

## 1Corinthians 18-09-16a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a blessing to see everyone here and to imagine everybody everywhere else and hope you're able to view us. My Bible class laptop is working on Microsoft updates as is typical for just when I need it most.

However, and somewhat unusually, I have a copious page of notes here and I'm going to be working out of my Reinacher Rogers this morning anyway, so despite its attempts to foil me, I'm actually not in need of it. This is September the 16th of 2018 and we're continuing our study in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the love chapter, and we're going to review the characteristics of this love. We saw last time that it is a thing not to be directly sought.

We found that the source of this love is the Holy Spirit, and rather than trying to cultivate these qualities individually and in our own strength, as we look to God for His power, these qualities will become evident. So this morning as we look at the facets of love that Paul describes here, rather than saying I've got to work on having that, we use these descriptions as a means of examining ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Because if we're doing what we're supposed to do in terms of benefiting from God's Word and drawing on the power of God's Holy Spirit on a daily basis, these will be symptoms.

These will be outgrowths and manifestations of the presence of God's power in us. This is how we know we've got it. It's a great relief to me to not have to try to make this list and then work on each one as though it was a quality that I had to generate.

It's much easier for me to look to the Word of God in faith, to trust in the presence and power of His Spirit, to create these things in me. I cannot cleanse my heart. God creates a clean heart within me.

I can't generate love. God pours out His love in us, and that's how we develop these qualities. So these are descriptions that help us to see where we are in the area of our spiritual growth and function.

So that's how we want to look at them as we review them in some detail this morning. Let's pause as we begin. We actually have the Greek word pause, and so it's on my mind coming up here.

But let's pause for a moment at the beginning and ask God's blessing on our study and thank Him for the wonderful day that He's given us in which to undertake it. Father, we are grateful for Your common grace that populates the world with the resources and the opportunities that give all of us the arena in which we make our choices and pursue our goals. And we're grateful that You have given us the options through Christ to partake of eternity, to lay hold of righteousness, to be more than what we could be just in time or just in the material world.

We're grateful for the work of the Lord Jesus that makes this possible for us. He has opened a door into a new and valuable way of life. He Himself, having lived in our midst and died on our behalf and is now risen and is interceding on our behalf, we thank You for His ministry.

We thank You for Your Holy Spirit and His work of facilitating our communication and enabling our prayers to be heard in Your presence and to manifest Your love in our hearts. And we pray that as we study that love this morning, that the Spirit will be our teacher, that we can follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who is the ultimate expression of Your love toward us, and that we can love each other in the way that You have showed us it can be done. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

I'm going to need a tissue. Not that I've choked myself up, but I woke up about four o'clock this morning. I've been golden all summer long, and now suddenly there's something in the air that's irritating my sinuses.

So thank you for that. I'll try not to make myself hard to look at here. But let's turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

I'm going to be running down the list of characteristics here in Greek, because Greek is great, and it illuminates for us the description. It will also explain, by the way, why if you have a parallel New Testament and you look at different versions, you will see such wonderfully different translations, many of which are different and yet valid for this particular passage. As we read it in the New King James, for example, you have the initial three descriptions of Paul.

And I just want to clarify something that I didn't really dwell on earlier in those first three descriptions. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Though I have 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.

This is the part I want to point out. Verse 3, though I bestow all my goods to feed, and notice the poor is in italics, but bestow to feed, the reason they add the poor there is the Greek verb that is translated bestow means to portion out, or to apportion, or to break into crumbs and scatter the crumbs to the birds. It means to divide into small pieces and distribute.

This is conceptually what the Lord did when he fed the 5,000 through the disciples. He broke the bread into small pieces and it went a lot of places. So though I distribute my goods widely, you can see Microsoft helpfully giving me back my machine.

And though I give my body to be burned, and you have a text note there if you have a New King James that says, so that I may boast. This is almost evenly divided evidence in the ancient Greek manuscripts between kaomai and kaophosomai. There's a difference of one letter.

It's either a chi, which is a long crisscross, or it's a theta. And in script, when you're writing a theta, if you draw a zero and then loop around and go through the middle of it, that's how you

do a script theta. When I'm making my notes, that's how you do it.

So there's not a lot of visual difference between a theta and a chi in italic writing. So it has come down to us in both forms. But the earliest witness is P46.

This is the oldest Greek manuscript we have. And P46 says the theta. And theta means, I'm sorry, it's the chi.

Theta is the one that means to be burned. The chi means to boast, or to have boasting. And give myself to boasting would be as a result of having distributed your goods.

And I think that's what's being said here. So for what it's worth, and most Greek scholars agree that the original here is kaomai, which means to boast, to have boasting. And Paul talks about boasting in many places in his letters.

And it's a frequently used verb. He doesn't use the to be burned word anywhere. So I think both content-wise, context-wise, and linguistically from the form of the text and all the rest of it, I would amend this to say, as it does in the, I think my bilingual testament here has a RSV.

And their translation is, well they say deliver my body to be burned. But I think a better translation is that I may boast. Give myself to boasting, so to speak.

It profits me nothing. Profiting, if you've just been incinerated, profit's kind of a moot point. Unless you're looking in the spiritual realm.

And the way it's typically understood is, I've thrown myself on a grenade because I'm expecting a spiritual reward. And it can certainly be taken that way. But I think this is for boasting.

Boasting is the problem in Corinth, by the way. And that's the culminating thought in this group of three thoughts. I could apportion all of my goods out and have that kind of boasting.

Remember, this is what got Ananias and Sapphira in trouble in the early part of Acts. And it's pretty much a well-known episode by now. So, that begins then the section of description in verse four.

We have it in the New King James, love suffers long and is kind. Then you have the list of eight oohs, what it is not. Two things that it is, eight things that it is not.

Then we're going to have four pantas down at the end. So, let's begin here in verse four. Love suffers long.

This is macro-thumia. Thumia has the idea of burning or temper or anger. And macro-thumia is to be long-suffering, to be patient.

I made some notes here. It is a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. Generally, when it breaks down, it gives way to passion.

And this is a very famous linguistic reference from the past century or more by Trench. Trench's New Testament synonyms. And this is Trench's definition of macro-thumia.

That it is a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. Generally to passion. It is the steadfast spirit which will never give in.

This comes from the theological dictionary of the New Testament. The idea of the word is it takes a long time before fuming and breaking into flames. You can heat it, but it has an inflammable quality.

It's been treated to not burst into flames even under exposure to flame. So that's macro-thumia. So suffers long is one aspect.

But what it is enduring and not doing is it's not breaking into hot temper and anger. It's not so much enduring pain or enduring suffering. It's enduring that which would make you angry without getting angry.

So temper is in view and it is slow to wrath. Might be a good translation. Slow to wrath.

The RSV just says love is patient. But this is a particular kind of patience. It's not waiting for your crops to grow so that you can harvest them.

This is bearing up under duress and not giving in to a perhaps justifiable passionate response in anger. Macro-thumia. That's what love... And this is the very first quality.

The first one. You could think, well, love... If you're going to write an essay on love, would you start out with, well, it's slow-tempered. Love is slow to wrath.

You might think of other things first. But Paul says this is one of its primary qualities. This is the point of the spear.

You can't do any of the rest of these if you've already gotten angry. So the first thing you have to do is not be angry. And where the love of God is present, we have great durability when it comes to not having a flash fit of temper.

So, does not flash into anger. Macro-thumia. That's our first description.

And the second one is also positive, and this is crestuomai. Crestuomai. Crestos, C-H-R-E-S-T-O-S, is the word that means something that is beneficial.

Paul says, for me to live is crestos and to die is gain, in my view. Your Bible says for me to live is Christ, but again, the change of one letter gives you a completely different sense. And I've honestly, since I was a child, never been able to make sense out of for me to live is Christ.

It's weird in Greek and it's weird in English. You can flower it up in your mind. But if to live is Christ, we don't see Christ here.

We see Him when we die. So it would seem like, well, to live is good and to die is Christ. That's when we're united with Him.

That's when we see Him. He takes us to Himself. It's a strange thought.

And half of the manuscripts, again, say *crestos*. And I've mentioned before, there's a similar swap in one of Peter's letters. Taste and see that the Lord is Christ, or taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

He's kind. He's beneficial. Taste and see.

This is the quality of the Lord and this is the quality of love. So when God's love is shed abroad, we are going to be like God in that sense. And it basically means beneficial.

And so in these first two descriptions, you have the essence of where we get our sacrificial, beneficial, short definition for love. *Macrothumia* means I'm not going to rail about justice and what I ought to have and why this is so wrong. I'm not going to throw a fit because things aren't going the way I think they should.

I'm going to sacrifice all that. I'm going to be slow to get unhappy or upset. And instead, I'm going to be beneficial.

So *macrothumia* and *crestos* really are our sacrificial, beneficial point of the spear. You have to have this to start for all of the rest of the qualities of love to have any traction. So it's a quick check.

When I am in this situation, when I am with this person or these people, am I patient in the sense of not becoming quickly angry and am I beneficial, am I kind in the sense of, boy, I'm sure glad that person is here. That's *crestos*. Aren't you glad the Lord Jesus is there? Taste and see that it's a benefit to know the Lord.

He is *crestos*. He is gracious. He is kind.

He is a benefit. And that's the nature of this love which comes from Him. So those are the first two positive things, *macrothumia* and *crestos*, *crestuomai*.

And *crestos* would just be an adjective as it's found a couple of other places in Scripture. But this is *crestuomai*, which is the *amai* there. When you see that, that's the reflexive idea.

And so it speaks of it as a quality. It doesn't just perform kindness. It is a benefit.

It's a middle. It acts in a way that is beneficial to self and to the other. Sometimes it even has a reflexive idea.

But this is a middle participle idea. Then thirdly, we have this list of eight things of what love is not. And in the favored Greek text, it says love is not number one.

And then it says love is not number two. And then it leaves out the word love. So you have that group of seven.

There's one that's set apart. And then there are seven more. But there's some uncertainty about whether Paul repeated the word love one or more times.

And P46 is on one side, and the other texts are on the other. And so I think we can't make too much out of whether he repeats the word love or not because we're not real sure. We know what he's talking about, but the specific form is a little bit uncertain.

So we'll just say there are eight notes here about love. The first one is zeloo, z-e-l-o-o, zeloo. This is to literally it means to boil.

And it means to be passionate, to be fervent, to be eager. It can mean to be zealous. It can mean to be jealous.

Now, this says it's not zealous, right? Oo is the strong negative in Greek. So it is not zeloo, it's not zeloi. Well, aren't we supposed to be a people zealous? Isn't zeal a good thing? How could love not be zealous? The last time this word was used by Paul is just a couple of verses up in chapter 12, verse 31.

Earnestly zeloo, the better gifts, is how you have it translated. But he says, you are zelooing the greater gifts. Let me show you a better way.

This is why I translated 31 the way I did because it is presented here as something love does not do. You are not being loving in the way you're coveting these gifts. You're so passionate about trying to get one of these gifts or improve the gift you have.

Let me show you a more excellent way. Love doesn't do this. You see the connection? 1231 and 13.4 here.

It is not zealous for itself. You get the idea that this is a selfish zeal. So we are aware that this is the very same word used up in 1231 and translated accordingly.

So it is not envious or self-interested in its passion. This would be a self-interested passion. Zeloo.

And the last description here in verse 4 is, it is not, in your New King James, it says, does not parade itself. It is patient. It is kind.

It does not envy. That's your zeloo. Zeloo does not parade itself here is perperuamai.

Perperuamai. This literally means to put oneself forward or to parade oneself. To show off.

Love doesn't show off. In other words, there are times when you want to be appreciated, and that's the reason you do a thing. You do something and say, well, that will get me noticed.

That will create a response of gratitude and positive inclination toward me. I will do this in order to receive favor, acclaim, accolades. You get the idea that people that are sometimes in the public eye will engage in charity, not because they woke up one morning and said, you know, I've really just got a heart for muscular dystrophy, or I've really got a heart for, but their manager or their agent has said, this is a good career move that you be well-rounded and that you are not just known for your acting or for your singing, but you appear to have a charitable heart.

This will increase your overall success. And so it doesn't come from within. There are others who do, by the way.

There are those who have family members and they have a great interest in cancer or in some other malady because somebody close to them has had it or they've lost a child to it or whatever, and they're deeply committed. And there's a difference there between somebody who adopts a charity because it was recommended to them as a good career move and somebody who has been moved by the suffering that that particular thing causes and on their own, whether they were rich or poor, they would be invested in trying to get this disease treated or cured or whatever. And so love does not do the shallow form of commitment or care or concern.

When it is committed to something, it's because it's genuine. And we have to think about this a little bit because there's a lot of good causes. There's a lot of ministries.

There's a lot of missions. There's a lot of charities. There are a lot of diseases that work is being done to try to address them and ameliorate them and cure them.

And, well, should I do like Paul says, distribute all of my goods in small morsels to all these different things because I think they're all good. I'm going to give to the ASPCA and help the shivering dogs, and I'm going to save the whales, and I'm going to try to cure world hunger and donate to the Doctors Without Borders. I mean, there are just dozens and an infinitude of wonderful causes.

And here's a guy with his hat in his hand and a cardboard sign on the corner of the street, and you stop at the light, and he comes toward you with an inquiring look in his eye. Have you got a 5 or a 20? You can drop in the hat here, and you think, well, maybe the guy is genuinely in need. I doubt it, but, you know, what do you do? This is the great thing about the love being shed abroad in us by God rather than us trying to generate it.

If I was going to try to generate charity, I would have to pick a charity, and I would have to really agonize over, well, why this one and not that one? And the more well-off people are. I've known some relatively well-off people, and this is one of the burdens they bear is you've been given this stewardship. What do you do with it? Where do you direct it? Who do you say no to when they come to you and have a seemingly legitimate situation? And you could quickly dissipate whatever resources you have on good causes.

You could give it all away, as Paul says. So how do you know? When should you give? Well, I can't tell you that, and you can't tell you that in advance. God will tell you that.

In the presence of His Holy Spirit and the power of His Word, you will just know. I can't tell you how to identify or how you did identify the person that you married. God works in mysterious ways, and it's often different for different people, wildly different in some cases.

But for believers, when it is of God, God brings it about, and He knows you, and He knows that other party. God knows you, and He knows a potential object of charity or a potential object of benefit in love. Maybe it's just a neighbor.

Maybe it's just an acquaintance. Maybe it's somebody in your periphery. Opportunity comes your way.

Should I pitch in and help, or is this something best left to others? Nobody knows that but God. So go to God. Look to the love that He sheds abroad in our hearts, and we will know.

This genuine expression has to come from the heart, and for believers, it has to come rooted in the love that God puts in our heart. And He will give us an identification friend or foe, if you will. There will be something that creates a connection.

It will just be the right thing. And I can't tell you how He lets us know that, but you'll know. If you are looking, and if you are watching, and if you are praying, and if you go before Him and say, I want to be a good steward of the time, the resources that you've given me.

Help me to know. Is this something I should do or not? God will never not honor that prayer. God would never say, Nope, sorry, you figure it out.

He wants us to minister. He wants us to be a blessing to one another. It's in His interest.

It's a part of His plan. How can He not answer that prayer? He will. We just have to be in a position to hear the answer, recognize the answer, and implement the answer in faith and not in human energy.

So there's a lot to this description of love here where you have it described as not showing off, not falsely motivated in what it does, not self-interested in that. The next description you have here is not fusiumai, fisiumai. In verse 4, the final word there, it says it's not perperuatai.

That's the sort of doing something to be noticed or to be appreciated. And then it is not fusiutai. Fusios is almost onomopoetic.

It is a blowing into, an inflating, a puffing up of a thing. And so to inflate yourself, to be self-important, to be puffed up, to, you know, this is what the puffer fish does. Of course, it's not air.

It's water. But it sucks in water and tries to make itself larger than it really is to fool its predators and to maybe impress its friends. I don't know.

But to enlarge yourself, to appear to be more than we are. So inflated is a really good word here. So they really simplify this in my RSV that accompanies my Greek text here where it says, Love is patient and kind.

Love is not jealous or boastful. And that certainly hits some of the high points. But love is not jealous.

It is not boastful. It is not arrogant or rude. It says here next.

And when it says arrogant, and in your New King James here, you have does not behave rudely. The word rudely here is oskemoneo. Oskemoneo.

And this is sort of a double negative. You have the alpha privative there. But schema is a right arrangement of things.

Schema in its pure sense is where things are right where they're supposed to be. They're put where they are according to a scheme. This is not an evil scheme.

This is a good scheme. You have a scheme for arranging your furniture. You have a scheme for laying out your landscaping.

And it's beautiful, and it's functional, and it's the way it should be. Well, a schemas is to be disarranged and out of order. And it comes to mean to be indecent or dishonorable.

Schema speaks of that which is honorable, that which is proper, that which is fitting. So when you put the alpha privative in front of it, it's not fitting. It's not proper.

It's not according to the plan. It doesn't benefit. It is a cacophony.

It jangles. It jars. It's square pegs in round holes.

It's out of whack. Love does not behave dishonorably or indecently. And this is a check on the proper expression of love that has been missed by, for example, pastors in large churches who do counseling, and a woman comes in, and her husband is abusive, or she's got some other big problems in her marriage, and she has self-esteem issues, and well-meaning and well-intentioned, arm around the shoulder, and look, you are valuable, you are worth something.

And many, I can't tell you, they warned us about this in seminary, never do counseling with a closed door, always have somebody else present, et cetera, et cetera, because it is so easy wanting to express love and wanting to reassure and build up and affirm, in the case of a male pastor and a female congregation member, that with all the best intentions and trying to express godly Christian love for this hurting person, it crosses a line, and this is the line it crosses. It is no longer proper. It's no longer honorable.

It has crossed a boundary, but it doesn't feel wrong, because you're just being as loving and supporting and building up as you know how to be, and you didn't check this particular

parameter. I've been trying to make things that are symmetrical. We've been making screen doors for chicken houses and various things, and you want things to be parallel and not trapezoidal.

You want it to be a rectangle and not a weird diamond shape, right? Especially on a screen door. It's mostly chicken wire. It's just got a little frame.

Well, it's not going to fit the door if it's hopper-jawed, right? And so I can measure the sides, and they're exactly the same. I can measure the top and bottom, and they're exactly the same. And I can have measured the doorway, and it's exactly the same.

And yet, if I put that thing together and tack all the wire down and go to put it in, there was one thing I forgot to check, and that's the diagonals. If I want to be sure that it's perfectly rectangular, I've got to go back and check the diagonals. All of the measurements are right.

It's wood, chicken wire. It's got the right dimensions. I just forgot one thing.

What about my diagonals? And visually, on a big door, you can't really see it. You can't stand far enough away from it to see that it's not square. The angles are not 90.

Well, in the expression of love, we always have to step back and make sure we've checked all of the dimensions. And this is one I know from observation has tripped up a lot of pastors, trying to be loving and trying to do counseling and trying to be affirming and supportive and restore self-esteem. And you can justify it nine ways to Sunday in your mind, but the first thing you know, the hugs are not quite proper anymore, and the reassurance and the comfort crosses this schema line.

And we have to always check that the expressions of love are proper and honorable, always. And as well-intentioned as you may be, and in the name of love, you can be doing something, you wind up being Debbie Boone. It can't be wrong if it feels so right.

Yes, it can. You can't go by your feelings. You've got to go by the schema.

And God the Holy Spirit and the Word of God in our souls will impress upon us the schema, the honor, the rightness, and it will never cross beyond cordial friendship into immoral and boundary-crossing romance, as one example of many. So a schema. So just saying that it is not rude doesn't quite get it.

Rudeness, of course, is crossing the boundaries of politeness or of courtesy or of, you know, what we used to have by way of social concourse. People wouldn't use bad language. They wouldn't tell off-color jokes.

They wouldn't bring up politics or, you know, things that were not seemly in polite society. And so rude, you know, to be uncivil or to be coarse is one thing, and love is certainly not that. But a schema.

Think about the schema. There's a lot of areas where there is a propriety that needs to be observed, not just courteous discourse. So does not seek its own is the next one.

And this is zeteo, which is to seek, to look for, ta heiotus. Heiotus is that which is mine. Heiotus is my own.

Well, my own what? There's no my own interest, my own glory, my own what? Well, because there's no object there, love doesn't seek its own anything. But to smooth it out in English, doesn't seek its own, probably the two most prominent areas where this applies is love doesn't seek its own way. How can I get my way? And it doesn't seek its own interest.

How can I benefit myself? And usually those overlap. If I get my way, I think I'll benefit. It'll be better for me if we do it this way.

I'll like it better. It appeals to me. I will in some way be benefited or be satisfied if my own idea is followed.

So it doesn't seek. And this is seek in the sense of search out. I'll find a way to get my way.

Or I'll find a way to better my prospect, my interest, my agenda. Love doesn't seek its own, and you can fill in the blank here. Interest, way, agenda are three suggestions.

And they're all true. Love doesn't have an agenda of its own. It doesn't have a way of its own.

It doesn't have an interest of its own. So that is the first part of verse 5 that is translated here. It doesn't behave rudely.

It does not seek its own. Seek its own is really good. Then the last part says, Is not provoked and thinks no evil.

Is not provoked is the Greek word from which we get paroxysm. So love does not partake of paroxysms. What exactly does that mean? Well, I think this is a good place for us to take a break.

We're about halfway through the description here. And our thought as we progress through these descriptions, again, is twofold. First of all, you can see that there is a common theme that was introduced at the beginning.

It is sacrificial in the sense of macrothumia, not getting ahead of itself, not throwing a fit, not getting angry because things aren't going according to its way. And you can see that all of these subsequent descriptions play back into that. You can't avoid envy and jealousy when you're angry.

You can just envy somebody the victory in an argument and say, Well, I don't want you to prevail. I don't want you to be right and me to be wrong. And you can just stay angry.

And a lot of people just shout louder when they're in the wrong because that way they don't have to come up with any actual valid arguments. I'm just louder than you, therefore I'm righter than you, which doesn't make a lot of sense. But macrothumia and chrestuomai.

It is sacrificial to self. It is beneficial to those that come into its way. We can't generate this.

It comes from God. So in looking at this list, again, this tells us where we are. This tells us what to do to improve.

If we've got a patience problem, and I'm using the royal we there, if I have a patience problem, I can't sit around working on patience. And I can tell you from personal experience, trying to be more patient when you have an impatience problem doesn't work. What I have to do, if I am impatient, is work on cultivating the presence and power of God in my soul, which will give me that love that emanates patience, that soaks me in patience.

And pulls me off the cliff I want to jump off of, thinking that this is the best way. So it's a wonderful thing to remember, that we have this resource in the Holy Spirit and in the Word of God to create in us what we cannot generate on our own. And that's where to direct our attention.

That's where to direct our time. That's where to direct our ambition. It's not so much ambition to develop great qualities, but ambitions to be literally more spiritual.

Because, seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things that you're seeking will be added unto you. It's the same in the realm of these. And you see what Paul is doing.

He says, you're thinking about gifts and how to have more gifts. You want more tongue speaking and more prophesying and more healing and more miracles. You want to see a miracle? Have the Holy Spirit bring these out in your soul and in your daily life.

This is a bigger miracle than tongues. It's a bigger miracle than bringing somebody's sight back when they're blind, or reducing their fever and bringing them whole and walking around and eating a meal. This is your Holy Spirit miracles right here.

This is the better way. So, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up and cover the rest of this description of God's love in us.