



Courageous Love: Charity Suffereth Long!

June 12, 2022

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Way back in July 2014, while teaching through this whole chapter, we said, “1 Corinthians 13 is essentially a “contextual interruption” of the Spirit’s teaching through Paul on spiritual gifts. It is a divine pause in the midst of didactic teaching to ensure the hearer is framing and connecting the teachings to the right place (Christ) and will go forward in obedience with the right motives (heart). It is a marvelous chapter that brings to mind so many exhortations about love...the love of God towards us in Christ, the love we should have towards God in Christ, and the love we should have for one another in Christ, expressed through loving service.”

Later on in this chapter, Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 13:11-13 (KJV) *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; **but the greatest of these is charity.***

The Primacy of Love

- Of the character traits Christians should prize the most (faith, hope and charity), because they “abide” or last forever, the greatest of these is charity, or love (agapē) in Greek.
- Indeed, love is one of the most desired AND misunderstood aspects of this life. Everyone wants it. Everyone wants to be perceived as being it. Many don’t feel like they have it. Some will wreck their lives in pursuit of their version of it. Satan uses his perverted version of it against God’s people. And literally the worst insult one could endure might be to be accused of being un-it!
- Yet despite all that, to truly walk in biblical love takes tremendous faith and courage. Why?
- **Because LOVE IS A RISK!**
- There is perhaps no greater situation where transparency and vulnerability is required than when one loves. There is no greater opportunity for both the heights of joy and crushing pain than when one loves. Love exposes you.
- Consequently, whether we realize it or not, most of us walk around saying “I love you” when what we really meant is “I appreciate you mostly, and I’ll help you if I can, but if you and your drama become too much, I’m out!”
- **We often confuse love with sentimentality...with warm feelings of temporary affection.**
- Or we spiritualize love’s use without a broader understanding of the cost required.
- **Beloved, let us say it again: it takes Biblical Courage (Biblical Courage is the ability to hold fast to God’s Word, repent in the event of failure, and continue on in obedience, regardless of the circumstances.) to truly love!**

Elements of Courageous Love: Paul’s Words to Corinth in verses 4-8:

1. Charity suffers long! (v.4)

- Courageous, biblical love is **patient**. In this way, it emulates the God who is love by demonstrating forbearance...

Romans 2:4 (KJV) *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

Romans 2:4 (NLT) Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

- It is so easy to become frustrated and give up on someone. Or to allow pain to push us toward the exit. But Courageous love is willing to suffer...for a long time.

2. Charity is kind. (v.4)

- The word for kind means "to show oneself useful; to act benevolently" (Strong's). It is more than a kindly disposition or attitude; courageous love involves **action**.
- Remember the Scripture: **1 John 3:18 (KJV)** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

3. Charity does not envy. (v.4)

- "Love refuses the way of envy and pride. It fights the fleshly desire to be haughty.
- Pride was a major issue in the Corinthian church. They fought over the prominence of their teachers, their knowledge, their use of gifts, and their social status.
- Love does not allow rivalry among the brethren or spiritual competition in the church. How appropriate in light of the context of gifts! Courageous love by its very nature, exudes **humility**."

4. Charity does not boast (vaunteth not itself). (v.4)

- Since biblical love is rooted God and in a right understanding of our relation to God, it cannot boast, unless such boasting is in the LORD! (Ps 34:2)
- Courageous love is willing to take the low place, to choose the path of the **meek** and lowly. It refuses to think of oneself more highly than one should! (Rom 12:3)

5. Charity is not arrogant (not puffed up). (v.4)

- **Proverbs 8:13 (KJV)** The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.
- Remember that **pride** is the devil's path:

Jonathan Edwards said, "The first and worst cause of errors that abound in our day and age is spiritual pride. This is the main door by which the devil comes into the hearts of those who are zealous for the advancement of Christ. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit to darken the mind and mislead the judgment. Pride is the main handle by which he has hold of Christian persons and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces to clog and hinder a work of God. Spiritual pride is the main spring or at least the main support of all other errors. Until this disease is cured, medicines are applied in vain to heal all other diseases."

6. Charity is not rude (behave itself unseemly). (v.5)

- Courageous love causes one to carefully consider one's **behavior** and speech!
- **Ephesians 4:29-32 (KJV)** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. **30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: **32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

7. Charity is not selfish (seeketh not her own). (v.5)

- Again, Courageous love puts others **first**.
- **Philippians 2:3-8 (KJV)** *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

8. Charity is not early provoked (not easily irritated). (v.5)

- Courageous, faith-filled love maintains a sense of perspective (what things are truly important) and exhibits self-**control** and propriety. Christians should not “go off!” :)
- **James 1:19-20 (KJV)** *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

9. Charity thinks no evil. (v.5)

- The word for “thinketh” is translated in other places, “impute, account, accounted, charge, numbered” among other words. This is why the NLT says, “...and it keeps no record of being wronged.”
- Courageous love truly and biblically **forgives**. (For more here, we strongly recommend listening to this message: <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2020/1/restoration-through-forgiveness-freedom-through-releasing-others>)

10. Charity rejoices in the truth, not iniquity! (v.6)

- We live in a day where all sorts of rejoicing is done in the name of sin and wickedness. “Biblical love cannot and will not rejoice in sin, rejoice in hurt, rejoice in darkness, or rejoice in lawlessness. It cannot, for these things are opposed to Christ. These things should break our hearts. They should move us to tears and to action. They should pull us to our knees, crying out to God for mercy and revival.”
- It takes one who Courageously loves God to rejoice in the truth! Remember, Jesus said, “I am the Way, the **Truth**, and the Life!” (Jn 14:6)
- **To love truth is to love our LORD, regardless of what the world says or does!**

11. Charity bears all things! (v.7)

- “In other words, Courageous love doesn't **quit** because truth doesn't quit. Truth is truth and always will be; it (He!) is what love is founded upon!
- “Love doesn't give up because it is anchored upon Christ and His finished work...the absolute truth of His Divinity, Humanity, Incarnation, Propitiation and Atoning Work, Lordship, Ascension, and Coming Return.”
- This sort of love empowers perseverance! (For more: <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2021/4/the-mercy-of-jesus-pt1-the-blessings-of-perseverance>)

12. Charity believes all things! (v.7)

- Love can **believe** all things because it is anchored in Him who cannot fail!
- **Mark 9:23 (KJV)** *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst **believe**, all things are possible to him that believeth.*

- **Jeremiah 32:27 (KJV)** Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?
- **1 Thessalonians 5:8-9 (KJV)** But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. **9** For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

13. **Charity is filled with hope! (v.7)**

- It is interesting that the Greek word for “hopeth” is often translated “trust.” This makes sense since hope is “an expectation.”
- Courageous loves hopes in all things because our God can be trusted and His **promises** shall come to pass! From prison, Paul expressed this sort of hope...
- **Philippians 1:19-21 (KJV)** For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, **20** According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. **21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

14. **Charity endures all things! (v.7)**

- Because of the love of **Jesus**, we can lovingly endure because “to die is gain!” Because of Christ, let us, “boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb 13:6)
- Let us remember the Courageous love of Christ who suffered on our behalf. Let us remember the Courageous love of Christ who went down into the grave. Let us remember the Courageous love of Christ who rose from the dead.
- May His words on the cross inspire our love: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” “I thirst.” “It is finished.” “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”
- **John 15:13 (KJV)** *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

15. **Charity never ends! (v.8)**

- Real love...the kind based in Jesus Christ...never ends. It will live on into **eternity**.
- This is the love that God has manifested in preparing eternal life for His people...

John 3:16 (KJV) *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Romans 5:8 (KJV) *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

- And this is the kind of courageous love to which we should aspire!

So how Courageous is your Love?

- Could you love deeper? With more passion? With kinder words and deeds? With more faithfulness and loyalty? More lawfully? More humility and repentance? More intentionality?
- What are three ways you might, by God’s grace, grow in this love this week?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Final Prayer

1 John 4:7-8 (KJV) *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

Oh LORD, fill our hearts with Thy love. Help us to courageously love Thee and Thy Laws, and deeply love one another. In Jesus' mighty Name, Amen!