

Remnant Life Church
January 10, 2021
The Excellence of Love
I Cor 13:1-3

- Paul talked a great deal about love even though it was most likely not always easy for him to show it
- By most accounts:
 - May not have been the easiest person to get along with
 - Demanding – refused to allow John Mark to accompany them after he had gone back home early from an earlier trip
 - Very direct and pulled no punches
 - Perhaps even bordered on insensitive
- Knowing how to live and actually living that way are 2 different things
- “Never meet your heroes”

READ - I Cor 13:1-3 - *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. 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. 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.*

- Paul takes these three verses and tells us that love is more important than even what we would think are true marks of being a Christian
 - How to deal with all the aspects of life; the most excellent way...
1. *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*
 - ... Paul says that love is more important than spiritual gifts
 - The Charismatic and Pentecostal churches put great emphasis on the Gifts
 - So much so that they can become a point of division
 - Paul talks about the gifts in the previous chapter (12th)
 - BUT he speaks twice as long regarding how to use them and the importance of maintaining unity
 - What does he mean by “a resounding gong?”
 - In the pagan religions of that day when a person would come to worship they would stop at the entrance of the temple and strike a large gong or hanging cymbal to wake up their gods so they would hear their prayers
 - Paul says that without love the gifts are just as useless as that action
 - On the day of Pentecost, read about in **Acts 2**, God gave those present the gift of speaking in languages that they did not know or study so everyone could understand the message of God’s love
 - If you know how to speak with every earthly and heavenly language but don’t have love your words are as meaningless as the sound of that gong trying to wake up a non-existent god

- If the spiritual gifts were used by churches today in love they would never become a source of division

2. *If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge*

... Paul says that love is more important than mental capabilities

- Being the smartest man will not give your life any meaning without love
 - Terence Tao – 45 yr old Australian/American mathematician
 - Child prodigy in mathematics
 - You must know the scale of IQ measurement to appreciate what I am about to tell you -

IQ

Classification

90 – 100	Normal or average intelligence
110 – 120	Superior intelligence
120 – 140	Very superior intelligence
140 – over	Genius or near genius

- Tao has been tested and verified to have an IQ close to if not exceeding 200
 - Age of 9 scored a 760 on the math portion of SAT
 - Bachelors and masters at 16
 - Received his PHD in mathematics from Princeton University at 21
 - Youngest full professorship awarded from UCLA – 24
- On his very best day, without love, he is nothing according to I Corinthians
- Don't be impressed by someone else's intelligence and, even more importantly, your own – without love it is meaningless

3. *If I have faith that can move mountains*

... Paul says that love is more important than faith

- Paul DOES NOT say that faith is not important
- What do you have faith in this morning?
- We have a shared faith this morning, don't we?
 - We have faith that Jesus lived just as the Bible says He did
 - We have faith that was and is the Son of God
 - We have faith that He died for our sins and is coming again
- You may have a great and powerful faith in your life, but without love, Paul says, it is of no value
 - In **Gal 5:6** Paul writes - ...*The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*
- Your faith is central to your salvation
 - It does not change what is the truth of Jesus and the love of God
 - But all that you believe still must be expressed in love

4. *If I give all that I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship*

... Paul says that love is more important than giving and self-sacrifice

- Now there are many that believe the more you deny yourself the more righteously you are living
 - They take the words of Jesus spoken in Luke 9:23, “*Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*”
 - But Jesus is talking about denying self here, not the things of this world
 - God does bless His people
 - Because it is not the things that matter, but the heart
- But Paul does not say if you tithe (10%)
 - He does not say if you give more than that
 - He does not say if you give food or furniture items
 - He says if you give it all
 - So if you were to empty your bank accounts, sell all of your possessions, max out your credit cards and give it all to the poor
 - And then on top of that give of your own body to help others
 - All of that without love is worth nothing
- Why do you do what you do, give what you give?
- Your motivation, and your expectation of giving in love is to receive absolutely nothing in return

Summarization – love is more important than spiritual gifts, intelligence, faith, and generosity.

- Jesus said in **John 13:34** – *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*
 - This is not a suggestion made by Jesus it is a command
 - We are called today to obey that command and love one another
 - Not just in church but everywhere we go with whoever we come in contact with

This love is not the love of world

- The world’s definition of love can be defined as what have you done for me lately?
 - You fall in and out love like you fall in a ditch or fall out of a tree
 - All by accident – with no control
 - Many people act as if they had no choice in the matter of love

Love must be at the core of all that we do

- Without love all that we do, all that we say, all that we even do for the Kingdom is like a sounding gong
- What motivates you?
- Is love at the heart of all that you do?