

Love is...

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality 11-27-11

ROB---A-LIST & Series (summary)/Finale Intro...

ANNOUNCEMENTS...

- 1)-Welcome / CCard / Joy Box / Bible-Pens
- 2)-Plano Rockin' CMAS THIS WEEKEND @ Plano Train Depot/Centennial Schools
- 3)-Build-Out Volunteers Needed...Praying only 2 more Sunday's of Special Services!

PRAYER

SERIES SUMMARY...(Will do my best to just read these and not expound)

- 1)-Emotional Maturity and Spiritual Maturity are inseparable, can't have one w/o the other. Moral and Behavioral codes should have never been separated...both shape who you really are. We are to be like Christ in EVERY way (Eph.4)
- 2)-Jesus taught and lived Emotional/Spiritual Maturity (Beatitudes/Gospels). Spirit enables Emotional/Spiritual growth (Gal.5). Father is glorified by Emotional/Spiritual growth (Mt.5:16)
- 3)-Biggest barrier to Emotional/Spiritual growth is NAIVITE OF SELF. Unless we spend more time looking in the mirror than the window no one will deserve forgiveness. Likewise, if we spend more time in the mirror than the window everyone deserves forgiveness. (Mt.18-Unforgiving Servant)

FINALE INTRO...

-TODAY we want to simply pause and immerse ourselves in the perfect embodiment of what spiritual/emotional health looks like. So, we are to be like Christ in EVERY WAY. Every way?---it would take a lifetime to study the various ways Christ taught us through His life. Perhaps there is a better way...a means by which we can summarize all His ways? There is one scripture in particular that dares to do so. I John 4:8...says that "...God is...LOVE".

-And so with that our remaining time together will focus on just that...Love.

- 1-Just how vital, how central is love?
- 2-What does love look like?
- 3-Why should we desire this love to be our all-consuming passion/How can we enjoy this most incomparable way of love?

PRAYER...

WORSHIP TEAM---Let the Water Rise

ROB--- How vital, how central is love?

I Corinthians 13:1-3

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.

WORSHIP TEAM---Healing is in His Hands/Your Grace Still Amazes Me

ROB---What does love look like?

I Corinthians 13:4-8a

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.

WORSHIP TEAM---With Everything/Your Love Never Fails

ROB---Why Should We Desire Love To Be Our All Consuming Passion/How Can We Enjoy this Incomparable Way of Love?

I John 4:7-11

⁷ Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, *for God is love.*

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, **since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.** ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, **God lives in us**, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

WORSHIP TEAM---“Beautiful Things”

DIVE DEEPER...

ADDITIONAL TEXTS

Matthew 22:36-40

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

³⁷ Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind."³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself."⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Colossians 3:12-14

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

I Peter 4:8

⁸Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY

(as always---our appreciation to enduringword.com & David Guzik)

1 Corinthians 13 - Agape Love

G. Campbell Morgan said that examining this chapter is like dissecting a flower to understand it. If you tear it apart too much, you lose the beauty. Alan Redpath said one could get a spiritual suntan from the warmth of this chapter!

A. The supremacy of love.

1. (1-2) Love is superior to spiritual gifts in and of themselves.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have *the gift* of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

- a. The Corinthians were enamored with spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of **tongues**. Paul reminds them even the gift of **tongues** is meaningless without love. Without love, a person may speak with the gift of tongues, but it is as meaningless as **sounding brass or a clanging cymbal**. It is nothing but empty noise.

i. “People of *little religion* are always *noisy*; he who has not the love of God and man filling his heart is like an *empty wagon* coming *violently* down a *hill*: it makes a *great noise*, because there is *nothing in it*.” (Josiah Gregory, cited in Clarke)

b. **Tongues of men and of angels**: The Greek word translated **tongues** has the simple idea of “languages” in some places (Acts 2:11, Revelation 5:9). This has led some to say the gift of **tongues** is simply the ability to communicate the gospel in other languages; it is the capability of learning languages quickly. But the way **tongues** is used here shows it can, and usually does, refer to a supernatural language by which a believer communicates to God. There is no other way the reference to **tongues of . . . angels** can be understood.

i. In Paul’s day, many Jews believe angels had their own language, and by the Spirit, one could speak it. The reference to **tongues of . . . angels** shows that though the genuine gift of tongues is a legitimate language, it may not be a “living” human language, or may not be a human language at all. Apparently, there are angelic languages men can speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

ii. Poole has a fascinating comment, suggesting that the **tongues of . . . angels** answer to how God may speak to us in a non-verbal way: “Angels have no tongues, nor make any articulate audible sounds, by which they understand one another; but yet there is certainly a society or intercourse among angels, which could not be upheld without some way amongst them to communicate their minds and wills to each other. How this is we cannot tell: some of the schoolmen say, it is by way of impression: that way God, indeed, communicates his mind sometimes to his people, making secret impressions of his will upon their minds and understandings.”

c. **Prophecy, knowledge, and faith** to do miracles are likewise irrelevant apart from love. The Corinthian Christians were missing the *motive* and the *goal* of the gifts, making them their own end; Paul draws the attention back to **love**.

i. Paul, quoting the idea of Jesus, refers to **faith** which **could remove mountains** (Matthew 17:20). What an amazing thing it

would be have faith which could work the impossible! Yet, even that faith makes us **nothing** if it is without **love**.

ii. A man with faith can move great mountains; but he will set them down right in the path of somebody else – or right on somebody else - if he doesn't have love!

iii. It isn't an issue of love versus the gifts. A church should never be forced to choose between love and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul is emphasizing the focus and goal of the gifts: love, not the gifts for their own sake.

iv. "Possession of the *charismata* is not the sign of the Spirit; Christian love is." (Fee)

d. **Have not love**: Paul is using the Greek word *agape*. The ancient Greeks had four different words we translate **love**. It is important to understand the difference between the words, and why the apostle Paul chose the Greek word *agape* here.

i. *Eros* was one word for love. It described, as we might guess from the word itself, *erotic* love. It refers to sexual love.

ii. *Storge* was the second word for love. It refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child, or between family members in general.

iii. *Philia* is the third word for love. It speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. It might be described as the highest love of which man, without God's help, is capable of.

iv. *Agape* is the fourth word for love. It is a love that loves without changing. It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment. It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing. It is love that loves even when it is rejected. *Agape* love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given. It gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive. According to Alan Redpath, we get our English word *agony* from *agape*. "It means the actual absorption of our being in one great passion." (Redpath) Strictly speaking, *agape* can't be defined as "God's love," because men

are said to *agape* sin and the world (John 3:19, 1 John 2:15). But it can be defined as a sacrificial, giving, absorbing, love. The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.

v. We can read this chapter and think that Paul is saying that if we are unfriendly, then our lives mean nothing. But *agape* isn't really friendliness; it is self-denial for the sake of another.

2. (3) The most dramatic renunciations of self are, in the same way, profitless without love.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

a. **Bestow all my goods to feed the poor:** This is what Jesus told the rich young ruler to do (Matthew 16:19-23), and he refused. But even if the rich young ruler had done what Jesus said, yet had **not love**, it would have been of no profit.

b. **Though I give my body to be burned:** Even if I lay my life down in dramatic martyrdom, apart from love, it is of no profit. Normally, no one would doubt the spiritual credentials of someone who gave away everything they had, and gave up their life in dramatic martyrdom. But those are not the best measures of someone's true spiritual credentials. Love is the best measure.

i. There were some early Christians so arrogant as to think that the blood of martyrdom would wash away any sin. They were so proud about their ability to endure suffering for Jesus, they thought it was the most important thing in the Christian life. It is important, but not the *most* important. Without **love, it profits me nothing**. Even if it is done willingly (Poole notes "and not be dragged to the stake, but freely give up myself to that cruel kind of death"), without **love, it profits me nothing**.

ii. Some believe the burning referred to here is not execution, but branding as a criminal or as a slave for the sake of the gospel. The more likely sense is execution, but it really matters little, because the essential meaning is the same. Paul is writing about great personal sacrifice.

iii. As well, some Greek manuscripts have *if I give up my body that I may glory* instead of **though I give my body to be burned**. Again, the meaning is the same, and the difference is really minor.

iv. Many Christians believe the Christian life is all about *sacrifice*. Sacrificing your money, your life, for the cause of Jesus Christ. Sacrifice is important, but without love it is useless. **It profits me nothing**.

c. Each thing described in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 is a good thing. *Tongues* are good. *Prophecy* and *knowledge* and *faith* are good. *Sacrifice* is good. But love is so valuable, so important, that apart from it, every other good thing is useless. Sometimes, we make the great mistake of letting go of what is best for something else that is good, but not the best.

B. The description of love.

“Lest the Corinthians should say to the apostle, What is this love you discourse of? Or how shall we know if we have it? The apostle here gives thirteen notes of a charitable person.” (Poole)

1. (4a) Two things love *is*: longsuffering and kind.

Love suffers long and is kind.

a. At the beginning, we see **love** is described by *action* words, not by ethereal concepts. Paul is not writing about how love feels, he is writing about how it can be seen in action. True love is always demonstrated by action.

b. **Love suffers long**: Love will endure a long time. It is the heart shown in God, when it is said of the Lord, *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance* (2 Peter 3:9). If God’s love is in us, we will be longsuffering to those who annoy us and hurt us.

i. The ancient preacher John Chrysostem said this is the word used of the man who is wronged, and who easily has the power to avenge himself, but will not do it out of mercy and

patience. Do you avenge yourself as soon as you have the opportunity?

c. Love **is kind**: When we have and show God's love, it will be seen in simple acts of kindness. A wonderful measure of kindness is to see how *children* receive us. Children won't receive and respond to unkind people!

i. Clarke on **kind**: "If called to suffer inspires the sufferer with the most amiable sweetness, and the most tender affection. It is also submissive to all the dispensations of God; and creates trouble to no one."

2. (4b-6) Eight things love is *not*: not envious, not proud, not arrogant, not rude, not cliquish, not touchy, not suspicious, not happy with evil.

Love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

a. **Love does not envy**: Envy is one of the least productive and most damaging of all sins. It accomplishes nothing, except to hurt. Love keeps its distance from envy, and does not resent it when someone else is promoted or blessed. Clarke describes the heart which **does not envy**: "They are ever willing that *others* should be preferred before *them*."

i. Is **envy** a small sin? Envy murdered Abel (Genesis 4:3-8). Envy enslaved Joseph (Genesis 37:11, 28). Envy put Jesus on the cross: *For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy* (Matthew 27:18).

ii. "Many persons cover a spirit of envy and uncharitableness with the name of godly zeal and tender concern for the salvation of others; they find fault with all; their spirit is a spirit of universal censoriousness; none can please them; and every one suffers by them. These destroy more souls by tithing mint and cummin, than others do by neglecting the weightier matters of the law. Such persons have what is termed, and very properly too, *sour godliness*." (Clarke)

b. **Love does not parade itself**: Love in action can work anonymously. It does not have to have the limelight or the attention to

do a good job, or to be satisfied with the result. Love gives because it loves to give, not out of the sense of praise it can have from showing itself off.

i. Sometimes the people who work the hardest at **love** are those the furthest from it. They do things many would perceive as loving, yet they do them in a manner which would **parade itself**. This isn't love; it is pride looking for glory by the appearance of love.

c. **Love . . . is not puffed up**: To be **puffed up** is to be arrogant and self-focused. It speaks of someone who has a "big head." Love doesn't get it's head swelled, it focuses on the needs of others.

i. Both to **parade itself** and to be **puffed up** are simply rooted in pride. Among Christians, the worst pride is *spiritual* pride. Pride of *face* is obnoxious, pride of *face* is vulgar, but the worst pride is pride of *grace*!

ii. William Carey is thought by many to be the founder of the modern missionary movement. Christians all over the world know who he was and honor him. He came from a humble place; he was a shoe repairman when God called him to reach the world. Once, when Carey was at a dinner party, a snobbish lord tried to insult him by saying very loudly, "Mr. Carey, I hear you once were a shoemaker!" Carey replied, "No, your lordship, not a shoemaker, only a cobbler!" Today, the name of William Carey is remembered, but nobody remembers who that snobbish lord was! His love showed itself in not having a big head about himself.

d. **Love . . . does not behave rudely**: Where there is love, there will be kindness and good manners. Perhaps not in the stuffy, "look at how cultured I am" way of showing manners, but in the simply way people do **not behave rudely**.

i. "No ill-bred man, or what is termed *rude* or *unmannerly*, is a Christian." (Clarke)

e. **Love . . . does not seek its own**: Paul communicates the same idea in Romans 12:10: *in honor giving preference to one another*. Also, Philippians 2:4 carries the same thought: *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of*

others. This is being like Jesus in a most basic way, being an *others-centered* person instead of a *self-centered* person.

i. “Love is never satisfied but in the welfare, comfort, and salvation of *all*. That man is no Christian who is solicitous for his own happiness alone; and cares not how the world goes, so that himself be comfortable.” (Clarke)

f. **Love . . . is not provoked**: We all find it easy to be **provoked**, to become irritated with those who are just plain annoying. But it is a sin to be **provoked**, and it isn’t loving. Moses was kept from the Promised Land because he became **provoked** at the people of Israel (Numbers 20:2-11).

i. “When the man who possesses this love gives way to provocation, he *loses* the balance of his soul, and grieves the Spirit of God. . . surely if he *getembittered* against his neighbour, he does not *love* him as himself.” (Clarke)

g. **Love . . . thinks no evil**: Literally, this means “love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received.” Love will put away the hurts of the past instead of clinging to them.

i. One writer tells of a tribe in Polynesia, where it was customary for each man to keep some reminders of his hatred for others. These reminders were suspended from the roofs of their huts to keep alive the memory of the wrongs, real or imagined. Most of us do the same.

ii. “Never supposes that a good action may have a bad motive . . . The original implies that he does not *invent* or *devise* any evil.” (Clarke)

h. **Love . . . does not rejoice in iniquity**: It is willing to want the best for others, and refuses to color things against others. Instead, love **rejoices in the truth**. Love can always stand with and on truth, because love is pure and good like truth.

3. (7) Four more things love *is*: strong, believing, hopeful, and enduring. Spurgeon calls these four virtues *love’s four sweet companions*.

Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

a. **All things**: we might have hoped Paul would have chosen any phrase but this! **All things** encompasses everything! We can all *bear some things*, we can all *believe some things*, we can all *hope some things*, we can all *endure some things*. But God calls us father and deeper into love for Him, for one another, and for a perishing world.

i. “You must have fervent charity towards the saints, but you will find very much about the best of them which will try your patience; for, like yourself, they are imperfect, and they will not always turn their best side towards you, but sometimes sadly exhibit their infirmities. Be prepared, therefore, to contend with “all things” in them.” (Spurgeon)

ii. “Love does not ask to have an easy life of it: self-love makes that her aim. Love denies herself, sacrifices herself, that she may win victories for God, and hers shall be no tinsel crown.” (Spurgeon)

b. **Love . . . bears all things**: The word for **bears** can also be translated *covers*. Either way, Paul brings an important truth along with 1 Peter 4:8: *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”*

i. “Love covers; that is, it never proclaims the errors of good men. There are busybodies abroad who never spy out a fault in a brother but they must needs hurry off to their next neighbour with the savoury news, and then they run up and down the street as though they had been elected common criers. It is by no means honorable to men or women to set up to be common informers. Yet I know some who are not half so eager to publish the gospel as to publish slander. Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lip.” (Spurgeon)

i. “I would, my brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate the pearl oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil, and what does it do but *cover* it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which has harmed us.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Love . . . believes all things:** We never believe a lie, but we never believe evil unless the *facts* demand it. We choose to believe the best of others.

i. “Love, as far as she can, believes in her fellows. I know some persons who habitually believe everything that is bad, but they are not the children of love. . . . I wish the chatterers would take a turn at exaggerating other people’s virtues, and go from house to house trumping up pretty stories of their acquaintances.”
(Spurgeon)

d. **Love . . . hopes all things:** Love has a confidence in the future, not a pessimism. When hurt, it does not say, “It will be this way for ever, and even get worse.” It hopes for the best, and it hopes in God.

e. **Love . . . endures all things:** Most of us can *bear all things*, and *believe all things*, and *hope all things*, but only for a while! The greatness of *agape* love is it keeps on bearing, believing, and hoping. It doesn’t give up. It destroys enemies by turning them into friends.

i. “If your brethren are angry without a cause, be sorry for them, but do not let them conquer you by driving you into a bad temper. Stand fast in love; endure not some things, but all things, for Christ’s sake; so you shall prove yourself to be a Christian indeed.” (Spurgeon)

f. Spurgeon sees the four qualities mentioned as love’s soldiers against evil. Evil is such a strong enemy, it comes at us again and again. First, we face evil with *patience*, for love **bears all things**. “Let the injury be inflicted, we will forgive it, and not be provoked: even seventy times seven will we bear in silence.” If this isn’t enough, we battle evil with *faith*, for love **believes all things**. We look to God and His promises and we believe them. If this is not enough, we overcome a third time by *hope*, for love **hopes all things**. “We rest in expectation that gentleness will win, and that long-suffering will wear out malice, for we look for the ultimate victory of everything that is true and gracious.” Finally, we finish the battle with *perseverance*, for love **endures all things**. “We abide faithful to our resolve to love, we will not be irritated unto unkindness, we will not be perverted from generous, all-forgiving affection, and so we win the battle by steadfast non-resistance.” Spurgeon concludes the thought: “Yes, brethren, and

love *conquers on all four sides*. . . . What a brave mode of battle this is! Is not love a man of war? Is it not invincible?"

4. The best way to understand each of these is to see them in the life of Jesus. We could replace the word *love* with the name *Jesus* and the description would make perfect sense. We can easily say, *Jesus suffers long and is kind; Jesus does not envy* . . . and make it through the whole chapter.

a. We can measure *our* spiritual maturity by seeing how it sounds when we put our name in place of the word *love*. Does it sound totally ridiculous or just a "little" far-fetched?

b. There is a reason why Paul put this chapter in the midst of his discussion of spiritual gifts. Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to remember that giftedness is not the measure of maturity, the display of love is.

C. The permanence of love.

1. (8-10) Love will outlive all the gifts.

Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

a. **Love never fails:** Paul is addressing the over-emphasis the Corinthian Christians had on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He shows they should emphasize love more than the gifts, because the gifts are temporary "containers" of God's work; love is the work itself.