

## Love is Patient (1 Corinthians 13:4a)

Pastor Phil, October 3, 2021

Turn to 1 Cor 13. We're going to focus on the first part of v. 4 today: *love is patient*. Last week we looked at v. 1-3, basically "no matter how good I am at languages or how eloquent, without love, it's like a bad Gong Show that should usher me off-stage."

Or imagine whatever music you can't stand and imagine a very loud and bad version; that's us without love! Loveless talent comes across noisy or annoying. We learned new math (5-1=0) [D.A. Carson]. 5 gifts or giving minus 1 virtue of love is nothing.

How do we define love? Paul describes it like this: ***Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.***

**CHALLENGE TO MEMORIZE V. 4-7 OR CHAPTER**

Today "*love is patient*." Next week "*love is kind*." Many preachers who normally take bigger sections take a whole message for each phrase because the Bible says love is the greatest and most important of all God calls us to.

One pastor said he took 2 weeks on love's patience just to test their patience

Last week we saw 12:31 sets up ch 13 as the more excellent way. ***Big idea of series: God's way of love is to have the supreme and central place in the church, and this text is crucial to pursue Christlike love toward others.***

REMINDE CONTEXT: I said last time Paul isn't writing for a happy bride and groom celebrating their mutual love – he's writing for an unhappy and unloving bride of Christ - the troubled Corinthian church. Paul didn't write a Hallmark card to use as a wedding gift, he's warning gifts can be misused.

Point of Ch 12-14: the gifts of the Spirit need the fruit of the Spirit: love.

**Leads to joy, peace, patience, kindness (love is patient and kind)**

I've shared I chose to study love as a school assignment: pick a subject for something you'd like to read and write and really live in for much of the year – I couldn't think of a greater need for us as a church or me personally.

But there's a higher purpose in all this, it's God's purpose for the church:

- Chapter 10 "*whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God*" (v. 31)
- Chapter 15 says "*by the grace of God, I am what I am*" (v. 10)
- Chapter 16 "*Let all that you do be done in love*" (v. 14). Ch 13 how

**GCBC Purpose Statement:** This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God as the ultimate purpose in all that we do. **[SDG banner]**

We seek to glorify God by ... pursuing God in worship, prayer, preaching to the church, proclaiming the gospel to the lost, personal love for God and loving obedience to God (in edifying relationships, fellowship, discipleship)

The chief purpose of man is to glorify and enjoy God forever. God is love, and a chief way He gets glory and we get joy is loving God and neighbor. v. 6 says love rejoices. v. 8 says love never ends, it's forever, and in v. 12 face to face we'll enjoy God forever. We love, to glorify the God who is love.

Last week we ended in Jn 15 where the Lord Jesus said: *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love...love one another as I have loved you...These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full* (v. 8-9, 12, 11). For His glory and for our joy we share His love.

The Trinity overflows eternal love in the Spirit's fruit and a fountain of joy.

We need to look higher than a person we love to the love of God in Christ.

Goal of series: **1) we know more of Christ's love in this text, to His glory**

**2) we grow more in His love as we preach and practice it**

- Help each other, pray, encourage, discuss application
- Small groups, men's group, leadership groups, elders
- Feedback forms, family devo/discussions, fellowship

TALK ABOUT DISCUSSION GUIDE IN BULLETIN.

HOME GROUPS – if you'd be open to open your home in the future to host a group a couple evenings a month, that's a present need we have

HABITS OF GRACE CLASS – grow in love for Lord

Last week I spent last several minutes reading things you wrote for hopes or desires to grow in this series. One question one of you wrote: "How do the Elders think that we need to grow in love as a church as a whole..."?

I emailed that question to them, and here's some of what I got back: "I think we have a very loving church - mostly. But ... it takes constant effort in prayer and commitment to maintain a loving church much less increase in it... Consider John's definition of love, in the love of Christ (I would add, for the sake of Christ) doing what is best for the other person – regardless of circumstances ...of cost ... One way is simply to get to know the members of body – interacting and serving alongside each other --- in a more intentional and intimate way. It begins though with the individual hearts desire ... uplift one another – and care for one another ... know each other well enough to know each others needs and meet them ... Consider the Acts 2 church and their dedicated, intentional fellowship ... knowing each other intimately ... put off the "old self" and put on the "new self" ... [practicing Col 3] will grow in love for one another. Love for others in the Body begins with love for Christ – which begets a godly desire to love the Body – which translates into action – which begets more love – and God is glorified."

Paul says in ch 10 “do all to the glory of God” and in 14:1 “Pursue love.”

**Outline: 1. The Patience of Love (v. 4 “Love is patient ...”)  
2. The Personal Application**

Notice v. 4 has what love is and what love is not, it’s a good place to start.

Love in scripture isn’t sentimental like a Hallmark movie, or sensual like a Hollywood movie. It’s not superficial feelings you can fall in and out of.

It’s not simple emotional fondness (“I love to do \_\_\_\_\_ ... I love it/that”).

It’s not a “spiritual” excuse to not confront sin or believe in hell (love wins).

It’s not sexual – it’s *agape*, not *eros* (English ideas of “lovers” or “making love” when not married). Greek NT doesn’t use this word for erotic love but it does talk about lust using other words. Sex outside marriage isn’t love.

*Agape* is patient, waiting for the proper time and place, not passions of flesh

PATIENT – an adjective in English, but in Greek it’s an active verb - not passive - it’s a present tense action. It’s love in action: love *waits patiently*. This is the opposite of our instant gratification culture today. In the culture Paul’s writing to, they were quick to satisfy fleshly lust. It was a sexualized culture with distorted views of love, much like our culture (1 Californians).

In ch 7 Paul said some couldn’t wait and were burning in their desires so he says better for them to get married. In the same chapter, married couples were too quick to withhold intimacy from each other, and that wasn’t good either. Others were too quick to get married and were unequally yoked, or weren’t patient and content in their single state of life. In ch 6 the unmarried were too quick to get into physical relationships – true love *waits patiently*.

Girls, if a guy pressures you to a physical relationship, he’s not showing he loves you, he’s showing you he loves himself. True love waits for marriage.

Paul says later love doesn’t seek its own (you could add self-indulgence or its own timetable, it can wait patiently for things to be done in the right time and way, not insisting on its own way and timing). Love is also not easily or quickly provoked, it can wait a long time, love bears and endure all things.

In the context they didn’t wait patiently to work things out. They weren’t taking the time to resolve conflicts in the church with the help of shepherds or spiritually mature believers, but were instead bringing their dirty laundry before a watching world (ch 6).

Even at communion love feasts they weren’t waiting for one another (ch 11) and ch 14 tells them to wait for each other when they speak in church, 1 at a time (apparently they weren’t even waiting for others to stop talking and were speaking in other languages but not waiting for someone to interpret)

## Convicting to me when I interrupt in talking vs. lovingly wait

But Paul's a model of patient love in this letter. Even though they were slow to grow (he calls them babes in Christ in ch 3 and wishes they were ready to take meat) Paul patiently lovingly kept ministering. In ch 4 they criticized him and were quick to judge instead of waiting for the Lord's verdict. But Paul lovingly dealt with them and patiently answered their many questions. Paul practiced what he preached about how love is patient. He summed up his ministry later to this church: "*in every way: by great endurance ... patience, kindness ... genuine love*" (2 Cor 6:3-6). Love is patient and kind.

### DMV lines, slothful people, traffic – 13:4 focuses on people not just events

PATIENT = *macrothumia* – macro=big thumia=anger (big threshold). NKJV "Love suffers long" captures the verbal element of being long-fused before being angry, another translation says love "meekly and patiently bears ill treatment from other" (Wuest). Impatience, in Respectable Sins, is "a strong sense of annoyance at the (usually) unintentional faults and failures of others...often expressed verbally... exasperation" (p. 116, 118).

Tom Schreiner says impatience puts oneself first, "thinking that one's own schedule and time should take priority over the needs of others."<sup>1</sup> Hodge adds love is "slow to be roused to resentment. It patiently bears with provocation and is not quick to assert its rights or to resent an injury"<sup>2</sup> (compare to 13:5).

How are you doing loving your kids or family? Are you patient with them? If you're not patient or kind, you're not loving. This is what love looks like in ministry or relationships, actively lovingly. It's not passive resignation, and it's not procrastination (putting off what you know needs to be done). This is convicting to me – in my own home. Are you loving in patience? Long-suffering, or short-fused, or like a grenade or nitroglycerin explosive that explodes when it's shaken?

It's not that we can't love, it's we love ourselves and our schedule too much that we can't love others by waiting patiently. Has anyone ever told you "you love yourself and have a wonderful plan for your life?" The problem is you love yourself more than others and they are not on the same wonderful plan for your life, they have their own. So we lack the love that is patient.

Best way to illustrate our need - fill in the blank (with your name?) \_\_\_\_\_ is patient and kind; \_\_\_\_\_ does not envy or boast; \_\_\_\_\_ is not arrogant or rude. \_\_\_\_\_ does not insist on its own way; \_\_\_\_\_ is not irritable or resentful; \_\_\_\_\_ does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. \_\_\_\_\_ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. \_\_\_\_\_ never fails...

**That takes us from The Patience of Love to our last point and part:**

## The Personal Application of Patient Love (we need help personally)

Paul wanted this to be very personal (and God inspired it for us personally). In the original language grammar, love is spoken of as a person, and with a series of verbs in the Greek text that a person does.<sup>3</sup> Paul uses 3rd person pronouns in v. 4-8 20x! There needs to be personal application of this - but we can't love or be patient like this without the help of God in 3 persons.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT – *fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience*

GOD THE FATHER – same root word in Rom 9:22: God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. 2 Pet 3:9 says the Father is patient toward you, not desiring any to perish, but that all may come to repentance

AUSTIN DUNCAN STORY OF CATECHIZED KIDS IN THE STORE

### APPLY TO GOSPEL – GOD'S PATIENCE VS. WHAT WE DESERVE

Jer 15:15 "O LORD, Remember me, take notice of me... Do not, in view of Your patience, take me away; Know that for Your sake I endure reproach."

Atheist Robert Ingersoll who had famously in lectures challenged God to strike him dead within five minutes, thought he disproved God. A wiser Christian replied you think you can exhaust the patient of God in 5 minutes?

### MOG CONFERENCE ILLUSTRATION OF PATIENCE TO AN ARYAN

Alexander Strauch says 'God himself is the supreme example of [patience]. When we are tempted to be impatient with others, we should stop and think about the gracious longsuffering of God with us and our many wrongs against him. In light of his patience toward us, who are we to think that we cannot patiently bear with the weakness and failures of others -- or the wrongs they may have done to us?'<sup>14</sup>

To put it in the flesh, think about Jesus. Think of 1 Cor 13:4 through a Christ-centered lens: **Christ's love is patient.** Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:16: '*I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life...*' (NIV)

Next time tempted, what should I think? **#1. Remember who is in control**

Ps 37:7 *Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself ...* Your translation may say '*Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him...*'

Instead of resting in God, impatience is fretting in things outside our control and forgetting God who's still in control, so we can be still and rest in God.

Jacob encountered God's sovereign life-controlling promises in Gen 28 then his love patiently waited despite bad dad in 29:20: *Jacob served 7 years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had...*

### **1<sup>st</sup> application: Remember He's in control, #2 Remember He's at work**

Rom 8:28: *God is working together for good all things ...* Question: does 'all things' include what we get impatient with? Yes!

If you look up *all things* in Greek means *all things* and Rom 8:29 reminds us the good in context is making us more like Christ. We're not patient like Christ was and is, so God brings into our lives things that test our patience He works together in for good, to make us like Christ.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> and final application: Remember He's Patient to us in the Gospel**

An old song says: Have patience, have patience, Don't be in such a hurry  
When you get impatient, you only start to worry  
Remember, remember that God is patient, too

Who's that song is from? It's from Herbert the Snail of the Music Machine. He was right: we need to remember, remember God is patient too, with you. And remember the gospel where God's love is patient, to save us in our sin.

Col 3 is where I'll end: 3:12 *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and **patience*** [and what does that look like? v. 13 gives the application] <sup>13</sup> ***bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*** <sup>14</sup> ***And above all these put on love ...***

There's power in the love of Christ to overcome your lack of love and to help you forgive those who haven't loved you and show love to them. There's grace in 1 Cor 13 for a husband not loving or leading his family, and strength for a wife who struggles to love him or her state in life. There's help in the love of Christ chapter for friend and family issues and there's application in it for all our relations or situations and when we get impatient

## **TRANSITION TO COMMUNION**

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<sup>1</sup> Schreiner, 275–276.

<sup>2</sup> Hodge, 238.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ellingworth and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995), 295.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love*, p. 41.