

Advent

Week Two



Love Alone

1 Corinthians, Chapter 13

Context Matters

- “The Love Chapter” is beautiful all by itself
- But it doesn’t *exist* by itself
- Context at Corinth
 - A troubled church
 - Badly divided (1:10ff.)
 - Animosity between church members (6:8)
 - Members proud of their spiritual gifts (Chapt. 12; 14)
- Paul writes to correct these problems

Sermon Outline

- Love Alone Counts 13:1-3
- Love Alone Triumphs 13:4-7
- Love Alone Endures 13:8-13

Part One: Love Alone Counts

1 Cor. 13:1-3

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not 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 have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love Alone Counts

1 Cor. 13:1-3

- Paul speaks in first person 13:1-3
- Tongues of men and angels 13:1
 - “Of men:” simple eloquence
 - “Of angels:” probably spiritual gift of tongues
- Gifts of prophecy, mysteries, knowledge 13:2
 - Supernatural gifts
 - Matter of pride at Corinthian church (12:7-10)
- Mountain-moving faith; great sacrifice 13:3
- Without love: reduced to petty noise

Part Two: Love Alone Triumphs

1 Cor. 13:4-7

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, 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.

Love Alone Triumphs

1 Cor. 13:4-7

What it isn't

- Envious
- Boastful
- Proud
- Rude
- Self-seeking
- Easily angered
- Keeps no record of wrongs
- Does not delight in evil

What it is

- Patient
- Kind
- Rejoices with the truth
- Always protects
- Always trusts
- Always hopes
- Always perseveres

Love Alone Endures

1 Cor. 13:8-13

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 perfection comes, the imperfect 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 childish ways behind me.

¹² Now we see but a poor 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.

Part Three: Love Alone Endures

1 Cor. 13:8-13

- We live “in between” times in the new Kingdom of God
 - Kingdom of God began with the first Advent
 - It will not fully arrive until the *second* Advent
- Some things won’t last beyond the “in between”
 - Prophecies, tongues, knowledge 13:8
 - Our imperfect efforts 13:10
 - The Church is moving through childhood 13:11
 - We see poorly now; soon we will see face to face 13:12
 - We understand in part now; soon we’ll understand everything

Love Alone Endures (continued)

1 Cor. 13:8-13

■ Love never fails

13:8

–It thrives “in between”

–It will last forever

Faith, Hope, and Love

1 Cor. 13:13

- These three remain: faith, hope, and love
 - Perhaps a well-known litany of the early church
 - All three are the essence of Christianity
- After the second Advent, two won't be needed
 - Faith will finally be sight
 - Hope will finally be realized
- But love will go on through eternity

Life Lessons

1 Cor. 13:4-7

What love isn't

- Envious
- Boastful
- Proud
- Rude
- Self-seeking
- Easily angered
- Keeps no record of wrongs
- Does not delight in evil

What love is

- Patient
- Kind
- Rejoices with the truth
- Always protects
- Always trusts
- Always hopes
- Always perseveres

Life Lessons

- Don't forget the lesson of the Corinthians
 - We are all gifted in some way
 - Don't compare your gifts and abilities; don't envy others
- No gift or ability is complete until baptized in love
- If you had no gifts at all, you could still excel in love

Aaronic Blessing

“The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.” ’

Numbers 6:24-26, NKJV