

Remnant Life Church
Sunday, January 17, 2016
The Most Excellent Way
I Cor 13:1-3

- Paul talked a great deal about love even though it was not always easy for him to show it
- Most accounts:
 - May not have been the easiest person to get along with
 - Demanding
 - Very direct and pulled no punches
 - Perhaps even bordered on insensitive
- Knowing how to live and actually living that way are 2 different things
- Story: The man portraying Jesus in a Passion Play
- **I Cor 13:1-3 - *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.***
- Paul takes these three verses and tells us that love is more important even than what we would think are true marks of being a Christian
- How to deal with all the aspects of life; the most excellent way...
 1. *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal*
 - ... Paul says that love is more important than spiritual gifts
 - + The Charismatic and Pentecostal churches put great emphasis on the Gifts
 - + So much so that they can become a point of division
 - + Paul talks about the gifts in the previous chapter (12th)
 - + BUT he speaks twice as long regarding how to use them and the importance of maintaining unity
 - + What does he mean by “a resounding gong?”
 - ^ In the pagan religions of that day when a person would come to worship they would stop at the entrance of the temple and strike a large gong or hanging cymbal to wake up their gods so they would hear their prayers
 - ^ Paul says that without love the gifts are just as useless as that action
 - + On the day of Pentecost, read about in Acts 2, God gave those present the gift of speaking in languages that they did not know or study so everyone could understand the message of God’s love
 - + If you know how to speak with every earthly and heavenly language but don’t have love your words are as meaningless as the sound of that gong trying to wake up a non-existent god
 - + If the spiritual gifts were used by churches today in love they would never become a source of division

2. *If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge*
... Paul says that love is more important than mental capabilities

- + Being the smartest man will not give your life any meaning without love
 - ^ Terrance Tao – 40 – LA – Tested/documentated IQ 225-230
 - ^ Scale to appreciate this number -

IQ	Classification
90 – 100	Normal or average intelligence
110 – 120	Superior intelligence
120 – 140	Very superior intelligence
140 – over	Genius or near genius

- + Age of 9 scored a 760 on the math portion of SAT
- + Bachelors and masters at 16
- + Received his PHD in mathematics from Princeton at 21
- + Youngest full professorship awarded from UCLA - 24
- + On his very best day, without love, he is nothing according to I Corinthians
- + Don't be impressed by someone else's intelligence and, even more importantly, your own – without love it is meaningless

3. *If I have faith the can move mountains*

- ... Paul says that love is more important than faith
- + Paul DOES NOT say that faith is not important
- + What do you have faith in this morning?
 - ^ Jesus lived just as the Bible says He did
 - ^ He came as the Son of God
 - ^ Died for your sins and is coming again
- + You may have a great and powerful faith in your life but without love, Paul says, it is of no value
- + It does not change what is the truth of Jesus and the love of God but it still must be covered in love

4. *If I give all that I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship*

- ... Paul says that love is more important than giving and self-sacrifice
- + As in all things we need to ask, why did I do that?
- + He doesn't say if I actually tithe (10%)
- + He says give it all – bank account, possessions, max your credit cards
- + And then on top of that give of your own body to help others
- + Even with all of that without love it is worth nothing
- + My motivation (expectation) of giving in love is to receive nothing in return

- Summarization – love is more important than spiritual gifts, intelligence, faith, and generosity.

- The importance of having love as the underlying and first motivation of what do, how we act, and what we say cannot be overstated
- Jesus said in **John 13:34** – *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*
 - This is not a suggestion by Jesus it is a command
 - We are called today to obey that command and love one another – not just in church but everywhere we go with whoever we come in contact with
 - Not an accidental event
 - The world: falling in love like you fall in a ditch; or falling out of love like falling out of a tree
 - Many people act as if they had no choice in the matter of love
 - WE ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE!
 - When we make that right choice the love we give is returned in a greater measure of peace with others, joy, and a knowledge that we are obeying Jesus at the very core of our hearts.