

## 1 Corinthians Class 16 Transcript

Welcome back to FI Online. We are happy to welcome you to class number 16 this evening.

Last class, class 15, we had **three questions** that we need to address very briefly before moving on into class 16.

### Question number 1:

In tonight's class, mention was made of **Psalm 139 verse 14**, specifically about how we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and while I understand about being wonderfully made, I'm not so sure about being fearfully made. Please explain the meaning of fearfully as used in this context.

Well, I think this is one of those places where it can be very helpful to go to another source and look at different translations, especially modern translations. There are many different resources available out there. Biblehub.com is one that many of us use and has well over twenty-five different translations that are available, and there are other places to go as well. I would encourage going there to see what it says.

Just to give you a couple of examples about this verse—

The *New Living Translation* says:

*Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!  
Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it.*

The *New English Translation* says:

*I will give you thanks because your deeds are awesome and amazing.  
You knew me thoroughly;*

From this same resource you can also sometimes look up the words themselves. The Hebrew word here that's used for *fearfully* is a word that refers to "reverence, or standing in awe of something." So I think what David is saying is, when I examine the human body and all that goes into it, it is **amazing** all that goes into the structure and how everything works together. But beyond that, not only do I look at the body and I'm amazed at it, but I'm in awe of the Creator of that body, so it is both *fearfully and wonderfully made*.

[2:15]

### Question number 2:

Please explain again what Paul is referring to when speaking of the *working of*

*miracles* in **1 Corinthians 12 verse 10**? I understand this is a gift which can occur behind the scenes.

Well, I don't know that we have a real good explanation of that, but I will say, I don't see any indication where God gave special miracle-working powers to any individual within the Church other than what we may find mentioned early on with the apostles and some of the early ministers in the book of Acts, where miraculous things were done. I don't find any individuals in the Church from that point forward who were known as "miracle workers." There's no office in the Church of "miracle worker"—that you pray about something, and when you need a miracle, then you go to this person, and they have the gift of miracle working. I don't really see that in Scripture. I therefore conclude that probably what God is talking about there is that He may choose individuals to accomplish things at different times where it's not their intent to go in and work a miracle, but sometimes God does miraculous things through them. And, it's not the person; it's that God chooses to work miraculously in a special situation.

I think, as an example, many of the ministers have had the experience at some point or another through the years of anointing people for a sickness, for an injury, where someone is anointed, and they are healed instantly. Most of the time it is not that way. We wish it were—would love to have that ability to always have someone healed instantly, but God doesn't always do it that way.

What do we see? When we look at a situation like that, is the minister doing anything different on those times when an instantaneous healing takes place as opposed to the other times? No, it's pretty much the same. It's just simply a matter that God sometimes chooses to work miraculously in one way, and in other times He chooses to do things in a different way.

So, I think that's the sense of this. God can use a lot of different people to accomplish miraculous things, but it's not that they themselves are automatically miracle workers at will, that whenever they want to work a miracle, they can. It doesn't work that way. God just simply uses them, and sometimes He does the miraculous through them.

[4:38]

### **Third Question:**

In **1st Corinthians 12 verse 28**, Paul mentions different offices, and as you explained, God is not obligated to fill all the offices at all times, but as He sees fit to fill the needs of the Church. What needs would an apostle fulfill?

Well, I think, as we explained, an apostle is someone who is sent from one in authority. He takes a specific message to a specific audience or recipient, and he bears with them the authority of the one who sent him. That, in some ways, sounds kind of similar to a prophet, but a prophet's message is probably broader and not so specific to an individual. The one who sent the apostle is the one who determined what the function of

that apostle would be, what the limits of his authority and responsibility would be. So, I guess my best answer to your question is—what needs would an apostle fulfill? Well, since Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, the apostle would fulfill whatever specific needs Jesus Christ decided they should, and when He decides that, He can put an apostle into that responsibility. Until then, we don't need the apostle.

Thank you for your questions. We do, as always when we begin a class, we want to make sure we have God's blessing. So if you would please, bow your heads and join me in asking for God's blessing.

[Prayer]

[6:54]

We're beginning class number 16 in our series on 1 Corinthians, and we need to go back and remind ourselves, as we start into **1 Corinthians 13**, what we covered at the end of the last class.

**Chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians**, Paul is talking about spiritual gifts and how God gives different gifts to different people, all of them given for the purpose of benefiting the entire Church, not bringing honor or recognition to any particular person.

Paul tells us at the end of that chapter, as he says here in **verse 31 of 1 Corinthians 12**:

*[But] earnestly desire the best gifts. —*

That's fine. There's nothing wrong with desiring the best gifts to be able to serve God's people in the right way. But he also includes another phrase where we ended last time:

*And yet I show you a more excellent way.*

Now, what could be more excellent than the way that we've been reading about and the spiritual gifts that are there, that are unique to each individual? Well, Paul's going to show us as we come into **1 Corinthians 13**.

Now, many of you, probably like me, if you look back at your educational history, perhaps—I think back to the days when I was a senior in high school and taking English literature, the **13th chapter of 1 Corinthians** was actually included in our English literature book as an example of such beautiful literature from that period of time. Of course, today, no one would dare put a chapter from the Bible in a public school textbook, but at that time it was considered to be perfectly legitimate.

This is a fascinating chapter. You—probably many of you have seen placards or perhaps wall decorations that include at least portions of this chapter. It's known as “the love chapter,” and it includes a tremendous amount of good information.

However, I think what we may also find is that for many people, it's a chapter that they look upon as if it's filled with some wonderful thoughts and platitudes, and "what a wonderful, nice way to think!" To be honest, when we examine this chapter as we really should, it's probably one of the most corrective chapters in the Bible. When we use this chapter as a mirror of our own spiritual conversion, it shows us some things that sometimes are very painful to see, and yet also shows us where we need to be and what godly love really looks like.

[9:27]

So let's go into this as we go forward here in **1 Corinthians 13**. Paul says:

**Verse 1** *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

We're going to see as we go further, and especially on into **chapter 14**, that apparently Paul is telling us that God had granted some very special gifts to the Corinthian congregation, and one of those seems to be the ability to speak in other languages. Now we'll talk more about that as we go further, but it seems to be a special gift that was used there, and, unfortunately, because it was a relatively common gift in the congregation, people began to see it as being some kind of a sign of "God's working with me, and I'm special."

Paul says: "Look, if I could speak with the languages"—that's what *tongues* means—"if I could speak with the languages of men anywhere else on earth, if I could speak any earthly language, or, even if I could speak or communicate as the angels communicate with one another, but I don't have love, then really I'm nothing more—my speaking and all of its wondrous impressiveness is nothing more than a *sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*"

Now, probably we think of those terms in a very literal sense of sounding brasses and clanging cymbals, but understand that in the Greek world, these were two instruments that were very commonly used in the worship of the pagan deities. And Paul is basically saying: If I have all of these wonderful abilities, but I lack godly love, then I'm really not much different than those who are going to worship the pagan deities that we've been talking about in previous chapters.

So Paul takes this to a higher level. He says that *tongues* don't prove the righteousness of the individual. What they prove is the power of God, the ability that God has to communicate His truth.

After all, we all remember a story from the Old Testament, **Numbers chapter 22**, especially **verse 28**, that tells us of an individual named Balaam who tried to disobey God, wanted to do what God told him not to do and ended up being rebuked by the words spoken from his donkey. God has the ability to communicate through a donkey,

so the fact that He can use one of us to communicate His truth doesn't make us any more righteous than it made the donkey, so, we don't want to take the gift of speaking in tongues in the wrong way.

Now, we'll also add—and again, I will spend a little more time when we move into the next chapter—but there's a good deal of confusion that people have about this concept of speaking in a tongue or another language. In our modern society today, especially in the Pentecostal churches, there is a phenomenon which is sometimes called “speaking in tongues,” or the term that's often used today is *glossolalia*, which relates back to the Greek words that are used. And there are those who say: well, what they're saying, when these people are speaking in this way—which sounds like babbling to most of us—they're actually speaking in the language of angels.

[12:52]

Well, frankly, if you begin to do a little research on this, you'll find that there are a number of resources out there that will tell you about individuals who are linguists, who are experts in languages and how languages are structured—because all human languages have certain similarities—and when they have examined these individuals, recordings of individuals speaking in these supposed tongues, these linguists listen very carefully, analyze and come to the conclusion that this cannot be a language. It does not have the characteristics of a language. It's not structured in that way, and, in fact, that in many cases, as they begin to put things together, they find that these individuals are simply making sounds that are common to their own language, but coupling them together in an odd way. Now they may not intend to do that, and as we'll see, there can be other factors involved that are not good, and we don't want to get involved in that kind of thing.

But, Paul is saying, okay, you're impressed with speaking in tongues. It's an impressive thing to be able speak another language, but he said, if I could do that with any language on earth, if I could communicate the way the angels communicate, but I don't have godly love, then, it's really worthless. It's just noise. That's all it is. Godly love is higher. It's that better way that Paul is talking about at the end of **chapter 12**.

And, one of the things that we must keep in mind is that while the individual gifts that God provides through His Spirit may be unique to an individual, and one individual may have one particular spiritual gift, another individual, a different spiritual gift, when it comes to love, this is something we all not only can have, but must have. Don't forget, it too is a gift of the Spirit of God. Remember, we read back in **chapter 12**—I believe it was **verse 7**— it tells us that any of the gifts God gives are not to exalt that person, but for the benefit of all. Godly love certainly fits in that category too. It is for the benefit of everyone. God gives to each of us His love so that we can genuinely serve one another.

Now when we talk about this kind of love, what are we talking about? Probably many of you have heard that in the Greek language of the first century, there were three words for “love.” Actually, there were four, and we'll talk about that in a moment as we go a

little further. But I think it's important to keep this in mind.

The first one, which actually doesn't occur in Scripture, is **eros**, and *eros* basically comes over to English in the term "erotic." It has a certain sexual sense to it, and it has to do with a warmth and affection that can be shared between a husband and wife, that has a sexual aspect to it. That sexuality is an expression of this *eros*, this erotic love. Now, again, that's obviously not what we're talking about here in the first verse of this chapter, but it is a legitimate and proper kind of love. It's when it's taken outside of the marriage that it becomes a problem. But within a marriage, you want this kind of love to be there between a husband and a wife. That's a very special part of what makes that relationship unique.

The second word that is used is **phileo**, which is a word that has the sense of a brotherly love, an affection, a warmth that we have toward one another, that when we're around people that we know well and we care about, that there is that sense of warmth and affection. Again, a perfectly good term.

[16:39]

The third term—again, this one doesn't occur exactly in Scripture, although it does in adjectival form—is the Greek word **storge**, which has to do with familial love, love of parent for child, child for parent, brothers and sisters for one another. It's that kind of love, and again, yes, there's an adjective form that occurs in Scripture, but that's the only one.

But the word that's used here, the one that attracts the most attention is **agape**. A-g-a-p-e is the way we anglicized that particular word. We sometimes say that this is godly love, but that's not exactly correct. It is the word that's used here, and it does describe godly love, but you will also find that it's the term that's used when it talks about those who love the world, and obviously that's not a godly love there. So that—it can mean more than that, but it has a sense to it. When we're talking about the erotic love, familial love, brotherly love—all of those describe an emotional response; they describe a way a person feels. But *agape* love is not a feeling; it is an outlook; it is an approach to people. It is—well, you may remember that Mr. Armstrong used to define it as "a genuine outgoing concern" for the one loved. It is that outgoing concern that focuses not on me and my feelings, but on the other person and my concern for them.

William Barclay likewise describes it as "unconquerable goodwill." It is a determination to treat people in a certain way, regardless of what that person may do. So in other words, *agape* love is not a feeling; it's an outlook. It's a determination to live, to deal with people, to relate to others and to God in a certain way. It is a way of thinking that produces actions.

When you and I are commanded by God that we are to love one another or to love our neighbor as ourselves, we have to recognize that God is talking about the way that we think, the decisions that we make. You can't really command someone to feel a certain

way. So, the love that's described here, this *agape* love—which does come from God, from His Spirit working in us—is not a feeling. It may affect our feelings, but the love that we're commanded to have is a determination; it's a way of thinking that we have the power to determine. We can choose to love even when it's difficult. We can't choose our feelings. They are going to happen one way or another. So keep that in mind as we go forward.

He says now: if I have all of this wonderful, miraculous ability, speaking another language, but I don't have godly love, I don't have **this** kind of love, then I'm really nothing more than a noisemaker. I'm making a lot of noise—may be attracting a lot of attention as trumpets and clanging cymbals certainly do—but I'm not really accomplishing anything of importance.

[19:53]

He goes on to say, **verse 2**:

*[And] though I have the gift of prophecy, —*

Remember, we talked about prophecy in **chapter 12**? That prophecy doesn't necessarily mean predictive ability, though it can include that, but it means to speak forth an inspired message from God.

*(If) I have the gift of prophecy (I can speak under the inspiration of God.), and (I) understand all mysteries —*

Remember, mystery, we said, refers to something which, in Scripture, is something that you don't understand until it's revealed to you, but once it's revealed, it's there; you can understand it.

—(That if I understand all of these things that have to be revealed in this way, I've been given all of that) *and (I have) all knowledge* (Oh, I have the ability to see and understand all of these things.), *and though I have all faith* (I have a trust and a confidence; I'm strong in this way.), *so that I could remove mountains, but (I) have not love, (I'm really) nothing.*

I have zero. I have no value, no purpose, no accountability or no accounting, in that sense. I don't amount to anything because I don't have what is essential at the core of all these other things. If I have love, then my ability to speak under inspiration has value. My ability to understand, my knowledge, my faith can strengthen and help others, but without that love, it doesn't go anywhere. It's just some “thing” that focuses upon me. We don't want to do that.

Now, I do want to add the phrase here. Sometimes people will say: well, if you have this little, tiny faith, you can move mountains, and then sometimes people say: well, that's true, but did you ever see Jesus move a mountain? Did those things ever happen?

Well, if we—I suppose in one sense we could say: yes, they have happened, because He's the Creator, and mountains were moved in creation. But that's not really the sense of what it's talking about here. It apparently was just a common proverb of that time that when you look at the situation that seemed impossible, that it was referred to as a "mountain." And trying to get through a situation that seems to have an impossible solution was referred to as trying to "move a mountain." So the phrase there is not intended to be taken as: well, if you really have godly faith, you can move Mount Everest to some other location on earth. That's not really what he's saying. He's telling us that no matter how impossible the situation may look, that with godly love and these characteristics, with the faith that should be there, you can face any situation and do so successfully.

[22:34]

**Verse 3** It says:

*And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but (do) not love, it profits me nothing.*

Again, we see wonderful examples of people devoting their lives, putting their lives in danger, in some cases even losing their lives in order to accomplish some good purpose, and we respect that. But again, he says, if the motivation is not godly love, it's not the love that God wants me to have, then all of that is a wonderful sacrifice, but it isn't really what God is looking for.

Then he comes to another section, in a sense, as he begins to describe love. Now, I think it's very helpful we see something like this because, very often, when people read the word "love," we have this kind of a warm, fuzzy idea, but we can't really define it and say what exactly is this? You know, when Jesus Christ said, *by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*, then okay, what does that kind of love look like? How would I recognize it? How do I know whether I have it or someone else has it? If I just have a very warm feeling toward people, is that enough? Is that what he's talking about—that I like the other Church people, so I must have love? Well, no, that's a different kind of love. We're talking about something else here. So, Paul begins to describe this for us.

Now, I'm going to switch to a full-screen slide here in just a moment that's going to show a contrast, as we build upon the next few verses, that Paul describes about what godly love has and doesn't have. We're going to look at one side of the slide, characteristics that godly love has—and on the other side, characteristics that are not a part of godly love, so that by looking at these characteristics, it helps us to understand what kind of love it is that God wants us to have.

Ahh, but there's something more important here too. It isn't so that we may have an intellectual understanding, so we can stack ourselves up. It is one of the most beautiful and intense spiritual mirrors anywhere in Scripture. When we look at the characteristics

that are described here and we stack ourselves up to that, it tells us first of all where we need to be working, and second, what our goal is. And if we see things in us that are not supposed to be a part of love, then those are things that we need to root out of our lives. Just as we read earlier in **chapter 5**, talking about the Days of Unleavened Bread, that we must both get rid of the old leaven **and** take in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Likewise, we have to get rid of those aspects of our own character that are contrary to godly love, **and** we must add in those characteristics that are unique to godly love.

So, let's look at this chart as we go through this. I would encourage you, as you have the opportunity, perhaps to make up your own chart. Now, we do have it here; that's fine. But I would encourage you to just go through the next few verses, make a simple chart, divide your page in half, and go on one side: What are the characteristics godly love has? On the other side: What are the characteristics that you won't find in godly love? Now, the list that we see here is in the order of what we find in the Scriptures, but they're not all going to be one verse. So let's read our way through this section and notice what it says.

[26:16]

#### **Verse 4** *Love suffers long* —

Okay, one of the characteristics we're going to find is that love is able to endure for quite a while. Now, there are two words that are often translated for patience or endurance in this kind of thing. One is called *makrothumein*, which is the word used here, and the other word is *hupomone*. There's a difference in these, and though we may translate them in English by the same English word, the problem is that in English we don't have enough words to make it clear what the difference is. But let's look at this.

Now, one of the things that we also would note here—this is kind of a little technical point, but I think it's helpful—all of the verbs that are used here in this description are what are called “present tense,” and, as *Expositor's Bible Commentary* says, they should be taken as “gnomic presence.” Now, that's kind of a phrase that we don't think of or even recognize, but basically what it means is—a gnomic presence tense means: this is the way things always are supposed to be. In other words, when it says *love suffers long*, it doesn't mean *love suffers long* once in a while. It means this is a consistent characteristic of godly life. And when we look at some of the other aspects about what love doesn't have, we'll see that love consistently doesn't have them. So, it's kind of a small point, but I think it's helpful to notice.

He says, again, *love suffers long*. The word is *makrothumein*. It means that it's slow to become resentful. It demonstrates patience in difficult situations. And then I like this comment from *Barclay*.

*Barclay* says:

The [Greek] word *makrothumein* is used in the New Testament—as used in the New Testament, always describes patience with people and not patience with circumstances. Chrysostom, one of the early writers said that it is the word used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself and yet who will not do it. It describes the man who is slow to anger, and it is used of God Himself in His relationship with (people).

So, it describes the individual as being able to be patient with people. Now, we'll see more as we go a little further.

It says: [**1 Corinthians 13 verse 4, continuing**] —(Love) *is kind*;

This means, of course, essentially gentle in their behavior, being beneficial to other people. It then tells us something love doesn't have.

—*love does not envy*; — (So we see that on the other side of our chart.)

The word “envy” means to set one's heart on something that belongs to someone else, to covet, to experience strong envy and resentment against someone, or even to be jealous. It's not a part of godly love to be selfishly wanting what belongs to someone else.

He then uses the phrase here—again, notice what he says in this verse. He says: — *love does not parade itself*, —

Okay, what do we mean by that? It means to boast, it means to put yourself forward as having certain characteristics, to praise yourself excessively. It is interestingly the only place in the New Testament where this word occurs, and then it's followed by an interesting phrase: *love does not parade itself, (and) is not puffed up*;

[29:57]

Now, we've noticed again, as we go through 1 Corinthians, that that phrase about *puffed up* keeps coming back, and of course, obviously, we tie that in with the Days of Unleavened Bread. But what's the difference between parading oneself and being puffed up? Well, what seems to be here is this attitude of puffed up—where *love is not puffed up*—is an attitude of an approach that you have toward your own self. It's a matter of being haughty, of having a high look at yourself. The parading itself is kind of the outward manifestation of that, the individual who publicly brags about himself.

Notice in **verse 5**: (Love) *does not behave rudely*, —

Okay. So we're seeing that being rude to other people, being inconsiderate, not dealing with people respectfully, is contrary to God's law. Now, again, we're not just talking about the way we treat Church people. We're talking about the way we treat our family members. Sometimes, isn't it easy to be rude to people in your own family? Sometimes

we get upset with people in our own family or among our own close circle more easily than we do others. Sometimes it's easy for people to be rude when they deal with those in the world around us who are in serving positions. Perhaps all of us have seen individuals who, perhaps in a restaurant or in a checkout line in a store, are rude to the individual there. I've been guilty of that myself at times. We have to remind ourselves: no, that's not the way godly love is. So, we're not to behave rudely.

It says: —*does not seek its own*, —

Aren't we a part of a world where we are encouraged day after day to seek our own? I want mine, get mine first. And, I don't mind you having some too as long as I get mine first. That's not the way godly love functions. We don't think of ourselves first. We think of others.

Love, it says, *is not provoked*, —

Not the kind of individual—again, one of the commentaries puts it as “having a sharpness of spirit, to be easily provoked.” Again, *Barclay* says the real meaning of this is that Christian love never becomes exasperated with people. Exasperation is always a sign of defeat. When we lose our temper, we lose everything.

It then goes on to say: —(love) *thinks no evil*;

In other words—what do we mean by that? We're being told that when we look at a situation, instead of being cynical, instead of assuming that there is some evil there, some evil motive, or someone's trying to take advantage of us, that we think in very positive terms. There is a genuineness, an openness, a positive approach to people that we don't automatically assume someone's trying to take advantage of us.

[32:56]

Another translation puts it, this phrase about thinking no evil: *it keeps no record of wrongs*.

That may be a best way to put it. It's the individual who doesn't go around continually remembering how they've been wronged. I remember many, many years ago dealing with an individual, an elderly bachelor. I'm sure he's long dead. But, every time you talked with him, he told you the same story over and over again, almost word for word, of how another member had treated him in a way that he thought was inappropriate. And, the first couple of times I heard the story, I thought, well, I can understand why he's upset, but after visiting with him a number of times and realizing I got the same story almost word for word every time, we realized: this individual's harboring something that's not godly at all. That's not the way we want to be. We don't keep a record of wrongs. Are people sometimes going to mistreat us? Yes, they are. We sometimes mistreat people and have to go back and apologize. We don't keep a record of that. We don't go with us, constantly bearing around the idea that this person treated me badly.

That's not godly love.

He goes on to say, again, one more negative here. **Verse 6** (Love) *does not rejoice in iniquity*, —

It finds no pleasure in evildoing. *Barclay*, again, says it might be better to translate this that “love finds no pleasure in anything that's wrong.” It's not so much a delight in doing the wrong thing that's meant as the malicious pleasure that comes to most of us when we hear something derogatory about someone else. That's not the way godly love should be.

You know, sometimes, when the Church has gone through difficult times, people have looked at what may be a group of individuals who've gone off in another direction, and sometimes we almost just **look** for them to do something wrong. If they will just teach some doctrinal thing that's different, then we can say: “Aha, see—they're wrong!” It shouldn't be that way. That's not the approach we should—we should never want to see anybody go off in a wrong direction. That's not our desire. Godly love doesn't do that.

But now we come back to some of the things that love does have, characteristics.

—(Love) *rejoices in the truth*;

There is a joy, a satisfaction, a happiness that comes from truth. We don't get pleasure from half-truth, from, as it's called today, “fake news.” That's not what we're after. Instead, we recognize that those things that are true should bring great pleasure to us. It is a state of happiness.

[35:49]

It says: **Verse 7** (Love) *bears all things*, —

In other words, there are times when we have to bear with one another, and, we all understand that. We recognize people can go through difficult times. We have to bear with them. Love leads us to do that, and we don't feel put upon. Someone's had a difficult day; you've had a difficult day yourself; you understand what it feels like. Someone perhaps overreacts to some statement, or takes it a way that you never intended. Instead of getting all offended, we bear with one another. We say: you know, they've been going through a tough time lately, so let's just let this go, and we'll work through it later on.

—(Love) *believes all things*, —

Now, this is isn't talking about gullibility. It doesn't mean that if someone walks up to you and says, “By the way, the earth is flat,” that you must say, “Oh, well, I love you, so it must be true; it's flat.” No. It's not that kind of thing at all. It is believing the best, rather

than assuming the worst. Love approaches things in a positive viewpoint. We view people in a positive way. Will we sometimes be mistaken? Yes, we will. That'll happen. But, the positive approach tends to lead people to come to the better standard. It encourages people when they know you trust them, you're believing them, you're not doubting them, you're not questioning everything they say or do, you're not putting them on the spot. Then, it tends to encourage them to be more honest, more open, to come to a higher standard. So, believing all things means believing the positives about things and about people, instead of automatically assuming the negative.

It says: —(Love) *believes all things, hopes all things*, —

Another translation puts it: *sees the bright side of things*. It does not despair. I think that lack of despair is one of those things that we see. Godly love doesn't leave us hopeless. God's love gives us hope. Even when things are difficult, when we're going through a difficult time, when God may be allowing us to go through a difficult time, godly love leads us to have a positive approach, to hope for the future.

—(Love) *endures all things*.

Now, here is where we find that other word we talked about. We said *makrothumein* has to do with patience with people. The word that's used here is *hupomone*, which means “patience in difficult circumstances, holding its ground when it can no longer believe or hope, capacity to continue or bear up under difficult circumstances.”

[38:28]

Again, since we quoted *Barclay* on the other one, let's quote him again here.

The verb used here is one of the great Greek words. It's generally translated “to bear” or “to endure,” but what it really describes is not the spirit which can passively bear things, but the spirit which in bearing them can conquer and transmute them. It has been defined as a constancy under trial. It's that kind of endurance that's there.

Now, we wrap up the description here with a few more of the characteristics that—or at least one more characteristic that love does not have.

**Verse 8** *Love never fails*. —

Love is not on again, off again. Love is genuine. It's a commitment. Literally, the word that's used there, I think, is graphic. It's a word that describes a flower or a leaf falling off of a plant. Love isn't that way. Love doesn't just kind of suddenly turn loose; it's no longer there. It's there; it's solid; it's stable.

So, make your own list. I think you'll find it to be quite helpful. And frankly, it's one of those lists you can take with you when you go to pray. Talk with God about it. Stack

yourself up to it. How am I doing? Am I puffed up? Do I behave rudely? Am I easily provoked? Do I think evil? Do I hope all things, and bear all things, and believe all things, and endure all things? Do I rejoice in truth? Am I kind? Those are things to use as we analyze ourselves. That's one of the things that's so very important for us in Scripture. God does not give us all of these things so that we can analyze the other fella. They're given for us. They teach us what **we** are supposed to be. If I look at myself and analyze myself in this way, well, which one of us wouldn't come up short of this wonderful standard?

Now, if you wanted to, you could take all of this and compare it to what we read about Jesus Christ as well, because He does have that kind of love. You look at His life and what He did, the examples that He set. He shows the perfect example of what all of these things look like. We can look at ourselves, stack ourselves up. Frankly, I think if we look at this chapter properly, it's pretty corrective. It's a chapter that is kind of painful to read because we all know that we come short. So, I think it's a good chapter for us to read.

Okay, let's go on. We didn't finish here.

[40:56]

**Verse 8** (Let's continue on.) —*But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*

Oh, people are so impressed with being able to prophesy, or, to speak in another language, or, they have this wonderful insight into things. Okay, those are wonderful gifts. Those are some of the spiritual gifts that God says He gives to His people, that He gives to the Church to benefit the whole Church. And there are different ones who have those strengths and abilities. But he said, you know, in the long run those things are going to pretty much cease to function, and that's the sense when he talks about failing. It means to make something idle, to pass away. It's something that's inoperative, no longer needed.

But, why would you no longer need inspired speaking or prophecy? Well, when Jesus Christ returns, we don't need to have some kind of special revelation. Jesus Christ is there. He is the ultimate revelation of God. We don't need to speak in other languages when God restores a pure language. We're told in Zephaniah that that's going to take place in the future. Knowledge is going to be available to everyone.

So, these are things that are wonderful to have. They're useful. They're gifts for the Church today, and God has made those things available today. But don't overrate them—because love is what it is that's never going to fail, that's always going to be there, that's going to be essential—because all of those things can exist apart from love. Our own modern history of the Church should tell us that. These things can exist apart from godly love, but godly love must be in each and every one of us.

So, he says in **verse 9**: *For we know in part and we prophesy in part.*

What do we mean by that? The term here means “a part or portion in contrast to the whole thing.” In other words, when we see something today, we see a little of it. We see a small portion. Consider, for example, every year most of us go to the Feast of Tabernacles, and we’re reminded that the Feast of Tabernacles is a picture—as what do we see in Colossians—a shadow of those things to come. It’s a picture; it’s a fore type of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the saints with Him. But, how much do we really understand? I’m not minimizing what we do understand. It’s very important. We should focus on it. That’s why God brings us together and says: look at this, pay attention to this—it’s important. But if you ever stop to think about all kinds of aspects about: what will be going on in the world tomorrow, what will it be like, how will we function, how will we accomplish this or that, or will we still be using this or that?

I know when my family first started attending the Church, I think we had some ideas that when Jesus Christ returns, we’re all going to go back to horse and buggy, and we’re all going to live up in the hollow with our own private little place and come out on the Sabbath and visit with one another, and it will be a wonderful world. Are we really going to throw away everything that we’ve learned, all of technology, everything about what goes on in our world today, the marvelous mass communication tools that we have? Are we just going to throw all that away so we can go back and have our horse and buggy? I don’t think so. But how’s it all going to work? How do we put all that together? What we see is a small portion of a much bigger picture.

[44:32]

I’m always reminded of a wonderful quote Mr. Les McCullough used many years ago when I was in college. He said: “If we understand **everything** the Scripture reveals about God’s plan, then what we **really** understand is the first sentence of the first paragraph of the introduction, because God’s plan is so much bigger.”

So, we see today, we prophesy, we speak about it, and we’re inspired to speak about it—in part. We only see a bit. So, we know in part; we prophesy in part—a little bit. We recognize that what we know and what we speak under inspiration are only partial, and there’s much more we don’t yet know or understand.

*But (he says, **verse 10**) when that which is perfect (And the term there means “complete” —that which is complete.) has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*

Oh, sometimes we may make our speculation today about: I think it will be like this, or it will be like that. Well, when it comes to reality, we won’t need all the speculations anymore. What will it be like when Jesus Christ comes back? When the seven trumpets sound, will everyone hear them, or will they be—is that kind of a metaphor, and there isn’t a literal sound that’s made? What’s it going to sound like? We can make

speculations today. We really don't know.

Have you ever had some of those times when you sit around with friends and maybe talk about what you think the future will be like? "What do you think you'll be doing in the Millennium?" Chances are good that your idea and mine are **far** too limited compared to what God really has in mind. So, okay. There's not a problem with that. But when that which is **complete** is here, there won't be any need for all of those wonderful speculations anymore. We won't need them. It will be done away.

Paul says: **[Verse 11]** *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

Okay, what's he telling us? There're a lot of different ways we can take this. And maybe in your own life, as I do in mine, I think of times, back when—in those years when I was transitioning from being a child to becoming a, let's say, a teenager, an adolescent, and then ultimately into adulthood. We could think of examples of things that changed. Paul's not putting down children. He's simply recognizing that children think in a certain way, and as adults we think in a different way. And we have to consciously put away the way children do things. Again, with a child, for example, it's very difficult to delay gratification, to have to wait for something over a long period of time. But as adults we realize, okay, that's the way we have to live our lives. We can't have everything we want right when we want it, so there're many examples that we could use.

[47:31]

Paul said: "*When I was a child*, yes, I functioned that way; I thought as a child." Children think in different ways than we as adults do, but eventually you reach the point where if you want to be an adult, you have to quit thinking that way. All the appeal of immediate gratification may still be there, but as an adult, you realize: I can't live my life that way. I have to think differently.

So, he says, there comes a time we *put away* the *childish things*. And I think, in a sense, what Paul is saying is: okay, there are things right now that can seem so very important to us—speaking in a tongue by divine ability. Okay, that's really impressive. Speaking under inspiration, yes, that's impressive. But on down the road those things are really not going to have the same meaning they do today. In fact, I think that's one of the reasons why some of those gifts we see are not so common in the Church today, because the need is not there in the same way. So we have to be mature and move on instead of being like children and wanting to hang on to the things of spiritual childhood.

He says in **verse 12**: *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

One of the interesting things to note here—and it's kind of a small point, but it's helpful—is that ancient mirrors in the first century were not like ours, made out of glass with a silver painted on the back of them, but instead were made from polished metal. And,

Corinth was famous for making mirrors. So I think that may be one of the reasons why Paul uses that particular metaphor. He says that we look in a mirror—what do we see? Well, we see dimly; we see indirectly; we see a reflection. Literally, the word that's used here is the root for our English word “enigma,” something that's very difficult to see —an indirect, an indistinct image. He said: that's kind of what we see.

One of the commentaries—and this is the *Louw & Nida Lexicon*—puts it this way:

He says now we see only puzzling reflections in the mirror. In **1 Corinthians 13:12**, the term enigma may be interpreted as lack of clarity in perception so that the meaning would be that which is difficult to see clearly. But the general usage of enigma would seem to point to the meaning of difficulty in understanding and comprehension, rather than in visual perception, things we have trouble understanding.

Again, *Barclay* says:

In this life, Paul feels we see only the reflections of God and are left with much that is mystery and riddle. We see that reflection in God's world, for the work of anyone's hands tells us something about the workman. We see in the gospel, and we see in Jesus Christ these same characteristics. Even if in Christ we have the perfect revelation, our seeking minds can grasp it only in part, for the finite can never grasp the infinite. Our knowledge is still like the knowledge of a child.

[50:43]

We stop and think about how much we know right now, and we have been blessed with so much. But the metaphor that we've often used is that we're like the infant growing in the womb. We grow; we develop. And that infant in the womb is learning. Science has helped us to understand that even the infant growing in the womb is learning. It's perceiving the world around it. Its senses are working. It hears. It has a certain ability to see, and all of those things are there. But, the infant knows so little compared to what's coming when it's born and it comes into this world. In many ways, that's the way we are in our relationship with God. We understand so much more than the rest of the world because God has given us this, but there is so much we don't yet understand.

So, Paul says: when the time comes, even though I know in part right now, I will know fully.

So, he says here, **verse 13**: *And now abide* (these things continue) *faith, hope, love, these three* (They're all important. They are things that must live in each of us.); *but the greatest of these is love*.

All the other gifts that he talks about, they're transit, they're temporary, they're for the world that we're a part of right now. But, this gift, the gift of godly love, is an eternal gift. It's a characteristic we all must have. So it is *a more excellent way*, and that's what Paul

is bringing out to us. This is a characteristic that God's Spirit can give, **must** give to all of us.

Now, let's go on. We have just a few minutes left, but let's go on and begin **chapter 14** because, again, I think this is a very important subject for us.

He says in **verse 1 of 1 Corinthians 14**: *Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.* (Or be inspired in the things that you say.)

That can take many different forms. You can be inspired in your instructions to your children. You can be inspired as you talk with your mate or a friend at services. All of those things can be an inspiration from God. God can give us the right words, the right thoughts at the right time, expressing them in certain ways, and we look back at it and say: well, I never thought about saying it that way, but that's exactly the right thing. God's given me the right words.

So, he says: *pursue love*. This is something to really go after. And, while you're pursuing love, as long as that's your motivation, not self-aggrandizement, then desiring spiritual gifts is a perfectly legitimate thing. You're going to God and saying: I really want to be a servant. How can I do that? Can you please help me to serve?

[53:36]

Now, I mentioned a characteristic and an aspect about how you determine what gifts God has given to you. I heard a wonderful sermon several years ago, given by Mr. Richard Pinelli, where he talked about spiritual gifts. And as I listened to the sermon, we got right up to the end and I was sitting there thinking: this is really a good sermon, but Mr. Pinelli, everybody's sitting here wondering: okay, I believe in spiritual gifts. How do I figure out what mine are? And in a very short couple of minutes, Mr. Pinelli explained it perfectly. He said, "Look, here's what you do. When you're a part of the body of Christ— you're a Church member—opportunities to serve come up. Now remember, all these gifts are given to serve the body, so various opportunities to serve come up."

It's very easy for us to say: well, you know, that's really not my area; I don't serve well there. I'll wait until another opportunity comes along. Well, we need to get in there and serve wherever they have the opportunity, wherever it comes up. Maybe that's not your strength, but how do you know if maybe that's an area where God is going to give you the strength that you don't have right now? And as Mr. Pinelli brought it out, when you serve in a variety of different ways, over a period of time you begin to see what strengths you actually have. You probably—if you just try to figure it out on your own, you're probably going to be wrong.

I think back when I was first going to Ambassador College. I remember sitting back and thinking: okay, here are some of the strengths that I have; here are areas of my life that are weak. I'm probably going to be tested in these weak areas, so I need to be alert. You know, in all the years since then—and it's well over 50 years—I very rarely had a

test in those areas that I said were weak. My biggest tests have come in those areas where I thought I was strong. God had to show me I wasn't strong. And He helps us to understand these things.

Likewise, when it comes to the spiritual gifts, you may think: well, I have a gift here, or, I want this gift. Well, no. It's not the way it works. Get in there and serve. And let God open the doors, and let God provide the gifts to go through those doors. You may find that God gives you gifts you never imagined. That's what He does with us.

So, Paul talks about—okay, here we are in Corinth, and he's already mentioned one of the gifts that seems to be very important to people. It's dealt with a great deal in this chapter, **chapter 14**, and that is the gift of being able to speak in another language. Now, why would that be so appealing? Why would that be more appealing, say, for example, than his statement that what we really should desire is to be able to speak under God's inspiration? Well, it's a pretty impressive gift. To be able to speak in another language that you've never learned—wow! That's impressive to people! But, to speak under inspiration—well, they may not even know you've been inspired. That can be kind of a background thing. He tells us to pursue it.

Now, I will say here, and, again, this is kind of foundational to where we go in understanding this aspect of speaking in tongues, and he's going to describe it in this chapter. I think sometimes our biggest barrier to understanding this subject is that we automatically think of it in terms of the Pentecostal way of doing things—this public thing where people get up and jabber and you don't know what they're saying, and so on—when we think about speaking in tongues. That's not it at all. If we can just completely put that concept out of our minds and think in simple terms: what would this have meant in first-century Corinth, or, as we first come across this miracle, first-century Jerusalem in **Acts chapter 2**, when people spoke in tongues? What does it tell us? It says the people came and said: how is it that we hear in our own tongue, our own language, these works? And they even use the word “dialect” there. Not only do we hear the language; we hear the dialect that we grew up with. This wasn't some strange babble. This was a language that they understood.

[58:00]

Now, again, would a person who has the gift of speaking in tongues, would they—how do they act? What were they like when this gift comes to them? Again, I think we have this wrong idea [that] it's like the person suddenly goes into a trance, and they just start speaking in some other language. No, that's not it. This is a normal person who has control of themselves, who—and again, we'll see that as we go further that that's a part of it—but who suddenly has the ability to communicate with someone else in their language, and it may be a language they didn't learn. Does that occur today? Is there such a thing as speaking in tongues today? Well, we have some amazing people in the Church of God who seem to have some amazing abilities when it comes to language. So, yes, I think we can say it in that way.

But, let me give you another example—something that I came across many years ago in my first pastorate, and you tell me, is this speaking in tongues? We had an elderly Polish lady in the congregation. Well, actually she was not in the congregation when we first got there. Her two daughters were. But this lady began to be very interested in the Church while we were there. Her background was that she came to this country from Poland when she was about 12 or 13 years old. And at the time that she came, child labor was very common in this country, and she did not have the opportunity to go to school at all. So, she immediately went into working and doing things in that way. And as she grew and got a little older, she married—married a Polish person, and they continued to speak Polish, but, they lived in America. They lived around people who were speaking English. Her children went to school and were learning to speak English, but she never had that opportunity. She never learned to read and write in English. She got along in English because she was immersed in the society, and she picked up the ability to communicate fairly well. She had her strong Polish accent, but a very sweet, elderly lady when we came across her.

At one point, in part because her daughters had left Roman Catholicism, as you can well imagine if you grew up Polish, especially from Poland, you were Roman Catholic, and she very much was Roman Catholic. But when she would ask questions to the priests, well, basically they would say: well, don't worry about what the Bible says. We will explain it for you. And her two daughters had Bibles, and they would see things a little differently. So she decided she wanted to be able to read the Bible for herself, even though the priest told her she didn't need to do that.

So she saved her money; she went to town to buy a Bible, but, there weren't any English Bibles—excuse me, there weren't any Polish Bibles. They were all English. Polish Bibles were not available. Polish she could read; English she couldn't. What should she do? She spent her money; she bought an English Bible; and she took it home, and she prayed. She said, "God, help me; help me to be able to understand what this book says." When my wife and I would go to see her, we would literally sit and listen to her read her English Bible. She would read it in English. She could understand it—the only thing in English she could read. She could not read a newspaper. She couldn't go to the grocery store and read signs, but her Bible she could read.

Now, is that miraculous? Is that an example of a gift of being able to function in another language that you didn't learn? To me it is. I think that's one of the ways in which God can do this. Now, that's not quite what was going on in Corinth. Why would God give the Church in Corinth this aspect of speaking in other languages? Reading wasn't, again, for many people even that much of a common thing to do, to be able to do. But speaking— why? Remember what we said about the geography of Corinth? Almost all of the trade east and west and north and south had to pass through Corinth, so there are people of all different languages who are coming through the area all the time. There would be a special need in Corinth for the ability to communicate with those people in another language when you're talking about the truth of God. It appears God gave the Corinthian Church a special ability in that way, different ones communicating with different ones, but sharing God's truth. We'll see that more as we go on.

We've run out of time for class number 16, so, please join us next time as we go in to class 17, and we'll continue on with the subject of **1 Corinthians 14** and speaking in tongues.

[1:02:57]