



1 CORINTHIANS

STEWARDS *of the* GOSPEL

Sermon Series

Love Never Fails

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- All of scripture is inspired by God, but 1 Corinthians 13 is one of the most inspirational passages in all of scripture.
- Think about this for a moment – Paul wrote to the church in Corinth to address some heavy issues. Some things that were downright messy and sinful. There are difficult topics that Paul needed to address in the church.
- In the middle of all of that, Paul writes one of the most beautiful passages about love you could ever find. I once heard a preacher say that he has never pastored a church bad enough for him to do a message series through 1 Corinthians. I guess I sort of looked at this letter in a similar fashion for a long time.

- But I would be doing a disservice to my flock if I neglected preaching through books like this.
- *The letter of 1 Corinthians, is it tough? Yes. Is it beautiful? Absolutely.* That seems to be the case with a lot of things in life. Sometimes, we get the glossed over version of life through social media and all the rest. But this world is both sinful and full of God's blessings.
- That's a good reminder this Mother's Day. For some, they have such wonderful mothers who exemplify the wonderful attributes of motherhood. We celebrate those wonderful Christian mothers who selflessly love and sacrifice for their families. We thank God for them. Others may not have had such a loving mother here on Earth. Two responses:
 - Rest in the love of God.
 - Seek to exemplify those godly attributes of motherhood for others. What a blessing to see so many spiritual mothers in the church.

Main Point: **The love of God is experienced by His people and shared with others.**

- I am so thankful that as a nine-year old boy I experienced the love of God when I acknowledged my need for a Savior and confessed Jesus Christ is Lord.
- All people experience the common grace of God because they were created in His image. Fearfully and wonderfully made.
- But when experience the salvific grace of God, we come to know His love in a personal and life-changing way.

I. The importance of God's love

- a. VERSES 1-3.

- b. Having the love of God is greater than **the gift of prophecy** (truth),
understanding all mysteries and knowledge (there are quite a few things I would really like to know – What's in a black hole, who built stone henge and how, is bigfoot real), **faith that could move mountains, giving, and sacrifice.**
- c. Experiencing and sharing the love of God with others is more important than all those things.
- d. What about those last couple of things? That seems like what love would do. Give all you have to the poor and offer your body to be burned?
- e. Those things are not always done in love. Sometimes, they may be done for selfish motivations or ambitions.
 - i. When you do nice things for others – you don't always have to post it on Facebook or tell a bunch of people. You can just do nice things.
 - ii. Some may even give of themselves, not so other people can benefit from their generosity, but so that they can make a name for themselves.
- f. That's not love by any definition, and that is certainly not the love of God.
- g. It's so important that people today come to know genuine and authentic love. We live in a utilitarian society. What does this person have to offer me?

II. The attributes of God's love

- a. VERSES 4-7.
- b. When you have experienced the love of God, it's only then that you can show true love to others. **1 John 4:19 – We love Him because He first loved us.**
- c. What kind of love is this? The world has a lot to say about love. Unfortunately, in the English language, the term love covers a wide variety of emotions and

sentiments. I love my wife. I also love rolls from Texas Roadhouse. I love my children. I also love going to the chiropractor.

- d. God's love is not based on worldly standards. His love is revealed to us by scripture.
- e. Some translations say love is patient. I actually think the KJV got it right. Love suffers long. Love is kind, not envious, not proud, not rude, not provoked, rejoices in truth.
- f. Sometimes, we better understand the definition of something by pointing to what it isn't. This is certainly true for love. We can look around and clearly see all that is not Godly love. It makes it even more important to celebrate it when we do see it.

g. **John 3:16**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

h. **Romans 5:8** *"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

i. **1 John 4:7-10**

"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... In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

j. **Ephesians 3:17-19**

"That you... may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the

breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge..."

III. The steadfastness of God's love

- a. One of the great attributes of love that comes from God – steadfastness. Preparing for marriage vs. preparing for a wedding. People spend so much time preparing for a day, when they need to be preparing for a lifetime.
- b. This understanding of love towards others is rooted in our understanding of the love of God towards us.
- c. **Exodus 34:6-7**
"The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...'"
- d. **Attributes:** God's love is **steadfast** (Hebrew: *hesed*, often translated as lovingkindness or covenantal loyalty), **merciful**, and **forgiving**. It endures across generations and is tied to His patience and faithfulness.
- e. **Psalms 136.** Every verse in the Psalm ends with "His faithful love endures forever." CSB version. All 26 verses.
- f. **VERSE 8** – Love never fails.
- g. He compares this to things that will one day end. While love never ends, tongues and knowledge will one day come to an end.
- h. This is actually one of the main passages that convinces me of cessationism – the gifts of the apostolic period have ceased. They could speak in tongues to share the

Gospel in a language others could understand, but when the perfect (fullness or completion) comes, this will come to an end. What is the full completion of things?

- i. The Word of God. While the apostles were preaching and ministering, they did not have the completed Word of God. But we do.
- i. You want to know the unending, unfailing love of God? Open this book.