

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 13:4-8a**.
- B. In looking at 1Cor. 13:1-3 we can see the following:
  - 1. One can be the best evangelist, preaching and teaching the word but if it is without love it is nothing.
  - 2. One can have the most knowledge of scripture and know the doctrine of Xianity but if it is without love it is nothing.
  - 3. One can work hard and serve like no one else, but if it is done without love it is nothing.
- C. Today begins a series of sermons on love.

## I. FOUR GREEK WORDS FOR LOVE (a quick review).

- A. **EROS** = passionate, erotic love, which desires others for the satisfaction of self. Not used in the NT.
- B. **STORGE** = a natural affection for one's family and kindred. A love by parents for children and children for parents. (The need to reproduce, and for orphans to know parents.)
- C. **PHILEO** = tender affection, emotion not to be commanded. To like someone very much but not with much commitment.
- D. **AGAPE** = a free and decisive act of the mind to show selflessness. It is the basis of every right relationship. Commitment in the purest and highest sense.

## II. WHOM SHOULD WE LOVE?

- A. First, we should love **God**.  
We don't love God if we manufacture holy feelings and call them love. We love God by revolutionizing our priorities and serving Him (Jn. 14:15; Mt. 6:33).  
(Jn 14:15) "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.  
(Mt 6:33) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.
- B. Second, we should love **our neighbor**.  
The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" because he wanted to put limits on his love. It is easy to love those who love you back, and it is easy to love those who fit our preconceived notions of being lovable. We are to love our neighbor, regardless (Lk. 10:25-37).
- C. Third, we should love **our enemies**.  
God's example of this is that He pours rain on the just and the unjust (Mt. 5:44-48). This is a maturing love (5:48). God is kind to ungrateful and evil men (Lk. 6:35). You can't escape! (Lk. 6:27-36).  
"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. **29** "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. **30** "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. **31** "And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way. **32** "And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. **33** "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. **34** "And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same amount. **35** "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. **36** "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
- D. Fourth, we should love **the brethren**.  
This is a sign that God sent Jesus to save the world (see Jn. 17:20-26). "An unloving follower of the infinitely loving God is a spiritual freak." Love is the most excellent way to treat brothers and sisters in X. It is better than teaching, preaching, knowing and serving! (Jn. 13:34; 1Pet. 2:17).  
(Jn 13:34) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."  
(1Pet 2:17) Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

### III. THE INSISTING SELF.

- A. There is a difference between self-interest and selfishness:
  - 1. Looking nice, being educated, having the necessities is not selfish.
  - 2. Maturity, salvation, and growth are not selfish things.
  - 3. Christians can have some pride in Who they belong to!
- B. "Selfishness is the besetting sin of all humanity. Selfishness is the mark of fallen man."
- C. The desire to make self the most important thing is sinful and completely unloving.
- D. To overcome the insisting self, we must decide to love by:
  - 1. Having the mind of X (Phil. 2:5-11).  
(Phil 2:5) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
  - 2. To live sacrificially (Mk. 8:34-36).  
And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. **35** "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. **36** "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?
  - 3. Putting your mind on things above (see Col. 3:2-10).

### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. How do you love? Is it *eros*, *storge*, *phileo* or *agape*? Is it a combination of these?
- B. Whom do you love? Is it only those who can love you back? Do you love God, your neighbor, your enemies, and the brethren?
- C. Are you overcoming the insisting self with love?
- D. God has so loved you as to send X.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.