

Last Week - The Primacy of Love

(Go listen to the sermon from September 7 for the difference between gifts of the Spirit and fruit of the Spirit, why gifts without love are worse than useless, and why intense and ambitious people like we have here in LJ – and America – are going to struggle with this.)

What Love Does Not Do

It does not envy, it does not boast, it does not puff up [ESV: Arrogant]

Envy: “To experience strong envy and resentment against someone.”

In context, if one person had a prominent spiritual gift, others envied it and resented them.

Boast: “To praise oneself excessively by downgrading someone else.”

In context, this is the flip side of envy. Boasting is the position of the prominent person.

Puff up: In extrabiblical Greek literature, it is a medical term for a swollen organ. A body part distorted to bigger than its normal shape, which is a sign the body is not working correctly.

In context, some had a distorted, bloated view of themselves. They thought too highly of themselves.

It does not act unbecomingly [ESV: is not rude]

What it means: To behave in a way that breaks social standards.

In context, it is the same word from 1 Corinthians 7:36. The meaning of this passage is debated, but it very possibly refers to a young couple whose “passions are strong,” in which case they should go ahead and get married.

It does not insist on its own way, is not provoked to anger [ESV: is not irritable]

Insist on its own way: Literally, “It does not seek the things of itself.”

In context, it is related to lawsuits and various self-serving divisions among the Corinthians.

Provoked to anger: Comes from a word which means “stirred up” or “sharpened.” Love does is not sharpened into a reaction. It’s the idea of letting cooler heads prevail.

It does not keep record of wrongs, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing [ESV: is not... resentful]

Unforgiveness, root of bitterness, resentment, and keeping a record of wrongs are all the same thing.

In context, the Corinthians were taking each other to court.

Some argue that “rejoice at wrongdoing” is a reference to 1 Cor 5:2. It is possible instead this is connected to record of wrongs.

Why would someone rejoice at wrongdoing? Because it proves they are justified in keeping a record of wrongs, in being irritated and angry and determined to get their own way.

What Love Does

Patient and kind

People grow at their own pace. We allow them to be themselves on their journey to God, and we don't rush them. We show them kindness as they go on their journey.

Believes, bears, hopes, endures

Bears – absorbs wrong without retaliating

Believes – interprets other people's actions in the best possible light

Hopes – anticipates redemption and God's work in people's lives

Endures – perseveres for the long haul

How to Get It

Love personified

*"In these verses, love is presented not merely as a description but as an actor—an agent of action."
What greater love is there than the love Jesus showed for us on the cross?*

Love is from Jesus

Romans 5:1-5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, ***because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.***

Questions for Personal Study

1. This passage reveals unloving attitudes and behaviors. Where are you lacking?
2. Is it hard or easy for you to believe the best in others? Why?
3. Read Romans 5:5. How is our salvation the source of our love for God and others?
4. Think of the cross and what Jesus did for you. How is Christ the fulfillment and perfect example of love?