

I Love You
“The Greatest of all is Love”
I Cor. 13:1-8

1. Read I Cor. 13:1-8 -
2. Men have asked, “What is the greatest thing I can do with my life?”
3. Jesus answered, love God and love your fellow man. Love is the greatest of all.
 - (1) Love is greater than faith; love is greater than hope.
 - (2) The Apostle sums it up, **I Cor. 13:8** – “Love never fails.”
 - (3) If these were not enough, he wrote, **I Cor. 14:1** – “Follow the way of love.”
4. **This emphasis on love is in harmony with what Jesus taught.** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” **Mk. 12:30**
 - a. **I Pet. 4:8.** “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”
5. The greatest thing in the world is love. What is this love that we speak of? By love, we mean, “agape” love. The KJV translates this word, “charity.” It has been defined as, “the highest form of love, the kind of love that God has shown to man. Agape extends itself to the unlovely, the unlovable, and to those who cannot earn, merit, or deserve love.”
6. **Love must motivate, that is, it must be the foundation for our actions, thoughts and deeds.**
7. To show the greatness of this love, it is contrasted with three things:
 - (1) **The eloquent tongue** – “speak with the tongues of men” – The gift of tongues is the miraculous ability to speak languages you never studied or learned. This gift allows the child of God to preach the gospel to people of foreign lands in their own native language. As important to the spreading of the gospel that this gift was, the inspired apostle states that if the exercise of this gift is not based upon love, it is useless.
 - (2) **The gift of prophecy** - The great intellect - “ to speak forth the mind and counsel of God. To predict the future.”

- (3) **Unparalleled understanding and knowledge** - Understand all mysteries and have all knowledge.
- (4) The inspired apostle makes it crystal clear Without love as the motivating factor, they –utterances, prophecy, understanding, knowledge - they are all useless!
- (5) Without love, nothing has meaning!
8. All the good works we can do from the cradle to the grave are of no profit, if they are not motivated by love. All of our thinking, speaking, and doing are meaningless without love. Three times we are told, that without love we are nothing, nobody, of no value.
9. John tells us, “We love him because he first loved us” **I Jn 4:19.** ,
- 10.** Jesus said “If you love me you will obey what I command.” **John 14:15.**
- 11.** We have been commanded by Him to believe, repent, and be baptized...**Mk. 16:15.** Can we claim to love God and to love Jesus Christ and yet we do not obey His gospel. If you love me, you will obey what I command. Have you obeyed the gospel? No. Then do you really love God?

DISCUSSION: Let’s consider the nature of this “agape” love -- Patience and kindness I Cor. 13:4.

- I. First I Cor. 13:4 – **Love is patient**/ longsuffering (KJV). Other readings are: “love is long-tempered, self-restrained in the face of provocation, not quick to retaliate. Love suffers... long – hence longsuffering (!!!), sees and yet endures. Love is patient with people, circumstances and events.”
- (1) Patience or long-suffering is God-like. God is love, **I Jn. 4:8.** Moses wrote of God in **Ex. 34:6**.....The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth.” Intrinsic to love is this patience. “Divine patience.” The GK is “*MAKROTHUMIA*”
- (2) “*MAKROTHUMIA*” is the “steadfast spirit which will never give in.”
- a. It is that spirit of patience and faith exemplified by Abraham – **Heb. 6:15**
 - b. It is the spirit - divine patience which is what love is –that husbands and wives must have for each other.

- (i) We see it and may learn it from the farmer who waits for his crop and the prophets who never gave up their hope of God. **James 5:7-10**

(3) MAKROTHUMIA is the virtue that not only husbands and wives MUST have but all Christians are to have for each other.

- a. One early church Father said MAKROTHUMIA is the spirit that could take revenge if it liked but utterly refuses to do so.
- b. Lightfoot – It is the spirit that will never retaliate
- c. MEGALOPSUCHIA – Greek’s virtue – Aristotle says “it is a refusal to tolerate any insult or injury.”
- d. To the Greeks, the big man was the man who went all out for vengeance. To the Christian the big man is the man who, even when he can, refuses to do so.

(4) Again MAKROTHUMIA is the spirit all Christians are to have for each other.

- a. It is a fruit of the spirit, Gal. 5:22
- b. It enables us to walk worthy of our Christian calling, **Eph. 4:2**;
- c. We are to clothe ourselves with it, **Col. 3:12-14**

(5) MAKROTHUMIA is one of the great attributes of God Almighty.

- a. Rom. 2:4
- b. It was Makrothumia which waited in the days of Noah; 8 persons were saved. **I Pet. 3:20-21**
- c. It is MAKROTHUMIA which is responsible for our salvation.
2 Pet 3:9, 15 “... He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

(6) Husbands and wives are to be patient and longsuffering with each other.

Love demands it. That’s what love is! Love is MAKROTHUMIA!

II. **Love is kind**. Other translations, “Love is good, mild, serviceable, gentle, tender, affectionate, and useful.”

(1) To be kind is to be like God. 26 times in **Psalm 136**, we are told that the loving kindness of God endureth forever.

(2) Jesus loves us we know because He is always kind towards us. He spent his life doing kind things.

- a. **Matt. 4:23** - Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. That is kindness!
- b. **John 15:13** – **Jesus died for us.** That is kindness.
- c. **John 3:16** – **God gave us His Son.** That is kindness.
- d. **Matt. 1:19** - **Joseph** did not want to expose Mary to public disgrace although at the time he thought she had done a disgraceful thing! That is kindness.

(3) Husbands and wives who love each other are kind to each other. That's love. Love is kind. I give my all for you for your welfare and well-being!

III. When I say "I love you," I must understand and accept that my love for you is patient and my love for you is kind.

(1) I tell you each day I love you because the "you" that I love keep changing!

- a. Who you are today, is not the same you, you were 10 years ago. The you you were ten years ago I love and I love the you you are today! If I don't tell you, you won't know.
- b. That's why it is necessary for us to tell each other every day several times per day I love you! And the love that I for you is Agape. And Agape is patient and Agape is kind.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have been discussing the topic of love – the greatest of all gifts.
2. We know that God loves us.. He sent His son to die for us.
3. We know that Jesus loves us, he gave His life for us.
4. We know that we are to love God and love our neighbor.
5. Can we fulfill the high standard of love, if the love of God is not within us?
6. The Love of God is from the Spirit of God, who only lives in us after we have obeyed his gospel. Have you obeyed the gospel? If not why not today?
7. Let us learn to love God and to love our neighbors.