

#01 THE VALUE OF LOVE

#02 THE VIRTUE (OR STRENGTH) OF LOVE

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

There are many who love this unholy and ungodly world in which we live. The problem is that most people who love the world love it in the wrong way. It is more lust than love. It is not a virtuous love. It is not selfless, it is not sacrificial, and it is not characterized by attitudes of redemption toward others. I want us to see four redemptive, Christlike attitudes which mark the virtue of agape love.

I. LOVE'S PATIENCE. Charity suffereth long, Love is patient. Where would we be today if there was no patience in God's dealings with us? Would there have been a cross? No. Would there have been a plan of salvation? No. If there was no patience in God, we would all be in a devil's hell for an eternity of suffering and separation from God. But the Bible tells us that God loves us and it is the nature of God's kind of love to be patient.

It literally means to burn long. In our terms, it means the opposite of having a short fuse. It

means to take the heat for a long time without bursting into flames.

A. NOTICE THE POSITION OF PATIENCE

Please note that when Paul first begins describing the virtuous characteristics of love, the very first thing he says is that love is patient. Let me tell you why patience is such an important aspect of Christian love. **It is important because without patience, love would never complete its mission.** You see, this love is not that warm, cuddly feeling so often identified as love. This love is that which works for the highest good in another person's life. Love is motion, not just emotion. It has places to go and things to do and a course to finish - and that can take a while.

A. NOTICE THE POSITION OF PATIENCE

B. NOTICE THE PATH OF PATIENCE

this love has the patience to keep on keeping on, to put up with the trials and tribulations of the relationship, and complete the mission. Completing the mission means giving all that can be given and doing all that can be done. This is the point at which Jesus cried "tetelestai" from the cross - **"it is finished."**

Do you remember what John said about Jesus and His disciples near the end of His earthly ministry? It is found in **john 13:1 - *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*** These men acted at times as though they had never heard a single thing Jesus ever said. He portrayed the life of the humble servant, taught them what it meant to be a humble servant - and then they got into a big argument about which one of them was the greatest. He told them He would die on the cross and then rise again on the third day and, when He did, it took them all by surprise. Thomas refused to believe Jesus was alive until he felt the scars in His hands and feet.

Jesus had one, and only one, plan for building His church. That was to spend three years equipping a handful of disciples and then to leave them on earth in the wake of His own death, burial and resurrection to carry out the Great Commission. There was never a backup plan. But as hard-headed and imperceptive as they could be at times, Jesus loved them to the end, which also means that Jesus was patient with them until His mission on earth was completed.

The virtue of love's restraint is its patience that refuses to let go of the relationship until the mission is completed.

I. LOVE'S PATIENCE.

II. LOVE'S PATH.

The next thing Paul says about agape is that *love is kind*. KIND MEANS IT SHOWS ITSELF USEFUL Love's virtuous response to others is one of kindness. Love is a helping hand, not a backhand. *Ephesians 4:32 says, Be kind to one another. 2 Timothy 2:24 says, And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men,*

A. IT IS NOT A PRETENSE

ILL. Robert De Vincenzo was an Argentine golfer born 1923 died 2017 who had finally won his first tournament on the pro tour. He received his check on the eighteenth green and, after a few minutes of formalities, walked to his car. A woman was waiting for him who told him a sad story about having a dying baby and no money to provide for its needs. Vincenzo endorsed his check and gave it to her and said, "Make some good days for your baby." A week later he learned that the woman was a con artist running a scam. But when Vincenzo learned that there was no sick baby, he said, "That's the best news I've heard all week."

Love is kind even when it is disappointed or taken advantage of, and that happens quite often.

A. IT IS NOT A PRETENSE

B. IT IS PRACTICE

Remember Jesus' discussion about the separation of the sheep and the goats at the end of time? **(Matt. 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.**

He then explained: *to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me (v. 40).* What is Jesus describing in these verses? He is describing the virtue of the kindness of love.

Love is kind.

I. LOVE'S PATIENCE.

II. LOVE'S PATH.

III. LOVES POSITION.

charity envieth not;

Paul says, love is not *jealous*.

THIS LOVE never resents the joys and blessings of others. It never covets what belongs to someone else.

A. IT IS NOT CHILDISH

We've all seen it - a bunch of children together in a room full of toys. How many times have we noticed that one child who doesn't seem to want to play with the toys, he just doesn't want anyone else playing with them. He takes the ball away from another child and holds onto it until he notices yet another child playing with a toy truck. So he throws down the ball and takes the truck away. Now the other kid has picked up the ball again, so he puts down the truck and takes back the ball. On and on it goes and no one is happy about anything.

A. IT IS CHILDISH

B. IT IS NOT CRUEL

That's how jealousy operates. But how do you work for the highest good in other people's lives when you resent the fact that they have things that you don't have and you wish you had them and they didn't? You can't. The very nature of LOVE is selflessness, and that rules out jealousy as an appropriate attitude toward any other person over anything.

I. LOVE'S PATIENCE.

II. LOVE'S PATH.

III. LOVE'S PRACTICE.

IV. LOVE'S PURPOSE.

charity vaunteth not itself is not puffed up

The last thing Paul says about LOVE in this verse is ***that love does not brag and is not arrogant***. Love's reflection is one of humility before God.

Love looks through a telescope; envy, through a microscope.

A. LOVE ENRICHES –Love thinks of the other person instead of self. Its only desire is to do what is best for the other person. It is not selfish. It seeks to make the other person's life a better one, not by control but by sacrifice.

Someone said, "Love puts the fun in together ... the sad in apart ... the hope in tomorrow ... the joy in a heart."

A. LOVE ENRICHES

B. LOVE EDIFIES –Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The purpose of spiritual gifts in the church is to edify the church. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. **(1 Corinthians 8:1 KJV) Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.**

(1 Corinthians 12:7 KJV) But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

(1 Corinthians 14:3 KJV) But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Love is the key. Joy is love singing. Peace is love resting. Long-suffering is love enduring. Kindness is love's touch. Goodness is love's character. Faithfulness is love's habit. Gentleness is love's selflessness. Self-control is love holding the reins.

A. LOVE ENRICHES

B. LOVE EDIFIES

C. LOVE ENCOURAGES – Riches take wings, comforts vanish, hope withers away, but love stays with us. God is love.

These are external proofs that love is in your heart.

In other words, it takes a lot to make love get ticked off.

Love has a long fuse.

In the church, you may not know all the answers, but you can meet a need, hold a hand, lift a burden, and simply BE THERE.