

1Corinthians 18-09-16b

Let's resume our study now in 1 Corinthians 13, and this is a helpful explication, exploration, expansion, close-up look at the nature of divine love, love that is transcendent, love that is beyond what we as human beings can produce. You and I have known people who are not necessarily believers, or if they are, they don't really have an active spiritual life, and yet they seem to be very loving and very giving and shirt-off-the-back, neighborly, and you say, well, doesn't God credit people who are just naturally generous, who are very kind, who are outgoing and selfless, and you know, they're a wonderful neighbor, a wonderful friend, get up in the middle of the night and help you with a flat, or take your kid to the doctor because your car's not working, or whatever, and there are, in the realm of human love and human generosity, there are a lot of wonderful expressions and genuine people who just have a wonderful disposition and they are self-sacrificial and they are beneficial to people around them. What about that? Here's the thing.

This love that we're studying in 1 Corinthians 13 is of God. It is from God, and its presence is a reflection of His glory. The preceding description I just gave of the wonderful friend or the wonderful neighbor, who gets the credit? Who is well thought of, and how far does that extend? Oh, great guy.

Can't say enough good things about X. But, crediting a human being, as nice as that is, and as valid as it is, as genuine and true as it may be, it isn't in the spiritual realm. It's not a bad thing that people are kind and generous and unbelievers are charitable and many of them are giving and selfless in different ways at different times. You can't impugn all of them and say, well, deep down they're all after evil motives.

Some of them have good motives. They're genuinely generous. They're genuinely kind.

They're genuinely thoughtful. It's fine. There's nothing evil about it.

But it falls short. There is no eternal quality in your neighbor helping you out. There were people that lived on this property in the late 1800s.

I don't know anything about them. I've found foundation stones out here. We've run across the remains of broken dishes.

Before that, there were Native Americans who lived here. I mean Native Americans before the Trail of Tears, natives in the sense of the mound builders and the Clovis people and the Oaxacan Chicagoans and all the rest of the ones that were here on the continent before the white man ever showed up. Many of those people were no doubt generous and kind and loyal to their families and their friends and the members of their clan and their tribe and so on.

A lot of human loyalty, a lot of human kindness, a lot of human love has been exercised. Here's my question to you. Where is it now? It was good in the moment.

Somebody appreciated them and knew their name and said, hey, thanks a lot. If I can ever return the favor, let me know. But it has perished.

Those people make up the red clay in these hills. They're gone and they weren't believers. They're part of the core that God assigned to Satan to play with because they had no interest in God.

And God said, fine. You can do your best without me. Here you go.

Have a continent. You want some supernatural power? Appeal to my former cherub that has been cast to earth and see what he can do for you. He thinks like you do.

He's not interested in a relationship with me, so you all go be warm, be fed on your own. Anything that a human being can generate, however seemingly noble, however seemingly truthful, however seemingly beneficial, however actually noble and truthful and beneficial doesn't partake of eternity. It doesn't enter into the divine.

If it's not connected to God, it will inevitably perish. It will be, it's of the earth. It's of the dust.

We are dust and we return to dust. And our goodnesses are like rags. And rags eventually turn to dust.

They disintegrate and they're gone. Did you ever think about that? Remember, we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. And in Hebrew, it's a very strong term.

But you think about this now. A rag didn't used to be a rag. It used to be one of my t-shirts.

It used to be something that was beneficial and good. And when it was no longer fit for that purpose, because I burned a hole in it. As far as I know, we've only ever lost one Grace and Truth embroidered t-shirt.

And that was me because we were burning brush and a cinder went way up in the air and came all the way down. I was wearing a coat. And it went down my collar and got inside my flannel shirt.

And I was wearing my Grace and Truth t-shirt underneath. And it went in there and that was right next to my heart. Right next to my skin.

The t-shirt was my undermost, you know, you do layers. The cinder didn't burn my coat, didn't burn my shirt. It burned my t-shirt.

And not just a little bit. There was about a two and a half inch path about the size of a big fat caterpillar where it completely burned away all the cloth. I never got touched.

I was like, you know, Hananiah and Mishaël and Azariah. The fire never harmed me. But it

ruined that shirt.

So that shirt became a rag. However, the embroidered Grace and Truth thing, Patty cut it out and I'm going to stitch it on something else. So the good part still exists.

I just saw it up there yesterday. But my point being that all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags. Well, what is a filthy rag like? Think about it.

Back up. People don't say, you don't go down to Walmart into a certain aisle in the cleaning department and they say, here's your filthy rags, right? Rags start out clean, not filthy, and the rags start out usually as something else. All of our rags are castoffs and things that are no longer fit for their purpose, but they started out being something good.

Human righteousness starts out as something good, but it does not last. It turns into filthy rags. Sometimes you need a rag.

You need a rag for all kinds of purposes. You need something to soak up a spill. You need something to wipe off grease.

You need something to clean and to beautify something else. And what's left over is the rag that is now unusable because it is soiled and spoiled and stained and full of whatever it might be, paint or grease or whatever, but it is something that cannot be restored. It started out good, but it can't be restored.

So it has now become a rag and it has been used for the only purpose you can use rags for and now it's no longer fit even for that purpose. What do you do with your castoff rags that you can't use anymore? You throw them away. They ultimately get burned or they disintegrate and go back to dust.

Our righteousnesses are like rags. Maybe fit for a purpose in the short term, but no lasting quality, no lasting value. That which you washed will need to be washed again.

That which you soaked up is going to need to be soaked up again. It's temporary. It's ephemeral.

It's transient. It's good in the moment, but it's got no eternity. Eternity partakes of God.

Eternal life, eternal glory, eternal benefit. That which is good in the transcendent sense. Our righteousness never achieves that level and you can greatly appreciate it in the moment, but it just doesn't last.

It just doesn't persist and that's its flaw. In the same way that human life may be great, but if it doesn't persist and doesn't move into eternity, it doesn't last. Let's take the collar off.

So here's my point. This description, these qualities, all hook into eternity. When you are patient, your patience is written in heaven.

When you are kind, that kindness is written in heaven. It reflects God's glory. The reason you were patient and the reason you were kind is you were connected to God and you hooked into a kind of patience and a kind of kindness that comes from Him.

And there's a qualitative difference. I was looking at grill covers yesterday and one of them is like \$15 and the other one is \$35. One of them is made by great value, let's say, and the other one is made by charbroil.

Well, I can get the \$15 cover and it says, you know, guaranteed to last two years. You can get the charbroil cover that's guaranteed to last, say, 10 years. Well, which one do you want? Well, I've got a cheap grill.

It probably won't last more than two years. I'll get the cheap cover. If everything is going to transient out and go away, I just used transient as a verb.

If everything is going to transition out and go away, then sure, use something cheap. Use a filthy rag to cover your greasy grill and they'll both be gone next year. Things that last cost more, mean more, do more.

And when you compare that to the eternality that God has put within our reach and within our grasp by faith, that's the difference. Nothing wrong with appreciating human good, but it's a filthy rag. We've got a whole box full of rags up there.

It's great for drying off the dog and wiping Major's mouth after he eats. It's good to have a rag, but I don't want that thing forever. When Major's gone, I'm not going to hang that mouth-wiping rag up on the wall and say, Oh, Major, look at that filthy rag I used to wipe his mouth with.

It's transient. He's a good dog, and it's a good thing to keep the carpet clean because if you don't wipe his mouth, he'll use the carpet as his napkin. So it's a great thing to have in the moment, but it doesn't partake of eternity.

Do you see the difference? The kind of love that we're talking about here is not transient. It's not momentary. It doesn't perish in the using, and it isn't forgotten when the giver and the receiver are gone.

It is recorded. It is written. It is as eternal as God is because it's his love, and it has ripples.

One of the things that we don't realize is our human good is often well-intentioned but poorly aimed. We think we're helping, and we're not. I think about this.

I loved my grandmother, and one time for Christmas I gave her a candle because she had a lot of knickknacks and things that looked like this candle. I thought, well, I'll give my grandmother a candle. And she understood this.

She's a wise woman. But the last thing my grandmother needed was one more knickknack. The

last thing she needed was one more candle.

I was trying to express love, but it was not well thought out. And you can appreciate a thing because of the intention more so than the thing. She probably didn't like that candle at all, but she kept it and shoved it, shoehorned it in with all the rest of her surplus of knickknacks.

But if we have the love of God, it partakes of God's wisdom. And its eternality is not just that it's recorded in heaven, but it is going to ripple out. The power of God is in God's love, and that power is going to radiate and manifest, and it's going to create benefits that we are completely unaware of.

We don't know what all is being accomplished when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We can't see it, and we don't have to know. We'll find out in glory.

You remember that small bit of faithfulness, and you didn't think anything of it, and you just trusted God in a small moment, and you were sacrificial to yourself, and you were beneficial to this other person, and you did this small thing. And we think, well, that probably helped them through a bad day. God may have taken that expression of His love and used it to do incredible things that we know not of because of our human limitations.

Human effort and human love never does that. It doesn't ripple out. It doesn't have divine foreknowledge and divine wisdom and divine power in it like God's love does.

So we can't even trust observation. We may think that something we've done by way of this kind of love is unappreciated or unnoticed or unrecognized or ineffectual. We did it, and we thought it would have an effect, and it did not.

I thought this kindness might bring somebody around and change their attitude or their appreciation, and it doesn't seem to have done anything. It seems to have just gotten lost in the fog. Don't count it out.

You don't know. When God's power is in it, there are things going on that are like radiation. When people first discovered uranium and things like that, they didn't realize that there was a power in it that was invisible.

That was a destructive power. That gave them radiation sickness and killed them. But they couldn't see it.

They mishandled it and were casual with it, carried it around in their pockets and put it in their desk drawers. First time they figured out something was going on was the guy put it in his desk drawer and messed up a stack of film. He pulled the film out and developed it, and here's all of this exposure.

And he said, Whoa, how did that happen? And he went back and figured out that there was power coming out of that rock that he didn't know. Well, there is power coming out of the love

of God. These qualities and these characteristics that you can't see and you can't know until we get to eternity.

But this is the more excellent way. It's more excellent than a humanly powered, humanly sighted kind of love. So that's what we're talking about here.

And just to put wonderful people in perspective, they are wonderful. When it's humanly originated and humanly powered, it just doesn't have eternity in it. It doesn't have God in it.

And it will inevitably perish like all other good things that man does. People build wonderful hospitals, wonderful church buildings. And I've seen both go through being appreciated for their modernity and their wonderful features.

Then they reach midlife, and then they get kind of dingy and dirty, and then they don't quite work right anymore. And first thing you know, here's the wrecking ball and the bulldozer, and they're gone. They were good for a time, but they didn't last.

We just don't have the power of eternal life. God does, and so does His love. Let's pick up now here in verse 6. We've seen not behaving rudely, and this is really not behaving out of the scheme.

Not being dishonorable. Not being indecent. And does not seek its own interest, its own way, its own agenda, would be my suggestions.

Then it says, is not provoked and thinks no evil. Is not provoked. This is where we left off with the word paroxysm.

And this is where we get paroxysm. It means to throw a fit. A paroxysm is an uncontrollable fit, usually of rage.

He was in a paroxysm of anger or whatever. He was out of control. But the Zuno, part of this, Z-U-N-O, Z-Y-N-O, this root word means sharp.

It's something sharp. And the idea of a paroxysm is that you're out of control, and you're going to hurt yourself. You're going to hit corners.

You're going to get sliced. Something sharp is going to create injury. It has the idea of injury.

So a good way perhaps to translate this would be, is not injurious. Doesn't, as it is flailing around. Have you ever tried to help an animal that is hurt, and it bites you or it scratches you? I had a cat.

We had a cat one time. They got tangled up with a plastic grocery bag. You know, the kind that blow in the wind, they're so light.

A little Wal-Mart type bag. Probably was a Wal-Mart bag. But we'd been gone, and I don't know

how it happened, but cats like to crawl into things and explore.

Well, he'd gotten inside this plastic bag, and then when he tried to get back out, it got wrapped around his back leg. Well, they rattle. And so as he tried to leave, the bag was rattling, and it scared him.

And so he was trying to get away from the rattling noise, which just made it rattle more. And he'd been running back and forth and back and forth. And he had torn out some of his claws, and there were bloody footprints on the thing.

And he was cowering under the bed, afraid to move. He had finally gotten the noise to stop, but it was only because he had worn himself out running back and forth in the house. And there was all kinds of signs that this had gone on for some time.

So I found him under the bed. I saw the bloody paw marks and tracked him down, found him under the bed. And so I wanted to get this bag off of him, but he was scared beyond all measure.

And in trying to get the bag off, it rattled. And, of course, then he wanted to scratch and bite. If you've ever tried to separate fighting cats, you get the same effect.

You know, you can get injured. The paroxysm, your efforts hurt those who may be trying to help you. That's what this word means.

Love doesn't hurt other people inadvertently because it's preoccupied with something else. It's hard to get all of the freight out of this word in English, but that's what it means. Love gives you that centered calmness that you don't inadvertently hurt the people around you because you're flailing, because you're panicky, because you're distracted.

It keeps you from hurting others. And what a wonderful quality to have. But the root in paroxysm is something sharp.

And the reason something sharp is not good is it's going to create injury. So there's sharpness in injury that love does not flail around and cause. Then it says, does not, thinks no evil.

Thinks no evil. This is really interesting because it's logizimai, which is the word that means to use your logic, to reason, to think about and explore a thing. You know, science is all about logizimai.

We observe. We gather data. We compare the data.

We try to draw valid conclusions by using reason and process of elimination and what makes sense. Logizimai is how we make sense of the world. And there are different words for thinking.

Froneo is another one. But this is logizimai. And you see the amai in there, which has that middle reflexive idea, to make sense of for myself.

It means to figure out. To figure out. To reason about a thing and draw conclusions so that you've got a settled mind about it.

Well, this doesn't so much mean it thinks no evil. And they try to say that logizimai means to assign or to impute to someone. But there are accounting words in Greek that would carry that meaning better.

But this is to logizimai kakon. That which is kakos just means wickedness, badness. That which is just wrong.

And love doesn't figure out wrongness. You know, there are people who say, here's something that went awry. And I say this somewhat carefully, but you can go in for a medical procedure.

And maybe the doctors and the nurses, you were out. You come back later and, you know, the guy left a scalpel or a sponge in there. Or he didn't stitch it up right and the stitch came loose.

Or he, you know, something went wrong. And I want to investigate and track this down and find who is responsible and get justice by figuring out what went wrong. Love doesn't try to figure out what went wrong.

It doesn't do forensics on the problem. I know somewhere you messed up, and I'm going to figure it out. It doesn't really mean love thinks no evil.

I mean, you would just have to be, you know, off eating your curds and whey or something and not having a skeptical thought in your head to not understand that bad things happen. And you need to identify them and be wary of them and stake out the ground where the, you know, it's going to take eight months to bury the dead when the millennial kingdom starts. And they're going to have to stake off the radiated parts and nobody's going to go there.

You've got to figure that out. You've got to identify what is wrong. You can't be good if you don't know what is wrong.

But thinking no evil doesn't catch what this means. It's logizimai. It's to parse and reason out and use your forensic tools to figure out what went wrong because you're going to go after them and get that fixed.

It just disinvests. Remember in Peter, I coined a new word for myself. We disinvest.

When something goes wrong, we suffer a wrong. Something goes wrong, we're not out for justice. Remember earlier in this letter, Paul said you're taking each other to court.

Wouldn't it be better to just let yourself be wronged? Let it go. Give it away. Drop it.

Go to the bridge. Be Billy Joe McAllister dropping something off the Tallahatchie Bridge. Drop it in the water and let it go away.

Give it to God. Let God figure it out. Don't logizomai kakan.

I don't try anymore to figure out what's wrong with American society or what's wrong with the economy or what's wrong with the government or what's wrong with the judicial system. The more you logizomai that, the less space there is for God the Holy Spirit to bring to us the thoughts of God and the truth of God and the hope and the faith and the love that's supposed to characterize us. If you've got your mind all wrapped up, this is why I quit watching news.

Well, somebody shot somebody. They got this guy, and he had somebody locked up in his basement. Here's this child.

They're two different races. That stuff can just get in your head and crawl around like a worm, eating what it may devour. Me personally, I am so much happier when I don't watch the news.

I just let the stuff flow. It doesn't concern me anyway. I'm not living next to somebody who locked their kid in the basement or shot somebody or got shot by somebody.

It's not a part of my periphery. I've got my hands full trying to logizomai what God has put on my plate. What are my priorities? How can I do what I am put here to do in a way that pleases God and brings Him glory and reflects credit on the Savior? People didn't used to have all of this stuff dragged into their living room.

That's a recent thing, and I think it's an evil thing. I think it's cack on that all of this trash is dragged and dumped into people's living rooms and comes out their phones and so on. I try not to use the browser on my phone any more than I have to because as soon as you turn it on and say, I want to look for what are the reviews on this brand of paint, they want to throw news at me, bad news, crimes.

I do not want to logizomai cack on. I don't want it floating around in my head. It just gets in there like termites and like collagia.

Poor old wooden head. Don't need those termites. So that's what this means.

Love, the love of God, doesn't leave you meditating on, reflecting on, trying to figure out evil. What is bad? Cack on literally, there's a different word for evil. Ponerous is evil.

This is bad. Cack on. It's just bad.

Things that are bad. Things that are not good. It's the opposite of agathos.

So thinks no evil is not like the monkey with the hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil, think no evil. You'd have to have a fourth monkey with, I don't know, earbuds in or something. He's listening to music and not thinking.

So then we come to verse 6. Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. And this is really good. Sometimes I pick on the translation because of the way they'll divide a chapter or

the way they divide verses.

This is really good because this stands alone in Greek. Verse 6 needs to be by itself. It's kind of like a distich in our Psalms or Proverbs study.

It doesn't do this, but it does this, and it's symmetrical. Verse 6 really stands by itself and is sort of a bracket. It's the other side of the bracket of suffers long and is kind.

It's going to enclose these eight oo's. This is the eighth and final oo, but it's balanced with a positive statement. So when it says, does not rejoice in iniquity, this is a different word from kakos.

Iniquity, remember I said there's poneros, there's kakos, and here there is adikia. Dikaios is righteousness. Dikaioisune, dikaios, what is right.

Well, this is alpha privative. Adikia, what is not right, what is not righteous. Does not rejoice, and it's joined by a preposition epi.

Does not celebrate. Cairo here, C-H-A-I-R-O. This is to celebrate, to be glad about, to, you know how it is when you're joyful.

It is not joyful. It's oo Cairo. Does not celebrate upon epi, unrighteousness.

Adikia. Doesn't celebrate on what's not right. People who disagree with whoever the sitting president is like to rejoice when something bad happens to them.

They say, ah, you know, he's been caught with his hand in the till. He's been caught doing something he shouldn't have done. Here's something that's not right, and somebody's going to pay.

Love doesn't rejoice when something bad happens, even to an enemy. Remember, you get over to Jude, and even Michael doesn't make a railing accusation against Satan, but says the Lord will rebuke you. He doesn't rejoice that Satan suffers a setback, or when he encounters Satan, he doesn't find a way to, there are people who sort of want to vanquish evil, and when they think they've won a victory, then they want to rejoice.

The fact that there is evil, and there's badness, and there's unrighteousness, whether it is stopped or not, there's nothing to celebrate, because there was still a wrong there, and it still has consequences, and it reflects the fallen state of things, and we are easily ignited. There's a lot of tinder within us that can be ignited just by contact, just by observation with evil and so on, and if you celebrate it, you're going to bring it in and think about it and rejoice over it. It's better to push it away.

It's better to isolate it, to contain it, to quarantine it, than to say, well, two wrongs make a right in this case, or whatever. So it does not celebrate unrighteousness, literally, it does not rejoice upon what is not right, but it rejoices. But this isn't just Cairo without the U. This is Sugh Cairo,

Sun Cairo.

Sun means with, so it's got a prefix here, and it means, but rejoices with, celebrates with. And you would think, well, the opposite of not celebrating what is not right, it's a double negative, I'm not celebrating what is not right, U Cairo Adikia, but I would Cairo what is Dikaio, right? That's not what it says. We celebrate with.

Sugh Cairo, what is Aletheia? Remember what Aletheia is? Truth. Aletheia. Doesn't rejoice over what is wrong, but celebrates truth.

And this colors our understanding of what Adikia is, because what is not right in this context is what is not true. What is not true? Well, I don't care if the rumors are actually right or not, I'm just glad he's getting pulled down a peg, she's getting put in her place. The accusation itself is enough to tear somebody down, and I don't really care if it's true or not.

You don't celebrate that which is not right, and Dikaio here, by way of this dis-ditch, we know it's not right in the sense that it's not true. We celebrate with what is true. We are partaking of truth, we should be thinking truth, and when we find truth elsewhere, we celebrate with.

We co-celebrate with truth. That's verse 6. Now we have the four pantas. Very quickly here.

He doesn't even repeat the word love. You would expect that he would, but he doesn't want to interrupt the flow here, so rejoicing in the truth introduces these four pantas. So in Greek here, you have probably love at the beginning of verse, at least in the RSV, they say love bears all things, but your New King James is good.

It doesn't repeat agape here. It says bears all things, and in Greek, this is just, let me read you this in Greek. Panta stegē, panta pistē, panta elpidē, panta upomene.

Panta comes first, and panta means all, or the entirety of something, all of a group. Panta stegē. Stegē is to stick, to stay, to stand.

You hold the hill, even if you're overrun, you never let go of that ground. Stegos, remember the stegosaurus? What characterizes a stegosaurus? Those big plates on the, I think Becca told me they changed its name. They don't call it stegosaurus anymore.

It's like Pluto being a planet and a lot of other things. It's just, now dinosaurs have feathers, and who knows what all, but stegos means that which is implanted and is firmly fixed and does not move. It isn't removed.

It bears. It bears with. It bears up.

It holds up. It's fixed. So, panta stegē.

It sticks despite everything, you could say. It remains firm. It doesn't alter.

It doesn't shift. I shall not be moved, like the tree planted by the waters. So, love isn't shifted or moved or removed by anything.

So, it stays. Throw everything at it. It's still there.

Panta pistuo. Pistis is the word for faith, for placing trust in God. Faith has become kind of like love.

It's so overused. You're not quite sure what aspect of it, but trust is a good aspect of faith to put here in the translation, and it doesn't mean trusts everything. It means it trusts in spite of anything.

It's just hard to get the Greek across in English, but when Paul says panta, he says throw everything and the kitchen sink at it, and it stays. Throw everything but the kitchen sink at it, and it still trusts. Remember Job? What's the great quote from Job? Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

Throw everything at Job. He may have questions, and he may have a lot of dialogues, but he never loses his trust. He never doubts God.

He wonders about God. He questions God. He can't figure out God.

Spends a little time logizimoing about the kakos in his life, but he never loses his trust. Though he slay me, I will trust him. Panta pistuo.

Doesn't mean anything you're told, you believe it. I'll believe anything. I'll bear anything.

Slice me in tiny pieces, I'll still bear up. No, it means in the face of anything, you trust. In the face of anything, you bear up.

Panta elpidso. In the face of anything, your hope is undiminished. Elpis is hope.

Elpidso is to hope. Panta hupomeno. Hupomeno is to remain.

Hupo is, of course, hypo, which is under. Hypodermic, under your skin. Hypomeno, you remain under.

This is endure. Throw everything at him, you endure. Notice these four things.

You've got stability. Is stable despite everything. Is stable under anything.

That's what stego. Stego really means something that's just fixed and immovable. You can't shift it.

Pistuo, elpidso, hupomeno. The outside two both speak of endurance and fixed, permanent nature. What are the two things between those? You've got these two posts.

It's like boaz and jashon, the two posts on the temple gate. And then you've got the two gates inside. So the boaz and the jashon are stego and hupomeno.

You've got these immovable posts. And what are the two doors swinging in between, at least in my mind? Faith and hope. How's he going to finish up this chapter? Now abide these three.

Faith, hope, same word group here. Elpis and pistuo. Pistis.

So these pantas are, to me, my mental picture is that gate. You've got these posts of stability. And in between, you've got hope and faith.

And the reason those exist, the reason you've got the gate is because of love. Love does this. Love has the gate.

Love has got the posts. Love has got the doors. Without love, you've got no gate.

And your faith and your hope are vain without love. These three are going to remain. This is what transcends the earthly, the temporal, the ephemeral, these transient things in this life.

It's like human good. It may actually be good. It just can't last.

And it doesn't partake of God, doesn't reflect on God, isn't imbued with His glory and His power, doesn't do what His power does, doesn't know what His knowledge knows, doesn't create the effect that is invisible and beyond human reason and beyond human observation. It lacks all of those things. It's just a pale shadow.

It's like this earthly body that we have. It's a good body. I've always been grateful to God for giving me a good body that can do what I need it to do and last as long as it needs to last.

All of us have been given an assignment. And even when we're given afflictions, they are designed because this body is going to waste away. All of us are going to have a body like Christ's body in the future.

This one, as good as it may be, the good is temporary. I was thinking about singers. You notice a lot of them have retired.

Doris Day retired when she was at the peak of her vocal power. She made her last album and she said, no more. Didn't do concerts, didn't make any more albums.

She said, I want to leave a body of work that I'm proud of. Unlike a lot of guys that just kept on, Frank Sinatra sang past the time that he could even sing. And people were willing to go and pay just to see him and say, that's Sinatra.

He's a legend. But if he had started out with that voice and those performances, he'd have never gotten out of the seamiest nightclub in the lowest neighborhood anywhere because it doesn't last. The man had unparalleled vocal ability and it was good.

Great. Unsurpassed. But temporary.

And it's gone. He got recordings, but he himself is gone. It's gone.

Everything in this life goes back to dust. God is eternal. God's love is eternal.

The results of God's love are like all the rest of his attributes. They are eternal and they reflect his glory. So you've got love characterized by all of these things.

And he summarizes it with the four panto. And that is the front. That's what you see, the faith and the hope.

And they are fixed. The faith doesn't move because it's on the post of stegos. The hope doesn't move because it's on the post of endurance.

And all of that is created and sustained by God's love, God's power, God's grace. So that's why you can then begin at verse 8 and say, Love never falls. This is pipto.

Everything on the earth falls. What goes up must come down. We fall into the pit.

We fall into the ground. We fall into the grave. We rise up for a moment.

We look around. We appreciate. We do our little dance in the sun.

And then we fall. We fall. Even the pagans tried to get over this and the people with alternate religions.

Why do you think they put a pharaoh up in a pyramid? They're trying to get him up, trying to keep him from falling. Why do you think they built the Tower of Babel? Trying to get up and not fall. But pyramids fall, towers fall, tombs get robbed.

Despite all their best efforts, everything falls. It says fail, but that's really a metaphorical translation. The word is, love never falls.

Pipto. Love never falls to the ground. This is God's love.

Human love will fall to the ground. The people who did the love and received the love are in the ground. And it's gone.

Largely unremembered. Well, that concludes this formal description of love. Next time, what we're going to do is finish out the chapter and looking at pausanto, which is where we get the word pause.

This talks about something that ceases. And we'll look at these next time, about the imperfection of knowledge and the imperfection of prophecy, the imperfection of our love is that it can't last. So what is it that lasts? And that's the great culminating thought of this chapter.

And so we'll pick up there next time. And we'll get back to another use of zolao, to earnestly desire, to be jealous. We said at the end of chapter 12, it's a bad thing that they're being jealous of greater gifts.

And he says in chapter 13, love is not zealous. It's not jealous. It's not envious.

It doesn't seek this kind of gain. But then he's going to start chapter 14 with the imperative from zolao, earnestly desire. So what does that mean? Well, we'll pick up there next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the connection to yourself, the connection to what is eternal, what is absolute, what is righteous and what is true that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing us to your throne, bringing us to your presence, bringing us into reconciliation and acceptability in your sight. We are so grateful that we have been lifted up from everything that is temporary and of the earth and of the dust and have been made alive, alive in that unique and eternal way that comes to us through our salvation.

We pray that as we reflect on what we see here in terms of the description of your love as it is imparted to us, that God the Holy Spirit will help us to see how we can better develop and maintain and express that love, how we can draw closer to you through the presence and power of your spirit and the truth that is in your word, so that the Lord Jesus will be glorified. We can function as his body both now and in the ages to come. We will be those who reflect your glory.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.