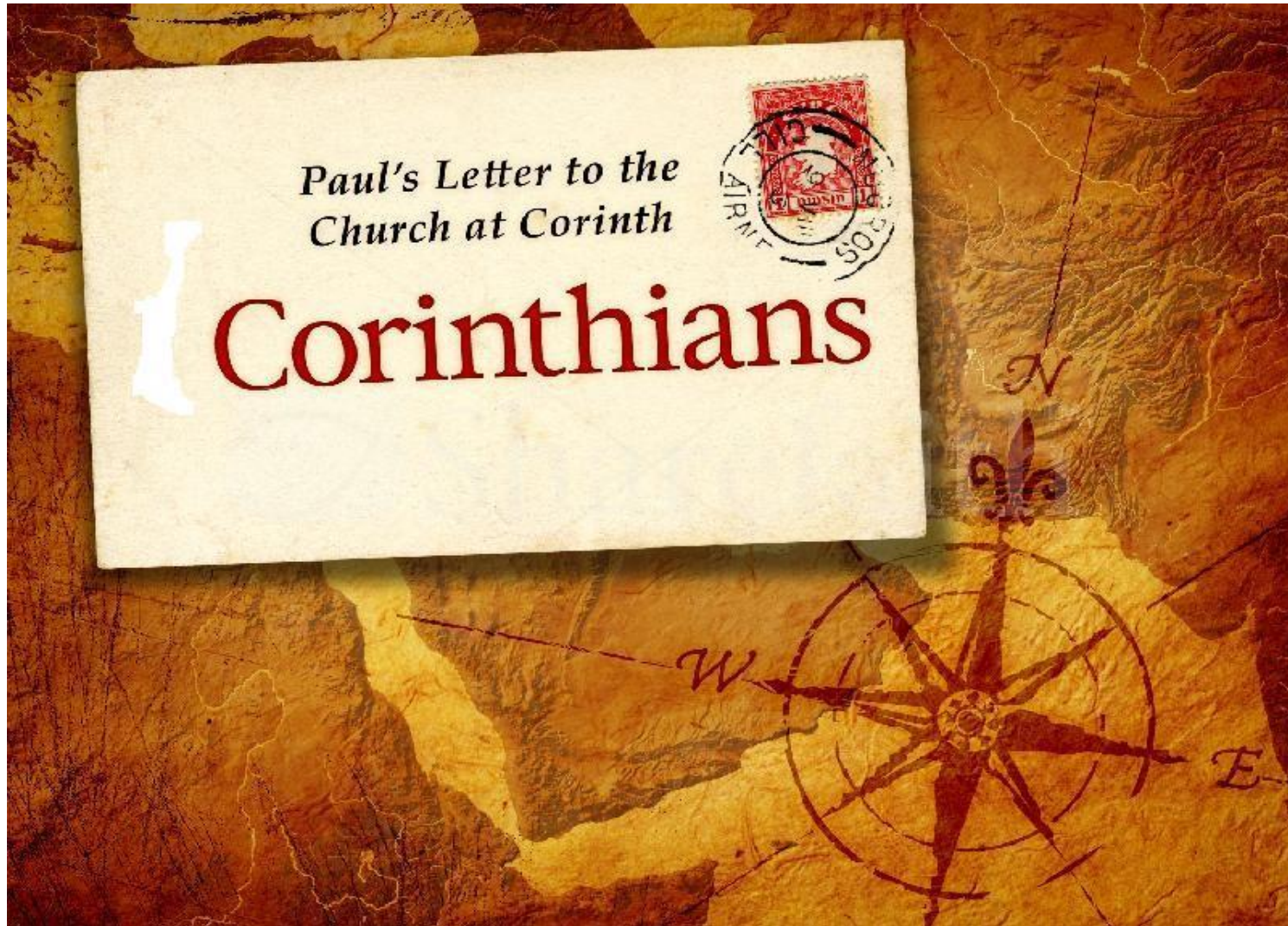


# 1 Cor.13:4-8 The Character of Christ's Love



<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):

**1<sup>st</sup> - Speak with tongues of men**

- will speak in real languages that he does not know
- this was last in the order of spiritual gifts given in 12:28

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Speak with tongues of angels**

- Do angels have their own language?
- Angels do speak in man's language.
- It seems best to see this expression as 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
- All Christian love, according to the Scriptures, is distinctly a manifestation of divine love operating through the human heart.
- 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: [wonder-working] faith by the Spirit

**but do not have love**

- agape - Love is assumed to be absent in exercising these spiritual gifts.

**I am nothing**

**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 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 **it profits me nothing**

I am being profited in not even one thing. Wuest  
**in not even one thing** - *oudén* - in no way, in no respect

# Today's Verses



- 4 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,
- 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,
- 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
- 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 8 Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away.



# Overview of the Character of Christ's Love



- Verses 4 to 8a will give us the characteristic or attributes of Christ's love.
- This love has its source in God alone.
- Paul described these [attributes] in relationship to a person's character that Christ's love rules. Constable
- Sixteen attributes are listed in these verses.
- These attributes have been divided into three groups\* and a final conclusion about God's love.
  - Love's Unselfishness
  - Love's Conduct
  - Love's Optimism
  - Love Never Fails

\* McCalley

# Outline



## 1. Love's Unselfishness 13:4

- a. Love "Is Patient"
- b. Love "Is Kind"
- c. Love "Is Not Jealous"
- d. Love "Does Not Brag"
- e. Love "Is Not Arrogant"

## 2. Love's Conduct 13:5-6

- a. Love "Does Not Act Unbecomingly"
- b. Love "Does Not Seek Its Own"
- c. Love "Is Not Provoked"
- d. Love "Does Not Take into Account a Wrong Suffered"
- e. Love "Does Not Rejoice in Unrighteousness"
- f. Love "Rejoices with the Truth"

## 3. Love's Optimism 13:7

- a. Love "Bears All Things"
- b. Love "Believes All Things"
- c. Love "Hopes All Things"
- d. Love "Endures All Things"

## 4. Love Never Fails 13:8a

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,



## I. Love's Unselfishness -----

### a. Love (*agape*) is patient

**patient** - *makrothuméō* - to suffer long, be long-suffering, as opposed to hasty anger or punishment

- 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
- Patience is a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. (love, joy, peace, **patience, kindness, ---**)
- So clearly patience has its source in God and can only be manifested as **we walk by** [by means of] **the Spirit.**

Gal 5:16



<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous;  
love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,

**I. Love's Unselfishness** (cont.)

**b. Love (agape) is kind**

**kind** - *chrēsteúomai* - to be kind, obliging, willing to  
help or assist

- **Patience** is a passive quality; **kindness** is an active quality.
- The key idea in **patience** is restraining; the key idea in **kindness** is bestowing. McCalley

**c. Love (agape) is not jealous**

**Jealous** - *zēloō* - to be zealous; to envy, be moved with  
envy – see Acts 7:9

- The idea is that God's love is never moved with envy.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous;  
love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,



**I. Love's Unselfishness (cont.)**

**d. Love (agape) does not brag**

**brag** - *perpereuomai* - to brag or boast; from braggart

- refers to being ostentatious, anxious to display oneself,
- loving to enumerate one's qualities, McCalley

Phil. 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped (asserted)

**e. Love (agape) is not arrogant**

**arrogant** - *physio* – to puff up; in the sense of being  
"puffed" up with pride

- This was a characteristic of the Corinthian church -  
1 Cor 8:1b Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

<sup>5</sup> does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own,  
is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong  
*suffered,*



## II. Love's Conduct -----

a. Love (agape) **does not act unbecomingly**  
**unbecomingly** - *aschēmoneō* - to behave in an ugly,  
indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner

- In English, we would use the word rude or unmannerly.

b. Love (agape) **does not seek its own** – other verses:  
1 Cor. 10:24 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his  
neighbor. - 1 Cor. 10:33 --- not seeking my own profit

- Seeking one's own benefit is a natural human  
characteristic. McCalley But this is Christ's love!



<sup>5</sup> does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,



## II. Love's Conduct (cont.)

### c. Love (*agape*) is not provoked

**provoked** - paroxynō – signifying “to rouse to anger,”  
“to provoke;” typically an outburst of emotion

- The word provoked describes a reaction that cannot occur unless triggered by something else.
- It refers to the attitude that results from a real or imagined injustice.

McCalley

<sup>5</sup> does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,



## II. Love's Conduct (cont.)

d. Love (*agape*) does not take into account a wrong suffered,

does [not] keep record of wrongs Interlinear

does keep record - *logizomai* - to reckon, impute, number

- *logizomai* is used for noting something in a ledger
- There is no question about one being wronged; this is assumed to have happened. McCalley



<sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

## II. Love's Conduct (cont.)

### e. Love (*agape*) does not rejoice in unrighteousness

does not rejoice over unrighteousness      Interlinear

- not [to] rejoice over the victory of unrighteousness\*
- 2 Thess 2:12 --- they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

### f. Love (*agape*) rejoices with the truth

Comparison of the terms with previous attribute:

- does not rejoice vs. rejoices indicates that
- love is never neutral but love takes sides\*
- 2 John 1:4a I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth.      \*McCalley

<sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;



## II. Love's Conduct (cont.)

### f. Love (*agape*) rejoices with the truth (cont.)

- Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.
- Love does not avoid truth and love does not compromise truth. McCalley
- Paul's antithesis is not between unrighteousness and righteousness but between unrighteousness and truth. McCalley

<sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



### III. Love's Optimism -----

#### a. Love (*agape*) bears all things

**bears** - *stegō* - love hides the faults of others or covers them up

- The meaning of the verb [*stegō*] is to pass over something in silence; to keep confidential. McCalley
- This is the quality of love that does not wish to broadcast what is bad, even if it is true. McCalley
- 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

<sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



### III. Love's Optimism (cont.)

#### b. Love (*agape*) believes all things

- This is not saying that we should be gullible in the sense of being easily duped.
- Paul is teaching that love always puts the best construction on things.
- In doubtful cases, one would rather be generous in his conclusion than to suspect unjustly.
- When love has no evidence, it believes the best.

McCalley



<sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,  
endures all things.



### III. Love's Optimism (cont.)

#### c. Love (*agape*) hopes all things

- Love is not pessimistic; love is optimistic.\*
- We often tend to think that some people are simply\* optimists or pessimists by birth and personality.
- Where Christ's love is, there is optimism.

#### d. Love (*agape*) endures all things

- **endures** - a strengthened form of *menō*, denotes "to abide under, to bear up courageously"
- when love has no evidence, it believes all things;
- when the evidence is adverse, love hopes all things;
- when hope is disappointed, love endures all things.

\* McCalley

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away.



## Love (agape) never fails

- This statement is a logical conclusion arising from verse 7.
- If love endures all things, then no assault will ever vanquish it; if it cannot be vanquished, it obviously will never fail.
- Gifts of the Spirit will pass away because they are temporary provisions, but the fruit of the Spirit will abide.

Constable

# Final Thoughts



## What am I to do with this list?

- Put it on the refrigerator.
- Consider it a personal list of how to be a better Christian.
- Make it a checklist for my brothers and sisters at church.

## A better use for this list:

- The list shows us the details of Christ's supernatural love in terms of human relationships.
- This list is how Christ desires to live His life through us.
- This love is only available to us as **we walk by** [by means of] **the Spirit**. Gal 5:16
- This love is the result of our relationship (by faith) with Christ.