

THE GREATEST OF THESE

As preached on Sunday, May 5th

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1. Some amazing gifts and practices are highlighted in vv.1-3: speaking in tongues, gifts of prophecy and discernment, faith that moves mountains, giving away all of our material goods to the poor, and willingly enduring physical hardship. Yet, what does Paul say these are without love? Why?
2. This chapter is famous for the next section of verses (vv.4-8). They are often read at weddings as a beautiful piece of poetry giving tribute to true love. Yet, Paul isn't really writing poetry to the Corinthians! Paul is giving them a concrete checklist of the attributes of Christian love. The design was for them to evaluate how their practice of love measures up. How does your practice of love measure up against the sixteen attributes given in these verses?
3. If you had to pick one of the sixteen attributes that is the healthiest in your life today, which would it be? If you had to pick one of the sixteen that needs the most attention and improvement, which would it be?
4. Look again at v.8. Why does love never fail while prophecies cease, tongues are stilled, and knowledge passes away?
5. In v.12 Paul makes reference to heaven as he says "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face..." What's the connection between love, as Paul's been describing it in vv.1-11 and heaven? What's Paul's point?
6. Explain v.13 in your own words. Why do only faith, hope, and love remain? Why is love the greatest of these?
7. In the end, the most difficult part about this chapter isn't understanding it, but putting it into practice. Paul is essentially saying that NOTHING we do in life counts if it is not characterized and motivated by love. What is one way you can improve in your daily practice of love?