

## “What True Love Is and Does,” Part 4 - 2 Corinthians 13:11-14 – June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "What True Love Is and Does."
- As we come to the end of this chapter, and with it the apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, Paul turns a sharp corner.
- By that I mean, Paul goes from being very harsh and blunt with them to very encouraging to them seeking restoration for them.

- I have to confess that while I'm very much looking forward to starting the next book of Galatians, I'm going to miss Corinthians.
- This for a number of reasons, chief of which is that we got to know the heart of the Apostle Paul and his genuine love for them.
- To me, this is so apropos that both epistles end with what I would argue is a textbook case of what's known today tough love.

### 1. True love speaks truth to others (Verses 1-3)

- Here, Paul very bluntly tells them that when he comes, he will not spare those who sinned earlier as well as any of the others.

### 2. True love is honest with others (Verses 4-6)

- Paul in his honesty with them tells them to be honest with themselves by testing themselves as to whether they are in the faith.

### 3. True love will pray for others (Verses 7-10)

- Here in these four verses, Paul talks about how he prays for the Corinthians to do what is right so he won't have to be harsh.

### 4. True love seeks restoration of others (Verses 11-14)

- v11 Paul encourages them to strive for full restoration, be of one mind, and live in peace so God's love and peace is with them.
- v12-13 He tells them to greet one another with a holy kiss, and says God's people there send the Corinthians their greetings.
- v14 He says may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with them all.

- Couple of thoughts on this packed passage, the first of which has to do with telling them to greet each other with a holy kiss.
- Kissing on the cheek was the custom in that day, and even modern day in the Middle East, and it's also customary in Hawaii.
- Like what we do, it's a greeting of friendly love and aloha, and is not something sensual, which is why Paul says it's to be holy.

G. Campbell Morgan - "The fact that the kiss was described as holy indicates that erotic overtones were excluded, the kiss was a greeting, a sign of peace and Christian agape."

- This greeting of love actually ties into the second thought, which is Paul mentioning the grace, love and fellowship in verse 14.
- It's interesting to note the delineation of grace being of the Lord Jesus love being of God and fellowship being of the Holy Spirit.
- It's also interesting that this is the only mention of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together in the entire New Testament.

- Lest you think that this is just a nebulous statistic of sorts, let me hasten to say that it provides us with an important principal.
- Namely, that of a three-pronged template, if you will, when it comes to restoration of others, and having fellowship with others.
- Notice first that it starts with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, this because, absent grace, there cannot be any restoration.

Romans 5:10–11 (NKJV) — 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- Once we've tasted from this cup of grace, we then taste the love of God, and in so doing, we'll have a love for God's people.
- This is why the first five commandments are about loving God, and the second five commandments are about loving others.
- However, until we have had the warm embrace of God's grace, we won't love much even though we've been forgiven of much.

- If there was ever a man who had been forgiven of much it was Saul of Tarsus, who was actually having Christians put to death.
- This explains why it is and even how it is that Paul was such a loving man. Simply put, he was on the receiving end of grace.
- I would suggest that the Christians who have the most grace and love have themselves known intimately God's grace and love.

- You'll forgive me for waxing sentimental in bringing it to a close, but I believe Paul was very emotional when it came to Corinth.
- I suppose you could liken it to a parents love for a child with special needs or if you prefer, the love a parent has for a sick child.
- Perhaps this is why Paul spent more time with the Corinthians than he did with any other church with the exception of Ephesus.

1 Corinthians 13 - 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. 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, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 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. 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. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.