



PRODIGAL

CHURCH

SERMON SERIES: PRODIGAL CHURCH

DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, 2020

SPEAKER: MICHAEL BROWN

SERMON TITLE: IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 13

Often when reading a passage as familiar as 1 Corinthians 13 we can often bring our presuppositions and ideas to the text. It doesn't mean that they aren't there but perhaps they aren't the main thing that is in the text. So, as we read the "Love" chapter, it's important that we are looking through the correct lens. In order to see clearly, adjustments may need to be made.

Q1. Michael in his sermon suggested that 1 Corinthians 12 & 14 would not make sense without chapter 13. Why do you think that is?

You see, chapter 13 is the key to unlocking chapter 12 & 14 because it is a guide to operating in the spiritual gifts but also a way to navigating conflicts in the church. So, the lens we need to look through from the start is The Lens of Maturity.

The church in Corinth was having so many conflicts and divisions amongst them and were very immature in their dealings with them. Paul is calling the Corinthians to step into the maturity that God has given them. It's a call to grow up and into the things of God. Let's jump ahead for a moment and read 1 Corinthians 13:11.

"11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me."

NOW READ HEBREWS 5:12:14.

¹² You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Q2. Reflect on your own life, and write down one example of your "putting childish ways behind you."

Q3. In what areas do you think the church is immature or needs to grow up?

The call to grow up and mature in Christ is peppered right throughout scripture. Michael said that if we as a body of believer's can't look after and love one another, what are we inviting those outside the church into? Read Galatians 6:9-10.

⁹ So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith."

Now let's look through the 2nd lens: The Lens of Love. Scripture assures us that God is love. (1 John 4:7-8) But the reality is we often have different interpretations of who God is and what love is and does. We need to look to Jesus for our definition of what love is today. The definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13 is the Greek word "Agape." The definition of agape is a warm regard and interest in others.

Q4. During Jesus' ministry, can you give examples of things that he does that may seem unloving but are in fact loving?

Q5. According to 1 Corinthians 12:31, what should the reader be anticipating in chapter 13?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3.

"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

Q6. Using verses 1-3, what is the relationship between gifts and love?

READ HEBREWS 3:15.

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

Q7. What does it look like to be boldly proactive in the pursuit of encouraging someone else?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7.

"⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

This is a definition of who God is. Secondly, it is a description of how Jesus pursues us.

Q8. If we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, how do we love people we struggle with?

C.S. Lewis said this:

"You are told to love your neighbour as yourself. How do you love yourself? When I look into my own mind, I find that I do not love myself by thinking myself a dear old chap or having affectionate feelings. I do not think that I love myself because I am particularly good, but just because I am myself and quite apart from my character. I might detest something which I have done. Nevertheless, I do not cease to love myself. In other words, that definite distinction that Christians make between hating sin and loving the sinner is one that you have been making in your own case since you were born. You dislike what you have done, but you don't cease to love yourself. You may even think that you ought to be hanged. You may even think that you ought to go to the Police and own up and be hanged. Love is not affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained."

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-12.

"⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Q9. Why does this way of love matter? Why does it matter that the Church gets along with one another? What is at stake?

Q10. What is Paul trying to say when he says "when the complete comes?" (v.10)

End your time together praying and encouraging one another in the gifts of the Spirit used in love.

