

Sermon Notes for February 21, 2010

**Sermon Series on
I Corinthians 13
“What Is Biblical Love?”
I Corinthians 13:4-7**

A young man wrote his sweetheart a love letter:

Dear Jennifer,

I love you so much I'd **climb the highest mountain just to see your smile**. I'd **swim the deepest river, infested with piranhas**, just for one of your kisses. I'd **cross the widest sea** for one of your hugs. I'd **cross the burning desert** just to look upon your face.

With never ending love, Frank

P.S. I'll be over to see you next Wednesday, **if it doesn't rain**.

Introduction

A. The WORLD'S View Of Love.

1. The world seems to have such an “emotional” view of love.
 - a. Some of the all-time classic love songs:
 1. ”Unchained Melody” – The Righteous Brothers
 2. “The Way You Look Tonight” – The Lettermen
 3. “Maria” – Johnny Mathis
 4. “Moon River” – Andy Williams
 5. “Try a Little Tenderness” – Otis Redding
 6. “Yesterday” – The Beatles
 7. “Once Upon A Time” – Frank Sinatra
 8. “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” – Roberta Flack
 9. “When a Man Loves a Woman” – Percy Sledge
 - b. The vows exchanged in a modern wedding ceremony – **“I will live with you as long as our love will last.”**
2. **IS LOVE MERELY AND “ONLY” A FEELING?**
 - a. what happens in a marriage when the feelings “just aren't there?”
 1. when money is tight
 2. when the baby hasn't slept for three days
 3. when there are six months of cancer treatments
 - b. the world does not seem to have a “real” definition of love

B. GOD'S View Of Love.

1. That is what so wonderful about our text today. **GOD'S WORD GIVES US A CLEAR DEFINITION OF BIBLICAL LOVE.**
 - a. and this definition is very, very practical, and very, very easy to understand
 - b. after this message, you will know EXACTLY what Biblical love is and how it is expressed.
2. However, you might want to **“fasten your seat belts, as this could be a bumpy ride.”**

I. What Biblical Love IS.

A. Love Is PATIENT – An ATTITUDE.

Vs. 4a – “Love is patient,”

1. **RIGHT OFF THE BAT**, Paul describes love as of an inner attitude.
 - a. It is **not just an emotion** that depends on external circumstances
 1. being simply “a feeling”
 2. with emotions going up and down
 - B. **BUT IT IS AN INNER ATTITUDE THAT REMAINS THE SAME NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS**
2. We know this love is an internal attitude because Paul says that **love is patient**.
 - a. what patience is **NOT**:
 1. letting others “think” that I am a patient person on the outside when I may be screaming on the inside to “show” my patience
 2. to “hold my tongue” so that others won’t know my anger
 - b. what patience **IS**:
 1. true, Biblical patience is not only **NOT** saying something to another who may have hurt you - Biblical patience is **NOT WANTING** to say something to another who may have hurt you. (Hardy)
 2. **NOW, WE MUST SEE THAT, THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN LOVE THIS WAY IS BECAUSE:**
 - a. the peace of Christ is ruling in my life
 - b. the love of Christ is ruling in my life
 - c. and HE has overruled my natural inclination to show impatience by the power of His Holy Spirit
 3. how would you do in this situation? – One snowy morning at 5:00 a.m., a missionary candidate rang the bell at a missionary examiner’s home. Ushered into the office, he sat **three hours** past his appointment time waiting for his interview. At 8:00 am a retired missionary appeared and began his questioning. **“Can you spell?”**
 Rather mystified, the candidate answered, **“Yes sir.”**
“All right, spell ‘baker’.”
“B-A-K-E-R.”
“Fine. Now, do you know anything about numbers?”
 the examiner continued.
“Yes sir, something.”
“Please add two plus two.”
“Four,” replied the candidate.
“That’s fine,” said the examiner. **“I believe you have passed. I’ll tell the board tomorrow.”**
 At the board meeting, the examiner reported on the interview. **“He has all the qualifications for a fine missionary. First,** I tested him on **self-denial**, making him arrive at my home at five in the morning. He left a warm bed on a snowy morning without any complaint. **Second,** I tested him on **promptness. He arrived on time. Third,** I examined him on **patience**, I made him wait **three hours to see me. Fourth,** I tested him on

temper. He failed to show any anger or aggravation. **Fifth,** I tried his **humility** by asking him questions that a seven-year-old child could answer, and he showed not indignation. So you see, I believe the candidate meets the requirements. He will make a fine missionary.”

4. **Matthew Henry** – Biblical love can endure evil, injury, and provocation, without being filled with resentment, indignation, or revenge. It makes the mind firm, gives it power over the angry passions, and furnishes it with a persevering patience, that **shall rather wait and wish for the reformation of a brother than fly out in resentment of his conduct.** It will put up with many slights and neglects from the person it loves, and **wait long to see the kindly effects of such patience on him.**

B. Love Is KIND – An ACTION.

Vs. 4a – “Love is patient, love is **kind.**

1. AND . . . the Biblical definition of love gets even “harder.”

- a. not only are we to be patient with difficult people – to have a Godly attitude
 - b. this word kindness says that we will ALSO express love through KIND ACTS toward those difficult people!
2. THAT’S why Paul defines love IN THIS WAY:
 - a. love is an **internal attitude of patience** and love toward others
 - b. AS WELL AS . . . an **external action of kindness** that EXPRESSES itself toward others
 3. So, before you say that you understand true love, ASK yourself these questions:
 - a. First, DOES MY INTERNAL ATTITUDE SENSE PATIENCE FOR OTHERS, ESPECIALLY TOWARD THOSE WHO “TRY MY PATIENCE”?
 - b. and Second, DO I “FIND” WAYS TO EXPRESS MY LOVE TO OTHERS **DESPITE** their attitudes toward me, good or bad.
 4. Hopefully, by now you are sensing that Biblical love is a supernatural act of God’s grace and Spirit in your life.
 - a. **YOU CANNOT LOVE THIS WAY WITHOUT THE LOVE OF GOD WITHIN YOU.**
 - b. **IN YOUR OWN POWER, YOU WILL FAIL!**

II. What Biblical Love Is NOT.

A. Love Is NOT JEALOUS.

Vs. 4b – “It does **not** envy:

1. After showing us what love **is**, Paul proceeds to tell us what **love is NOT.**
 - a. as Paul tells us what love is not, he seems to show us how true Godly love will **not** respond to others
 - b. because there is usually an obstacle is to truly loving others – **JEALOUSY**
 1. it seems as if jealousy is the first and foundational problem that we have with other people
 2. and once we become jealous, there is a “**domino effect;**” our jealousy causes all of the other “dominos” or bad attitudes to fall as well

2. Understanding jealousy.

- a. there are two types of jealousy:
 1. to want what another person has
 2. to NOT want another person to have something
- b. jealousy was and continues to be a major sin seen throughout Scripture
 1. **Eve** wanted to be like God, so she ate the forbidden fruit
 2. **Cain** was jealous of Abel's blessing by God so he killed his brother
 3. **Joseph's brothers** were jealous of their brother so they sold him into slavery
 4. **Saul** was jealous of David and stalked him for years to kill him
 5. **Ecclesiastes 4:4** – “And I saw that all labor and **all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor**. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”
- c. Even Shakespeare, in Othello, spoke of jealousy. . . “**O! beware, my lord, of jealousy. It is the green-ey'd monster** which doth mock the meat it feeds on.”
- d. let's say that someone gets the job that I want.

3. Understanding Biblical love regarding jealousy.

- a. true, Biblical love is NOT jealous – why?
 1. **BECAUSE WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO BE JEALOUS OF?**
 - a. if JESUS IS YOUR LIFE, **WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED?**
 - b. and what is life anyway. . .
 1. money?
 2. influence?
 3. possessions?
 2. Biblical love is that which is:
 - a. totally satisfied with one's place in life because God loves me
 - b. and He is the sovereign over my life
 - c. so that my life is **FULL OF JESUS!**
- b. true Biblical love expresses itself
 1. **R.C.H. Lenski** – “**Biblical love is not upset when someone else gets something good. When love sees another prosperous, rich, high, gifted, it is pleased and glad of his advantage.**”
 2. even though we may not always love as we should - my brothers
 - a. D. – top 25 in sales in Raymond James
 - b. T. – in Florida even as we speak

B. Love Does NOT BOAST.

Vs. 4b – “it does not boast,”

1. The domino affect continues:

- a. imagine a person gets that job that you have been trained to do
 1. you are the best trained
 2. you have the most experience
 3. but another man gets the job, probably by going behind your back.
- b. you get jealous and begin to “**boast**” that **you** should have gotten the job
 1. in fact, you want the world to know how “unfair” it was
 2. and . . . you begin to hate that person who got “your job”

2. Understanding Biblical love concerning boasting.

- a. the person who is boastful to the world is consumed with ONE THING – **ME!**
 1. “**I** have goals.”
 2. “**I** want more.”
 3. “**I** want what is due me!”
 4. “**I DESERVE THIS!**”
- b. It is said that in a churchyard near the old village of **Leamington, England**, there stands a tombstone with the following inscription: “**Here lies a miser who lived for himself, and cared for nothing but gathering wealth; now where he is or how he fares, nobody knows and nobody cares.**” In contrast, there’s a plain tombstone at **St. Paul’s Cathedral in London** with an inscription that reads, “**Sacred to the memory of General Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, and his heart to God.**” Two epitaphs – two distinct opposites. One life shows lovelessness, the other life shows love.
- c. **William Barclay** says that there are two kinds of people: “those who think of their **rights** and those who think of their **duties.**”

C. Love Is NOT PROUD

Vs. 4c – “it is not proud

1. The hurt person goes from verbal bragging to internal pride.

- a. The hurt person has made their point that:
 1. “**They** should have gotten that job”
 2. “**I** was the best person for the job”
 3. “That person must have stabbed **me** in the back; or pulled strings to get that job!”
- b. now, they are simply “**puffed up**”
 1. thinking in their heart that they are the best
 2. sports – when you get beat out by another player
 - a. “I am the best.”
- c. “He is not as good as I am.”

2. Understanding Biblical love concerning pride.

- a. the Greek meaning of pride is:
 1. to inflate
 2. a bag of hot air

- b. one of the problems is that this person has an “inflated” view of self
1. **and in doing so, will not only have a lofty view of self - but will look down on others that are “beneath him”**
 2. **William Carey** was one of the greatest missionaries who ever lived and one of the greatest linguists the world has ever seen – Christian or non-Christian. William Carey translated parts of the Bible into no fewer than **thirty-four different Indian languages**. He began his life as a cobbler, fixing shoes. When he arrived in India as a missionary, he was immediately regarded with dislike and contempt because of the very stringent caste system that the people had been locked into for centuries. **So he was given absolutely no respect.**
 One time, at a dinner party that Carey was attending, a snob had the idea of humiliating Carey because of Carey’s low estate. So that all could hear, he said, **“I hear, Mr. Carey, that you once worked as a shoemaker?”** “Oh no, your lordship,” said William Carey, **“not as a shoemaker, only a shoe repairman.”** He wouldn’t even claim that he made shoes if he only repaired them.
- c. **DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHO YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY?**
1. the next time you feel prideful – **LOOK AT THE HOLINESS OF GOD**
 - a. who are **you** in comparison to Him?
 - b. it matters not who you are in comparison to other people
 2. the next time you feel prideful – **LOOK AT THE GRACE OF GOD.**
 - a. **LOOK AT THE CROSS – WHAT DID JESUS DO FOR YOU?**
 - b. and why did He do it?
 - c. “The Passion of the Christ.”
 - d. **Romans 2:3-4** – “So when you, a mere man, **pass judgment on them** and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, **not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?”**
 - e. A counselor, **David Seamands**, summed up his career this way: “Many years ago I was driven to the conclusion that the two major causes of most emotional problems among evangelical Christians are these: **the failure to understand, receive, and live out God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness; and the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people . . .** We read, we hear, we believe a good theology of grace. But that’s not the way we live. **The good news of the Gospel of Grace has not penetrated the level of our emotions.”**

3. SPIRITUALLY. . .WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO BE PROUDFUL OF?

D. Love Is NOT RUDE.

Vs. 5a – “It is not rude,”

1. The person who got your job really bothers you.

- a. “I deserved that job.”
- b. “They probably lied to get the job.”
- c. “If the truth be told, I really don’t like them . . . at all.”
- d. this is how rudeness will manifest itself:
 1. **ANY PERSON YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH, YOU WILL PROBABLY BE RUDE TO.**
 2. ask yourself these questions relative to a person that you don’t like:
 - a. Can you look them in the eye?
 - b. Can you be in the same room with them?
 - c. Do you “roll your eyes” when they talk?
 - d. Does your “body language” send negative signals to that person?

2. Understanding Biblical love concerning rudeness.

- a. the definition of rudeness is to be shapeless, uninformed
 1. the meaning here is that this person is out of control, undisciplined
 2. there is no order or “propriety” in their relationships
 3. **THE PERSON WHO IS RUDE DOESN’T CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THEM OR THEIR ACTIONS**
- b. rudeness, therefore is the **EPITOME OF SELFISHNESS!**
 1. the rude person will walk out of a room while a person is in the middle of a sentence
 2. the rude person will interrupt what a person is saying
 3. the rude person **WILL DO WHATEVER THEY WANT TO- ESPECIALLY TO THE PERSON THEY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH**
 - a. B. – “Oh, he’s a nothing.”
 - b. H. – folded arms, sarcasm

E. Love Is NOT SELF-SEEKING.

Vs. 5a – “it is not self-seeking,”

1. The other person got your job.

- a. You are not only boasting and prideful,
- b. You continue to seek to get that job.
- c. You do will everything and anything that you can to discredit and embarrass that person in the hope that they will lose their job and you get it.

2. Understanding Biblical love concerning self-seeking.

- a. **THE WORST THING THAT YOU CAN DO IN THIS LIFE IS TO:**
 1. BE SELF ABSORBED
 2. AND TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO BE SELF ABSORBED

- b. if you truly want to develop the self image of your children, **TEACH THEM HOW TO SERVE OTHERS!**

F. Love Is NOT EASILY ANGERED.

Vs. 5b – “it is not easily angered,

1. The cycle continues.

- a. someone has hurt you. You take it personally.
- b. you will be:
 1. **jealous** of that person
 2. **bragging** to others that he hurt you
 3. **filled with pride**
 4. **rude** to that person whenever you get the chance
 5. **seeking** all the time to get even
 6. **with a constant anger toward that person**

2. Understanding Biblical love concerning easily angry.

- a. the Greek word for easily angry is:
 1. a sudden outburst
 2. a quick temper
- b. the person who hurt you can get you mad at the “drop of a hat”
 1. they can look at you wrongly
 2. they can ask you for a favor and you get angry
 3. in fact, anything and everything that they do around you “ticks you off”
- c. **THE REASON THAT YOU ARE ANGRY AT THIS PERSON IS THAT THIS PERSON BLOCKED YOUR PERSONAL GOAL.**
 1. L.Crabb – blocked goals
 2. **Proverbs 13:12 – “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”**
 3. “Inspiration without expression leads to depression.”
- d. if your temper is quick, there are some unresolved problems in your life
 1. G.
 2. me – Taylor Johnson – may be hostile
- e. **Sam Peebles – “Stress does not make you what you are. It simply reveals what is already there.”**

G. Love Does NOT KEEP A RECORD OF WRONGS.

Vs. 5c – “it keeps no record of wrongs.

1. Regarding that person who hurt you, you will mentally or even physically remember or recall EVERYTHING that they have EVER DONE to you.

- a. Crabb – M:
- b. In some of the **Polynesian Islands**, where the natives spend a lot of their time warring and fighting, it is customary for every man to **keep visible reminders of his hatred**. They do this **by suspending little articles from the roof of their huts** – with each article representing something about somebody that they hate. You say, “That’s incredible! Can you imagine that in our own society? Can you imagine everybody’s house decorated like that?” **Well, it’s not untrue to say that most of our minds have some of those articles of hate hanging in them.**

2. Understanding Biblical love concerning keeping a record of wrongs.

- a. the Greek means:
 1. an accounting term representing putting figures into an accounting ledger
 2. to keep an accurate account of what other people have done to you
- b. the other sense of this term is that not only do you keep a record of wrongs, you continue to look for others faults as well
 1. in a sense, you become **suspicious**
 - a. EVERYTHING that that person does is grounds for suspicion
 - b. you “EXPECT” that person to lie
 2. I want to say something to those of you who are naturally suspicious
 - a. you were not born that way
 - b. something or someone has made you to become suspicious
 - c. I have generally found that people who are suspicious usually have their own personal sins that they have not dealt with
 - d. J. F.
 3. this is true Biblical love – **“Love will never indulge suspicion without proofs, but will rather incline to darken and disbelieve evidence against the person it affects. It will hardly give an ill opinion of another and it will do it with regret and reluctance when the evidence cannot be resisted. It will not make the worst construction of things, but put the best fact that it can on circumstances that have no good appearance.”**

H. Love Does NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL.

Vs. 6 - “love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

1. We have “seen all of the dominos fall.”
 - a. someone has harmed you, someone has gotten something you want – and you are **jealous**
 - b. you become **arrogant** and **full of pride**
 - c. you are **rude** to that person, showing them no respect
 - d. you do everything that you can behind their back to **discredit them**
 - e. **everything** that they do upsets you
 - f. **you keep a journal of everything** that they do to you
 - g. and finally, **you hope for the day** that they will fail, that some misfortune will come to them
2. Understanding Biblical love and delighting in evil.
 - a. you will know where you are spiritually when you hear that someone who once hurt you has failed
 1. Will you smile and say “justice has been done?”
 2. Or will you grieve, thanking God that while truth may have come out, it is still a tragedy?

- b. if you are full of the love of Jesus:
 - 1. you know that God will be the ultimate judge
 - 2. that you will not be their judge
 - 3. BECAUSE you forgave them a long time ago and your anger has been replaced with grief

III. How BIBLICAL LOVE EXPRESSES ITSELF.

A. Biblical Love **BEARS ALL THINGS**

Vs. 7a – “It always **protects**,”

- 1. NKJV – “Love bears all things.”
- 2. to put up with the slights of others even when it hurts you.
- 3. “Instead of speaking of others in a bad light, it will try to cover for a person.”

B. Biblical Love **BELIEVES ALL THINGS**

Vs. 7a - “(Love) always **trusts**”

- 1. NKJV – “believes all things”
- 2. they are not suspicious
- 3. it readily credits what men say in their own defense
- 4. it will believe well even when there is a dark appearance.”
- 5. gunshot in other room.

C. Biblical Love **HOPES ALL THINGS**

Vs. 7b – (Love) “always **hopes**”

- 1. NKJV – “hopes all things”
- 2. to hope for the best for all men.
- 3. to hope that a person is telling the truth even when there is considerable doubt.

D. Biblical Love **ENDURES ALL THINGS**

Vs, 7b – “(Love) always **perseveres**.”

- 1. NKJV – “endures all things”
- 2. it sustains all assaults, whatever they are
- 3. it bears up under then and endures patiently.

Conclusion:

1. **FIRST** of all, I want you to **realize** that to love as God loves **IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE IN OUR OWN POWER.**
 - a. Our flesh actually “rebels” at this kind of love
 1. because our flesh and our sin says, **I WANT WHAT I WANT WHEN I WANT IT!**
 2. I have goals, desires and hopes and **NO ONE SHOULD STAND IN MY WAY!**
 - b. It is the most natural, sinful thing to want to be the center of our universe.
 - c. We must confess the worship and obsession of ourselves and our lack of love and concern for other people.
2. **SECOND**, I want to **ask you** if there has ever been a **person or event that has caused you NOT to be able to love?**
 - a. Has someone hurt you?
 - b. Has someone stabbed you in the back?
 - c. Is there a person in your past that you wish harm upon?
3. **THIRD**, are you willing to **repent of your sins** regarding that person?
 - a. My coach in Jr. High
 - b. brother who was a roofer
4. **FOURTH**, are you desirous of loving others unconditionally?

A story told by a nurse:

It was a busy morning, approximately 8:30 am, when an elderly gentleman in his 80's, arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He stated that he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound.

On examining him, I saw that it was well healed, so I got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound. While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation. I asked him if he had another Doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry. **The gentlemen told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife.**

I then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that **she was a victim of Alzheimer's disease. As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late.** He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. I was surprised, and asked him, **"And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?"**

He smiled as he patted my hand and said, **"She doesn't know who I am, but I still know who she is."**

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought, **"That is the kind of love I want in my life."**