down. As I turned to leave he reached up & grabbed my face & pulled me close & kissed me on the cheek, & said what I think was 'Thank you.'

Doug said, "The next morning there were patients waiting when I awoke, & they asked if they could read some of the books & tracts that I had brought. Others had questions about the God that I worshiped & about His Son who came into the world to die for their sins."

Doug Nichols says that in the next few weeks he gave out all the literature that he had brought, & during the months that he was there many of the patients, & even doctors & nurses in that sanitarium, came to accept Jesus as their Savior, too.

He said, "Now what did I do? I didn't preach a sermon. I couldn't even communicate very well in their language. I didn't have a brilliant lesson to teach them, or wonderful things to show them. All I did was take an old man to the bathroom & anyone can do that."

You have heard it time and time again but, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

There is a more excellent way, & that is the way of Jesus Christ.

This morning if you're here and do not know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, we offer His invitation to you.

If you are here and have realized that you have put Jesus on the back burner and need to put him back in the center of your life, His invitation is also for you...

We pray that you will respond as we stand the praise and worship team sings a song...

Saints if you are here this morning and you are one of the ones that need love in your life you are in the right place, if you need to show a little more love in your life, you can make that change today, either way do not leave here the same as you came, take the opportunity to invite Jesus back into the center of your life, do it now, as we are not promised tomorrow....

Ephesians 3:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,”