

Qualities of Love - Considerate

1 Corinthians

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Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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1 Corinthians 13 is where we are this evening and we read beginning with verse 1. We'll read down to verse 8.

1 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, 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. 8 Love never ends.

Let's bow together for prayer.

Father in heaven, we love you and we worship you, Lord, because you have made yourself known to us. You have made yourself known to us by what you have made. You have made yourself known to us, Lord, by what you have revealed in Scripture. And you have made yourself known to us in your Son. And by bringing us to Jesus, by bringing us to Christ, by giving us your Spirit, Lord, you have made us worshipers. So tonight we gather here and from our hearts we are able to give to you love and adoration and worship because you have saved us. For that, Lord, we are grateful beyond words and will be for the rest of time and eternity.

We gather here tonight, Lord, in need, in greater need than we know, in greater need than we imagine. Lord, you have saved us. You have brought us to yourself but we cannot and do not live independent of you and so we are dependent upon you for everything, every moment of every day. Lord, you have granted us faith and repentance but you alone can sustain our faith and continue to grant us repentance where we need it. So Lord, our greatest desire tonight is just to draw near to you, to walk closely with you, Lord, to experience your grace, your blessing, your favor in a tangible and manifest

way. And so we ask you for this and we know, Lord, this to be your desire and your will and we rejoice in it.

We thank you, Lord, tonight that everything is being worked together for good to those who love you even when it doesn't feel good, even when we can't see how it's good. Even then, Lord, you are faithful always. Now Lord, tonight as we gather around your word, we ask that you would be our teacher, that you would do your good work in this place in this hour. Lord, strengthen and empower so that this will be a blessed time. I thank you for my brothers and sisters. I thank you for their love for you, their faithfulness to the truth. Lord, it encourages my heart and I ask your blessing upon them tonight as we study together. We also pray for those in our midst who are lost and we ask for their salvation and we ask you this in Jesus' name. Amen.

As we continue to look at this list of the qualities of love, there are a few things that I want us to keep before our mind's eye. First of all, you've noticed no doubt that what we find in this list is contrary to who we are by nature. I mean, if you have ever wondered whether men are able to love with the love of God naturally or whether this is something that requires salvation, all you have to do is to honestly read through this list and it becomes apparent to us that this is not who we are by nature. This is something that we become, that we are able to experience because of salvation, because of God's grace, because of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. We are not in Adam patient people, not with the kind of patience that is biblical. We are not by nature before the Lord saved us, before he gave us his Spirit, we were not and would not be kind, not in the true biblical sense of the word. By nature we are jealous. By nature we are braggarts. By nature we are, human beings are arrogant and can be rude and insist on our own way and be irritable and resentful and all the rest that we read in this list. What we read here is contrary to what we are by nature and so we are reminded that not only is salvation necessary but step-by-step, day-by-day, we are dependent on the Lord if we are to walk in these qualities, if we are to walk in love because what we're having described here for us is love. This is love in action.

Something else to bear in mind as we look at this list is that it is corrective specifically to the Corinthian church. This is not an exhaustive list of what love is. This list has been strategically constructed. If you read it carefully you will notice that Paul is, through this list, the Holy Spirit through Paul, through this list, God is addressing specific areas where the Corinthians were struggling. They were struggling with jealousy, especially in this context in the area of spiritual gifts. They were struggling with boasting. They were arrogant. They were, as we'll talk about tonight, what rudeness is. They were guilty of it in the fellowship, in fact, in their gatherings together, insisting on their own way and all the rest. So this list is corrective in a specific sense toward the Corinthian church. As we read the list, we need to read it in its context and remember, Paul is being very pastoral as he is teaching them which, by the way, reminds us also that the way you deal with problems in the local fellowship is with the truth of God's word. How do you shepherd people? It's with Scripture. It's with truth.

Something else to keep in mind as you look at this list is though it is corrective to the Corinthian church, it is universal in its application. The fact that this passage is one of the best-known, most beloved passages in the entire New Testament, in fact in the entirety of God's word, reminds us that we all struggle with the same problems the Corinthians struggled with. If this is corrective to their issues and yet is a passage that is universally loved and read and applied, that tells us we all struggle with the same stuff. Universal are the problems that are described in these verses. We struggle with patience. We struggle with kindness. We struggle with jealousy. We struggle with boasting. We struggle with rudeness. So he's dealing with them but as with the rest of Scripture, he's dealing with us.

These are the problems plaguing congregations today. These are the problems that threaten the life of this church, which gets to something else we need to remember as we look at this list: it is a list that represents what is necessary for unity. At the heart of all of this instruction, chapters 12, 13 and 14, is the desire for the Corinthians to focus on what edifies the body. Not what is best for you personally, but what is best for the church. What is mutually edifying. What allows the church to function in a unified fashion. We are the body of Christ, a unit where there is great diversity and variety but how do we function as one? The answer is we've got to love each other. Love is how the church functions in a unified fashion. Simply possessing spiritual gifts, which we do if we're saved, simply possessing spiritual gifts that are designed to function together and they are, doesn't guarantee that we will be functioning together unless those gifts are being put to use in the attitude and the atmosphere of love. It is where love is being lived out that those spiritual gifts then function together as God intended. Never forget as we said this morning, the context for chapter 13: it is sandwiched between a discussion of gifts in chapter 12 and again in chapter 14. This is the attitude. This is the atmosphere within which spiritual gifts are meant to operate.

Finally, one last reminder, I would remind us that this list is not telling us what love results in. He's not telling us that love results in patience, love results in kindness, he's telling us what love is. Love is patience. Love is kind. Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. He's telling us what love is. This is love in action. Let me tell you why that's important. If you look back to verses 1 through 3 and he says, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love," right? "If I have prophetic powers," verse 2. "Understand all mysteries, all knowledge, if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love," when he says in verse 3, "If you give away everything you have, deliver up your body to be burned but have not love," what is he envisioning? Here we are speaking eloquent words but we don't have love. Well, what is he envisioning by "have not love"? Well, the answer is represented in the list that follows so that if I am eloquent in speech but I don't have patience, if I'm a great speaker but I'm not kind, you see? If I have all of this knowledge but I'm jealous natured or if I'm someone who is sacrificing in a very public manner but I'm also boastful and arrogant, this is when I accomplish nothing. This is when I am nothing. This is when I gain nothing. So what he's giving us here in verses 4 through 8 is the concrete answer for what it means to be without love even as you're trying, striving, to operate in your giftedness. You say, "Well, I'm busy in ministry." Well, okay, but are you patient? Are you kind? Are you jealous

natured? Are you boastful? Are you arrogant? You see, these are the things that we must be walking in if the spiritual gifts are to matter at all. This is why love is the priority.

So this morning we began with a list and we focused simply on the first description of it, verse 4, "Love is patient," and tonight we begin with the second and that is, "Love is kind." I noted more than once this morning as we read through some verses that sort of correlate with these how patience and kindness is often coupled together, linked together in these lists. Why is that? Why are patience and kindness linked together? I think the answer is these 2 qualities describe the passive and the active responses of love toward others. I can love you by what I don't do and I can love you by what I do in response to you. I can love you by making sure I don't respond to you in a certain way, that's patience, and I can love you by responding to you in a certain way, that is kindness. So that kindness is the active response of love, patience is the passive response of love and these 2 things are linked together because these 2 qualities are linked together in God's dealings with us. You see his patience and you see his kindness linked together.

Let me give you a couple of passages. Keep your Bible marker here and go to the book of Romans for just a moment, Romans 2. Look at verse 1, "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges." Now, he has just finished in chapter 1 describing the sinfulness of the pagan world, of the Gentile world, and he envisions the Jew listening to this and saying, "Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Those horrible, wretched Gentiles." But he says, "You have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things. Do you suppose, O man - you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself - that you will escape the judgment of God?" Well, why hasn't God already judged the world in his wrath in the final sense? Why is it that you can look around at the world and its pagan atmosphere and say, "Look at that sin"? Why is it that the Jew who was judging the Gentile world but practicing the same things, why is it that he has not yet met with the judgment of God? Next verse, verse 4, "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience." You see, God has been kind in that he is forbearing. He has been kind in that he has been patient. But he says, "Don't mistake what this patience represents." Next statement, "not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." The wrath of God is coming but now at this time, we are able to witness God's patience, his forbearance and his kindness.

Now, the patience we understand: waiting, we talked about that this morning. The wrath of God is waiting. God is giving space and time for men to repent but what about this kindness? How is God kind to an unbelieving world? Look over to the Gospel of Matthew. We can say that in one way God is kind simply by being patient, that is a form of God's kindness but notice some other ways that God is kind. Matthew 5:38, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Wouldn't you agree, beloved, that that's patience, right? Next verse, "And if

anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies," don't forget what we're talking about here, beloved, is love. Love is patient. Love is kind. "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

How is God demonstrating kindness toward this unbelieving world? Today the sun rose. Somewhere in the world the rain is falling. God is good even to those who curse his name and he says, "This is how you and I are to love our enemies, not simply by patience, not responding in like manner but also with kindness, actually doing good toward those who would persecute us." Luke 6:26, "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." You say, "Well, how do I do good to them?" Well, with the words you speak, that's one way. "How do I do good to them?" Praying for them, that's one way. Forgiving them. Ephesians 4:32 says this and this is in the context of us dealing with each other as believers, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

And all these things, folks, all of these things tie together. I cannot say that I am demonstrating kindness toward you if my heart is not tender toward you. I cannot close my heart to a brother or sister and then pretend that I'm demonstrating the kindness of Christ toward them. I cannot be kind toward you if I'm not willing to forgive you. 2 Timothy 2:24, "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will." What does he say to the teacher of God's word? "You demonstrate the very same kind of patience and kindness that God demonstrates to the world. You endure evil. You gently correct. You continue to teach. God may grant them repentance. Don't quarrel with them, be kind to them."

So when we love, we will be patient in the face of insult and good even toward our enemies. We will love them by what we don't do in response and we will love them by being good and kind toward them in response. Love is kind. Look back, if you would, at 1 Corinthians 13. Now, we see a third description of love, "love is patient and kind," third, "love does not envy." It's not jealous. Now, this particular word can be used in a positive context as well as a negative context. The word itself just has to do with zeal. It comes from a root that has to do with boil and so the idea is an intensity in the heart, a fervency in the heart, a zeal, but it's obvious here in this context, this isn't a positive thing.

Love does not have this kind of zeal, this kind of envy. So what this word in this context is describing is a sinful resentment in your heart over what you perceive someone else has. Something you want, something you wish you had, something that you feel like in some way minimizes you. That's jealousy. When I resent you over something I perceive you have that in my mind or in my eyes makes me smaller or without, lacking. That's not love. If you have this attitude, you can't practice 1 Corinthians 12:26. Do you remember what it says? "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored," what do all do? They "all rejoice together." You cannot honestly rejoice when a brother or sister is honored if you are jealous of them.

What do people get jealous over? Well, some people resent another person's strengths. They see what they perceive to be strength in another person. It could be talents, gifts, you name it. You see it as a strength in them and you're envious. Some people resent another person's successes. They succeed. They accomplish something. They are honored in some way. You resent that. Some people find resentment in their heart over another person's opportunities. "Why didn't they ask me to do that? Why is that not my position? Why did they get the opportunity?" Folks, this can take place in so many different arenas, I mean, this can happen at work, can't it? Someone you have worked with, you feel like that you have worked harder than they have, you feel like you deserve it more than they do and they are the one who gets called upon. They of the one who gets honored. They are the one who gets the opportunity. What goes on in your heart when that happens?

Don't forget what he's describing here, it's not envious. This is something internal. This is something that others can't see. God sees. You know what it is to have this boiling sort of go on in your heart when this person is spoken of or they are in your presence or you see them succeeding or you see them getting opportunities. Anything that you see that represents blessing from God and you feel like in some way it minimizes you so you are resentful over it. The word of God says here that you cannot be loving them, if you are jealous of them. Love is not envious.

When is the last time you were aware of jealousy in your heart? Can I ask you: do you deal with it as sin? Remember, if it's not love, it's the flesh. If it's not love, it's sin. So when you sense that jealousy in your heart, do you deal with it as sin? This means that if I am to love someone, I have to overcome. I have to deal with sin. That kind of passion that's in me. If I'm going to love someone and I sense that I am resenting an opportunity or a blessing or a strength or anything that I see in them, I have to deal with that before God and let him change my heart so that I can truly love them from my heart. Love is not jealous.

By the way, these first few that are mentioned, it almost seems like you have pairs, one being a passive expression, the other being active. We know that's true in terms of patience and kindness but notice in these next 2, you have, "it does not envy," but now notice the next one, "nor does it boast." If jealousy is me resenting something in you that I feel like minimizes me, then boasting is what I want you to know about me that minimizes you. I want to tell you what is in me that makes you smaller. The word itself here translated "boast" has to do with being a braggart; someone who brags; someone

who is ready to tell you about their own greatness. Whenever we're boasting, we are not loving those people that we are minimizing. When we boast, we forget who is the source of whatever it is we are glorying in. What do you brag about? What do you tell others about that would minimize them and magnify you? Have you forgotten that whatever it is that you have, you received it. It's not explained by you. Ultimately you did not achieve it, not in the final analysis. God gave it to you.

Again, I want to remind you: he is dealing with specific issues in the Corinthian church. Just look back to chapter 4 for a second, very quickly, chapter 4, and he has already dealt with this in verse 7, backup to verse 6, "I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos," where he talks about, "Just regard us as servants of Christ. We're just servants." And he says, "I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" If you're not the source, if you're the recipient, if whatever ability you have is a gift, why do you boast as if it wasn't given to you? As if you're something more than a recipient?

Whenever we are boasting, we're forgetting who the source is of whatever it is that we are glorying in. We also forget why God has given us whatever it is that we possess. Whatever it is that you glory in. Whatever it is that makes you want to tell others about your greatness. Let me ask you: why did God give that to you? He didn't give it to you just for you. In fact, he gave it to you to bless others, to serve others. 1 Corinthians 12, be reminded of this in verse 7, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit," this is in reference to spiritual gifts manifesting his presence and activity, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." For the blessing of the whole. Again, if one member suffers, we all suffer. If one member is honored, we all rejoice. Why? Because we are one body. Different members with different functions but we belong to a unit.

So whatever ability or whatever strength God has built into you, it is not a commentary on you and he didn't give it to you for you, he gave it to you for the benefit of others. Whenever you are tempted to be a braggart, remind yourself of that. "You know, whatever it is I possess, I'm just a recipient and whatever God gave me, he didn't give it to me for me. He gave it to me for others." Also stop and reflect whenever you're bragging, what does this say about the brother or sister you're bragging to? I mean, are you really caring about them? Are you wanting to edify them? Are you wanting to encourage them? Are you wanting to build them up? Or are you, in fact, using them? You are minimizing them to build yourself up. That's not love.

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not jealous on the one hand, that gets to our internal attitude. Nor does it boast, that's action, that's what we do out loud. That's not love. Notice the next quality that is mentioned, "it is not arrogant." No doubt, arrogance can be expressed but, again, it seems to me that he is dealing with something, again, internal. The next one, he couples it with rudeness is something more external. But love is not

arrogant. Literally, it's not puffed up. The word here comes from a word that means bellows, to puff up, to blow up, to be inflated. You don't have to be a braggart to be unloving, you just have to have an inflated view of yourself. You may never express your arrogance with words, though that is highly unlikely. Well, I'll put it to you this way: if you never express your arrogance with words but you still have an attitude of arrogance, you're not a loving person. Love operates in a spirit of humility, not in a spirit of pride. An overinflated view of oneself, thinking more highly of oneself than we ought, overestimating our giftedness, overestimating our abilities, overestimating us in general. What are we but just a vapor? What do we have but that which we have been given and that which could be taken from us in a moment if God chose to do so? What strength do we possess that he doesn't sustain? What ability is made useful apart from him being the one who makes it useful? If we are wise, we will realize that, in fact, we are nothing and apart from Jesus Christ, we can do nothing. And every once in a while, God in his love brings us face-to-face with that reality, doesn't he? He humbles us. He puts us in positions where we recognize our weakness.

By the way, please note this: it is often those who have accused others of pride who most struggle with it themselves. I say this so that you will examine yourself as I examine myself. Let us beware of a trap here set by the enemy where we put ourselves in the position of saying, "You know, I hate pride so let me identify it in everyone around me," and we don't take the time to look at our own heart for it. I think one of the most telling passages in all the Bible about this is found in the book of Numbers. I want you to look over to Numbers 16, if you would, please, real quickly. Number 16 and I want you to bear in mind as you read this, the Old Testament says that Moses at the time he was living, Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth. Now, that's God's commentary. Moses was a humble man but look at what happens in verse 1 of Numbers 16, "Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men." By the way, I'll just add a thought: beware what position can do in your heart. One of the reasons why when you talk about elders, he is not to be a novice, the Bible says specifically, "lest he get puffed up in his heart and fall into the snare of the devil." These are men with position. They are chiefs of the congregation. They have been chosen from the assembly. They are well known and it's obvious from the passage this has diseased them. Verse 3, "They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, 'You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them.'" Here are the words, "'Why then do you,' Moses and Aaron, 'Why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?'" What are these men saying to Moses and Aaron? "You are," what? "Proud. You exalt yourself." Was that the truth? Wasn't it true that it was Korah and the others who were exalting themselves by rejecting what God had chosen Moses for? Verse 4, "When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, and he said to Korah and all his company, 'In the morning the LORD will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him.'" And, of course, you know the rest of the story, and God made very evident whom he had chosen.

Look back at 1 Corinthians 13. I simply mean there to illustrate that it can be the very ones who accuse others of pride that are actually guilty of it themselves and I would warn all of us not to be pride detectors in others so much as we are examining our own heart for that heinous sin and saying, "Lord, please allow me to walk humbly before you," because love is not arrogant. It is not puffed up.

Verse 5, we're also told, "love is not rude." If arrogance is the internal quality, then rudeness would be the external expression of it. Literally it means that it doesn't act unbecomingly, it doesn't act shamefully. Love does not act disgracefully. It doesn't act in a way that would shame or humiliate another person. The Corinthians were doing that, weren't they? They were gathering around the Lord's supper, they would have a love feast that was experienced in conjunction with the Lord's table and you had people who had much coming early and enjoying their meal together in such a way that when the poor would come afterward, they would have nothing and in that way, the rich in the congregation were humiliating the poor who were their brothers. That is not love. That is shameful behavior. That is the rudeness that he is describing here.

But if we talk about love not being rude, we can include in that a selflessness that is reflected in general in consideration of other people. Love is considerate of others. Not only would I not shame you if I'm loving you but I don't want to act in a shameful way, period. In a disgraceful way, period. Love has a consideration for the feelings of others. We could say it this way: love pays attention to manners. It's interesting when you think about this as an expression of pride because there are people who consider manners to be a thing of pride. They take pride in disregarding manners. They walk into a room and they are loud. They call attention to themselves. They would make light of people who think that what they are doing is not proper, "Ah, just be yourself," they say when in reality they are just being rude. It is right to think and it is right to say that love is not ostentatious. It is not mannerly in a way that is arrogant and stiff and false, that's true, but we're wrong to think that love would steamroll over the sensitivities of other people. No, if we love each other, we're not just considerate of what something we're doing, how it makes us feel but how does that make the other person feel. Love is not disgraceful.

So love is patient, it's passive, it's what I don't do in response to you. Love is kind, that's active, it is positively being good to you no matter how you treat me. Love is not jealous, that is, I am not resentful over that which I see in you that sinfully I would think minimizes me. It's not boastful, that is, I don't want to brag and through that seek to minimize you. It is not arrogant, puffed up, an inflated view of myself. Nor is it rude, disgraceful and shameful and humiliating toward another.

We're going to stop there tonight but as we take what we've seen tonight and we apply it for a moment, let me just drive home a couple of lessons. First of all, do you take seriously both the passive and the active nature of love? When you think of loving someone, do you ever think in terms of what you don't do? I think we often think in terms of what we do but are you getting this part of the lesson, sometimes it's what you don't do. Have you ever gone home and reflected on a conversation that bothers you and said

to yourself, "I wish I would have been quicker. I wish I could have thought to say this"? Have you had that conversation with yourself? I'm sure no one here ever has but do you ever stop and realize that God was gracious that you didn't say that? That you didn't think of that? Do you ever thank God that you're not a good come-back artist? That you don't know what to say? I mean, now, that's not necessarily to your praise either. If you're wanting to be a good come-back artist, alright, you've failed the test there. The only thing lacking is ability, not desire. But what I'm saying is we've got to get to the point that we realize, "Lord, I don't want to respond in like manner. When insulted, I want to bless. When persecuted, I want to pray. Lord, help me to reflect toward others through what I don't do, the love of my Savior."

You look at the Lord Jesus in the midst of his trials and you see him slapped, spat upon, jeered, insulted, "You have healed others, come on down off that cross and we'll believe." And like a lamb led to the slaughter, he did not open his mouth. What is that? That is love. That is patience. And he's going to the cross to deliver some of those very people from their sins. Let us not forget that the thief on the cross that was with Jesus in paradise the day he died was somewhere earlier in that day joining the other guy on the cross in insulting the Lord Jesus. Christ died for that man's sins. May God help us not just to love actively, may he help us to love passively by what we don't do.

The second thing I would drive home tonight is to see what all these things we have talked about tonight have in common including this morning: patience, kindness, not being jealous, not boasting, not being arrogant, not being rude. What do all these have in common? Every one of these things strikes at the heart of a self-centered perspective. You can't live this if you are at the center. To say it another way: all of these things strike at the heart of a Christ-absent perspective. I can't live this apart from my Savior. I can't live this apart from loving him, wanting to honor him, walking with him, following him, emulating him, asking him and trusting him to live his life out through me.

Finally, all these things have in common the fact that they deal with my whole person. You can't divide your person up and love in part. If you're going to walk in this, it's going to involve your thoughts, your attitudes, your words, your behavior. We love with our whole man. I think sometimes what we do, beloved, is we try to watch over our words and we try to watch over our behavior, we try to watch over what other people can see but we don't deal with the problem in the unseen realm of our life, how we think and how we feel. "Lord, help me not just to look like I'm loving, so deal in my life that I really am loving, that I really am experiencing and I am expressing Christ's love that has been poured out in my heart and that reflects the indwelling Holy Spirit. Strengthen me, Lord, to live a supernaturally loving life."

Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we thank you for what we have been reminded of today and, Lord, I pray that you would remind us even now again that the goal of what we have looked at today is not just instruction and not just examination but transformation. Amen.