

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13 (in connection with Lord's Day 2.3-4)

Psalters: 132:1-5 – 23:1-6 – 384:1-5 – 143:1, 3

Opening observations ...

- Is God's diagnosis of fallen man to black and white? (Rom 3:10-18)
 - Scripture of 1 Cor. 13 only reinforces this *inconvenient* truth

- What is God's tool to discover our real condition? (Rom. 3:20b)
 - God's original law is restated in Mark 12:38-34 (Matt. 22:37-40)

 - To love is *more than all religious forms and acts* (1 Sam. 15:22; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Matt 9:11-13)

- What is the purpose of this *deep-searching-look through the lens of Scripture* at ourselves? (Rom. 3:19)

DO YOU LOVE THE WAY JESUS LOVED? (1)

A. Love defined B. Love examined

I. Love Defined

A. 1 Cor 13 shows we fail entirely in reflecting the glory of God! (Rom. 3:19-20)

1. How do you walk away after reading 1 Cor. 13 tells your spiritual condition

B. 1 Cor. 13 was not written for a *wedding service*

C. 1 Cor 13 divides into three general parts

1. Vs. 1-3: *nothing is more important than genuine charity (love)*

2. vs. 4-7: *genuine love defined in detail*

3. vs. 8-13: *charity is the permanent and best gift of God*

C. The Details of section 1 & 2 are *sharp and convicting*

1. Vs. 1-3: *nothing matters in what you do, if it is out of charity*

a. awake to the truth: *any lack of love is not just a lack!*

2. vs. 4-7: sets out *character of that love in 16 'verbs'* (in original Greek)
a. this is 'love in its working clothes'

b. these verses *expound* God's original law in *the positive duties*

- Paul personifies 'charity' as a person who
 - suffers long (patient) with all
 - is always kind to anyone
 - never envies others
 - never boasts about him/herself (also in the mind)
 - is never arrogant (puffed up) looking at others
 - is never rude (behave unseemly)
 - does not insist on your way (seeks not her own)
 - not easily provoked by annoying people (irritable)
 - thinks no evil (not resentful or vengeful but ready to forgive royally and repeatedly)
 - rejoices not in iniquity (wrongdoing) of others
 - rejoices in truth (about others)
 - bears all things (annoyance, inconvenience)
 - believes all things (tries to believe best)
 - hopes all things
 - endures all things that come against it
 - never fails (even if others keep failing)

Take along ...

A. Look deeply at this portrait and peer into his/her eyes and heart

1. Who do you see?

a. if you see a stranger, then be convicted of your sin!

b. if you see Jesus, then you see the Law in all its demand!

c. yet seeing Jesus' love also spells hope!

THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS TO PONDER ...

1. Let us all consider 1 Cor. 13 in its context and each prayerfully answer the question, "What might be different in our church if we would love each other as members as this chapter sets out?"
2. In what ways is a loveless church (or individual Christians) a noisy gong as stated in vs. 1?
3. As you meet a stranger's need this week, what limits do you feel tempted to put on your exercise of love?