

Context: The Corinthian saints sought and used spiritual gifts in self-promoting pride, instead of Christ-like love.

- They prioritized the *power* of the Spirit above the *fruit* of the Spirit.

Recap

- If I memorize 1 Cor 13, but have not love, I gain nothing
- Me in the flesh: David is *not* very patient or kind; he envies the influential and boasts about his own strengths. David is often arrogant and rude; he loves to get his own way; he grows irritable when he doesn't feel respected. David is sometimes resentful of perceived insults and hypocrisy; he can shade the truth to make things easier for himself and likes to give others a taste of their own medicine. David bears what he's used to, believes what he already thinks, sees the worst qualities in people and quickly turns his disappointment into contempt for others. David fails all the time.
- The Lord Jesus: Jesus is patient and kind; He does not envy or boast because He is content in His glory; He is not arrogant or rude, but humble and tenderhearted. Jesus did not insist on His own way, but took up the Cross to die for His enemies. He is never irritable or resentful toward the weak or sinful seeker. He does not rejoice at my wrongdoing, but rejoices with me in the Light. Jesus bears all things, even my worst blasphemies; He doesn't shoot down what I say, but trusts my resolutions and takes my apologies seriously. Jesus hopes for my best future and draws out the person I want to be. Jesus endures all things, and never denies me His friendship, even in my darkest hour. Jesus never fails. Even death could not stop His love.

And this is the perfect, permanent love we will discuss today. Receive it!

Overview

1. What is Perfect
2. What is Passing Away
3. What is Permanent

KEY VERSE: “Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

- Knew: covenant intimacy

I. What is Perfect?—The Love of God

- Divine love surpasses power

God values His *love* displayed in us more than His *power* displayed in us.

- Widow's two pennies: (Luke 21:1-4)
- God looks on the heart!

- Divine love surpasses the present

*****Things that end:** Jobs; Times of physical health; Relationships; Marriages; Prosperity; Hard times; Seasons of fruitful ministry; Family names and lines; Styles of worship and preaching; Local churches; Religions; Philosophies; Nations; Ecosystems; Stars; Galaxies; Our lives
—God's Love never ends! He IS Love

- Divine love surpasses the personal

Love never ends: To be fully known and fully loved by God and by people is the whole point of life

- Love expands our hearts and horizons
- All the gifts and power of God are working toward this one objective: to let us know Him fully and live with Him and His people in harmony
- Living with God means total acceptance, vibrant community, joyful liberty, and glorious intimacy.

- Divine love is in the Presence of God
Jude 1:24; Psalm 16:11; Psalm 17:15

II. What is Passing Away?

The **tools** that build the body will one day be obsolete, but the glorious **palace** of the perfect, loving church stands forever.

****Prophecy* is temporary

- In heaven, all is fulfilled
- All the plans of God will have come to pass and there will be no more need to look forward to predictions of paradise. It will BE paradise.

***The use of *various tongues* will cease;

- In heaven, there will be full knowledge of others. Our speech will be perfect and undivided. The judgment of Babel will be completely reversed. Different tongues will not be needed since the peoples will be united.

“For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord.” (Zephaniah 3:9)

- **Also:** The gift of tongues enables perfect communication with God. In heaven, we will see Him face-to-face and have no need of a prayer language to communicate spirit-to-Spirit with Him.

***Partial *knowledge* of God pass away

- Pastors and teachers will be out a job. Theologians will be obsolete
- All the greatest, dustiest theological tomes will seem like picture books when we learn what He is really like

****Childish ways* will pass away

- The selfish way in which this culture and age thinks
- Putting self first: my needs, reputation, spiritual attainments, rank, comforts, my way or highway
- Letting others serve me, feed me, clean me, shelter me, hold my hand spiritually

*** *All limits on my enjoyment of God* will pass away (v.12)

- Adam **knew** Eve—covenant intimacy, self-disclosure, full acceptance, nakedness without shame. Real love.

No hindrances to love such as:

- Sin; Guilt; Pride; Ungodly influences; culture; Corrupt leaders; Time constraints; Unequal yokes; Ignorance: Misleading doctrine; Procrastination; Immaturity; Oppression & injustice; Fear; Sickness; Fatigue

“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of **knowing** Christ Jesus my Lord. (Philippians 3:7)

- We will **then** have the same kind of intimate knowledge of God that He has of us in this age. WHAT???????

III. What is Permanent?

1. Oneness with Christ in perfect glory

“Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2)—total completion

2. Faith—confident trust in God and His Word that will abide forever *because **He is worthy** and **we are always going to depend on Him as creatures***
3. Hope—there is always something new coming in God! We will start writing the true story of the ages. There will be an abiding place for holy desire and anticipation of better things to come. The fullness and creativity of God is an ocean that will never be drained.
4. Love—He loves us with an *everlasting love* and holds us to Him in an *eternal covenant* which is already sealed by Christ's blood and legally inherited by glorified believers.

IV. Conclusion: Start experiencing it now!

- Secret place—faith

- Cultivate treasure in heaven—hope
- Fellowship with the saints—love
- Pray—face-to-face
- Study—partial knowledge
- Tell God's love—prophecy in part