

1Corinthians 18-09-23b

Let's continue our study now in 1 Corinthians. I've taken my jacket off because I'm warming to my work and I want you to admire which I'm wearing for the second week in a row now, my 1 Corinthians 13 tie. Faith, hope and love.

Greatest of these is love. It's got the reference right here on the bottom. So I had to put this away, you know, until the next time I do 1 Corinthians after today.

But as we look at this now, what is the big idea so far? Paul is explaining. Remember he said, I'm gonna show you the more excellent way. You're desiring these gifts.

You're lusting after these gifts. You want greater gifts. Let me show you a more excellent way.

And he has described the love of God that is ours to channel, to redirect. God pours it into us and then it flows out of us. And so we've seen that description.

So now we know whether or not we have it by looking for its manifestations. If we are doing improper things, if we're seeking our own, if we are easily provoked and all the rest of those attributes, if we are constantly brooding and thinking about evil things and we can't get our mind off of what went wrong or what isn't right or what ought to be better, we know that we need to go to the source. You can't just decide to love.

You can't commit to love. You can't make yourself love. We have to go to the source of love.

And if your water glass is empty, you don't just sit and concentrate on the glass and water suddenly appears. You gotta go to the fountain to get the water. You gotta go to the source, right? So when we lack in these areas, we go to the source.

If you lack the fruit of the spirit, you don't concentrate on, well, I'm gonna go take a class on patience or I'm gonna get a book on long suffering or I'm gonna get a poem about peace and just say it to myself over and over. I'm gonna have a little refrigerator magnet that I look at every morning and I'll have more gentleness. What do you do if you find yourself coming up short with the fruit of the spirit? Go to the spirit.

How do I cultivate the presence and the power of the spirit? And that doesn't involve cultivating peace. I don't cultivate gentleness. I don't cultivate any of those fruits.

Try cultivating joy. I'm just gonna be joyful. If you're not joyful and somebody says, you know, don't worry, be happy, you just may wanna backhand that person and say, you know, take you and your Caribbean vocal music and go somewhere else.

I don't feel happy. I'm not in a circumstance for happiness. My situation is not conducive to joy.

Well, when we recognize that we're falling short, we go to the source and that's a completely

different operation. Do I know how to bring the power of the Holy Spirit who is ever present? He didn't leave. He may be grieved.

He may be quenched, but he didn't leave. So how can I experience the presence and the power of God in my life more fully? Well, there are well-known, well-reviewed steps for doing that. Same thing with love.

Same thing, by the way, with faith. If I'm having trouble applying the word of God, do I just concentrate on more application? I'm gonna get a book on application. I'm gonna go, faith, hope, and love are all qualities that we redirect from God and it is by choice.

We begin with a choice. I choose to have the power of God in my life. I choose to believe.

Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief. I choose to believe.

Make it possible for me to act on that choice, to fulfill that desire. I can't tell you how many times that little, that guy that the Lord Jesus was talking to, Jesus makes a proposition to him and he says, Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.

Give me what I need so that I can perpetuate this and sustain it and fulfill it and make it real because the power is not in the choice. The power is in what God gives us after we make that choice. So we go to the source.

We go to the rock that is higher than I. There is a fountain. And not only do you lose all your guilty stains in the fountain of cleansing, but there is a fountain of living water and the tree planted by that river grows and bears its fruit, right? The ungodly are not so. They are like the chaff.

What happens? How do you turn into chaff? You've been disconnected from the stem and the little tubules that go down into the ground and bring the living water that comes from the river into the soil and into the plant and into the stem and into where that little kernel of seed is. When all of that gets disconnected and separated, you're a tumbleweed. You're a piece of chaff and the wind is just gonna blow you away.

So it is, as I've so often said, it is the indirect approach. It's the strategy of the indirect approach. If you want peace and love and joy, you don't chase those.

We go to the source, the divine, eternal, all-righteous, all-knowing, all-loving source. And when we have God's word and keep it because we love him, that's when God's presence is manifest. And that power never fails.

It never fails. It never gives up. It never gives out, never gives in.

Billy Joel fans will recognize those phrases, but they're true. Never gives up, never gives out, never gives in. That's genuine love.

That's the description here. So, and it's not something that a child can sustain. I never will understand, as long as I live, people's fascination with child love or the lack thereof.

You see some sort of drama put on and some child says, oh, I hate you. And the parent is all traumatized and comes apart at the seams because the child has had a fit and says, I don't love you. Or they get all gooey and sloppy because the child says, oh, I love you.

That to me is a tremendous misunderstanding of the difference between childhood and adulthood and maturity and stability versus immaturity and instability. And handing somebody a candy cane and they say, I love you, is not as meaningful as somebody's love expressed over time in a mature and knowing way, in a self-sacrificial way. So when I was a child, I spoke as a child, understood as a child, thought as a child.

And notice the three aspects that Paul focuses on. There's a lot you could say about children, but there is understanding, thinking, and speaking. And in no particular order in this passage, but there is an order in logical progress.

In order to think about something, you have to have an understanding of it. You've got to have some input. I don't even think about Supreme Court justices until somebody says, hey, we're going to pick a new one.

Okay, so now I have an understanding of the situation. One guy has retired, they're going to pick another one. There's contention, it's all political, and we don't care how great the guy actually is, we're going to pick him apart because politically speaking, we don't want the other side to have a victory or get their guy in, et cetera.

So I glean all of this and I have an understanding. Once I am apprised of these facts, then I think about them and analyze them and I draw my conclusions. And then I might stand up here and speak.

So you see the progression. You can't think about a thing if you don't have an understanding. If you don't have some grist for the mill, you can't grind, right? So grist, grind, then speak.

Hopefully it's in that order and you don't speak when you have no understanding and you haven't thought about it. This is the way to embarrass yourself. Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, right? Go get the understanding and do the processing, then speak.

So spoke as a child is the first thing you know about the child. You don't probe into the understanding or the thinking of the child. If you look at a child, what you get first is their output.

And he says, I spoke as a child because I understood as a child and I thought as a child, basically. There's that logical progression. We want to avoid that ourselves.

How do I not think and speak as a child? I nullify, I put away childish things. He doesn't say

childish things dropped away. I identify them, I dropped them.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. So in this analysis where we identify immaturity and nullify it and null it, make it ineffectual, I might have the impulse to be childish, to stamp my foot, but I got to get over that.

It's a conscious process of, I'm not going to do this immature thing. I'm not going to speak this immature line. I'm not going to think this immature line of thinking.

I'm not going to let my understanding remain incomplete and flawed and misdirected. I'm going to get more facts. I want to understand.

It's amazing how just one fact will change everything. And this, by the way, is the nature of a lot of internet rumors. I used earlier the example of our current Supreme Court nominee who has suddenly become very contentious because of some allegation that's made concerning something that happened when he was in high school.

And there's a lady that brought this forward. Well, and so everybody says, well, you know, it's the Me Too movement and you can't hush up somebody who's been traumatized by some thing. And leaving that where it is, I then saw somebody say, well, the only reason this lady brought this forward is this judge's mother was also a judge and she presided in a case involving this gal's parents who were about to lose their house, which is true.

This Judge Kavanaugh, his mother was a judge and she was the officiating judge in a court case where their house, this girl that's made the allegation, her parents' house had been foreclosed upon and the foreclosure went to court and his mother was. So then it flashed through the internet as such things do. She's got a motive.

She's trying to bring this guy down because it's revenge for what his mother did to her mother and daddy. Well, no, it is true that, now see how we're whipsawing back and forth? You say, ah, so, so this whole thing is a big sham flim flam job here and she's just out for revenge. Well, if you go investigate the case, it is true.

It's one of those weird coincidences of fate and history that his mother was a presiding judge. But when the thing came to trial, she actually rendered a judgment that returned the house to the parents and they kept it and they had it all the way until like 2002 when they, I don't know, the parents died and they sold it or whatever. But anyway, it all turned out great.

The judge made the right call and everything turned out fine. There was nothing to get revenge for. She didn't lean over the judge bench and say, boo on you, your house is gone.

Go live in the street with a can of pencils and none of that. She made a good call and there was no reason for anybody to be unhappy with the judge or with the outcome of the case or anything else. It came out in their favor.

So one little additional fact, the only reason I'm even bringing this up is you think about how when you find out that Judge Kavanaugh's mother presided in a case that had to do with foreclosure, you think, aha, now with this new information, it casts a whole fresh light. Then I tell you that the case was decided favorably for the parents, well now that casts a whole new light. One additional fact, we know in part, we have partial knowledge.

Don't be quick to judge when you only have partial knowledge. One little insight can completely change your evaluation. So this is why it is a biblical virtue to be slow to wrath, to be slow to anger, to take your time and be long-suffering.

Not be quick to flash into a flame over something. Get all the information. Those of us that are spouses and parents and such know that you walk in, you see a thing, you make a snap judgment, you throw a fit, then you find out, oops, I should have slowed down and gotten a few more facts and I've just made an idiot out of myself.

This was actually somebody being helpful, not somebody falling down on the job and doing something bad and I have just made a fool out of myself. I can attest multiple instances of that and it is a warning, it is an encouragement to take your time, wait till all the facts are in. If you think as a child, you're gonna render snap judgments.

You're gonna go with the first thought that comes into your head and it'll probably come out your mouth. You'll speak as a child. When you become mature, you set that aside.

We see in a mirror dimly but then face-to-face. I talked about this before the break. When you look in a mirror, looking in a mirror is to see your face, right? And we have an imperfect view when we look in the mirror.

He doesn't say when we look with a half-closed eye or when we look with a veil over our face. You know, these gauzy veils, you can still kind of see out. Paul could have easily said, you know, we look through a veil dimly.

We see the world partially and that would have made a great point but that's not his point. He says, we're looking in a mirror. When you look in a mirror, you're looking at your face.

People back then didn't have full-length, polished pieces of metal where they were trying to see if their shoes matched. They looked at their face. And is everything well-arranged? And women almost exclusively.

Men, you know, what's to look at? Did I trim my beard? They had slaves to do that kind of stuff. So it's almost exclusively women who look in it. But Paul says, now we see.

Notice he changed person here as well. When I was a child, thought as a child, spoke as a child, I put away childish things. Why does he shift to the first person? I suggest that this is a little bit tongue-in-cheek because not everybody has put away their childish thinking and their childish speaking.

Paul is gently saying, you know, this is what I've done. You might want to think about following my example. But now he pulls everybody in and he uses the first person plural.

So, now we see in a mirror, dimly, we see. He didn't continue the first person singular. When I look in a mirror, I see dimly.

And that might've drawn attention to his, we don't know if he has his eyesight problems yet or not. But he says, we all, we all have this experience. We look in a mirror and we can't see everything.

We can't see fine detail. But then face-to-face. Now, is it possible with a mirror or your iPhone or your selfie camera or anything else to actually be outside yourself looking at your face? Can you look at yourself face-to-face? When will this be true? When will you be able to see just as well as if you were outside yourself looking at your face? It's like you're somebody else looking at your face.

Nobody can see my face. I can't see my face. Even in a mirror, there are little subtle reflections and imperfections and things, and it's reversed.

You know, I'm seeing what looks like the left side of my face is actually the right side to me. But somebody else looking at me, you know, like a doctor, a dermatologist, or somebody that needs to be looking very closely, hopefully with their eyesight is good, they see perfectly. Paul says, when that which is complete is come and that which is in part is done away, I will be able to see myself as though I were outside myself.

That's how perfect the view is going to be. It's not even possible in this life. I can't freeze frame, walk around in front of myself and look to see if my 1 Corinthians 13 tie is straight or if my midshipman dimple is in the middle of the knot.

By the way, all midshipmen are identifiable because they all know how to tie a tie, and anybody that's ever been a midshipman will have a dimple in their tie. You will never, I promise you, as long as you live, ever see anybody that's ever been to the Naval Academy tie a tie that doesn't have a dimple in the middle. It's just, you can't help it.

It's like lacing your boots right over left. You can't help. In the same way, to stand outside yourself and see yourself is as perfect as it's ever going to get.

Now the second part. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And once again, it's subjective.

I will know like a set of encyclopedias. I'll know like all the wisest men put together. I'll know like Daniel, Job, and Solomon.

I will know, why does he use this particular comparison? I will know as I am known. Well, how well am I known? What's the first passage that comes into your mind when you talk about

being known? Who is the subject of knowing here? As I will know as I am known. As I am known by others or as I am known by God? It's God, right? I will know divine truth, eternal truth, the way I am currently known by the source of all eternal truth.

So what's your passage for being known by God? Is it possible to be a believer and have the Lord look at you and say, I never knew you, depart from me, you worker of iniquity? How well are you known? You say, well, God's omniscient, he knows everything. This is not knowledge in the objective sense of does God have every hair on your head numbered? This is being known in the sense Jesus illustrates it. When he's sitting down at the table and someone knocks at the door and says, Lord, Lord, in your name, we've done all these wonderful things.

And he says, I never knew you, depart from me. I will know as I am known. And this is a very important thing to understand.

We think, oh, when I get to heaven, everything will make sense. I'll have full understanding. I'll just get this big data dump into my soul and everything will make sense.

I'll understand everything. No, you won't. You will come to understand to the extent that you've been close to God in this life.

The closer we are to the Lord now, the more we learn from him and the more he knows us because we are regularly before his throne, because we are processing what he tells us. We listen to what he says. We are in a conversation.

We are in a relationship. We are in an ongoing walk. We walk in the light as he is in the light and we have fellowship with him and he with us.

That fellowship is the knowledge. And when that which is complete is come, we will know you'll have access to everything you've learned. I've told you a hundred times how much I wish I could remember everything.

I go back and listen to old Bible classes and think, wow, that was a great point. I wonder why I didn't remember that. Or I wish I could remember, I can't remember everything I said last week.

And wouldn't it be great to have total recall, full access to everything that we've learned? We will, to what we have learned. You're not going to get new learning, is my understanding from this. We will know even as we are known.

What we learn in this life is going to be what we start the eternal future with and it's going to all be there. It's going to be perfect access, perfect ability to pull up and avail ourselves of what we have learned in this life. We necessarily have filters.

People that remember everything are miserable and there are a few of them. It's a form of savantism or something where you can't forget anything. And people have the details of their

lives and they can tell you on April the 14th of 1989, I was in this place doing this thing and here's who was with me and here's all the dialogue of the movie I watched and all the rest of it.

And it's a kind of a curse. These people are overloaded with information. We necessarily see in part and understand and even remember in part.

Now, it's helpful to be able to forget certain things. But in the eternal future with the upgrade we get in our resurrection body, we will know to the extent that we are known now. And what this does is when Paul uses this particular construction, it is a reminder that God is in this.

We could say, I will know everything I've ever known. He could have said that. But he says, I will know as I am known because it goes back to how close is my walk with God? How consistent and how faithful? How much time do I spend in the light in that fellowship with him that is a dialogue? I speak to him and he speaks to me, not extraneously with prophecy, not miraculously with tongues, but with his spirit and with his word.

And I grasp God, the Holy Spirit brings pertinent truths to my mind and shows me how they apply and where they pertain. And I smile and I thank him for that insight and that connection that God, the Holy Spirit has made in my soul because I'm free of sin. I have confessed and availed myself of the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ.

I have exposed myself to the word of God. So there's something the Holy Spirit can use to bring to my mind. It's fresh, it's available.

And I am asking and seeking and knocking and I am returning my side of the conversation in prayer. That's how I walk in the light. That's how I experience fellowship.

That's how I am known. And I will know then as I am known now. So to what extent do I waste that opportunity and I spend my time logiziming about circumstances or what's the source of the evil? How much time do I spend parading myself or putting myself forward or any of these other things that love is not? To the extent that I spend my time doing that, I am not being known.

I'm off on my own agenda. I'm off doing my own thing. I'm wasting time.

I'm being a bad steward of time and opportunity. And I will not be known by God so long as I'm doing those things. I want to be known so that I will know.

We take it as a tacit understanding that it's a good thing to know and to be known. That, well, I'm just as happy, you know, ignorance is bliss. Let me just be dumb and ignorant and just be happy in Jesus.

The Bible never presents that as an option. Now abide faith, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. Turn real quickly now to Galatians chapter five.

1 Corinthians, Galatians. Just second book over. Galatians chapter five.

He's talking about, stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing, i.e. if you try to generate works that conform to a standard that has been proposed, i.e. the standard of the law of Moses in this case, but it can be any human standard of righteousness. If you exert yourself trying to meet this human standard, this falsely perpetrated, falsely understood standard, Christ will profit you nothing.

What did he say at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 13? Have not love, it profits me nothing. If I go back to human generated righteousness, it profits nothing. Same word, it profits nothing.

Read on ahead. Testify again. Every man who becomes circumcised is a debtor to keep the whole law.

You have become estranged from Christ. You who attempt to be vindicated, justified by law, you have fallen from grace. See where it says you have become estranged? Katar Geo.

You have been nullified. You have been annulled. You have been rendered ineffectual from Christ.

He's gonna look through the door and say, I don't know you. If you have a faulty notion of what righteousness is and you expend your efforts in that direction, you are Katar Geode from Christ. Same word.

You get the idea that this is an area of thought that Paul revisited often, not just for Corinth. This is the churches in Galatia. This is a whole region of believers.

Christ will profit you nothing. You have become annulled, nullified from Christ. All of the benefit, all of the love that ought to flow through you is cut off.

Colossians chapter one. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. Paul and Timothy talking to the saints in Christ at Philippi wouldn't be the one.

I need the people in Colossae. Saints and faithful in Colossae, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks, this is Colossians 1.3. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.

What did he say at the end of 13 in Corinthians? Now abide these three, faith, hope and love. We pray for you and we give thanks for you since we heard of your faith. What kind of faith? Faith in Christ Jesus.

What kind of love? Love for all the sanctified ones because of the hope. Faith is the means, faith in Christ Jesus is what makes all of this possible. Hope is the motivation because of the hope laid up for you in heaven of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.

You have that understanding and that's a mature understanding. They talk about the phases of growing up. I saw that documentary I mentioned a time or two before where when a child can develop an expectation, when they can wait, when they can delay gratification, it's a process at a certain stage of growth as a child, you reach the point where you can wait for a thing.

You can contain yourself or restrain yourself looking toward a reward. You can't do it as a small child. You reach a certain point in growth and then you can begin to anticipate the future and have an effect on the present because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

It's a mark of maturity which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel which has come to you as also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit ever since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth. Faith in Christ, love for the saints because of the hope in heaven. Faith, hope, and love.

Flip over a few pages to 1 Thessalonians 1. We give thanks to God, verse two, always for you all making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith. What did we learn from Colossians? The faith is in Christ Jesus and what does it do? Ergos, it produces work. We do things because of our faith in Christ.

It's an active trust. It's an active belief because I trust the Lord Jesus, because I have faith in Christ, I work, I do things. Your work of faith, your labor of love.

In Colossians, he said you have love for all the saints. Well, how does it manifest itself? In labor and patience of hope. Your motivation does not flag, it doesn't fail, it doesn't wear thin, it doesn't give out.

Work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of our God and Father knowing beloved brethren, your choosing by God, your election, a lot you can say about that, but I'm not going to go into it right now. Flip over a few pages still in first Thessalonians to chapter five, from the first chapter to the last chapter here. Verse four, you brethren are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief.

By the way, there's one of the lexical commentators on the word katargeo, suggests that in that ceasing and stopping work, argos, that the idea there was originally the sun going down. The sun has gone down. Remember Jesus saying, work while you have the light, because without the light, the darkness is coming when no man can work.

And there was an association with katargeo in its literal sense with the going down of the sun. It's dark, you can't work anymore, time to rest. So here Paul says, brethren, you're not in darkness so that the day should overtake you as a thief.

You are sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be vigilant.

Let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk

at night.

Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. So what have we learned about these three that remain? We've seen the direction of them in Colossians, faith in Christ, love toward the saints, hope in the future in heaven. In the first part of this letter, he talks about that it produces action.

There is a work of faith. There is a labor of love. And there is a durability of our hope.

It's persistent. Here, he says, faith and love are a breastplate. What's the function of a breastplate in armor? You don't get neutralized.

You don't get killed. Something hitting you in the chest is going to stop you on the battlefield. It's gonna stop you from advancing.

The breastplate is defensive. It is protective. It insulates.

It keeps you going. And faith and love are a breastplate that we put on. It's not automatically there.

He says, you have got to focus on faith and focus on love. Make sure you have them and that you have put them on. You pick it up and you strap it on.

You strap on this breastplate. And as a helmet, the seat of motivation and of power is in the chest, in the heart. It's your cardiovascular system.

This is where you get your endurance. I can climb hills. I can pick up weights.

I can do work and labor because my pump is working. My lungs are filling and renewing my energy, right? Where is the direction for that energy? What makes sure that I'm working effectively and wisely? No one to work and no one to rest. It's up in my head.

I'm directing my power and my energy with my head. Hope is the helmet. It could have been something else.

What if he had said love is the helmet? I don't think I could make any sense out of that. What keeps my thinking straight? Knowing when and how to work? How long to work? For whom to work? What is my work of faith and my labor of love? How do I wisely adjudicate that? Hope is the helmet that protects my thinking center and surrounds it. Putting on the breastplate, putting on as a helmet, the hope of deliverance.

This is a temporary phase. All of this is going to cut our ghetto. How can I redeem the time and convert it into something eternal? Faith, hope, and love.

God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain deliverance through our Lord Jesus Christ. This isn't going to perish. It is going to last.

This is an investment in eternity. That's my hope as a helmet. So the greatest of these is love.

These three abide, faith, hope, and love. We've seen these additional passages. Let me close by giving you just four passages that help us understand why the greatest of these is love.

You've got an action that is being looked at in court. As a reverse or a negative illustration, you could think of a murder case. What do they look for when they're trying to convict somebody of murder? Motive and means and opportunity, right? Means, motive, and opportunity.

Well, we already know that hope is our motivation. God has given us the opportunity because we are in Christ. If you're not in Christ, there's no potential exists.

And the means is faith. It's the work of faith. Faith is the means by which we get these things done.

Hope is the motivation. And what we get done is love. The greatest of these is love.

If love is in evidence, the other two are functional. So I'm back to how can I make sure I have this love? If I check the symptoms and I don't have them all, and I want to increase the divine love that is being poured out in my heart by the Holy Spirit, I've confessed my sins, I'm cultivating his presence, I'm exposing myself to the word, how do I make sure this love is working? Well, it is going to be evident in our interaction with the saints because those are the targets. It is going to be protecting my chest in the same way that a breastplate does.

And what are its characteristics? Flip back now to Romans chapter 13. I'm gonna give you four quick passages and we won't have time to analyze them, mainly just read them and you can kind of reflect on them after we finish. Romans chapter 13, verse eight through 10.

It's got its own little section here in My New King James titled, "Love your neighbor. "Owe no one anything except to love one another, "for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." You don't have to have the Galatian problem where you're trying to be circumcised and fulfill the law. If you want to fulfill the law, go for the more excellent way.

Love fulfills the law. It's the indirect approach. If you want to fulfill the law, don't read the law and try to do the things that are in the law.

That was Israel's mistake. Cultivate love, manifest love, that fulfills the law. The commandments, don't commit adultery, don't murder, don't steal, don't bear false witness, don't covet, any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. Does no harm.

The whole Hippocratic oath thing is actually biblically derived, do no harm. Love does no harm. One of the things Paul does not mention in 1 Corinthians 13 is, in all of the things that love does and does not do, it fulfills the law because it is respectful of the neighbor and doesn't damage

the neighbor, doesn't harm the neighbor, doesn't act as a detriment to a neighbor.

And that is how it fulfills the law. And verse 11, do this knowing the time. Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.

What did we just see in our previous passages? You're not of the night or of the darkness. Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

Those that are deflected are under some other influence. When we're under the influence of love, it's day, it's work time. Wake up out of sleep.

Our deliverance is nearer than when we first believed. The hope of deliverance, that's hope. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. What's the breastplate in the armor of light? Faith and love. Walk properly as in the day, not in revelry, drunkenness, lewdness, lust, strife, and envy.

These are all self-gratifying problems. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you put on the armor of light, you are putting on Christ.

Make no provision for the flesh to its lusts. Okay, quickly now to Galatians chapter five. We already saw verses five and six.

We're gonna go a little bit further in Galatians, in that same chapter. Galatians 5, 13 through 15. You brethren have been called to freedom, to liberty.

Only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh and where you just said, stay away from lusts and self-gratification, envy, strife, and all the rest of it. Do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another. Your freedom gives you the opportunity to serve one another in love.

That's what your freedom is for. It's not freedom to indulge in vice. It is freedom to serve.

All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you are consumed by one another. So Romans 13, eight through 10, love does no wrong to a neighbor.

It does no harm. Galatians 5, 13 through 15, love is a constraint on our freedom. It's the law of love that trumps freedom.

I may be free, all things are lawful, not all things build up, Paul has said in Corinthians. Ephesians chapter four, just two pages over. Ephesians 4, 11 through 16, he himself gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up, the edifying of the body of Christ until we all come to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God to a telos man, a complete man, to the measure

of the stature of the fullness of Christ that we're no longer children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, trickery of men, cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love.

Speaking the truth in love may grow up, no longer a child, no longer thinking, understanding, or speaking as a child. We grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself, how? In love, in love. Remember in the earlier part of Galatians, when it said that the saints are the target, love your neighbor is the fulfilling of the law, the body looking to itself in love grows up and is unified, unity.

The whole theme of 1 Corinthians is in some ways summed up by unity. And finally, one you might not expect, turn over to Philemon, right before Hebrews. It's really only takes up one page, it's kind of hard to hit.

Philemon, four through seven. I thank my God. This of course is the letter Paul writes to the master of Onesimus the slave.

Philemon, Onesimus ran away, he got converted, he got close to Paul and Paul is sending him back. And so Paul writes an accompanying letter, a letter of reintroduction, if you will. I thank my God, oh Philemon, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith, which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints.

Faith is toward Jesus and love is toward the saints. There's a beautiful little mini chiasm there. In order that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus, for we have great joy and consolation in your love.

Romans 13, love does no wrong to a neighbor. Galatians five, love constrains freedom. We might be free to do a thing, but we don't.

Ephesians four, it is a unifying factor. It knits together the body of Christ. Love knits us together by that which every joint supplies.

And Philemon four through seven, love provides great joy, consolation and refreshment. There is joy, there is comfort and encouragement. There is refreshment from this love.

These are additional symptoms, additional manifestations of love beyond the great summary that Paul gives us in Corinthians. So we recognize that it is a part of that threefold set of Christian virtues and the other two have to be in existence. If I want this love, this is my final proposal to you.

If I want this divine love in my soul, understanding the role of the Holy Spirit, understanding the role of the word of God, if I want this love, what do I need to do? Its foundation, the two bottom corners of the pyramid in order to have that love at the top, the greatest of these is love. I've

got to have those other two, faith and hope. So if I'm having trouble, if I see that maybe love is not fully manifest or isn't doing all that it could or should do, I can't just try to put a pyramid cap up in air.

I've got to have the foundation of faith and hope. I've got to refresh my understanding of eternity, of judgment, of opportunity, of reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus, of being known by Him. I've got to have that faith that commits to and trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And because of that, and because of Him and His example, I have a different perspective. I have a different set of thoughts that I choose to entertain. I don't logizomai about extraneous things.

I focus on faith and I focus on hope. Love will emerge. Love will be poured out when I cultivate faith and cultivate hope.

You get it indirectly. It comes by not chasing it. It comes by going to the source, trusting in the source, believing and having hope in the promises of the source.

That love will be a natural concomitant. It will emerge naturally. And that's why the three remain, but the greatest is love because the other two have done their work and have produced their fruit.

So in order to have this love and to fulfill 1 Corinthians 13, work on your faith, work on your hope, redirect your attention to that which has been promised, not to the vagaries and the insults and the shortfalls and all of the corruption that is in this earth, whether it's people, places, or things. Faith and hope, there's your love. It's a good thing to review.

I encourage you this week to read Galatians 5, to read Colossians chapter 1, Thessalonians 1 and Thessalonians 5, Romans 13, Ephesians chapter 4. And the whole Philemon letter is an appeal to Philemon's love. And Paul commends Onesimus to Philemon because Paul loves him. And it is an act of love in all three of these men.

Onesimus returns to his master because he loves Paul. And he recognizes that love can overcome all of the baggage that might come from a runaway slave and a master-slave relationship and anything that happened in the past. Paul says, love can fix all of this.

I have love for you, Philemon. Philemon, you have love for me. I want you to transfer your love for me to Onesimus.

He loves me and he loves you. And that will supersede and rise above all of the history and any failure, any shortcoming. Paul says, if anything is owed by Onesimus, charge it to my account because you owe me.

And there's a little friendly dig at the end. He says, I need some benefit from you. I helped to get you saved and charge it to my account.

But actually, you owe me there, brother. And he's smiling as he says it. It's a wonderful letter

and it's got some humor in it.

Well, that's the conclusion of our chapter. We'll begin chapter 14 next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the wonderful blessing it is to not be trapped in ourselves, to not be limited by what is earthly and what might've been given to us by heredity or by environment or by circumstance. But in your transcending grace and your unlimited power, you are able to raise us up and stand us on our feet and enable us to pursue that upward way that leaves things behind and presses toward the mark of the calling we have in the Lord Jesus. We know that that calling is summed up in exercising faith, reminding ourselves of our hope and producing that love that is available from you.

And we pray that as we reflect on these things, the Holy Spirit will activate them in our souls, remind us at the time of application so that we can live and reflect your glory in the glory of the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name, amen.