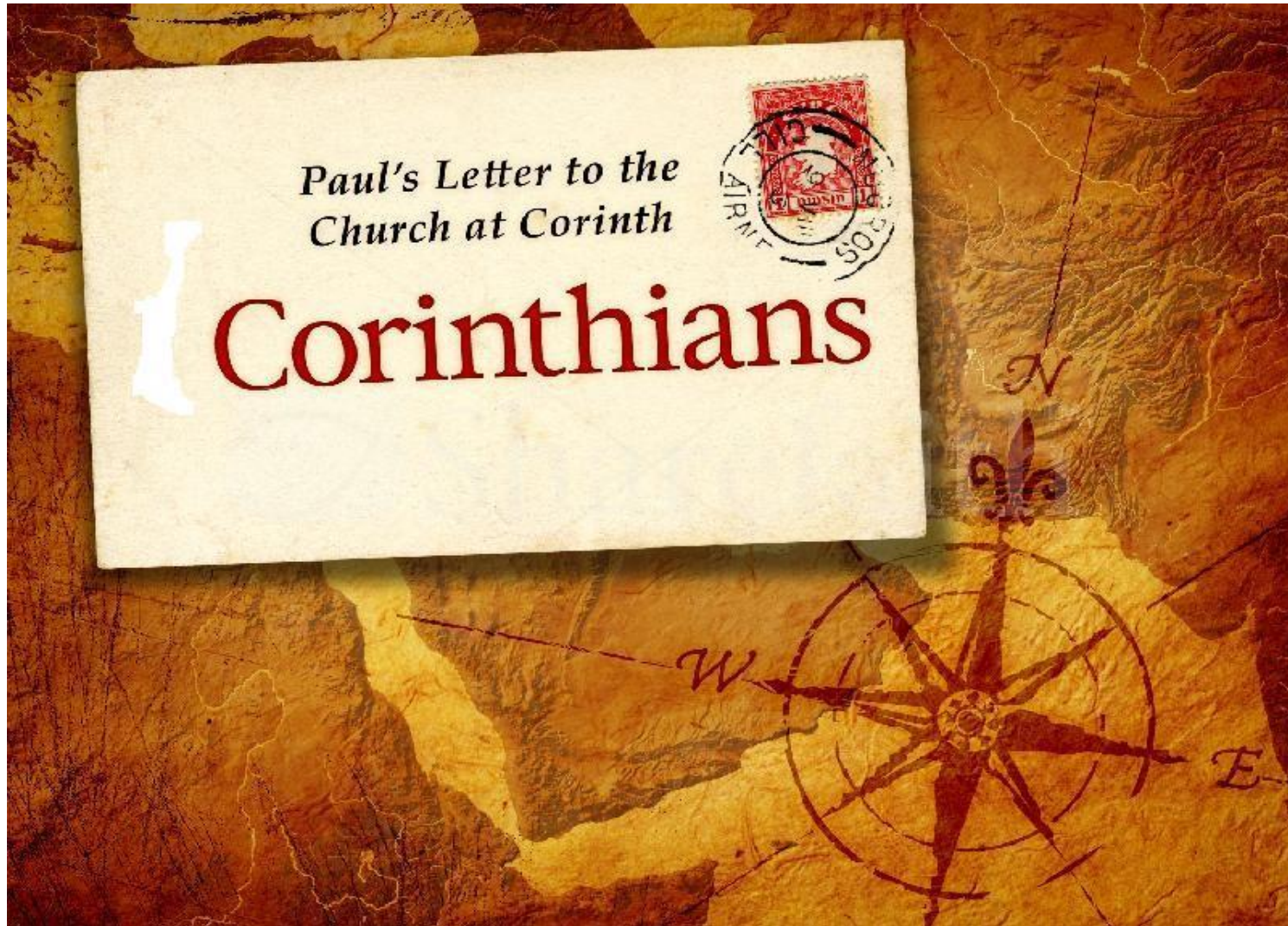


# 1 Cor.13:1-3 Spiritual Gifts and Christ's Love



# Spiritual Gifts



- A gift [given in Chp 12] in the spiritual sense means the Holy Spirit is doing a particular service through the believer and using the believer to do it Chafer
- Paul gave us the order of importance of spiritual gifts in the church at Corinth in 12:28:

And God has appointed [set in place] in the church,

- first apostles,
- second prophets,
- third teachers,
- then miracles,
- then gifts of healings,
- helps,
- administrations,
- *various* kinds of tongues.



1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

## But earnestly desire the greater gifts

**verb** – [you] **earnestly desire** – *zello* – lit: zealous

- present tense – continuous action
  - imperative – this in a command
  - active – subject is to perform the action
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural
  - Verse 31 speaks of the church at Corinth not individual members.
- Merryman

## **the greater gifts** – **What are they?**

- You as body of believers are to desire the greater gifts.
  - The gifts that brought the greater edification to the body were the greater gifts.
- Merryman



1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

More on **greater gifts**:

- the greater gifts are at the top of the list in 12:28
  - first apostles
  - second prophets
  - third teachers
- also Chp. 14 will tell us more about the greater gifts
- What does the believer need to realize?
- 1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
- But as it is, God has placed and arranged the limbs and organs in the body, each [particular one] of them, just as He wished and saw fit and with the best adaptation.

Amplified

1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.



And I show you a still more excellent way.

And yet I point out a superexcellent way. Wuest

- starting with part b of this verse Paul will switch to first person – “I”

**Subject:** I – Paul [will use himself as an example]

**Verb:** point out - to show by making known

**Dir: Object:** a way - metaphorically of "a course of conduct"

- a way is described as superexcellent or beyond comparison

1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.



## more excellent way – continued

- Chapter 13 will tell us of the necessity of love in the exercise of spiritual gifts.
- The spiritual gifts should be in subordination to *agape* love in the local church. Merryman
- Paul will use himself in Chp 13 to tell us that we are to continuously have this attitude of *agape* love.
- Since tongues was a major issues in Corinth he will tell us that any usage of tongues must be in subordination to love. Merryman

# Main Ideas of Chapter 13\*



- Spiritual gifts and their perspective relative to usage.
- Spiritual gifts are to be used relative to love.
- This chapter gives us some of the attitudes that love is to display.
- Paul will delineate what God's love is in this chapter.
- Verses 1-3 gives us the necessity of love in the exercise of spiritual gifts.
- Verses 4-7 gives us the characteristic of God's love displayed [how will I recognize it!].
- Verses 8-13 – the permanence of love in contrast to temporality of the spectacular gifts.

\* Merryman

# Today's Verses



- <sup>1</sup> If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
- <sup>2</sup> If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
- <sup>3</sup> And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.



# Chp 13:1 - 3 Outline\*



## The Necessity of Love 13:1-3

### 1. The First Cycle 13:1

- a. The Assumed Condition – speaking in tongues
- b. The Assumed Absence – *agape* love
- c. The Certain Result – only noisy sounds

### 2. The Second Cycle 13:2

- a. The Assumed Condition – gift of prophecy, know all mysteries, all knowledge and all faith
- b. The Assumed Absence – *agape* love
- c. The Certain Result – I am nothing

### 3. The Third Cycle 13:3

- a. The Assumed Condition – give all my possessions and give body to be burned
- b. The Assumed Absence – *agape* love
- c. The Certain Result – it profits me nothing

\* from McCalley

<sup>1</sup> If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.



## If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels

Paul is assuming he probably will do the following (so he can make his point about love):

### <sup>1st</sup> – I speak with tongues of men

- will speak in real language that he does not know
- this was last in the order of spiritual gifts given in 1 Cor 12:28
- 1 Cor 14:18b I [Paul] speak in tongues more than you all [Corinthians]

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> – I speak with tongues of angels

- Do angels have their own language?
- Angels do speak in man's language.
- Luke 1:13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.
- It seems best to see this expression as a hyperbole.

McCalley



<sup>1</sup> If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

### but do not have love

- *agape* love is assumed to be absent in exercising this spiritual gift
- **love** - *agape* - the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown Vine
- it [*agapao*] expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects,
- producing and fostering a "love" in them [believers] towards the Giver [God] Vine

## More on *agape* love\*:



- all Christian love, according to the Scriptures, is distinctly a manifestation of divine love operating through the human heart.
- because the love of God hath been shed abroad ['poured out,'] in our hearts through [as produced, or caused, by] the Holy Spirit which was given unto us" (Rom 5:8 R.V.).
- This activity, then, is not the working of human affection; it is rather the direct manifestation of the "love of God" passing through the heart of the believer out from the indwelling Spirit.
- A human heart cannot produce divine love, but it can experience it.

\* Chafer

<sup>1</sup> If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.



I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

**verb: have become** - *ginomai* - to come into a new state of being – perfect tense

- The words **have become** are perfect tense, referring to a settled and complete state. McCalley

a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

- Gongs and cymbals were common in some of the popular pagan cults of the time. They made much noise but no sense. Constable
- Tongues were a gift of the Holy Spirit given to bring the good news to people of a another language.
- But without God's love [*agape*] this is not possible.

<sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.



### If I have the gift of prophecy

- Paul is again assuming he probably does have the following gifts:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> - prophecy** - *prophēteia* - the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> - know all mysteries** – mysteries are things that were not previously revealed
- But the word **all** (*pas*) indicates supernatural knowledge of mysteries.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - all knowledge** - The gift of the “word of knowledge” mentioned in 1 Cor 12:8.
- But again the word **all** (*pas*) indicates a supernatural amount of knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.



#### 4<sup>th</sup> - if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains

Paul is again assuming he probably does have the following gift of faith:

- again it is **all** (*pas*) faith
- **to remove mountains**
- To another [wonder-working] faith by the same [Holy] Spirit. 1 Cor 12:9
- Matt 21:21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, --- if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.



<sup>2</sup> If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.



but do not have love

- *agape* love is assumed to be absent in exercising these spiritual gifts

I am nothing

verb = I am – *eimi* – the state in which someone continuously exists

subject complement – nothing is an adjective that describes the subject I

nothing – *oudén* - it means nothing or not a thing

- I am nothing (a useless nobody). Amplified



<sup>3</sup> And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

1<sup>st</sup> - And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*

Even if I dole out all that I have [to the poor in providing] food  
Amplified

2<sup>nd</sup> - if I surrender my body to be burned,

if I surrender my body to be burned or *in order that I may glory*  
Amplified

but do not have love

- *agape* love is assumed to be absent in exercising these spiritual gifts

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.



it profits me nothing

I am being profited in not even one thing Weust

**verb:** I am being profited - *ōpheleō* - in the passive:  
to receive help or  
to derive profit or advantage

in not even one thing - *oudén* - means in no way,  
in no respect

Mark 5:26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse—

## Final Thoughts \*



- The Apostle [Paul] contends that love is supreme and the gift to be desired above all others.
- [And it is] proper that love should be named as the first among the elements which comprise the fruit of the Spirit [love, joy, peace ---].
- Likewise, the superhuman character of divine love is readily apparent.
- Not only is such love [*agape*] beyond human capacity,
- but it is as far removed from the quality of human affection as heaven is higher than the earth. \* Chafer