



Sermon Series:

“What The World Needs Now Is Love”

Sermon 1:

“That Crazy Little Thing Called Love”
(THE DEFINITION OF LOVE)

1 Corinthians 13: 1-7, 13

INTRO Turn your Bibles or turn them on, to 1 Corinthians 13. Today we start a new sermon series titled, WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS LOVE. (I would appreciate very much you not singing the song out loud!)

There are many differing opinions on the subject of LOVE. Every generation and every culture tries to define for themselves what love is. But try as we may, love has always been a little elusive. We never really seem able to helm it up in a corner and get a handle on it. But we continue to try.

In preparation for this sermon, I wanted to see what the up and coming generation of CFC thinks love is. So, I text a few of our parents and grandparents and asked them if they would get their children and grandchildren to answer a simple question, then text back to me their responses. The question was, WHAT IS LOVE?

The first response I got was from Gavin. His answer to, What is love?, was, “It’s for hugging and kissing”. That’s funny right there!

The other answers were...

Lucy - “Love means Hearts and Stars”

Sara - “Love means something Special”

Jaxon - “Love is this emotion you get when you find someone or something beautiful”

Caroline-Kate - When Greg asked her, What is Love, she just gave him a hug, then she said, “I’m going to eat my banana.”

Emily G. - “Love is that you are caring for people, like giving them a card or something, or saying I love you, or by cutting up a piece of paper as a heart!”

Kennedy - “Mommy!”

Kenzie - “When 2 people like each other very much and then they get married.”

Langston - “Love is having a family with papas, dads, mamas, and sisters.”

Payton - “Love is when people take care of me when I am sick, Friends helping me when I fall down, GOD IS LOVE!

Sometimes kids have a better understanding of things than adults. For children, love is simple. For adults, it’s anything but. Most grown ups find love to be arduously complex.

Over the next few weeks, we’ll be looking at this subject through the lens of scripture, to see what the Bible says about this LOVE.

Today, I’m preaching on the subject “THAT CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE”. The goal of the sermon today is to establish a Biblical DEFINITION OF LOVE. Over the next couple weeks, I’ll be preaching on the DOCTRINE OF LOVE and the DUTY OF LOVE. So, Let’s jump in.

1 Corinthians 13: 1-7 “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned (for the preaching of the Gospel), but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...

13 So now faith, hope, and love abide (forever), these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Notice with me...

J) LIFE WITHOUT LOVE: vv 1-3 Here in these first three verses, Paul describes what life is like for those outside the (AGAPE) of God, the LOVE OF GOD. Let me say something about LOVE, as it's used here in this passage. In the English language we only have the one word, LOVE. In the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages of the original scriptures, however, there are several words for LOVE.

I'm not going to get into the different words today, that's next week's sermon. But suffice it to say, some meanings are lost in translation if we don't do our due diligence to understand what God's Word is teaching us.

The Greek word used throughout this chapter, that we have translated as LOVE, is the word AGAPE. AGAPE is the highest, most lofty expression of LOVE known. It is a Heavenly love, and comes from GOD.

We read in **1 John 4: 7-8** “Dear friends (Adj. agapetos, beloved in Christ), let us love (Verb agapao) one another, for love (Noun agape) comes from God. Everyone who loves (agapao) has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love (agapao) does not know God, because God is love (agape).”

So Paul in these first three verses is talking about LIFE WITHOUT AGAPE, life without God's love, life without God, because, as we read, God is AGAPE. So how does Paul liken life without God's love?...

A) It Has No Melody: v 1 “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love (agape), I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.”

B) It Has No Meaning: v 2 “And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love (agape), I am nothing.”

C) It Has No Mission: v 3 “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love (agape), I gain nothing.”

I can't imagine anything worse than to live all my life working and sacrificing for a particular cause, only to get to the end of life and realize it was all for naught. It's the mission of our life that gets us value and worth! But without GOD, everything we do is in vain. You can live your life serving others, but without God it's all in vain.

I) LIFE WITHOUT LOVE: vv 1-3

II) LIFE WITH LOVE: vv 4-7 *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...”*

As you can see, Life with LOVE, with God's LOVE, with GOD, is very different than life without Him. VERY DIFFERENT!

Now, I need to say this, and you need to hear it. If you claim to know the LOVE of GOD, yet your life is the same, or even very similar, to how you lived before you claimed to know God, then you really need to examine yourself.

Listen, God's love changes us! God changes us...how we think, how we act, how we talk, how we treat others. If there's no difference in you, you're living life without Agape, with God!

If you have the same prejudices, the same language, the same business practices, if you hold the same grudges, carry the same hatred, and have the same actions, something is horrifically wrong!

READ IT AGAIN vv 4-7 *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...”*

Yeah, but... NO, THERE ARE NO BUTS!

So Paul has told us what Life is like without Love, and what it's like with Love. Now notice the last thing he says, he speaks of a...

III) LIFE OF LOVE: v 13 *“So now faith, hope, and love abide (forever), these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

“So now faith, hope, and love abide (forever), these three;...” The three great pursuits of the Christian life are not “miracles, power, and gifts”; they are **faith, hope, and love**. Though the gifts of the Spirit are precious, they were never meant to be the focus or goal of our Christian lives. Instead, we are to pursue faith, hope, and love.

“but the greatest of these is love.” Why does it say that? Love is greatest because it will always continue. When we get to heaven, faith and hope will have fulfilled their purpose. We won't need faith when we see God face to face. We won't need to hope in the coming of Jesus once He comes. But we will always love the Lord and each other, and grow in that love throughout eternity.

Love is also the greatest because it's an attribute of God. **1 John 4:8** *“...GOD is LOVE.”*

CONCLUSION: What does your life look like in comparison to the Word of God? Are you living a Life Without Love, or are you resting securely in the Love of Christ today? How would the people closest to you answer that question about you?