

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 13:8-13.**
- B. The apostle Paul talks about agape love and says it is:
 - 1. **Patient and kind.**
 - 2. **Not jealous nor boastful.**
 - 3. **Not arrogant or rude.**
 - 4. **Not irritable nor resentful.**
 - 5. **Rejoices at the right things.**
 - 6. **The enduring proof** (of any relationship).
- C. In 13:8a, Paul concludes that "love never fails."

I. LOVE NEVER FAILS.

A. First, **all spiritual gifts fail without love.**

It makes no difference if they are miraculous or non-miraculous. The miraculous gifts will cease (13:10), but even their use without love is useless (13:1-3).

(1Cor. 13:10) ...but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

(1Cor. 13:1-3) If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

B. Second, **love makes us perfect or mature.**

As long as we rely solely on the gifts we possess, we render partial service to God (1Cor. 13:8-10).

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. **9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

C. Third, **love solves the problems that talking and reasoning can't** (1Cor. 13:11-12).

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.

D. Fourth, **three things that always work:** faith, hope and love (1Cor. 13:13).

But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

II. FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

A. Have faith.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for (the certainty of the future coming true) and the conviction of things not seen (the knowledge of the past being true). See Heb. 11:1.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

B. Have hope.

Biblical hope means desire plus expectation. One desires an object, and expects to get it has hope. To desire something is to live in a way as to obtain it; expectation is something one has knowing they shall someday obtain it (Rom. 8:24).

For in hope we have been saved...,

C. Have love.

Love will last longer and have a greater influence than either faith or hope. Faith shall be realized when we see God; see 2Cor. 5:6-8. Hope will be realized when we receive what is desired and expected (eternal life; Ti. 1:2); see Rom. 8:24.

(2Cor 5:6-8) Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight-- **8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

(Titus 1:2) ...in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

III. LOVE IS THE GREATEST.

A. Four things as to why love is the greatest:

1. **Agape love is attitude and ought** not just sentiment or a feeling. To *agape* will help define our direction and morality.
2. **Agape love rebukes evil** and does not accept it. It is not loving people to let them sin.
3. **Agape love is action and non-action** fellowshiping with God and not fellowshiping sin, (those who truly love God will not fellowship sinful things)
4. **Agape love seeks the betterment of others** more so than self according to God's word, (love is not selfish, but selfless).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Col. 3:14 says, "And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."
- B. All of the good things that Xians do must be saturated with love.
- C. Spiritual gifts are good, service is good, thinking, talking and reasoning is good--but love is better.
- D. Love is the "more excellent way" (1Cor. 12:31).
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.