"Love is patient, love is kind, love does not envy, love does not boast, love is not conceited."

1 Corinthians 13:4

13 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.

4Love 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.

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.

1 Corinthians 13

Have we seriously given thought to the kind of impact the practice of love would have upon our lives? What kind of change loving people would have on society? What would our history look like if we had practiced love instead of all the other emotions, we did, in fact, exhibit? Love is more than an emotion. Love is an action. It is an action that is to be delivered intentionally. Love is supposed to be purposeful, without recourse.

The scripture speaks to the potential of love if lived out in a variety of situations. Its audience is the church in Corinth. The congregation seems to be full of itself because it has gifts that other congregations do not have. I find it interesting that Paul must address the church on how to treat each other with the Holy Spirit in its midst. But therein lies the issue. The Holy Spirit is present, but no one is paying attention to God's Spirit. Love is present, but no one is paying attention to love. Love is present; the people just need to be detained, restrained and held captive. Made to stand still long enough so the power of God's love can be experienced. This is the point of this message.

What does love look like when practiced? What does it look like anywhere it is practiced? Love can hurt. Because true love means you allow yourself to become vulnerable. True love means you have opened yourself up to the potential of disappointment. The disappointment that comes when we place our expectations upon those we love. When we expect behavior from them, we know they are unable to perform or exhibit in the hope they will change. Love accepts the person; it accepts the situation that is in front of us. Love

sacrifices itself for the benefit of the other. We sacrifice our expectations by swallowing our disappointment; by practicing love in that painful moment when what we wanted or expected is not realized. It is not that people disappoint us as much as it is we do not realize the expectations we place upon people are our expectations and not theirs.

Verse 5 says Love, “It does not insist upon its own way.” Love is a disturber. Love moves us out of those comfort zones we have bathed our emotions in for years. Love will make us examine and reflect upon those things we thought were important but when all is said and done are not. When we begin to examine that which is important in our lives, I mean those things that really matter, we discover that forgiveness matters. It matters because it restores relationships. It matters because it heals the mind and the heart. Forgiveness matters because it heals the one doing the forgiving. However, before forgiveness can happen, we must become disturbed, unsettled, and uncomfortable in our stubborn emotional position. It is then that your life enters a place that was at one time believed unreachable.

Verse 7 says, “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Love compels us to choose. Choose what we are going to practice moving forward. When people love, they see things differently. They try to respond to things with compassion and understanding. When people love, they give people the benefit of the doubt. Understand, love is not gullible. Love is not blind. Nevertheless, love tries to see the best if that is all possible. Because love does not give up on hope, love is the single ingredient that can implement change in us without destroying the one that is changing. Love covers

what is unpleasant in the other person. So, we can see them, the ones we love. Love does not drag blemishes on and on into eternity. Love will endure what others who do not love, cannot and will not endure.

Love is the ultimate solution to the problems we all face. Love can solve any problem there is. Love does not reject. Love accepts. Love accepts those we do not choose to be around. Love finds a way to care for them. Love looks beyond the theft or the broken heart or the indiscretion suffered by another. Love does these things because love moves us all beyond our limits of acceptance. It does not mean I like it, but it does mean that I am aware that whatever happened, happened and there is nothing I can do about it now. Love gets to the place where we can accept the things we cannot change and change the things we can. Love gives us the wisdom to know the difference. Love looks beyond our faults and sees and understands what we need.

Paul is not suggesting we choose between faith, hope, and love. But in the Corinthian church, Paul is saying tongues don't matter. All the other gifts they were trying to lift up, they don't matter if you do not coat them with the love of God.

Whatever God has blessed us with; whatever gifts we may possess; whatever the riches; if any possess wisdom beyond that of mere mortals; if we fail to utilize love in the practice of those gifts, we will corrupt them.

What would our lives be like if we had practiced love? What would this country be like if we had practiced love? What would human history

have been like if love had been practiced? I can only believe it would have been much different. However, we cannot change the past. Let us all practice love moving forward. Let us see what kind of future that will bring.

Blessings,

Pastor Gool