

# Love, The More Excellent Way.

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning. Welcome to the worship service this morning.! The voice of the Lord fill up and that we are excited to worship in song and in word.
- It's good that we're here to encourage one another and also to see direction as the Lord speaks to us through His Word. I just want to draw attention to that announcement regarding the Sexsmith singing.
- And that is, they contacted me by email this week asking if our church would be interested in doing that again. It's on the 20th and they're giving us up to half an hour.
- And so we are going to be away in Bolivia. And so does that interest anybody here? Just a show of hands.
- There's some? Because I would need someone to be able to step forward and say, you know, I'd be willing to get some songs ready and just coordinate the group. And so if that's you, come talk to me after.
- [ 1 : 42 ]     But it's a good chance to go caroling, to spread God's Word of cheer through song. And so may the Lord bless you with that.
- Why don't we take a few minutes and greet a neighbor, maybe someone that we haven't greeted yet this morning.
- Let's just stand for a minute. Just greet a few people around us and then we'll get settled in for the message. We have this morning what we call, or it's commonly called the love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13.
- And so we will be covering a lot of ground this morning as we bridge chapter 12, a chapter on spiritual gifting.
- Gifts of the Spirit. And chapter 14, where Paul goes on to correct the tongue movement.
- [ 2 : 58 ]     And so in the midst of this, we have a love chapter, which he comes out and says has to be the motive of all of it.
- And so that's what we'll be touching on this morning. I've entitled it, Love the More Excellent Way. Love the More Excellent Way.
- And we'll be just looking at what is a godly love. So what does the word love mean?
- Does anyone have that figured out? No?
- Okay. Let me ask another question. What would the world be like without love? Love. I didn't quite hear you.
- [ 4 : 18 ]     Ruthless? Okay. I don't think we'd want to be here. Do you have an answer? War?
- Yeah. Yeah. You know what? Maybe the most accurate description of what life would be like without love is hell. Because it's the absence of God.
- Do we take love for granted? We're going to look at this a little bit deeper as we make the connections.
- God is love. Scripture tells us that. He doesn't possess it as an attribute. It's his essence. He is love.

- That's who he is. God is unchangeable. He cannot change who he is. He is love.
- [ 5 : 27 ] And as we look at Scripture, we have various kinds of love presented in Scripture.
- And I'm not going to spend a lot of time on that. There's eros and storge, more of a sensational love or sensual love.
- Storge, more of a family relationship love. Phileo, it's a love that is between friends. So all different types of love.
- But then ultimately, and what the Bible uses the most, is agape. We're all familiar with that word, I believe. Agape love. And it is the love that God showed us by coming to die for our sins.
- Agape love. It's the love that is unselfish. That puts others ahead of ourselves.
- [ 6 : 34 ] Very simple definition. It's unselfish. It puts others ahead. And so, the challenge is, for us, how do we go through life showing agape love?
- These other types of love, eros and storge, like the sensual love and the relational loves, how far would they get us if agape wasn't there?
- Because they're more based on feelings. And God recognizes that's not enough.
- We have to give and give and give. Those that are married, we know this.
- But even in an unmarried relationship of friends, we have to give and give and give.
- [ 7 : 57 ] Otherwise, the relationship ends. And so, this is the root of what we're saying.
- Let's turn to Romans 5. Romans 5. So, I'm going to talk a little bit about love before we connect the chapters. Romans 5, verse 5.
- Romans 5. Romans 5. Now, hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- So, to whom has God given love?
- Anyone? To whom has God given love? To us. To every one of His children.
- [ 9 : 29 ] So, if you are a born-again believer here this morning, the love of God has been poured out in your heart. It's there.
- It's accessible. It's available. Only as God teaches us. Only as God teaches us. As He matures us.
- We learn that the love of God has to be worked out. And when we walk by the Spirit, when we obey the Spirit of God, we show the love of God.
- And when we walk in the flesh, what happens? That love is not evident.
- Even in believers. But the love has been poured out. You have it. You have it within you.
- [ 10 : 29 ] And God is teaching us to walk by the Spirit, to access that love every day. And to allow it to flow into all our relationships.
- As God first is the Father of love, He is love, bestowing it upon us.
- And as we receive the love of God, we now bestow it on each other. And that's what makes relationships, that's what makes the family of God, a beautiful thing.
- Because love is there. The love of God. And we care for one another. And so that is, only God could come up with something like this.
- Let's turn also to 1 John 4. I'm going to start in verse 7.
- [ 11 : 55 ] There's seven verses in a row. Starting in verse 7, 1 John 4. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested, or made known toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into this world, that we might live through Him.

So the love of God appearing, making known to us by the sending of Jesus Christ. Verse 10.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

[ 13 : 14 ] It's been poured out. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us His love, or His Spirit.

So that is then one of the evidences that we are born again, is the love of God is within us.

And we can play that out to those around us. So God is love. Love. Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments by giving us two.

Do we know what they are? What's the first one? Let's hear it. Love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and so on.

Right? What's the second one? Love your neighbor. What's the commonality between the two?

[ 14 : 23 ] Love. Who are we to love? We're to love God, and then each other. love. So this is the essence, the very root of relationships, is love, the love of God being played out.

And so that's the foundation for writing 1 Corinthians 13, is this love of God. And so we see, even in the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments are all based on love.

For when we do not kill, we do not steal, all those commandments, it's showing love. It's showing love.

And so God, God who is love, gave us those commandments. Let's turn back to Corinthians.

Corinthians. The last verse in chapter 12, he says, but earnestly desire the best gifts, and yet I show you a more excellent way.

[ 16 : 02 ] So finishing the chapter 12 about the spiritual gifts that God has given, and we had that a few weeks back, and Pastor Henry summarized the rest of the unity of the body in using those gifts.

And, but now, after addressing gifts, Paul says, we are to desire spiritual gifts, but there is a better way.

And he says, I will show you a more excellent way, a perfect way. And then he dives into chapter 13.

And so, what he is saying is that having a spiritual gift, the ability to speak languages, the ability to preach, to prophesy, to teach, to heal, is not as important as to show love in whatever we do.

and because love edifies. And so, giftings without love puffs us up.

[ 17 : 30 ] because without love, we're saying, this gift is mine, I came up with it.

But recognizing that God does the gifting for the benefit of the whole, and if we don't use them out of sincere, godly love for one another, we are better off to be quiet.

We're better off to shut up. Because it pushes people away. God he is bringing into perspective the issues in Corinth in the church there, and that they were boasting in their gifts, elevating a spiritual gift over another one.

And Paul says, enough of this. I think we could say that the charismatics of Corinth were not acting in love.

that would sum up chapter 12. The first three verses, well, we're going to back up a little more.

[ 19 : 05 ] We'll go into verse 28 in chapter 12, and then the first three verses in 13. And God has appointed these in the church, first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, after that, miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

He lists the spiritual gifts of their day. And earlier in chapter 12, we learned that they were elevating the gift of tongues, of language, above all others.

apostles, that they could speak a foreign language and thus became puffed up. Did you notice in the list in verse 28 that Paul lists the language gift as the last one?

he says, first, are the speaking gifts, apostles, the missionaries, the prophets, the preachers, and the teachers, those that bring edification, that build up, that expound the Word of God.

He lifts those as number one above healings, administrations, of helps, miracles, and of tongues.

[ 20 : 45 ] And so, rightfully so, for God is always interested that we grow, that we're edified, that we're built up. And so, He puts them in their place and for them that would have been a very hard thing to accept.

because they put so much weight on tongues, on languages. Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, are all workers of miracles?

Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? And the answer is a resounding no.

We don't. We don't. in fact, the gifts are given to only some people to teach the rest.

And so, there's a variety of gifts, but not everybody is an apostle or a prophet. Not everybody speaks in tongues even in their day.

[ 21 : 55 ] not everybody had the gift of healings and so on. I find interesting the gift of helps and of administrations, ones that we kind of push off.

And the word administrations, if you look that up in the Greek, it means to manage or to pilot a ship. And so, he's given in leadership giftings to spiritual manage the church.

not to rule per se, but to manage, to give a direction. And as a pilot on a ship, a captain, he directs, he pilots that ship to where it's going to go.

He has a destination. And so, he's pointing out one of the spiritual gifts in leadership is that we're providing the teaching, the training, that this ship is going in God's direction.

And it's a gift that we overlook, that we don't highlight. And yet, if none of the leadership in the church have it, this church would go astray.

[ 23 : 20 ] The waves would beat us around. We'd be tossed to and fro. And so, hence, it is there. So I thought I would just highlight that one a bit.

And so, kind of what Paul is doing overall, though, is taking the wind out of their sails. And he says, guys, there's a better way. Chapter 13, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Now, that's a direct countering to the tongue movement. I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, talking of perfect speech, of smooth speech, tongue of angels.

He says, you could be gifted in all language, but have not love. love. You are like a clanging cymbal, an empty noise that's annoying.

That's it. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, what am I?

- [ 24 : 58 ] Nothing. Zero. Zero. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

So he's cutting through the chase, down to the roots. Love now has to be the motive in everything that we do.

and then it will profit. Just take a moment and think of your workplace, whether it's at home, whether it's in a shop, or in a truck, or wherever.

If love is your motive in everything, things will go pretty well. We'll have a good week.

Our co-workers will be blessed. They'll want to work there. Love as the motive changes everything because it's of God.

- [ 26 : 25 ] It's unselfish and it keeps on giving. Verses 4 through 7 are very practical instructions, often given in marriage, but applied to all relationships.

and let's just walk through it briefly. There's about 10 points there. Verse 4, love suffers long. What does that mean?

Love suffers long. Patience. Yeah. We don't want to suffer. That's more of an old English word, but it means it endures.

It's patience. It's enduring when we're wronged. This is the love of God in relationships.

And we don't enjoy when we're wronged, when we're defamed or gossiped about or whatever, but love endures.

- [ 27 : 44 ] It sees it through. love love is kind. It's kind. It talks about a good will towards others.

Kindness, having that attitude toward one another of goodness, wanting to do good. Love does not envy. envy. Love does not envy.

In fact, love rejoices when someone else is honored. Instead of being envious, we rejoice.

love does not parade itself. Show off, puffed up.

That's the next word, is not puffed up. Rather, the opposite of being puffed up or parading is to give God the glory.

- [ 28 : 56 ] To give God the glory. glory. Okay? Verse 5, love does not behave rudely. The opposite of being rude is to be considerate of one another.

It's to think of each other. So these are all very practical everyday life as we rub off each other. does not behave rudely.

Love does not seek its own. Like Philippians 2 says, we are to show interest in others, to put others' interests ahead of our own.

So it does not seek its own, but rather looks to others. It's not provoked. So love is not provoked. willing to endure.

It's kind of similar to the second one, or the third one. Suffers long, the first one there. Not provoked means willing to endure insults when we're slighted, that we're not easily offended.

- [ 30 : 21 ] We're willing to overlook. We're not sure of somebody's motive. Love overlooks instead of assuming the worst.

You see, then, love controls the mind. Because when we assume the worst, we create a roller coaster mentally. And our imagination can run wild.

Love is not like that. it's not provoked. Thinks no evil. And maybe related to the last one, thinks no evil, that we don't assume the worst in the next person, but when we're uncertain, that we give them the benefit of the doubt.

That we don't assume that's what they meant. If we're unsure, we don't right away assume, but we give them the benefit of the doubt. So, thinks no evil.

We don't desire evil from the next person, trying to avoid it. And then the last verse, bears all things. sorry, verse 6.

[ 31 : 51 ] Does not rejoice in iniquity. Here's the next one. Does not rejoice in iniquity, and iniquity or rejoice in sin, but rather rejoices in truth.

That's the opposite. it. Yesterday, in our leadership class, we talked about slandering in church, and gossiping, harming one another's reputation, and the concept that came out from Scripture was that people that listen to slander and entertain it have an evil heart themselves.

So we're not to put up with it. Rather, cut it off. And when someone comes up to us and slanders another person and we shut them down, or we walk away, they won't come to you anymore.

Because they're not finding common ground. But he who has an ear, he's in the same boat. And the motives are wrong.

So does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth, and then bears all things. Again, patience, enduring, bears all things, has also the aspect of, instead of exposing people, to rather cover up their mistakes.

[ 33 : 44 ] Do not make a big mountain out of it, to keep it small, deal with it as small as we can. Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

things. So, believing all things, a positive mindset, believing positive about situations, hopes all things, always desiring and looking positively for the best outcome of every situation.

situation. And, and you know what, so often in our lives, the Lord allows things that we don't understand, that are adverse, or so we think, but, but this, believing all things, hope, hope all things, is trusting God is going to have something good and positive come out of this.

He is teaching me something. So, it's a mental state of positivity. And, the last one there, endures all things, again, in the way of ill treatment or persecution.

So, very brief summary of agape love in relationships, how it plays out itself. And, if you study all of these words, all of them have to do with dying to self or selflessness.

[ 35 : 18 ] Putting myself down and looking at others. So, that's what Paul was teaching here to the church in Corinth and to us as well.

So, as we move on to the last section, verse 8 and onward, we learn that love is the only one that never fails. Verse 8, love never fails, but whether there are prophecies, they will fail.

Where there are tongues, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will vanish. See, all these gifts of the Spirit have a time and a place then they're done.

But love is forever. Love is forever. We know in part and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away with. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.

[ 36 : 36 ] But when I became a man, I put away childish things. And even in maturing in Christ, we learn and we grow in understanding the gifts that God has given us, their purpose and the use of them.

That they're for the glory of God. Verse 12, for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known. And then summing up, and now abide faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Love is enduring. we know that many of the early church sign gifts ceased, they vanished after the apostolic era, after the canon of scripture was complete.

We do not have a continuance of some of these gifts. But regardless of where we stand with that, we are to see the giftings of God in proper perspective.

[ 38 : 04 ] And that is that if the foundation isn't love, then the giftings are useless. The last verse, the three that abide are faith, hope, and love.

Just like to touch in on them. did you know that faith always looks behind us?

I see some puzzled faces. Faith is built on things that have happened in the past.

You cannot have built faith on what's yet to come. That's an expression of faith. But faith is built on how God has revealed himself.

How he's shown himself strong in my life behind me. And that gives me the ability to trust him for what's yet to come. So faith is built on the past.

[ 39 : 22 ] Is that correct? we can agree with that? So we have three here. Faith, hope, and love. Hope is always what?

Future. You don't hope for what you have. You don't hope for what's already past. Hope is always, always future.

And he says these three, faith, hope, and love. Now what's love? What's significant about love?

love, always, always lives in the present. Love was in the past, love will be in the future, but love is today.

Love will be tomorrow. Love will be after lunch. And that's why love is the greatest of these three.

[ 40 : 39 ] Did we get that? We are to live in love. It means moment by moment, even now, love is here.

And we act in love. You know, sometimes when we desire for change, I'm going to start to die tomorrow.

How would it be if the Christian said, I'm going to start showing God's love tomorrow morning. But God, give me the freedom to pig out today.

Today. Today. Today. love is in the moment. It's now. And tomorrow.

Tomorrow. in Spanish cultures, when they want to push you off at the markets, they always say mañana, tomorrow.

[ 41 : 55 ] And there's a saying that says mañana never comes, tomorrow never comes, it's always tomorrow again. It's always pushing off, it's being irresponsible and not giving you a clear answer and saying that it will be here in three days.

They just say mañana. And it's a way of saying not now. So I always clued in, it doesn't mean tomorrow, it means not now. But God says love is now, not tomorrow.

And so we carry the now with us every step of the way. So now as we look at the whole picture of God's family, the church, spiritual gifts, interacting with one another, the very foundation of all of this is the love of God poured out in each of our hearts.

And it plays out in your life and in my life as God wills to lead us, as he gifts us, as we interact with one another.

And so that is, that I think is the crux of this lesson here. So as we, as we take this home, practice it in your marriage.

[ 43 : 39 ] If you're still married, you are practicing it, or you wouldn't be. It's foundational, it's crucial. And practice it in your friendships. that way I get to address the singles and our youth and everyone.

We need to practice agape love in every aspect. And then ultimately in the family of God. So may the Lord continue to bless us with this as we take it home and and we put to practice what God has poured out in your heart.

And remember, when love is absent in your actions, it's an indication that you're walking in the flesh. We can't blame it on God.

He poured it out lavishly, freely. He poured it out so that it wants to spill over. But we choose to walk in the spirit or in the flesh.

[ 45 : 02 ] Let's pray. Lord, we look forward to heaven.

We look forward to your presence. We look forward to final salvation where we will be transformed into perfection and love will always, always guide us.

But till then, Lord, you've instructed us. You're teaching us to walk in the spirit. May you have again your way in each one of us.

Because it's for your glory, for your kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.