

## 1Corinthians 18-09-23a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's a wonderful day. It's my kind of day.

It's a little overcast, a little drizzly, and they have a new scientific temperament analysis. You remember, some of you remember back in the 60s when Tim LaHaye came out with spirit-controlled temperaments, and you had your phlegmatics, and your choleric, and your melancholies, and I forget the other one, sanguine. And sanguine are your sanguine people, melancholy are your typically a little bit more moody people, and tend to like the gray days and such.

And they said, well, you know, everybody's kind of propensity toward one of those and a mix of some of the others. Well, I read this past week they came out with a whole new study, and science has determined that there are, guess what, four basic personality types. And they're suspiciously similar to what Tim LaHaye talked about 50 years ago.

So science marches on and eventually catches up with what we tend to already know. But it is great to be with you this morning and to anticipate the continuation of our study in 1 Corinthians. We'll be wrapping up chapter 13, this final section.

We have looked in some detail at each of the descriptions of love. We looked at the Greek words. We had *zolaos*, and *perperuomai*, and *fusiomai*, and *askemonai*, and all the rest of it.

But essentially we saw those five positive aspects and the eight things that love does not do. It's interesting to me that it is more of a, there are more descriptions that say this is what it does not do than there are those that say what it does. It's fairly balanced, but it is as much a refraining as it is a doing or a being.

And so this is helpful to us in the sense that we can look at ourselves and see if we are manifesting and characterized by these things that God, the Holy Spirit can do in our souls. And of course, once we link that love with the Holy Spirit, then all of the other passages that tell us what the Holy Spirit does, the fruit of the Spirit, and so on, pertain. But we're going to move forward from that this morning to the sort of prophetic side of this.

Paul not only looks at the present and what love is and what love does and what love does not do, but he also puts it in the perspective of these other spiritual gifts that he has been talking about in Corinth. And this is then going to lead us into chapter 14, where he's going to seemingly say the opposite of what he said at the end of chapter 12. And so we want to, if he's frowning upon the ambition to desire greater gifts, then why does he turn right around and say, desire a greater gift? So that's always a challenge when you think that somebody has reversed their field and especially in scripture.

So we'll look at that, but let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and ask his blessing on

our study, and then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful for this time of fellowship and of investigation of your Word to learn its truth, to have our souls, our minds, our hearts refreshed and plowed so that the Holy Spirit can take that seed of your Word and bless it to fruitfulness and to enhanced reflection of your glory, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we look at this portion together, that each one will find it pertinent and helpful, that God, the Holy Spirit will minister it to each of us in a way that is meaningful and helpful in the days ahead, and that we can all grow more fully and more closely in conformity with the Lord Jesus himself when he lived the life that we are now called to, when he was perfect in his obedience and in his expression of your love toward us.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, let's take a look at the last portion here of 1 Corinthians.

It's always good to kind of make sure we have the text in mind. After talking about love's positive and negative attributes in the first seven verses, verse 8 begins, Love never fails. We saw that this is pipto last time, it never falls, and it's a metaphor for never failing.

I've got a ginormous fingerprint right in the middle of my glasses. I must have done that when I took them off because it wasn't there a moment ago. I don't want to say love is smudged.

Love never fails, love never fails, pipto, to fall, to fall down. You get the idea that it would stumble or be inconsistent or somehow not be where it is supposed to be doing what it's supposed to do. 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. When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I understood as a child.

I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. So now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Or we see through our glasses dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Let's begin up at verse eight, right after love never fails, love never fails. You'll notice that it says, but whether there are prophecies, they will fail. And it just said love never fails.

Whether there are prophecies, they will fail. So you might think, well, this would be the same word in Greek, but it isn't. Um, love never fails.

At the beginning we saw was PIPTO, but this is one of Paul's very often used words, uh, for prophecies. And it is, uh, Katargeo, Katargeo. You say, Oh, we're going to just be slogging

through Greek.

We're only going to basically look at this one word because Katargeo is a really important word. You know, what, uh, ergos and, and, uh, uh, it has the idea of work ergos ergos. We say something is ergonomic.

It facilitates your work. Well, if something does not work, you'd say, well, wouldn't it be great if I could put an alpha privative on the front of that? And it would be a ergo. It would be non working, non getting stuff done, right? Non effectual.

Well, that's what argeo is in Greek. It's a negative of ergo to do, to get stuff done. So it's not getting stuff done.

It's not effectual. It's not functional. And Katargeo is, uh, basically kata in this usage.

And it's at the beyond the material a little bit. It's kind of like the feminine plural in Hebrew kata in front of a lot of these words, uh, helps you get to the metaphorical sense. So what are we saying? Katargeo means to become or to make ineffectual, non-working, non-applicable.

The root meaning, uh, would be to nullify, to zero out or to annul, annul or nullify. It has the idea of it's no longer a factor. It's no longer a force.

It's no longer getting things done. Now, this passage that we are now looking at is, uh, contentious because there are a lot of people who believe that the spiritual gifts that function in the earliest days of the church are still available and functional. And there's a smaller group of Christians who think that you're really not fully susceptible to the ministry of the spirit if you don't have these gifts.

Now, the famous one is tongues and everybody listening to the sound of my voice, I feel reasonably certain is already persuaded that tongues are no longer in effect. Um, we're a little bit dubious, if not suspicious, if not running away with our hair on fire when we see tongues talking and so on the various degrees of concern about that. Is it just a distraction? Is it just a misunderstanding or is it actually something that's kind of dangerous to your emotional health? Well, this passage is, is one of the central ones in the new Testament over which believers divide.

And it's usually always about tongues. But I would like to suggest to you this morning is what about the others? Because I see an equally problematic view of things like prophecy that you can get a word from the Lord that is separate and apart from scripture and perpetrate that is share that, you know, the Lord has told me X or, uh, I was thinking about this passage and God told me, I hear this on TV all the time from pastors that are considered to be relatively conservative in their theology or not in a, uh, the Nazarene church or the holiness movement or some other proponent of tongues. Uh, but a lot of people believe that God speaks in their hearts or in their minds or through signs and through circumstances.

Well, you either have all of the temporary gifts or you don't have any of them. They are treated together, always in scripture, almost exclusively by Paul, but they're all in the same group. So if, if you can get these, um, extra biblical revelations, sort of prophetic insights outside of scripture, uh, then that's all the same as saying you can still speak in tongues when necessary or under the right circumstances, they're all treated together.

So this word is important because Paul says, and you notice there are, it just says, whether prophecies in Greek, uh, and he's not saying so much whether they are, he's saying any of these temporary gifts you want to look at, whether it's prophecies, whether it's tongues, whether it is, um, knowledge, knowledge. I thought gnosis was a good thing. But he says, whether knowledge, it is going to vanish away.

And by the way, vanish away, very same word as fail. Catergao, both of them. So what's going on here? This is what I want to know.

Uh, are we correct in our understanding that the sign gifts, what we see as, and Paul identifies as signs. And we, I showed you the verse in our upcoming chapter where Paul says, these things are assigned not for believers, but to unbelievers. They are assigned for unbelievers.

What does that mean? There is a target audience for perception and an impression that is left by these gifts and it's not believers. So if we've got a room full of believers, you're not going to see these, these, uh, gifts in evidence because they are assigned for unbelievers. Well, Catergao is central to this.

And I want to just briefly look at where Paul has used this word, uh, so that we understand exactly what he's saying. Uh, we looked at, uh, when we were in Psalms, uh, 14 on Thursday night, we saw that Paul quotes from Psalm 14, one through three in Romans chapter three. And everybody here now was here then.

And you remember that when we went to Romans three, he begins by saying that, uh, these things were given to Israel. The word of God was given to Israel. What if some did not believe? What if some of them did not believe? Does this nullify the faithfulness of God? If they are unfaithful, does it Catergao God's faithfulness? Does it render it ineffectual? Does it nullify God's faithfulness? If some did not believe, and he goes on in Romans three to argue that, no, it does not let God be true.

They're every man, a liar. And that there is, uh, the God used that for a purpose to make sin the issue. So the use of Catergao there is just because some are unfaithful, that doesn't nullify what God is doing, right? The failure of man does not set aside, put to nothing, render ineffectual what God is doing.

God works all things together for good. And this is a good thing to remember because people around us always fail. We fail.

I fail you. You fail me. We fail each other.

It's because we're fallen people in a fallen world. And we're struggling to tread the upward way and gain new heights every day, right? We're, we're trying for that higher ground, but we're going to stumble. And it's a matter of getting back up and continuing, right? So our failure doesn't make God fail because we are unfaithful because we are inconsistent because we Piptoee love does not fail.

Love does not fail. People fail, people fall, people stumble, right? And this is why it's a handy thing that the love we're supposed to have isn't a human love. It's a divine love.

And so, um, I saw, uh, someone once with a pan, pan full of a beautiful dessert, and then it, it slipped and they dropped it. It wasn't the desserts fault. It was the person's fault.

I've actually seen this more than once. Um, and the people concerned know who they are, but you think about it. Uh, if you stumble and fall and you drop a cake or a plot pie or whatever it might be, it might really be a plot pie.

By the time it hits the floor, you have stumbled and fallen. And because of your failure, the thing that you had has been spoiled. Great thing about the love of God is you can stumble and fall.

You can let go of it, but it does not change. It does not fail. It does not falter.

It does not fail. The failure is on our part, but we do not nullify the grace of God. We do not nullify the love of God.

We do not nullify the faithfulness of God. God will find another way to be faithful to us. If he is using a person in our life, or if we are being used in someone else's life and we fail, we can beat ourselves up and obsess and get spiral into some sort of downward dark pit because, Oh, that this it's, Oh, I've failed.

And I've made a permanent blight and scar and horrible cesspool of failure in this other person's life. Get over yourself. People fail.

God's love does not fail. God's faithfulness does not fail. If someone is in God's hands and he can use us to be a blessing and a benefit, that's great.

But if we fail, or if we fall, we want to concentrate on recovery and on standing back up and getting ourselves fixed up, but don't obsess over the effect that your failure has had on others. God's got it. God's faithfulness does not cut our ghetto.

His love does not cut our ghetto. It's like a juggler. He throws one ball up in the air.

He's catching another one. And he'll put that one right where it needs to be. God has got all of the pieces and he does not fail.

So part of our faith, when we stumble and when we fall is not only faith in God's ability to

restore and to cleanse and to renew us, but that he is not going to create a penalty in someone else's life because of my failure, because it's not my love. And when I failed, my love failed. Therefore, the effect failed.

Therefore, this person has got some, some detriment. Don't think that way. It's God's love.

And God's love does not fail. God's faithfulness does not fail. Cut our ghetto ergo.

It gets work done. If one person falls down, somebody else will stand up. If the flag is starting to fall, another guy is going to grab it and carry it forward in God's plan because God is in it.

And this is the difference between human love, human energy, human effort, human counseling, human encouragement, human plans, human solutions. I will tell you again, as I said before, nothing is more of a bemusement to me than to after the day is over and I sit down and I just want to vegetate and I'll turn on, we just get broadcast television. And so the networks, you know, it's pretty safe.

Nobody does anything horrific. You don't have to get shocked and turn your TV off. There's just light fair on there, but it's the commercials and it's the commercials.

There are two blonde women and I don't know if they're in competition. I don't know if one of them is trying to outdo the other, but they always come on and they say, have you had this procedure? Did you take this drug? Did you use baby powder? Did you have this procedure done? You can sue because Cymbalta or hernia mesh or baby powder or whatever else it is has people were using it. It was put forward.

It was a medicine. It was a treatment. It was a drug.

It was a helpful product to solve this problem. It's, it's great for this particular application, but it has had this horrible side effect. And now there's a class action.

There's a suit. These lawyers are waiting to add you to their roster of people for whom they can get a judgment. And of course they get a sizable chunk of that.

So there's money in the failure of human solutions. There's money in it. And so call us today because we can take your case and analyze it for free.

And if you've got any traction, because yeah, your hip implant failed, we're going to go get money. Yeah. I think, you know, what a wonderful thing.

How many people have had these knee replacements and hip, hip joint deals and, and they can walk again, they're pain-free and all of that. But there's a certain number for whom that the thing rusted or they had a reaction or the, I don't know what all, but any human solution vaccines, the flu shot, there's a certain percentage of people that get sick or have an allergic reaction from a flu shot. That's what human solutions are.

If you try to run around with human love, it is going to have bad side effects, just like baby powder. How could you not like baby powder? Just makes you think of little babies and they're all cleaned up and fresh. And you're fixing to put on a nice diaper and you pat their little behind with a little puff of baby powder and you get that little talcum aroma, the perfume they put in it.

And you think, oh, you know, nothing's more innocent than this. It's a deadly cancer causing agent for some people, this talcum powder. And so God's love is unlike human love.

God's faithfulness is unlike human faithfulness. The best that we can do, the best of human good always has the taint and the corruption of humanity. It is only when we are a channel for the faithfulness of God, the love of God, the blessings of God, that God is in it and it winds up blessing everyone that comes in contact with it.

It's like the reverse of radioactivity. This would be radium that doesn't tear your cells down. It builds them up.

I suspect in the eternal future, the food and the environment is going to be such that you will draw restoration and energy and benefit and renewal from everything that God has provided. It's just the reverse of what happens in this earth. You know, there's argon or something coming out of the, out of the ground.

There's, what, no, it's what is that radon? I knew there was some kind of on coming out of the ground. You can't even smell it. It's odorless, colorless, tasteless, but it seeps up out of the ground and some people are over a open seam of the stuff and that you're near a power line and you don't realize that it's creating little nodes in your head just because of the electromagnetic interaction with your cranium or something.

The environment itself is fallen because we are fallen. And so everything around us tends to degrade and to wear down and to break apart. God's environment is just the opposite.

It restores, it renews, it builds up, it is healthy. So the contrast here, you can think all kinds of things, you can say all kinds of things about first Corinthians chapter 13 and love, but when it says love never fails, love never falls, the partial things were stopgap. They had their place.

Prophecy had its place. It was needful and it was helpful in its day, but it was temporary. The things that happen in this life are needful and helpful.

Even our decline and departure from this life is needful. You got to get us out of the way so the next generation can have their shot. God is, it'd have to be an awfully lot bigger planet if all of us just lived all the way through human history.

But God has so ordered things that we have our season in the sun and then toward the sunset we depart and others come up behind us. People preceded us. We've had our day or are having our day, but it's temporary.

And it doesn't mean that it's intrinsically evil. It just is limited by its temporality, by its partial nature. But when God is in it, even that which is partial is good.

These prophecies are partial and the word for partial here is a word that you know well because we have seen it over in revelation. Remember the people who have their portion in the lake of fire and we talked about Meros, M-E-R-O-S, and it's like meridian. It is a thing that divides.

It is a division. And when you divide a thing, now you have a part. You got a pie.

You got a pizza. You cut it. Now you've got a part.

It is a part of a whole, Meros. And so the prophecy says, he says, prophecies will cut our ghetto. Tongues will pause, pausante.

But this is a middle voice and it means they will decline. They will fade out sort of of their own accord. They will become, they will render themselves unnecessary.

Once they've done their job, it's like you ever needed to glue something. So you go buy some super glue and you glue the thing and it in many cases works great. But then you've got the tube of glue sitting there, but it's done its job and you don't use it again for months.

And the next time you say, wow, I need some super glue. You go and the thing is just hard as a rock. It has, it was great in the day, but once it did its job, you know, trying to save it, the tubes of caulk, cans of paint, there's all kinds of things that you better use them now because if you try to save them and use them in the future, they're not effectual in the future.

They're good when they're new. They're good when you first open them. They're great.

Nothing wrong with them, but they just don't last. And you need something else later on. Well, that's kind of the idea here.

Knowledge will cut our ghetto. It will cease to have a function. This is not knowledge in the sense of what you and I know or what somebody knows.

This is the gift of knowledge. This is the gift of prophecy. This is the gift of tongues.

Languages are actually still fairly helpful. People that speak Spanish are glad that they can talk to each other. People that are in Israel and speak Hebrew are grateful that there's a way to communicate.

We speak English. Languages are not ceased, have they? The gift of speaking to somebody in their own language has ceased. Prophecies in the Bible are a wonderful thing.

Prophecies have not ceased. They've not all been fulfilled and are nullified and of no use. The gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the gift of knowledge, those gifts have served their purpose and run out their string.

That's what Paul is saying. They are no longer effectual. Why? Because at the present time, when those gifts were still in evidence, Paul says in verse 9, right now we have this gift of knowledge.

We have this gift of prophecy. Notice he leaves tongues out in verse 9. We know ekmeros. The gift of knowledge gives you one little piece of the pie.

The gift of prophecy gives you one piece of the pie, meros. It's a distributed portion. That's what it is when it's used for inheritance in Revelation.

Those dogs and fornicators and love and practice a lie and the rest of those, their meros, their distributed portion, is in the Lake of Fire. We know a portion. We prophesy a portion.

But when that which is perfect, and it's not perfect, can cross out perfect, it is complete. It's telios. You've come to the end.

Have you ever been watching something or listening to something and you get interrupted? Usually now it's software. You come back and it says, do you want to resume where you left off? You want to pick up in the middle of this. You were halfway through and you took a phone call.

Do you want to resume or do you want to start from the beginning? Sometimes you can come back a week later and something says, resume where you left off or start over. Well, it doesn't do that if you made it all the way to the end. You watched the complete episode.

You heard the complete story. And so you don't have a portion that is heard and a portion that is unheard. When you get to the end, that portion is done away.

When you get the whole pie available at any point, then the portions that are being dealt out will no longer be in effect. When that which is telios, when that which is complete, when that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end, then that which is meros, partial, will be done away. Done away.

We had a man across the road here that owned property. His name was Mr. Dunaway. Faye Dunaway is an actress.

But when this says done away, this has again, the idea of Cotargeo. Now, I can't stress how important it is to understand what this word means. And Paul has used it several times in first Corinthians already.

Flip back a few pages, first Corinthians chapter one. We're going for 1.28. You see your calling brethren, verse 26, not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of this world to put to shame the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty and the base things of the world and the things which are despised.

God has chosen and the things which are not to bring to nothing the things that are. Cotargeo,

to nullify, to render of no effect, to make obsolete, to make irrelevant. Cotargeo.

Next page over, first Corinthians chapter two, verse six. We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor the rulers of this age who are Cotargeo-ing. They are coming to nothing.

They are being rendered ineffectual. They are being nullified. The wisdom of this age, the powers of this age, the rulers of this age are coming to nothing.

Notice the wisdom of God doesn't come to nothing. It's always valuable. What you learn now, both by way of Bible study and experience, is knowledge of God that never fades away, never becomes of no effect.

You carry it with you. They always say you can't take it with you. This you do take with you because it is of God and it never perishes.

It never Cotargeos. You look at chapter six, flip over a couple of pages. We saw this in chapter six, when we got to verse 13.

All things are lawful for me. Verse 12, first Corinthians 6, 12. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will Cotargeo both it and them. Render it meaningless, no longer applies, no longer pertinent.

Nothing wrong with stomachs, nothing wrong with foods, but it's only for a season. And then God is going to set that aside. It is all going to be set aside.

It doesn't last. Destroy is really a terrible translation here. God will nullify both it and them.

God will obsolete them, obsolete, make obsolete. And then in our passage, of course, we have three uses here in 13.8 and 13.10. And we're going to see it again in our next verse. When that which is complete has come, that which is partial will be done away.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child.

Nothing wrong with being a child. It's a necessary state of development, right? There's only ever been two people who weren't children, right? This goes back to the whole, did Adam have a belly button question? There's only been two people that didn't go through the childhood phase. Everybody else in human history, including the Lord Jesus himself, had a childhood phase.

It's necessary. It's good. It just does not last.

We have good things in our life that we treasure, that are great blessings, that we enjoy, but

they don't last. Patty and I lived a lot of places. We've had a lot of different phases of our life, as have you.

You can think back, and it's a fragrance of memories. It was wonderful. We're not there now.

We're not having that experience. We're not in that place. We're not in that time.

But it was wonderful. And there wasn't a thing wrong with it. It was a wonderful blessing from God while it lasted, but it was temporary.

It served a purpose. It took up a section of God's plan for us. And now we are in a new place and a new time with new opportunities.

And those old ones have passed away to the extent that God was in them, to the extent that God taught us. And we learned and we grew and we took hold of righteousness by faith. Righteousness, you know, we always think about righteousness as sort of an abstraction of sterling golden goodness.

But in my mind, righteousness is basically that which is eternal. And we don't fully understand what righteousness is. Righteousness by faith is not just, okay, you're good.

That was a good thing. Righteousness partakes of the eternity and the intrinsic value of God himself. So when we lay hold of righteousness by faith, you lay hold of a part of God.

And in that is all of the essence of God, truth and virtue and life and multiplying goodnesses. It comes in contact with something and it's a benefit. It touches something and it is healed.

It is restored. Jesus was righteousness personified. And when he touched a dead guy, the guy came to life.

When he touched a defiled leper, the leper was restored. It's reverse radioactivity. Everything it touches goes good, goes life-wise, goes eternal-wise, stretches into the infinity of God's future plans and purposes.

And what a wonderful privilege that God lets us do that in all of these different phases of our life. So Paul says, when I was a child, spoke as a child, understood as a child and thought as a child. Nothing wrong with that, especially if it's a well-behaved child and not the hellion weeds that seem to be so prevalent around us now.

I've never seen such scary children as you tend to see now that just have not had the benefit of training. The most beautiful roses and flowering plants are those that a gardener carefully trains and prunes and cares for so that they reach their full potential of beauty and symmetry. And if you say, let nature take its course, I don't want to impinge, I don't want to in any way impose myself and let it teach itself and take its own way, you're going to end up with a wild, sprawling, untended rose bushes if you've ever gone to an abandoned property and somebody used to have beautiful roses.

You go there now and it's got these big, long, reedy, weedy, gangly, unfruitful branches and a lot of cellulose instead of flowers and mostly thorns. It's untended. Tending makes these things better.

And so tended children, you think as a child, speak as a child, understand as a child, but Paul says, when I became a man, and he didn't turn himself into a man, over the course of time, circumstances changed. It's a natural progression. When I became a man, I catargeoed childish things.

I set them aside. I nullified them. I looked at my childish desire to play and to be self-centered and I set that aside.

When I became mature, I recognized childish understandings, childish thinking, childish speaking. Say the first thing comes into your mind, she's fat. Every parent has had that horrifying moment when your child says something that is true, but it shouldn't be said.

Mature people understand that there's a time and a place for unvarnished truth and that's not it. In the store, when you're walking by some poor lady with a shopping cart and four kids of her own and she's trying to get things done and your child says the first thing that comes into their head, it's speaking as a child. Is it true? Yes.

Is it sort of innocent and not bad intended? Yes, but there's a time and a place. And when we mature, we understand better. So Paul says, I took those things.

I recognize them as childish, childish understanding, childish thinking, childish speaking. And Paul says, I set it aside. This is a part of maturity to recognize in ourselves what is immature and what is unseemly and what is not helpful and make it cease.

Cause it to no longer pertain. Now we see in a mirror dimly. You know what's interesting about this? Corinth was famous as a mirror factory.

They made polished metal mirrors in Corinth that were famous throughout the Roman empire. And so when Paul uses the word mirror here, he's hooking into the cosmopolitan economic, cultural knowledge of his audience. When he says mirror, it's like talking peaches to the peach capital.

It's like talking oil to Texans or Oklahomans. When you get on a subject where that's your product and that's what you're famous for, everybody knows about it. And so Paul says, for now we see it as in a mirror.

And some people say, you know, as in a glass darkly and you're supposed to be looking through, this is a mirror and it's a polished mirror. And if you've seen ancient mirror technology, it's not silver glass by a long shot. It's not even limpid pool reflection quality.

You can get the general idea. You've got the outline, you can see lights and darks and so on,

but it's low def. You got your 1040 HD.

Have you seen the new televisions, the UHD things? It hurts my eyes to look at that much clarity. It's too sharp. I walked into, we were going to go get groceries at Costco and you can't get there without going past the flat screen TVs.

They've got them all up there and curved screens and all of this money. And the things are just, they've got the vivid button turned all the way to 11 and they're showing drone shots of the Greek islands. But then they had a guy in the Greek islands in a boat and he's one of these wizened old fishermen and they show him and it's just scary clear, every little whisker, every little wrinkle.

And I mean, a dermatologist could have diagnosed this guy from the side shot they had. You can see splinters in the ore handle. And look, if I want to see that much detail, I'll go look for myself and have my glasses on.

But most of these mediums are designed to tell a story and I don't need to picture the thread count of the towels hanging on the rack when it's Bogie and Bacall and they're having a conversation. I just don't need that much detail. Just give me the gist.

Well, the ancient mirrors were that way. They gave you the gist. You got the big picture.

Hey, I've got a big hunk of hair hanging down that's in the wrong place. Let me swoop it back. You know, the slave would hand the gal the mirror and say, look, I got your headband symmetrical.

You can see the little red diamond in the middle and shape. It's all great. But it was imperfect.

It was a generality. It gave you enough information, but not high def by a long shot. And the earliest color television that some of us remember seeing, I remember the first color TV picture I ever saw in my life.

Our next door neighbor's got a color TV, went up there and most broadcasts, nearly all broadcasts were still in black and white. But on Saturday morning, they had like an hour of color cartoons. And so I would go up there and on Saturday morning to see these color cartoons.

And of course, the color was turned way up. The red was just bleeding out and the green was bleeding out. But we thought it was great because it's color.

But it was blurry. It was fuzzy. The old CRT televisions didn't have sharp edges.

Now, if they go back and show you those old series, you go back and try to watch the early color programs or the early movies. If you ever noticed how everything just looks, it's like, man, I need to wipe my glasses or I need to clean my TV screen. It's just blurry.

That's what these mirrors are. Nothing wrong with what you see. I want to emphasize that something partial doesn't mean it's bad.

It's just not as good as what is coming. I always wondered if I won the publisher's clearinghouse sweepstake, they give you the option. Do you want the lump sum or do you want them to pay it out? And you get several thousand dollars a month for the rest of your life.

And your first descendant gets it for the rest of their life. And you think, wow, what a deal that would be in the childish part of my thinking, which I need to put away. But do you want it all now or do you want it in increments? Well, if you get it in increments, you never get it all because you won't live that long.

Uh, so if I want it all, do I want it all now? Do I want it complete or do I want it in part? And of course you'd get it complete and you get it all in one year. Tax is going to take like, you know, 85% of it and you're still not going to get it all. It's one of those imperfections of human, uh, prize disposition.

So we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. And this of all of the things Paul could have said, does it make you wonder at all why he says this? We see as in a mirror dimly imperfectly, but then face to face. If I'm looking in a mirror, what face am I going to see imperfect or otherwise? If I hold up a mirror right here, what face am I going to see? My own, right? So if my mirror is imperfect, but then there's perfection and I'm seeing fit, what face am I looking at face to face? Am I looking at my own face? Are there two of me? How can it be face to face? If the reflection in the mirror is me, I'm going to let you puzzle on that while we take our break.

Uh, and we'll come back and, uh, look at verse 12 a little more closely seeing in a mirror dimly, but then face to face knowing in part, then I shall know just as also I am known. The second part of the verse is equally subjective. I will know the way Jesus knows.

I'll know the way the angels know. Oh, he says, I'll know the way I am known. And so you have yourself interjected in there two times in this verse.

What is that about? Well, we need to take a look at it, but the upshot of this portion of first Corinthians chapter 13, partial and complete, partial and complete Paul sets the two side by side. There's nothing wrong with what is partial. You and I have partial understanding of scripture, partial understanding of ourselves, partial realization of what God is doing in our lives.

And in the lives of others around us, there's coming a time when there will be perfect understanding, but it's not yet nothing wrong with a partial understanding, but we need to recognize that it is partial and it is passing. And there is nothing wrong with Qatar. Ghetto.

In fact, Qatar ghetto is necessary. You can't, Oh, I wish this moment could go on forever. No, you don't.

You don't want things to stay static. We want to progress. We want to move from childhood to adulthood.

We want to move from that, which is partial to that, which is complete and that's God's plan and purpose for us. So while we can reminisce and we can have a fond remembrance of things, we do not grieve as those who have no hope because we are not looking back and Oh, weren't those the good old days. We are looking ahead to the perfect days, the even greater days, the more fully realized and clear and ultra high definition days in the best sense of all of those words.

We forget those things which are behind and we press toward the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which is future looking nothing wrong with appreciating the past, appreciating the present, but we always have our eye on the future. That's the great gift God gives us the future. Unlike the future of somebody that uses baby powder or the future of somebody that gets a mesh that breaks down or the future of somebody that takes a drug and then it nullifies their internal organs.

Our future is even better, even greater, even more fully perfect. So it's a great gift that God gives us. And the center of it, the heart of it, the almost definition of it is love, divine love, love that partakes of that which is eternal.

But we'll see more of this when we come back from our break.