

CALLED TO BE SAINTS TOGETHER

Love Matters Most

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (ESV)

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Background and context:

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 (ESV)

²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

God's divine structure for the Church:

Apostles –

Prophets –

Teachers –

Miracles –

Various gifts –

Ephesians 2:19-21

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

“But (you) earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I will show a still more excellent way.”

What is that ‘more excellent way’?

The centrality of love for the local church:

_____ love is the most essential component of Christian community.

The _____ of love makes the exercise of any gift _____, and even _____.

Without love, God is not _____, and I am not _____.

Love is what makes any gift ‘_____’. Why?

Agape love is fundamentally described in what we _____, not in what we _____.

Agape love is _____ to my _____.

Agape love is _____ **to others’** _____.

Agape love is the most enduringly _____ activity of the Church. While some gifts will cease to be, love never will.

Agape love shows that I am _____ spiritually.

Learning to love this way is the key to truly _____.