

## Have Not Charity

I Corinthians 13:1-8

- Sometimes, believers in Christ, endeavoring in gospel ministry
- Believe eloquence of speech is enough
- Captivating illustrations are enough
- An informed and dynamic presentation is enough
  
- But to accomplish the purposes of God in the world
- To reach those He intends for us to reach
- The Bible makes it clear these things are not enough
  
- In fact, our passage of the day has perhaps the most well-known statements on the matter
- Some you will probably recognize
- It says our speaking, our gifts, our understanding, and even our faith mean nothing
- If we "Have Not Charity"
- Which is our theme
- From I Corinthians 13:1-8
  
- There is a long list of attributes a believer in Christ can have in this text
- They are very good attributes
- Those we would, in most circumstances, respect
- That the Bible simply declares "nothing" here
  
- It says, if we have them, but don't have charity
- We are nothing
- And that is exactly what it means
  
- God has a very low opinion of human talents and abilities
- That are not backed up by something deep and abiding like love for our fellow man
- Love He has commanded us to have for people
  
- This passage couldn't really make it more clear
- Let's read these eight verses, then have a closer look...

I Corinthians 13:1-8

- 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
- 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
- 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
- 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
- 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
- 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
- 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

- There are a lot of details to discuss from this text
- We'll begin at verse one...

I Corinthians 13:1

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

- We can speak in different languages
- We can even speak with the language of angels
- When we speak, we can be good at it
- We can compel others
- We can inspire them
- But if we have not charity
- It's not good enough
  
- But, what is charity?
- It is love
- The kind of love that does not have regard for the loveliness of the person loved
- It is a good will and benevolence
- A selfless love
- One that gives
  
- If we don't have that kind of love
- The best of our communication is more like noise
- Sounds from instruments that are not meant to be played solo
  
- When we are ministering to people
- This is not what we want
- We want our words to mean something
  
- We can have other attributes too...

I Corinthians 13:2

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

- We could have prophetic powers
- Or understand mysteries others can't understand
- Or have "all knowledge"
- Or even have faith that could move mountains
  
- That sounds like a lot
- Those are attributes far beyond our own

- Even far beyond the best ministers we can name or imagine
- But if we had them, but not love, we would still be nothing
- This may be a startling revelation for those of us who rely on talents and experience
- God expects something deeper
- Something genuine toward the people He sent His son to die for
- What if we sacrifice for God and others?

#### I Corinthians 13:3

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

- Selling everything to feed the poor seems like a loving act on the surface
- According to this, not always
- And we can be martyrs
- Burned at the stake, presumably for what we believe or teach
- And have not charity
- Therefore it profits nothing
- Our motivations are important
- When ministering to others, love is key
- Speech is not the main thing
- Understanding is not the main thing
- Faith is not the main thing
- Even selfless sacrifice is not the main thing
- Love is the main thing
- A sincere care and concern for people is vital
- Good will towards, a benevolence for, and a delight in others is required
- Beyond the other things mentioned in the text
- What does this kind of charity look like?

#### I Corinthians 13:4

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

- This kind of love is longsuffering
- It is forbearing and patient
- It patiently endures
- It acts in benevolence
- That is to be characterized by or to be given to doing good

- There is no hint of envy in this kind of love
- Envy is a feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by (and in conjunction with) a desire for the possessions or qualities of another
- This kind of love does not boast
- Is not inflated
- Or proud
- Or puffed up
- What's more...

#### I Corinthians 13:5

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

- This vital kind of love is not rude
- It is not selfish, insisting on its own way
- It is not easily made angry or irritable
- And is not resentful or remembering the wrongs done against it
- It is translated charity in our text
- And this is fitting
- Because it is a charitable way of thinking and acting toward others
- Lacking any uncharitable attributes
- There is more about this love we must have...

#### I Corinthians 13:6-7

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

- We're still talking about love
- It doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing
- But rejoices in the truth
- It never gives up on people
- Never stops trusting
- Never loses hope
- And never quits
- Beyond what we communicate in the world
- Beyond how we act and react
- And beyond even the greatest of attributes we hold
- We ought to have this kind of love
- Because...

I Corinthians 13:8

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

- The gift of prophecy
- The gift of speaking other languages
- Even the gift of knowledge will come to an end
- But love does not
- It doesn't fail
  
- If we love in this way
- Our usefulness in ministry will be deep and long-lasting
- It will bear eternal fruit in the lives of those we love
  
- We must love others

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023*