

# SUPERNATURAL - Love

May 21, 2023 | 1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13

## OPENING QUESTION

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that of faith, hope, and love, love is the greatest. Why is love the greatest?

### LOVE IS ELEVATED - 1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:3

- Without love, speaking in tongues and languages of any and every kind is simply a way of making a loud but incomprehensible noise.
- If you take one of Jesus's commands to the extreme - giving away all of your possessions, sacrificing your body - but don't have love, they ultimately don't do you any good.
- Evidence of the Holy Spirit and a supernatural life is **not** tongues, prophecy, secret knowledge, inspirational teachings and faith, or sacrificial service to others, it is LOVE.
- When these gifts flow from a supernaturally-changed heart, when they flow out of love, the power is there to build up the church and to show others the love of Jesus. The power isn't in the gift, it's in the giver. It's in love.

Do you know the song "Power of Love" by Huey Lewis and the News? What is the power of love? What does it mean to say that love is *transformative*, not *transactional*?

### LOVE IS ESSENTIAL - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- Verses 4-7 are a list of everything the Corinthian Christians are not. They are impatient. They are unkind. They are rude. They are boastful. They're bragging. They're condescending.
- Paul is not saying, "I want you to be patient. I want you to be kind. I don't want you to envy. I don't want you to boast. I want you not to be proud." He doesn't say that.
- Instead, he personifies love. Love becomes an individual, a person.
- Love suffers long. That's patience. Love suffers long and bears it. Love is so kind. Love does not envy. Love is a person doing this.
- Love is not first something you do. It's a power that picks you up and changes you. It's a supernaturally changed heart. Love is essential.
- We love because we've been loved. Before you can love others, you have to awaken to how much God loves, what He thinks about you, and realize who you are in Christ.
- Then you have to receive the love He has shown you. Then and only then will you be able to truly love.

Have you heard others say that before you can love others you have to love yourself? Is that true? Or is it more important to see how God loves you? What does that look like?

### LOVE IS ETERNAL - 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- These verses explain that love is one of the things which will last forever in God's new heaven and new earth. Love therefore matters far, far more than the things which will pass away—which include most of the things the Corinthians were most bothered and concerned about.
- Paul doesn't say prophecies, tongues, knowledge have ceased, but that they will cease. When? "When the perfect (complete) comes."
- These things, including the Bible, are not the cornerstone and foundation - Jesus is! They all point to Jesus (John 1:1).
- Paul sees all of life, and these gifts, within the framework of God's eternity—God's future which has burst into the present in the person of Jesus, and especially in his **resurrection**.
- In this future, Paul sees a world full of goodness, but, above all of love. **Love is eternal!**
- Paul wants us to see the spiritual gifts in the proper light. They are temporary helps for building up the church in the **present age**, and it's important to learn to use them, but to understand that there is something greater, something eternal that is here now, and is to come.
- Paul is saying the **kingdom of God** which will come on earth as in heaven, is here now. Love is the way of life in the new world to which, by grace, we are able to experience right now in Christ.
- We need to learn it here and now: *Be marked a people of love!*

What role will faith play in the new heaven and new earth? What about prophecy? The Bible? Tongues? Love? What is the "completeness" Paul speaks of in v. 10? What will it mean to *know* as we are *known*?



## CLOSING QUESTIONS

### Hear

What are some things that stood out to you in this week's sermon and Scriptures?

### Obey

How much do you think about faith? Hope? Love? How do you live out each of these? How does knowing that love will last forever impact your relationship with others? With God? Is your love for others transformational or merely transactional?

### Pray

Meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 this week. Reflect on how the faith, hope, and love in your walk with Christ is growing. Pray for God to help you see your gifts in light of the love you have for others, because of the love He has for you.