

1Corinthians – Week 46

I. Review

A. Quiz

B. 1Cor. 12:12ff

- i. Paul makes the point that just as the human body has many parts, with different functions, so it is with the Church.
 1. Within the Church, there are a variety of gifts and ministries (services).
 2. Yet they are all empowered by the Spirit.
- ii. And it is by the power of the Spirit we are all baptized into one body, which is the Church (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23)
- iii. And we all drink of the Spirit, who dwells in every Christian's life!
- iv. There are no vestigial organs in the Body of Christ!
 1. No one should feel as if they are unimportant or functionless!
 2. We need each other's God-given talents and abilities; each other's presence, fellowship, resources and encouragement.
- v. Paul shows them the most excellent way to function as a Body: Love one another!

II. Continuation: The Supremacy of Love

A. Introduction to Chapter 13:

- i. The presence of division, jealousy, strife, and tolerance of sin, lawsuits, misuse of Christian freedom, cliques, gluttony and pride showed not only a lack of maturity, but a lack of love for each other.
 - ii. For this reason, Paul encourages to practice something that they all could do: LOVE!
 - iii. Love is supreme!
 1. The greatest commandments are to love God and neighbor! (cf. Luke 10:27)
 - a. We love God by keeping His commandments (cf. 1John 5:3)
 - b. We love our neighbor by doing no harm to them (cf. Rom. 13:10)
 2. Jesus said His disciples are known by their love for each other! (cf. Jn. 13:33-34)
 3. Love drove the Father to send His Son to die for us (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-9)
 4. And those who are born of God, although possessing various gifts and abilities, must practice love (cf. 1John 4:7-8).
 - iv. Chapter 13 is divided into three sections
 1. The importance of love (vv. 1-3)
 2. The definition of love (vv. 4-8a)
 3. The permanency of love (vv. 8b-13)
 - v. The use of hyperbole (pronounced: hyper-bo-lee)
 1. Hyperboles are exaggerations to create emphasis or effect.
 - a. Ex. *“Enough food to feed a whole army”* is a common hyperbole.
 2. Paul uses hyperboles to show the preeminence of love...
- B. 1Cor. 13:1 (ESV), *“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.”*
- i. Probably Paul began with tongues because of the Corinthians' fascination with this gift as seen in chapter 14.
 - ii. In Acts 2, we see the first occurrence of tongues.
 1. They were languages of men (Acts 2:6-11).
 - iii. Paul spoke with tongues (cf. 1Cor. 14:18) but did he ever speak angelic language?
 1. This is a hyperbole: Paul is saying if he could speak in an angelic language, without love, he would be just a piece of noisy metal!
 - iv. Today, one can apply this in the following manner:
 1. If a member is fluent in several languages and is even proficient in sign language, yet did not love others, God would not be pleased with him!

- C. 1Cor. 13:2 (ESV), “*And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*”
- i. Paul prophesied (cf. Acts 27:21-25)
 - ii. God even revealed mysteries to Paul (cf. 1Cor. 15:51ff)
 - iii. But did Paul understand all mysteries? Did he have all knowledge?
 1. This is a hyperbole: Paul is saying that if he knew everything there is to know, without love, he is nothing!
 2. Today, one can apply this in the following manner:
 - a. If a Bible teacher memorized every verse in the Bible, had a deep understanding of every book in the Scriptures, and was regarded as a living Bible encyclopedia, yet did not love others, he would be rejected by God!
- D. 1Cor. 13:3 (ESV), “*If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*”
- i. Paul did give to the poor! He also did not live his life in the comforts common to man.
 - ii. Yet, did Paul ever deliver his body to be burned?
 1. This is a hyperbole: Paul is saying that if he surrendered his body to be executed by fire, without love, he gained nothing – no divine merits; no divine recognition; no divine salvation!
- E. Paul’s basic point is this...
- i. In order for a spiritual gift to be of value, it must be accompanied by love.
 - ii. Love must be the motive!
 1. Consider the first part of verse 3: Giving!
 - a. Some people might think that by giving, they are earning a position (or a better position) in heaven.
 - b. Some people make contributions in order to get an income tax deduction.
 - c. Others contribute for the recognition.
 - d. Some people give so they can tell a friend that they support such-and-such a cause or organization.
 - e. Some people give because they see other people giving and they are ashamed not to give.
 - f. Giving must be driven by love in order for it to be recognized by God!
 2. Today, one can apply this in the following manner:
 - a. If a member gives contribution and yet does not love others, his giving would be considered a stench to God, not a pleasing aroma! (cf. Phil. 4:18b)