

The Greatest Gift of All - Part 6

1 Corinthians 13; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 12-31-2023

Love is the More Excellent Way Because of Its Absolute Necessity (1-3)

- Love is essential, not optional; an absolute necessity.
- Love delivers us from empty (heartless) words, show, and deeds.
- Love is essential to the fruit of saving faith.
- Love is essential to our fulfilling the image of God who is love.
- Love is essential to enjoying God who commands us to love.

How is love defined?

- Love is rooted in the nature of God Himself. – 1 John 4:8
- Love is preeminently expressed in the Cross of Christ. – 1 John 3:16
- Love is shaped and bounded by the Word of God. – Romans 13:10

Love is the More Excellent Way Because of Its Divine Beauty (4-7)

- Love patiently suffers in order to keep loving.
- Love mercifully shows kindness and does good to the undeserving.
- Love does not strive after what others have.
- Love does not exalt itself and put others down.
- Love does not carry an inflated opinion of itself.
- Love does not show disrespect to God and others.
- Love does not seek its own private good.
- Love is not easily irritated or offended.
- Love does not assume the worst of others or keep a record of wrongs.
- Love does not love what is wrong but loves what is right.
- Love stands the test of trial and time.

Love is the More Excellent Way Because of Its Heavenly Eternal Perfection (8-12)

- Love, God's love, never fails to love regardless of the opposition or person or situation because it is graciously given, not drawn out by something in the other person. (8)
- Love will outlast temporal gifts so that they are not essential to what God calls us to be as His children. (8)
- Love in its full and limitless perfection is the heaven in the presence of God that we wait for. (9-10)
- The little child values most the tiny shiny toy, but the grown man values most the love that gives such things and shapes the use of such things. (11)
- The grown man sees that his knowledge is limited, even with regard to God's love, but trusts God's Word on this side of the Great Unknown. (12)

Love is the More Excellent Way Because It is the Goal of Faith and Hope (13)

Love or charity, which is the same thing as the great duty of Christianity, 'tis that grace wherein the essentials of Christian holiness consists, without which all other things are nothing. – Jonathan Edwards

How do we love?

- By faith: Rest in Jesus for pardon and perfection and perfect love. Guilty people and unloved people don't love well! – Galatians 2:20
- By hope: Hope in God for help and happiness and holiness. Idolaters and hopeless people don't love well! – 2 Peter 1:4
- By the Spirit: Pursue love by submission to God's Word and will and in dependence on His Spirit. Proud people don't love well! – Galatians 5:22-23

The Year in Review: How well did we love this year?

- How patient and long-suffering were you this year with others and their faults and failings?
- How kind were you this year with others especially when they were not kind to you?
- How happy were you this year to see others have and enjoy what you could only dream of having and enjoying?
- How often did you put others down and exalt yourself this year?
- How often did you look down on others this year and believe that you would never do the things you see them doing?
- How often were you rude, disrespectful or insensitive to others this year?
- How often did you selfishly do what you wanted to do this year regardless of how it impacted or ignored the needs and desires of others?
- How often were you quick to become irritated and angry and easily offended?
- How often did you keep a list of offenses to use against another person?
- How many people in your life this year have gone unforgiven?
- How often did you assume the worst of another person's motives and intentions this year without any evidence for it?
- How often did you take pleasure in thinking or saying or doing something wrong or take pleasure in others doing the same?
- How often did you take pleasure this year in those you dislike experiencing suffering or evil?
- How often did you think about whether what you were doing or going to do was right or wrong in the eyes of God and gladly did what was right even when it cost you?
- How often did you excuse your failure to love this year to a certain set of circumstances or to the difficulty of relating to particular people?
- Where did you fail this year? Rest in Jesus!
- Where do you see evidences of God's grace in your life this year? Give praise to God!
- How often did you remember to rest in Jesus for God's love for you and forgiveness of you in order to find grace to love?
- How often did you put your hope in the promises of God in Jesus in order to find grace to love?
- Remember that Jesus is an able and willing Savior for sinners! He saves from the penalty of sin, power of sin, and presence of sin!