

Un-Comfy

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[0 : 00] Well, hello and welcome. My name is Tyler Lawrence. I am the worship and technology pastor here at First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana. Hey, I wanted to invite you, if you are a person who has been watching online or maybe listening on the radio, maybe you've even been here before, I want to invite you back again or maybe for the first time.

There's something that's so special about a body of believers gathering together under one roof and lifting up praises to God, to learning a little bit more about Him, enjoying some good food.

And we also have a welcome gift for you if this is your first time that you come and you visit with us. And it has a lot of good information about who we are as a church, what we believe, and how you can get plugged in.

So I just wanted to extend that first off right from the get-go. And now I want to go ahead and start pivoting into our time for our sermon today.

So our sermon today is actually going to be a continuation in the series called The Power of Unity.

[1 : 10] So The Power of Unity. And that's where we've been going through chapter by chapter in 1 Corinthians. And we have been studying about what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to say.

And he's been dealing with some tough things. He's been dealing with things that many of us might choose to try to shy away from. And yet Paul continuously comes back to, we've got to deal with these things.

So the Corinthian church was kind of a rough around the edges group of people, much like us. And I just love this series. You know, before we went into this series, sometimes I thought, I'm a little bit more worried about how to spell Corinthians, let alone study it.

And it's been awesome to learn a little bit more about it. Now before we jump into our scripture today, I'm still kind of the new kid on the block. My family and I, we moved to Greensburg about 10 months ago.

And so I wanted to just take a couple of minutes to introduce myself to you. As I mentioned, my name is Tyler. I'm the worship and technology pastor. And that means that my job has a broad scope of different things.

[2 : 20] And so I get to lead worship from the platform, so a very public kind of face. But then I also do a lot of behind the scenes stuff as well.

And I love working with volunteers. In fact, that's one of my favorite parts of my job is working with volunteers. And so if you are a person who serves on the worship ministry, on the tech ministry, and with me more directly, I just want to say thank you.

Thank you for the work that you put in every week to make church, church. It just doesn't work quite the same or as well without our volunteers, without our awesome volunteers.

Now, you might not volunteer directly with worship or with youth or with our tech ministry, but you still might volunteer in a number of other areas around the church.

And I also want to say thank you to you as well. If you're somebody who is not currently serving but would like to get involved, there are plenty of people that you could ask. You could ask myself or Pastor Ray.

- [3 : 23] You could call into the church office. And we would love to get you plugged in wherever we can. So a little bit more about me. I grew up in eastern Ohio, very rural eastern Ohio. And this here is a picture of my family, the better side of who I am. Over here on the left side of your screen, you can see my wife, Caitlin.
- She and I met when I was seven years old. So we've known each other for what feels like our entire lives. And we recently celebrated our eighth wedding anniversary, August 1, 2015.
- Make sure you tell her that I did not bumble with that date, that I was able to come up with it very quickly. So tons of brownie points are due to me, if you ask me.
- But yeah, our eighth wedding year anniversary. And, you know, so I was thinking about it. And I think time for me has passed so fast. You know, for me, it actually feels a little bit more like it's maybe the second or the third year that we've been married.
- [4 : 31] But for Caitlin, it's passed a little bit more like dog years, I think. And so she was very excited to announce her 30th wedding anniversary to me this past year.
- It's been, and I've been very pleased and happy to see her endure the suffering. I mean, to be married to me. And it's been a really good time.
- Now, off to the other side of your screen, the right-hand side, you can see our three kids, Joretta and Alistair and Margo. They're two, four, and seven.
- And they are ornery and smart. I think the orneriness is from their mom's side. But they're also very smart. Here's just a quick example of how smart they are, sometimes not for the better.
- But the other night, we were getting ready for bed. And I said, okay, kids, it's time for bed. Mommy and I are going to watch Survivor. And so it's time for you guys to head off to bed.
- [5 : 34] And so if you have kids or if you've been around kids, you might know that the first time you say something, they don't immediately just jump up and do what you want them to do. So Joretta, my oldest, she sat there.
- And I think she was just kind of waiting to see if I would get distracted by the TV. But I didn't. And I said, hey, anybody who's a kid, anybody who's a child needs to get up and go to bed.
- You have brushed your teeth. You have gotten a drink of water. You know, you have used the restroom. It's just time for bed. And so she kind of gets up and grumbles and gets about halfway to the stairs.
- And then she turns around and looks at me and she says, well, you know, Dad, you're a child of God. So technically that means you should be going to bed too. That's what I'm dealing with. But she's seven and we're already dealing with these kinds of things.
- So but no, they have taught me so much. You know, I think now that some of the ways that we learn about being a parent is how maybe God feels about us.
- [6 : 34] Sometimes we just seem so silly to him, even though in our minds it makes perfect sense. So anyway, well, we're going to continue on now. We're going to talk a little bit about our sermon today. And it actually comes out of First Corinthians chapter 13, which some of you may know is called the love chapter.
- The love chapter. Oh, we love the love chapter. It's so comfy and warm and exciting. And it gives us all of these amazing feelings. Right. If you're like me, eight years ago, if you're like me, you would have had this part of scripture read at your wedding.
- And I remember thinking at the time, this sounds so awesome. Love is love is all these amazing things. We're going to read about it today. It just seems so comfortable. So since the since this section of scripture is almost always read at weddings, I want to take some time in that spirit to play a little bit of a wedding game.

And so hopefully you're sitting next to your spouse or your fiancé or your partner, your significant other. So hopefully you're sitting next to them and you'll be able to answer these questions.

OK, question number one. Who cracks the lamest jokes? OK, I'm going to raise my hand. I'm going to raise my hand because I do love a good dad joke or a bad joke.

[7 : 59] Just depends on who you ask. OK, question number two. Who is worse with directions? Who's worse with directions? I'm going to keep my hands down.

Who is the messier of the two of you? I probably could raise my hand on that one. Probably the messier of the two of us. OK, what about this? Who is the best driver?

Now, this one is kind of a contentious one in my house because I know I'm right. And then depending on how you've answered the rest of these questions, you're going to have to know the answer to this one.

Who is the best fighter? Who's going to win the fight after the way you've answered these previous questions? OK, so so no matter no matter who has the better jokes or who can who can navigate no matter what's going on, doesn't matter who's the cleanest or the best driver, who's going to win that fight later.

What matters, it seems, is that we all have to interact with love. Like we all interact with love. But what is love? It seems like we have a lot of different answers to this question.

[9 : 05] And some of the answers are a little bit better than others. Some of the answers leave a bit to be desired. For instance, if you look at this anonymous quote here, love is nature's way of tricking people into reproducing.

Hmm. That seems like a bit of a worldly definition of love. Now, this one, this one just made me laugh. How about this? Love is a homeless person scavenging for treasure in the middle of the rain.

He finds a bag of gold coins and then realizes that they're all made of chocolate. Even though he's heartbroken, he can't complain because he was hungry in the first place.

That one just makes me laugh. That's kind of a weird definition of love, if you ask me. Obviously, there was somebody who thought that that might be what love is or maybe not.

Now, here's an example of what I think might be a good man-made definition of what love is. David Jeremiah, some of you may be familiar with him, but he states in his book, *The Power of Love*.

[10 : 10] Love is not a feeling. Love is a response. Love is action. I think that's a pretty good one. So let's see what the Bible has to say.

So if you would, turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 is where we're going to be reading out of. It's towards the end of your Bible. Hey, don't forget, if you are a person who likes to take notes and follow along with your phone, you can do so from the Y-O-U, YouVersion Bible app.

You can go to events, and then you can find our church, and then you'll be able to follow along directly. Now, we're getting ready to read this now, but before we do, I just want to ask you to sort of clear your mind and to approach this with a fresh set of eyes and a fresh perspective and to listen to the words, maybe in a new way.

But first, let's pray. God, thank you so much. We have this unique opportunity to still learn about you and to still talk about you, even if we're not in the same room.

That's so powerful. Father, we ask that you would speak to us today through your word. We ask that you would get us out of the way and that we would hear what you want us to hear.

[11 : 33] It's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right. I'm excited. Let's jump right in now to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. We're going to go ahead and read the entire chapter at this point.

Here we go. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels but do not have love, I'm 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 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.

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It does not dishonor others. It is not self-seeking.

[12 : 27] It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

But when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 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.

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.

And now these remain. These three remain. Faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. Wow.

[13 : 34] You know, even though I've heard that chapter before. Every time I listen to it or every time I read it, I feel like there's just so much to unpack in 13 verses.

Which, by the way, I think is interesting that chapter 13 has 13 verses. So your next Bible trivia night, you'll be able to answer that question flawlessly. But there is a lot to unpack there, right? Now let me ask you this.

Was there anything that you hadn't noticed before? As you were listening to that, as you were reading along, was there something that you heard differently because of what you've learned in this series?

This is the 12th week in our series. And so we've had 11 different perspectives on 1 Corinthians. And now that we're here talking about chapter 13, maybe you heard something new.

For instance, for me, I didn't quite realize that there was so much talk about the spiritual gifts, like the gifts of prophecy and of knowledge and of tongues and of healing.

[14 : 34] I didn't quite realize that. I hope you've been enjoying this series, as I have as well. So here's what we're going to do. I'd like to go now into our point number one.

Godly love is the root of meaningful gain. Godly love is the root of meaningful gain. If you were to break down chapter 13, at least in the NIV, you can see that there are four sections, four little paragraphs that build this one chapter, right?

And that first section, those first three or four verses, Paul is really outlining that, hey, if I have a number of different things, but I don't have love, I don't really have anything.

Right? That seems harsh, but he's saying, if I have knowledge, if I have gifts, if I have faith, if I have charity, if I have self-sacrifice. Speaking of self-sacrifice, the ESV, which is another popular translation of the Bible, says, verse three in a different way.

It says, if I gave all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. There are some scholars who believe that the reason you could translate that as my body to be burned is actually a reference to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, which you may know, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are three Israelites who refused to worship anything other than God, and because of that, they were going to be thrown into this fiery furnace, and they were going to be burned alive.

[16 : 10] And yet, God delivered them from the hand of that evil king. He kept them safe, and they came out of the fiery furnace, and not even their clothes were charred.

They weren't even burned up. So that's a pretty stark and big example that Paul is using here. He's saying, even if you have knowledge and faith and charity and the type of self-sacrifice to where you're willing to lay it all out on the line to be burned alive, but if you do all of that and you don't have love, you have nothing.

Without love, it's nothing. Go ahead and look back down here at verse number four with me. Verses four to seven, we're going to read that.

This is kind of the comfy part, the part that I think most people like to pay attention to, especially at weddings. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud.

It does not dishonor others. It is not self-seeking. It's not easily angered. It keeps no records of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.

[17 : 27] It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It always perseveres. How are you with this? If you were to take this section of scripture and you were to, instead of putting love in there, plug your name into there, how would you hold up?

And I had to deal with this myself, too. You know, as I was preparing this message, I did that. I put my name in there. So let's just, for fun, well, it's not really fun, but let's just, for fun, put my name in for the first five attributes of what love is.

That's just the first verse, okay? Is Tyler patient? Tyler's patient. Tyler's kind. Tyler is not envious. Tyler does not boast.

Tyler is not proud. Tyler is not in love. So lift a pid-body. Thank you for thatfire. Thank you, Feed shape. animal. hold up to that perfectly, that I don't really hold up to that hardly at all. So now maybe think of it with your name. Maybe go through that list and insert your name into love or in for love, substitute your name in there. Do you always protect? Do you always trust? Do you always hope?

Do you always persevere? I think now we're getting a bit uncomfy. You see, at first this seems like such a fuzzy, beautiful segment of scripture, and yet when we try to apply it to our lives, it can be pretty uncomfortable. I think it's safe to say that we can't live up to that, that we can't be perfectly loving, but I know who can. We know who can. 1 John chapter 4, starting in verse 7, it says this, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. Skip down to verse 11 here, Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God.

[19 : 36] If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. Did you catch that little bit at the end of verse 12? No one has ever seen God, and then he sort of just kind of goes off and talks about something else. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us, but that doesn't necessarily feel like it answers the question of nobody has seen God.

But I think that's exactly what he's saying. No one has seen God, because in our present state, we can't be in the presence of God, of someone so holy and perfect and just. And yet, if we abide in love with one another, that's how you see God. That is how we bring unity to the body of the church.

Point number two, God is love. He's so many more things outside of love as well, but he is love. It originates from him. You know, kind of backing up just a little bit, if you were to put Jesus' name in for love, it absolutely would work perfectly, right? All right, let's move on. Let's look at verses number eight, and we're going to read down to verse 12. This is still in 1 Corinthians 13 now.

Love never fails, but where there are prophecies, they will cease. Where there are tongues, they will be still. Where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. You know, a couple weeks ago, Pastor Ray tackled a really difficult section of Scripture where it was dealing with tongues and some other, you know, pretty contentious items, some different gifts that seem to divide the church.

It can so easily divide the church. And what he came up with, and I think is totally, totally right, is he said, you know, hey, the gifts aren't gone, but they need to operate within the confines of what the Bible says for them to operate into, and that is to edify and to transform, right? To edify and to transform. But what Paul is saying here, and if you look back here at verse nine, for we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When we are completed, we won't necessarily need to be edified and transformed. I think that's just a neat thing to recognize is that someday we will be completed. That's not now, but when completion comes, when completeness comes, what's in part will disappear. We won't need to be edified and transformed any longer. Verse 11, When I was a child, I talked like a child. I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child.

[22 : 34] When I became a man, when I started adulting, right, I put the ways of childhood behind me. Watch your emotions. I had mentioned earlier that I've learned a lot about how God might view us based off of how I get to see my children interact, and how they interact with me, and how I interact with them.

But, you know, children seem to be completely ruled by their emotions. And so if you were to think and reason and act like a child, and talk like a child, you would talk based on your emotions along with just self-centeredness. And then now verse 12, Point number three, You know, one day we will be known fully face to face with the Savior.

If you are in Christ, if you've accepted that gift that He has offered you, then one day you will be made complete. And that gives us a tremendous amount of hope and faith.

You see, to me, one way you could think about it is that that hope is that something greater is happening later on down the road, and so I can hope in that. And my faith builds from that hope.

You know, I know that something good is going to happen, and so today, in the hard times, I'm going to have faith that something better is coming. But all of that, that hope, stems from the love of God. Hope and faith come from the love of God. You know, speaking of God's love, we have one word for love in the English language, which is just love, right? But the Hebrew language actually gives us at least four. I know there's more than that, but these are the four main ones that we see throughout Scripture, and that is storgi, which is a familial love. It's the love that a parent has for their child. Even when they mess up, they still just seem to love them over and over and over again. And then there is phileo, which is where we get our word for Philadelphia, which is the city of brotherly love. So phileo is camaraderie and brotherly love. Eros, which is the word that we use to derive erotic or sexual love. And then agape, which is unconditional love. It's a love that can only originate from God. Now, something to think about with this love is that our attempts to produce godliness from within ourselves, I think, are just cheap imitations of what He has for us.

[25 : 35] Anything that we can try to produce from within ourselves to imitate God is just a short-term sort of lookalike. It's not lasting. Look at Isaiah 64 6. He says, All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind, our sins sweep us away. You know, we ourselves are just not enough because we are imperfect, because we are sinful, because we have messed up. You know, our love is not enough to earn our way into heaven. Our faith, our righteousness, our works, our hope is just not enough to do that. Now, you might be thinking, well, this is great. I love getting beat down while I watch a sermon, and that's not my intent at all, and I don't think that's what God's intent is either. He's saying, listen, you've messed up, and so now your works and your love and your hope and your righteousness, they're just not enough, but Jesus is enough. Jesus is enough for you. Jesus is enough for me. I am not enough without God's love.

But, Romans 5.8 says, God demonstrated His love, His own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. His love displayed on a cross is true love. John 15.13 says, greater love has no one than this to lay down one's life for one's friends. Now, listen, I mentioned that that this kind of got uncomfortable for a bit when we try to apply this to our lives, but that is comfy.

It is so good to know that Jesus loves me, that Jesus loves us. That is comforting. Point number four, God's love is what comforts me. God's love is what comforts me. Let that be a declaration for you today. In the good times, His love comforts me. In the bad times, His love comforts me.

When I'm doing something or I'm living some way that I just, I know deep down isn't right, His love draws me into change. Okay? You might be able to word it like this, come as you are.

[28 : 03] You know, God wants you to come just as you are, but don't stay as you are, because His love changes us. So I want to ask you again, what is love? One way you might be able to phrase that is by saying that love is the greatest gift of all.

Love is Jesus laying His life down for us. Love is what draws us to change, to repentance, and it's what makes us new. And God gave us all of it.

And now these three remain. Verse 13, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. Today, as we wrap up, I want to invite you and challenge you to do something.

At some point today, take a moment to step away from the regular of your life. To maybe put on some soft worship music or to just get into silence, whichever one helps you to focus the most.

And ask yourself this question, when have you seen God's love working in your life? When have you seen God's love working in your life? And I want to challenge you, don't just think of it. Write it down. Write it down and date it and go back to it when you are struggling.

[29 : 22] Almost as a note to yourself that says, God loves me now and He loves you now. When you're going through a hard time, God loves you. When you're going through a good time, God loves you.

And I don't know where you are today. I don't know if you're going through a hard time or a good time. If you're going through somewhere just kind of in between, it just seems kind of boring, status quo, I'm not sure. But if you have questions, if you want to know more about who Jesus is and how you might be able to become a Christian, to become a Christ follower and what that means, please, please, please make sure that you reach out to us.

You can contact me directly by emailing me at Tyler at FCCGreensburg.com. You could also reach out if you have a good relationship with Ray or Steve.

It's Ray at FCCGreensburg.com or Steve at FCCGreensburg.com. You can reach out to any of us and we would love to talk to you. Or you can also contact us at the church.

You can call the church office by calling 812-663-8488. Now, before we go today, I just want to remind you one more time that God loves you.

[30 : 38] If you would, pray with me as we close our time. Heavenly Father, we are grateful. We know that there is no greater form of love than self-sacrifice.

And what you did on the cross is absolutely that. You are the embodiment of love. You are the author and the perfecter of love and of our faith. And we just pray now that you would continue to indwell us.

God, I pray for those who are in need, those who are struggling today, that you would put your hand of guidance and of comfort and of peace on them. It's in your name we pray. Amen.

Hey, thank you once again so much for joining us. And I hope to see you soon. Let's pray. Thank you. What concerns you, listeners? What concerns you, listeners?

What concerns you, listeners? How concerns you feel?