

# Love

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[0:00] We're talking about the subject of love and are we living up to the Bible standard, the Bible measure of love? What is the biblical standard of love, God's love?

So we're going to go to 1 Corinthians 13 which is the pivotal chapter that really defines love as God tells us of love. And we'll start in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 31.

It says this, 1 Corinthians 12 verse 31, it says, But covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Paul is saying this is more excellent than all the spiritual gifts you could reckon.

This is the more excellent way. It starts there in 1 Corinthians 13 verse 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or as a singling symbol.

And though I have the gift of prophecy and understandable mystery and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing.

[1:06] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burnt and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and is kind.

Charity envieth not. Charity wanteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly. Seeketh not her own. Is not easily provoked.

Thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.

But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.

Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

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. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

[2:09] Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity. These three. But the greatest of these is charity.

Then it says, follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy. So here we have a fulsome description of the Bible description of love.

God's love. God's kind of love. It defines love. What it is. How we recognize it. What it looks like.

Elsewhere we read in 1 John 4 verse 16, it says, God is love.

God is love. It says, 1 John 4 verse 16, and we have known and believed the love that God hath put to us. God is love. And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

The Indians of Nicaragua defined love as pain of the heart. In other words, a love that so dominates the soul that its closest emotion seems to be pain.

[3:12] We could say, God's so hurt in his heart for us that he gave his only begotten son for us. There's that pain of love, that sense of emotion that is so strong.

And Paul shows love to us. He demonstrates it here. Love lived out in the Christian's life. Here we see a number of ingredients, if you like, in that recipe of the love of God, the divine love.

The qualities, the character qualities of divine love. So love is defined here in 1 Corinthians 13. It's good just to dwell on these rich verses as we talk through, just walk through these verses in 1 Corinthians 13, this chapter of charity, of love.

Really, it's the TLC, the tender loving care of God, isn't it? It's as if God cares for us such that we're in the intensive care unit. We're in his care, intensive care, his encompassing love.

And Paul tells of spiritual gifts in the context, the prelude and the postlude of 1 Corinthians 13. He tells of spiritual gifts, but then he tells of love as something much more, something much more excellent, a more excellent way.

[4:22] God's kind of love is the more excellent way, the most excellent way, the highest path of them all. Think of God's love, it's so rich and complete. It's the highest, the noblest, the sweetest, God's precious love.

It's the important quality, the most important quality of life. And Paul tells us there, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I'll become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge. Though I have faith, all faith, so that I can remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.

Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. So all the greatest spiritual benefits or the greatest sacrificial efforts pale into nothingness if we do not have love.

If we miss that vital ingredient, that vital aspect. So what is God's love? It's defined here for us. It's selfless, it's unconditional, it's just sacrificial.

[5:33] It's volitional too, it's by His will. It's a decisive love. It's the love of choice. God decided to love us. God gave His love.

He willingly, willfully loved us so. So let's look at God's love and what the Bible tells us about that. As we take it up from verse 4, we see what God says love looks like.

1 Corinthians 13 verse 4 it says, Charity suffereth long and is kind. We see here patience, don't we?

Verse 4. Patience, charity, love, suffereth long and is kind.

It's long suffering. Think of God's long suffering towards us. He's patient, isn't He? He's so patient, He's so kind. This kind of love, God's kind of love, it bears ill treatment.

It denies itself. There's a story told of Abraham Lincoln when there was a man called Ed Stanton who criticised Lincoln openly, publicly, yet Lincoln determined to make him the Secretary of War.

[6:37] He didn't hold some grievance against him. He was patient and he was kind. He was gracious to this man who you could reckon would deserve ill treatment.

Yet he treated him not as an enemy but as a friend. He personified, he displayed love in that context there. And love is such that love gives people a power to be patient.

To be patient when everything is wrong. When everything else goes wrong. To be patient with other people. To be patient with those that may not deserve it. As we would reckon it. And this kind of love, it's long suffering.

It suffers long. So, God's love gives us that ability to keep calm. To be collected and calm. Even when others might lose their self control and react in panic.

In unexpected situations. Charity suffereth long. And then it says, Charity suffereth long and is kind. We're still in verse 4 there. 1 Corinthians 13 verse 4.

[7:38] Charity suffereth long. It's got that patience, that long suffering. And then it says, Love is charity, it's kind. So, notice here the kindness that is part of love.

The early Christians put it, Love is sweet to all. It's got that sweet nature. Love is kind. Love has got a gracious heart. It's generous. It's good natured.

It's tender. Kindness is love in action, isn't it? Now we could easily be the opposite of kind. We could be unkind. We could be self-willed.

But God's love prompts us to be kind. To have that kind-heartedness. In Christian love, it means that we think of the needs of others instead of ourselves.

It's that thought that, Yes, I must be kind. God is kind to us. We talked about God's kindness this morning in Mephibosheth's story. And kind people will not willingly hurt others.

[8:34] Love will want us, We'll want to bless others. So, it's almost something to switch on. What's God's love say that I should be in respect to treating others?

It says that we should be kind. It says we should be kind. Have you that kind of love that suffereth long and is kind? Are you long-suffering towards others?

Are you forbearing? It goes against the grain sometimes, doesn't it? When some people roll you up and easy to just be willful and selfish. Some can suffer but are not always kind as well.

But we should be long-suffering and kind. So, this love that God gives to us, He inspires us to be tender in our affections towards others.

Even those who knowingly injure us. Now, that's again, it's the love of Christ, isn't it? He loved His enemies. He loves us. He loved us even while we were His enemies. This kind of love will show a sweet spirit in our every look and tone of voice that we would switch on to that kindness of God.

[9:42] That would be the default for us, that we would be kind. And our Lord calls us to be such, to be kind to the weak and the needy, to the Mephibosheths, as we heard this morning, in how we treat others.

The children, as our Lord demonstrated in Matthew 18, He wanted the children to come unto Him. He called them to Himself. He showed that loving care for them. 1 Peter 3 verses 8 and 9 it says, Finally, be ye all of one mind.

Have compassion, it says, one of another. Love as brethren. Be pitiful, in other words, be full of pity and compassion. Be courteous, it says. Not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing.

He says, don't fight fire with fire. He says, but contrarywise, blessing. Knowing that here unto are you called, that you should inherit a blessing. So again, it's not when someone treats you unkindly, you respond with kindness.

That's the ideal, isn't it? That's God's ideal. That you would not render evil for evil. In other words, someone treats you hatefully and harms you, that you would rather seek to bless.

[10:51] As our Lord says, that we should pray for those who spitefully use us. And pray for them. Bless those who curse you. So, seek God helping you to be kind, to be such, to know God's kindness, to display it.

And then we read on, back to our text, verse 4. It says, charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity envieth not. We see verse 4, charity envieth not.

It's got this goodwill. In other words, it's not full of envy or jealousy. This love of God is not jealous. When we see someone that might fare better than us, we're not jealous of them.

We're not envious of them. We're not having that spiteful, selfish reaction to others. Being envious of others.

What others may have. Or what they do. God's love is empty of jealousy and envy. So, we don't have that spirit of prejudice, of envy, of a jealous feeling about what others might be doing or having.

[11:58] We don't have that. We're not envious. We're not jealous. Really, it's carnality. Jealousy is carnality. We should want the best for others around us.

We should want others to be blessed and not be selfish or jealous of them. Then we see it reads on, verse 4. As we read, it says, Charity suffereth long and is kind.

Charity envieth not. Charity vaunteth not itself. It's got this sense of strutting around like a peacock, showing off, being vaunting. There's kind of a bragging, exalting yourself.

It's not arrogant or stuck up. God's love, the nature of God's love is such that we have a humility. There's a humility that's in us. It's a selflessness.

There's an unselfish character to the love that God gives to us. This love is not conceited or proud. It doesn't show itself off. It's not about strutting on a stage.

[12:57] It's not about big noting ourselves. This love, it's saying here, it's not a conceited love. It's not arrogant or full of pride or inflated with pride. It's a sense of being puffed up.

Sometimes it can happen when we may have some situations where we can become arrogant and boasting and become a big shot.

Again, that's contrary to the Spirit of Christ, to want to have the power or praise of men. Pride is the opposite to the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

Really, without our Lord, we are nothing. We can only give Him the praise and honour. It tells how the ones who exalt themselves will be humbled.

But he who humbles himself will be exalted. So, the Bible emphasises humility as that heart nature that we should have to be humble, not to be wanting to be high and mighty.

[14:00] Our Lord says, He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's Matthew 23 verse 11.

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased. He that shall humble himself shall be exalted. So, it's telling us here not to seek to have some high position or to have some exalted place, but to take the humble place.

Then God will lift us. God will lift you as you take the humble place, as you humbly serve. Love vaunteth not itself. Can you imagine the Lord Jesus when there was great miracle power, as if He would come along and say, about this man that I healed here, I want it published on the front page of the Jerusalem Gazette.

You know, that the Lord Jesus would want to have some great display about His miracle workings. But actually, He was the opposite of that. He didn't want to make some big show about His ministry. He actually told people, don't tell people. He didn't want to have that. He wasn't motivated by pride. He wasn't inflated with ego or some air of superiority.

[15:17] And that's the same, the heart nature. For you that love God, that know His love, that that love will be such that you will not deal rashly or harshly with others.

You won't have some kind of inflated view of yourself. But you'll have meekness. And you'll be humble in that regard. It says, verse 4, it goes on to say that love is not puffed up.

Verse 4, love is not puffed up. In other words, it's not conceited. It can happen where we might have some situations where we might feel important.

But we don't want to have such a view that we're exalting ourselves. That it's not the position or the success that is our motive. It's not the position or the success that we're willing to take the humble place of service.

We're willing to do the quiet things. We're willing to be a silent achiever, a quiet worker. And to do those things that people may not even realize that we're doing.

[16:22] We're not wanting to draw attention to ourselves in how we serve God. It could be in those quiet, unseen ways that we can really serve God. And God will bless you for that.

To not be wanting to be preferred or praised above others. But to be willing to be humble. And then God will lift you up. He will give you that encouragement.

So God's kind of love, it's a selfless love. Our life is not consumed with our own pride or vain glory. It's not about you, it's not about me. It's about him, isn't it?

That he may be exalted. We read of William Carey, a missionary of note, a noted linguist. He knew 34 Indian dialects, 34 language dialects.

And he translated parts of the Bible into each of those. Yet he was regarded with scorn and contempt. They called him, you know, as he was, as his trade was. He was just a shoemaker, just a cobbler.

[17:23] That's what he was. That was his trade. That was where he served his apprenticeship. But of course he became really a professor of languages. But he wasn't about big noting himself. He wanted to die to himself.

He wrote this, he said, It's about how we look in his eyes, our saviour's eyes.

But we die to self. It's a very important concept of scripture. So how is it with you? Are these things ringing true for you? Are they things that we can aspire to in our lives?

How is it with you? Verse 5 we read on, Doth not behave itself unseemly. 1 Corinthians 13, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly. Now this has got the sense of being ill-mannered.

It doesn't behave itself in an indecent way, in a way that brings shame. It displays courtesy. It's not rude. It's not without good manners.

[18:29] It's not vulgar. Now this kind of love, it does not behave itself unseemly. In other words, it's polite and well-mannered. And how can we display that? Maybe think of yourself in your work context, with your workmates, with your friends, your neighbours, your spouse, your children, your fellow Christians.

Love is not rude, in other words. Love is not unmannerly. It does not behave itself unbecomingly. It doesn't act rudely or discourteously. That sense of what's right in how we treat others?

Am I treating others in a respectful way? Am I using good manners in consideration in my behaviour towards others? So this true courtesy, it should be a hallmark of the believer that we are courteous people.

We don't go around picking fault, discussing the faults of others in a malicious spirit. Sadly, God's people don't always measure up to 1 Corinthians 13.

Amen? Let's be honest. There are times I don't. But it's kind of sad when a Christian really doesn't measure up to these truths. It does not behave itself unseemly.

[19:42] In other words, it doesn't behave itself in this kind of rude, obnoxious way. Gandhi experienced this. He said, I could believe the Christian teachings if it hadn't been for the lives of Christian people.

You know, the Christians that he knew, or those who call themselves Christians, the nominal Christians that Mahatma Gandhi knew, they put him off Christianity. He said he could believe the teachings.

He just didn't like the example, the lives of Christian people. What a reproach. What a shameful thing. Maybe Christians behaving themselves unseemly was an obstacle for him to trust Christ for himself.

So it's very needful. We should be heeding this and mindful of this. To be a genuine, a real consistent Christian. It's really the best advertisement for the Christian life is how we live.

That we are measuring up to the 1 Corinthians 13 standard. We see when Nathan confronted David and he called him to repent.

[20:47] When David's sin was known and Nathan rebuked him, he said to David, Because of this deed, thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

That's 2 Samuel 12 verse 14. So David brought great shame. Not only did he commit adultery and line up the man to die on the battlefield, but he gave occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

He brought reproach. He brought great shame. And friends, believers can do that too. We can act foolishly and bring much hurt and damage, be a poor witness. So let's be mindful of this, that love does not behave itself unseemly.

If you have this kind of love of God, be careful about your behaviour, that you won't be a source of temptation. Be careful towards those of the opposite sex.

You'll leave every home as pure as you found it. Your only object will be to seek their good. Do you always do this? Don't give the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme.

[21:57] In 1 Corinthians 13 verse 5 it goes on, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. It says it does not behave itself unseemly and it goes on to say, it seeketh not her own.

In other words, this kind of love, God's kind of love, is not selfish. It's unselfish. It seeketh not her own. You know, what's mine is mine, and how do they say it?

Everything is about the me, me. People are like that, aren't they? It's all about the me. But love is not like that. It's not selfish. In other words, love doesn't insist on its own rights or its own way.

It's not self-seeking. Paul the Apostle said in Philippians 2 verse 21, he wrote of some that they seek to advance their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. He says, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ.

So it's a great error to be selfish. Rather, let's be like Abraham, as he said to Lot, you pick the land that you want and I'll have what's left. He had that attitude of not selfish, not taking for himself.

[23:03] Love doesn't insist on our own needs or demanding our own rights, our own way. The love of God is not selfish or self-centered. It's not self-assertive.

We think of our Lord even on the cross in John 19, from verse 26 through 27. As our Lord was on the cross, he looked down and he saw his mother, Mary, and he says, Woman, behold thy son.

And then to the disciple John, behold thy mother. He even thought of the care for his mother when he was gone, that he had the unselfish heart. But contrary wise, selfishness is the tendency of the natural man.

We're all inclined to be selfish. Let's be honest. But love, God's love, He changes us. That love never seeks her own interests. That we would have rather an interest of others first. It's been said there would be revival in the church today if men were built for Christ instead of for themselves. Now let's deny self rather than elevate self.

[24:09] Paul writes in Philippians 3 verse 8, He says, Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency, that surpassing value, that worth of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

Now Paul had things he could have put on his resume of all the credentials that he had as the worldly or the religious system of the day would reckon.

He had a lot that he could have boasted about, I count them as dung. But I'm no win Christ. It's not about any religious knowledge or any achievements of my own. It's just dung.

It's just refuse. So love seeketh not our own, it says. So we'll get rid of that selfishness, that our love, his love, will have us such that we deny ourselves, and that we'll have that heart to do to others as we would have them do us.

That he would have that interest in promoting the interest and happiness of others, not making it all about ourselves. Verse 5, it goes on.

[25:20] Doth not behave itself unseemly. Seeketh not our own, is not easily provoked. Thinketh no evil. So it's not easily provoked. Notice this one. It's easy when we're tired maybe, or under pressure to be provoked.

But this kind of love, God's kind of love, is not irritable. It's not fretful or touchy or resentful. Paul's saying here that if we know God's love, as God's love is working in us, we won't have that touchy, easily irritated kind of heart.

Paul's saying the one who has God's kind of love will not be provoked. Now, of course, we know there's times where we'll be rightfully provoked. That's the Lord Jesus in John 2, verse 15.

He went into the temple and the money changers there. He was provoked by their false ways, by their wrongdoing. And he drove the money changers out of the temple.

So there's righteous anger and rightful provocation. But we're talking here about that irritation. When someone irritates you and you explode, and you act fleshly, we can have quick temper sometimes.

[26:33] And we can be overly sensitive sometimes, can't we? You know, if someone says something to us, we can get touchy, and we can fight back and justify ourselves and, you know, try to get argumentative.

And that kind of touchiness is not of God. It's not... We shouldn't have that sensitivity, that defensiveness, that irritated nature.

Rather, keep our spirit, master our spirit, keep rule over your spirit, and keep that calm and peaceful nature. Man's anger does not promote the righteousness of God.

It says that in James 1 verse 20, For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. I can think of a time where I was a young Christian, I think I was about a four-year-old Christian or something like that, three or four years old, and there was quite a senior saint, and I rebuked him, and I thought I was being very righteous because, I mean, he obviously had false doctrine, which was the case.

He was teaching and believing false doctrine. But the way that I did it was not right. I was acting in a vengeful, self-righteous, in a condemnatory way that wasn't right.

[27:48] It was the wrath of man. It wasn't working the righteousness of God. Even when you might be rebuking someone, you know, really, I should have been more respectful to the man who was a fellow believer but had a false doctrine.

But God's love is not touchy. It's not judgmental. It's not temperamental. It's not moody. Love is not easily provoked, it says. It's not roused to anger over the slightest thing.

It's not quick to take offense. It's got the sense it's not prone to be irritated. That's the sense of it here. That we shouldn't have that easily provoked kind of way. The least little thing will set us off and cause us to get angry and such.

At the slightest provocation. So learn rather to keep your anger under control. Keep it under check. When you're under pressure, when you're in a hurry, when you're feeling tired or impatient, don't get easily stirred up at the ignorance of others maybe or the stubbornness of others, the slowness of others, whatever it be.

Now think, how is it looking? Am I going to give, am I being a good witness of Christ in my heart, in my actions, in my conduct?

[28:59] Are we touchy and sensitive about the least little thing? Rather, let's get rid of that attitude. That's carnality. That's the old man, isn't it?

We read on verse 5, it says, 1 Corinthians 13, 5, Doth not behave itself unseemly. Seeketh not her own. Is not easily provoked. Thinketh no evil.

So the next one is thinking no evil. God's love thinks righteous things. God's love thinks good things, godly things, pure things of good rapport, things that are righteous and worthy things. It says that God's love thinks no evil. So in other words, put away uncharitable thoughts, unkind thoughts about others. Now sometimes we can think the worst of someone, as if, you know, if they've done something wrong, but it becomes an overwhelming thought against them. It's good in a way to forget things about others. To not plan to get even. To hold and harbour grudges and spite.

[30:08] To try not to harbour that resentment. To try to forget the faults of others. That would rather be the spiritual track to take. It's the principle of forgiveness, isn't it?

Thinketh no evil. Don't get consumed with thoughts of hatred or getting even or some malevolence, some ancient hurt, some chip on the shoulder that's just, you know, you carry for a lifetime. Love does not harbour grudges. It does not dwell upon such things. It thinketh no evil. It doesn't find a lodging place in the grey cells. It takes no account. It doesn't keep a mental register of the wrongs of others.

The wrongs which we have suffered. And sure enough we can all have a list of how people have hurt us, of the things done wrong to us. I could give you my list. You know, but really we don't keep such a list.

Because it just eats us up, doesn't it? We can get sour and bitter over injuries and insults. And they're long gone. And the person who's injured us probably doesn't even remember it either.

[31:09] So love forgives. It forgets. It's saying here love takes no account of the evil that's done to it. It doesn't pay attention to those things in which they've suffered wrong.

Love thinks no evil. It doesn't harbour that. We don't live in this state of suspicion. As if we know someone might have done something wrong, and then we're forever suspicious of them.

Not holding any forgiveness towards them. But harbouring it. Not forgiving and forgetting. See what our Lord Jesus says as he said to Peter. As Peter asked him, How many times should I forgive? He says, I tell you not up to seven times, but seventy times seven. This is Matthew 18, 22. I say unto thee until seven times. I don't say that.

He says until seventy times seven. You know, some have got kind of, they set a limit only seven times, and then I'll, you know, harbour this hatred and this unforgiveness.

[32:07] He says keep on forgiving. Seventy times seven. So you can't count it. You're not going to be able to count as if there's a limit. It's unlimited. Your forgiveness should be unlimited.

That's the kind of sense of it there. And then as we move on to verse six. 1 Corinthians 13 verse six. It says this. That this charity, this love, God's love, it says, Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Love is known by its rejoicing. We've got something to rejoice about. Amen. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity. So it's saying here it doesn't delight in unrighteousness. It doesn't gloat over men's sins. Now we could think about the sins of others, the faults of others, the failings of others. You know, we could have a, you know, as some would try to gossip about others and blame and condemn others.

When the Lord Jesus saw Peter's failure, he wept. His heart was broken up in love for Peter, who failed him. He failed him. If we possess this kind of love, God's kind of love, we'll not be obsessed

with the inconsistencies of others.

[33:21] It won't obsess us. And we won't delight over the sins or follies of an enemy. But we'll desire rather that they would find forgiveness, that they would be able to find God's grace.

What does love rejoice in? It says love rejoices in the truth. Verse 6. Love is happy in the truth. Now as believers, as God's people, what we want to praise about, what we want to dwell upon, what we want to be glad about is the truth.

We rejoice in that. We want to know the truth of God. And it's in the Word and it's in action. It's in what we want to delight in what's right, in action, in conduct.

In the Word of God, we want to delight in the truth of it. And this love, it's not about making much about iniquity, but making much about truth.

It's making much about the righteousness of God. It's making much about the joy of our salvation and of praising God. God's love is joyful for what is right and what is godly.

[34:29] We don't want to harbour and whinge on about faults and failings. And it's easy to look at other churches and say that they're failing this and that and everything's wrong about how they're worshipping and what they're doing.

But it's rather, we want to rejoice in the truth. We want to rejoice in the goodness of God. We want to rejoice in sound doctrine and lift up the glory of God and bring praise to Him. Ultimately, the truth will triumph over evil.

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness is what it's saying, but it rejoices in the truth. It's true. So we go on to verse 7. Verse 7, 1 Corinthians 13, 7.

It says that this love, charity, love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. So verse 7, love beareth all things.

In other words, it always perseveres. This kind of love, this kind of love that we can know, God's love for us, our love for others, our love for our spouse, our love for our families, our love for our enemies even, is a love that always perseveres.

[35:39] This is persevering love. God's kind of love, it goes the distance. It doesn't have a limit. It's limitless. It endures everything. This love, it always bears all things.

It goes on and on. It doesn't lose heart. It doesn't lose courage. It beareth all things. So it's got the sense of going, keeping on, keeping on.

It's always long-suffering. It's always pressing on. It's always believing. It's always trusting. It says that love beareth all things, believeth all things.

This love always trusts. It's got a faith that's unquenchable. When we think about the faith that we know in Christ, the love of our God, our trust in Christ as our Saviour, it's a love that believeth all things.

So it's got that faith that presses on and continues on. It's an enduring faith. And it can always think the best to uplift others, to see the benefits, to see the potential in others.

[36:47] It's got that faith. It believeth all things. And then it says it hopeth all things. It always hopes. Now this faith, this love that we have, it's got a hopeful outlook.

It's positive. The hopes that we have as God's people, of course we have the blessed hope. We know that the hope that we have is like an anchor of the soul. This hope that we have is enduring hope.

It's got a positive outlook for the future. And the hope that we have in Christ is fadeless. It is always hoping. It's always, it hopeth all things. So it doesn't weaken.

It keeps hoping. It keeps hopeful. Now sometimes when we hear about the faults of others, we can become preoccupied with them. But this kind of love will see beyond the faults of others.

It will see that love can conquer. Love can overcome all the situations of life. And this love is steadfast love.

[37:49] It's strong in faith. It's believing that all things are possible with God. This kind of love is ready to endure hardship. As a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Knowing that this hope that we have is in our Lord.

He will not fail us. So it says such love, endure all things. Think of the love that we ought to have. That love that he prompts us to have. His love to us, it endures all things.

His love is so patient for us, isn't it? That he would endure at times our flagging, our faltering. That God would be so long suffering towards us.

His love is such that he wants us to love so. So do you possess this love? The love of God. Nothing short of it will enable you to penetrate through the awful pride and the unbelief of these times that we're living in.

We know this love, it endureth all things. We know there's some enduring ahead of us, brothers and sisters. There's enduring. These are times when we need some endurance, some perseverance.

[38:54] Paul says, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love. I'm just an irritating noise. You know, that's what it's saying really, isn't it? But he says here in verse 8 that love never fails.

He says whether they be tongues, whether they be prophecy, whether they be knowledge, it shall vanish away. But he's saying there that charity never faileth. So this love, this love of God, this love that he wants us to indwell us, this love, this charity never fails.

When you know this love, this love will never give up. This love is not going to quit. It never ceases. It never stops. And then we're just going to jump to 1 Corinthians 13 verse 13.

And it wraps it up here and it says, Now abide of these three. Now abide of faith, hope, charity. These three. But the greatest of these is charity.

So it's saying here in verse 13 that these three, faith, hope and love, they abide forever. But the greatest is love. Think of faith, our conviction and faith, our trust, our belief in Christ, our saving hope.

[40:08] That's special, that's forever. Faith is forever. Our hope, our joyful, confident expectation of eternity, the hope of the believer is reserved in heaven for us.

We have a hope that is enduring, it's forever. You that know him as saviour, you have a hope that is a forever hope. And then we see love. It also abides forever.

Our true affection for God, his affection for us, our love for men and women, our people and our lives, even for our enemies. It's a sense where that love has an enduring quality.

So really we could substitute the word charity with Jesus, our Lord, couldn't we? Look at 1 Corinthians 13. It's the Lord Jesus really. It's his character.

It's a character description of our Lord Jesus. And it says, the greatest is love. And then just to wind up the next verse, it says, follow after charity.

[41:05] Follow after love. In other words, make it your pursuit. Make it your aim. Make this your goal. Make this your great quest to pursue this, to chase after this, to possess this love.

It says, in effect, it's saying, earnestly endeavour. Earnestly seek and strive, desire. Make it your aim to find, to aspire, to acquire this love.

This love of God. 1 Corinthians 13. Now take it and read it again. And dwell upon these words.

We've only really just scratched the surface. But what love do we have? Sometimes we have a love that is just an earthly love.

That's just maybe an emotional love. Natural human love. The Bible says in Colossians 3 verse 2, set your affection on things above. Not on things on the earth.

And we can have the love of money, the love of pleasure, the love of the world. What about the first love, our Lord, to love Him? To know His love for us, which is so perfect and absolute.

[42:08] It's so selfless. It's unconditional. It's not based on our performance. You know, friends, you might think, as some would reckon and mistakenly view, that salvation is somehow acquired by our deserving it or by our earning it or by having some credit of our own works, of some deserving of it.

But no, it's not of that. His love is such. It's so selfless that His love is unconditional. Not based upon your works. It's not human love that can be selfish and conditional based on performance.

But His love is such that He generously lavishes His love on us. And we can know that today. And He wants to place that love in your hearts such that His love can be shed abroad in your hearts.

And that love that we read of here, it's not based on human feelings. It's not a love that demands its own way. It's kind of self-centered. It's not a love that holds grudges and harbors resentment. It's not a love that is jealous and envious or prideful and arrogant. It's not a love that's full of self-minded, picky, fault-finding, critical kind of attitude.

[43:28] But it's the humility of our very Christ. It's the God kind of love. So unselfish. So unconditional. So sacrificial. Not based on human performance.

Not founded in emotional and human feelings. His love is such that He loves us with an everlasting love. And that kind of love can somehow be generated within you and me.

Towards others. It's astounding, isn't it? To think that His love could be applied and translated into our own lives.

That we can have a humility, the love of Christ. That He loves us so undeserving as we are. This love that would overlook faults and would seek to restore.

That would want to bring grace and forgiveness. Now friends, the Bible tells us how we should walk in love. So that it should be that pathway that we take to walk in love.

[44:30] As we tread our earthly journey. That we would make sure we stay walking in love. Amen. To have that mindset that I'm going to walk in love.

I'm going to stay on that road of love. To love one another. As we read in 1 Thessalonians 3 verse 12. Paul says, Paul's prayer is that we might increase and abound in love.

You know, that love can multiply and expand. And we can be more loving. We can be more generous in our love.

And we can learn the truths of 1 Corinthians 13.

And that love would be so lived out in our lives. It's hard to fathom.

[45:44] Somehow some of these aspects of love seem so contrary to human will and mind. Like we can be inclined to be the opposite of 1 Corinthians 13.

To not have patience. To be jealous. To be selfish and puffed up. To rejoice in iniquity. All the latest goss and some spiteful remarks.

But rather to have love. Charity never faileth. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that your love goes beyond our comprehension.

That you would deign to love such as we. Lord, for your grace that you've given. That we can know a Saviour who paid the price for our sin. And as that love gift of immeasurable heart.

That you would give your son. So you so love the world. That you would give your only begotten son. Lord, that we can know him. And that we can not perish but have everlasting life.

[46:53] We pray each one might know that gift. And say, Lord, I want that. I want that gift. I want to receive that. I want to know you as my Saviour.

I want to trust in you personally. To know you. And that each one might know that love. That held you to the cross. That love. That motivated you to step down from the realms of glory.

Down those steps from your throne as it were. And to become a man. To become a man. The perfect man. But yet a man that would suffer. And be punished for our sin.

Nailed to the cross. To pay penalty of our sin. The wages of sin. Death for us. Lord, we thank you for that.

Love that took you there. And now as our risen Saviour. We know your love. And help us to display that love too. Help each one, we pray. That this might be a message we'll take.

[47:59] And put into action, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.