

Rescuing the Love Chapter from the Wedding Service

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: Come up with a practical way to prioritize growing in love this week.

Sermon Refresher: While we tend to regard 1 Corinthians 13 as a sentimental passage read at weddings, Keith reminded us how it is a challenge to our self-centered, self-righteous, autonomous way of living as well as a pointer to trust and follow Jesus.

Icebreaker: What would someone be able to say about you by the way you dress?

Discussion:

Have someone read:

Corinth was a recently rebuilt city economically strategic isthmus in Greece with where you could go make a name for yourself. It was a place where people wanted to become great. The culture was one driven by competition, a work hard-play hard mentality, and a polytheistic religious culture that worshiped whatever god would get them ahead. Pride, boasting, divisions, lawsuits, and sexual immorality; all characterized this city where Paul is trying to start a church.

1. What are similarities between Corinth and our culture today? How can we identify with these tendencies personally?

Read:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to

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the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

2. How can spiritual experiences, theological knowledge, or even service and self-sacrifice for others become ways we try to be great?
3. Why does the lack of love drain these good things of their worth?
4. Keith had you plug in your own name to the description of love in the following verses. How does it feel plugging in your own name? Then, plug in Jesus' name. Why is it encouraging to use his name?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

(My name) ⁴ _____ is patient, _____ is kind. _____ does not envy, _____ does not boast, _____ is not proud. ⁵ _____ does not dishonor others, _____ is not self-seeking, _____ is not easily angered, _____ keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ _____ does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ _____ always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

5. How does knowing Jesus is loving, even when our love falls so short, change the way we relate to him?
6. If learning to love is the greatest endeavor for Christians, what's a way we can actually prioritize that in our lives this week?

Sharing and Prayer:

Either...

Have everyone pray for the ways to prioritize love this week.

Or...

Allow some time for people to:

- confess ways we aren't motivated or prioritizing love in short prayers
- thank God for his grace and mercy towards us
- pray for him to shape us into more loving people.