

## **SERMON: The More Excellent Way, Part 4**

**TEXT: 1 John 4:7-21; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

### **Introduction**

- A. In verses 4-7 of 1 Corinthians 13, as we study the nature of love, we are in fact studying the nature of God, Who is love, and studying the nature of Jesus Christ, Who is God. Everything love is, the Lord is, and everything love is not, the Son of God is not.
- B. Since every true Christian has been predestined to be conformed to the to the image of God's Son (Romans 8:29), it is sobering that Christ's apostle Paul, while praising the nature of love, is at the same time blaming the Corinthian believers for failing to love. The 8 things Paul mentions that love is not is exactly what he has already in this letter charged the Corinthians with being - jealous, boastful, arrogant, self-centered, quarrelsome, holding grudges, etc.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love ... **is not jealous**; love **does not** brag and **is not arrogant**,<sup>5</sup> **does not act unbecomingly**; it **does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,**<sup>6</sup> **does not rejoice in unrighteousness**, but rejoices with the truth;

- C. If what "love is not" in any way describes you and me, there is hope to be found for us in God's provision of grace to us in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus died and rose again so that those who belong to Him might repent of their lovelessness, receive the forgiveness of their sins, and receive the Spirit's cleansing of their hearts of all sinful, loveless passions, so as to walk in newness of life, so as to be led by Jesus to walk in paths of righteousness, to walk in love for His Name's sake.

1. Christ's death pays the death penalty for the sins of those who believe in Him, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins.

Matthew 26:28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

Acts 10:43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

2. Christ's death provides the means whereby His Spirit can apply Christ's death to our sinful passions, that we might die to them and live to righteousness.

1 Peter 2:24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, **so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness**; for by His wounds you were healed.<sup>25</sup> For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

3. So if we confess to God our jealousy, our arrogance, our anger and irritability, our self-centeredness, our unforgiving spirit, He will supply the grace Christ procured for us on the cross to provide both forgiveness of sin's guilt and cleansing of all sinful attitudes and conduct.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to **forgive us** our sins and **to cleanse us** from all unrighteousness.

- D. So as we continue to look at what love is not, pray that we all might be quick to see, confess, and repent of any lovelessness within our hearts, so that we might receive Christ's forgiveness and Christ's cleansing of our hearts, so that our hearts might be more conformed to His.

## I. 13:5 Love does not act unbecomingly.

1 Corinthians 13:5 **does not act unbecomingly**; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,

- A. The Greek verb “*aschuneo*” used here means to act shamefully or disgracefully. This word, in its various forms (verb, noun, adjective) can describe a wide range of activity including being rude, disruptive, sexually immoral or obscene, as seen in this word’s uses by Paul.

**1 Corinthians 7:36** But if any man thinks that he is acting **unbecomingly** (*aschuneo*) toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.

**1 Corinthians 12:23** and those *members* of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our **less presentable** (*aschanon*) members become much more presentable,

Romans 1:27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing **indecent acts** (*aschamosuna*) and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his **shame** (*aschamosuna*)."

- B. In our culture’s debate over gay and lesbian marriage, proponents are often heard saying, “If two men or two women love each other, they ought to be able to get married.” But God, Who is love and the author/definer of love, tells us that what these proponents call love is not love at all- it is shameful, unbecoming, and love doesn’t act this way.
- C. In this letter we recall chapter 11, for example, the women who are bringing “shame” upon their heads by blurring sexual distinctions and the humiliating/shaming of the poor at the Lord’s Supper gatherings by those of greater means, or in chapter 6 the engaging with prostitutes. Love cares too much for the welfare of the good of others to behave in such inappropriate ways.

## II. 13:5 Love does not seek its own.

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; **it does not seek its own**, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,

- A. Some of the Corinthians had been unlovingly insisting they had a right to eat market meat or meat at a guests house that had been sacrificed to an idol (meat is meat) regardless of whether their doing so might embolden a brother or sister to violate their conscience.

1 Corinthians 8:8 But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.<sup>9</sup> But **take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak**.<sup>10</sup> For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> For **through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died**.<sup>12</sup> **And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ**.

- B. Love does not insist on exercising one’s rights, but will practice self-denial for the sake of others.

1 Corinthians 8:13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

1 Corinthians 10:23 All things are lawful, but **not all things are profitable**. All things are lawful, but **not all things edify**.<sup>24</sup> **Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor**.

1 Corinthians 10:32 Give no offense (cause for stumbling) either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;<sup>33</sup> just as I also please all men in all things, **not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many**, so that they

may be saved.

**Philippians 2:3** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup> **do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.**

### III. 13:5 Love is not provoked.

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, **is not provoked**, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,

- A. The Greek verb “paroxuno,” used only here in the NT, literally means to make sharp, pointed, and is used metaphorically here to being easily irritated or provoked to anger. It is used this way in the Greek translation of the OT (LXX) to be provoked to anger or to taunt.

Proverbs 20:2 The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; He who **provokes** (LXX: paroxuno) him to anger forfeits his own life.

Proverbs 14:31 He who oppresses the poor **taunts** (paroxuno) his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.

- B. Interestingly it’s noun form describes the “irritation” that arose between Paul and Barnabas over whether or not to bring John Mark along on their second missionary journey after he had abandoned them on the previous journey.

Acts 15:39 And there occurred such a **sharp disagreement** (paroxusmos) that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.

- C. Love is not thin skinned. It is not armed and primed to be annoyed, bothered, offended. It is not easily provoked, wounded, by what others say or do. It is not easily goaded into responding with irritation, anger, sharp responses. It is not always having “issues” with people.
- D. Is God answering our prayers that we all might be quick to see, confess, and repent of any lovelessness within our hearts, so that we might receive Christ’s forgiveness and Christ’s cleansing of our hearts, so that our hearts might be more conformed to His?

### IV. 13:5 Love does not take into account a wrong suffered.

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, **does not take into account a wrong suffered**,

- A. The Greek word used here, “logizomai,” is the same word used for God “reckoning” or “accounting” our faith in Christ to us as righteousness. Love does not keep accounting to others wrongs that they have done. Love does not nurse a memory of being wronged, injured. It does not water that memory to keep it alive.
- B. Think about what would be our eternal destiny if God’s love toward us did not include this virtue. Scary version? God, the righteous judge, will exact payment for every sin committed by every human being. Every sinful act in which a person takes pleasure (sensuality, vengeance, gossip, etc.) God will repay with corresponding misery and suffering.

Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you are storing up wrath for yourself** in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

Revelation 18:4 I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;<sup>5</sup> for **her sins have piled up as high as heaven**, and **God has remembered her iniquities**.<sup>6</sup> **"Pay her back even as she has paid**, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.<sup>7</sup> **"To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning**; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.'<sup>8</sup> "For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

Proverbs 8:36 "But **he who sins against me injures himself**; All those who hate me love death."

- C. This is the scary, terrifying destiny of all whose sins are not paid for by Christ's bearing God's wrath in their place.
- D. But for us who have turned from sin and received Jesus Christ by faith as Savior and Lord of our lives, God responds differently.

Hebrews 10:16 "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," He then says,<sup>17</sup> "AND **THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE**."

- E. Our response?

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.<sup>11</sup> Beloved, **if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another**.

Matthew 6:14 "For **if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you**.<sup>15</sup> "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you**.