

### **11.02.14 - 1Corinthians 13:7-8a, "Love is the Greatest!"**

In previous weeks, we have studied how God's love is patient and it is kind; it isn't envious or boastful or arrogant or rude or self-centered; nor is it easily angered, and it doesn't keep a record of wrongs. God's love turns away from all that is evil while at the same time turning toward all that pleases God! Love's opposite is hate!

**Verse 7...** The word "*always*" used here means, "in all things," "at all times," "in every way," i.e., everything within the revealed and expressed will of God.

Love always protects. God's love watches out for others, in a way that covers them, bearing their burdens, even enduring anything that would come against them or bring harm to them (the Greatest Commandment).

**Proverbs 10:12**, "Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs."

God's love feels the very pain of those it loves and it helps to bear or carry their load and their hurt; even to the point of being willing to take the consequences or punishment for the sins of those it loves.

**Isaiah 53:4-5**, "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the greatest example of how God's love fully protects us from the condemnation and punishment we deserve for our sin.

Love always trusts. This doesn't mean that God's love is easily fooled, ignorant, or tolerant of sin.

What it does mean is that God's love always wants to believe the best of someone, to give them the benefit of the doubt. Hatred breeds distrust causing us to believe the worst of others; whereas, God's love urges us to think the best of others, simply because we have received God's complete forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32).

Love always hopes – meaning that as long as God's grace is still operative, human desire and human failure will never be the final authority of how things turn out. Although our faith may be shaken at times, we can stand secure in the hope we have in and through God's love.

**Romans 5:1-2**, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

**1Corinthians 15:58**, "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

We are never to give up hope: You may be the father or mother of one or more backslidden children who have wandered away from the faith they were taught; you

may be a believer who is married to an unbeliever; you may be the one and only Christian in your family, or perhaps the only student in your class who believes in God.

As members of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, of which Christ is the Head, we are the parts of the body, to be continually reaching out, with the message of faith, hope, and love, to those who have no hope because they don't have Christ.

God's love hopes that the wayward child, the unsaved spouse, the unbelieving brother, sister or parent, even the atheist classmate, will come to salvation through Christ.

**John 8:31-32**, "Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"

**John 10:10**, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

**1John 5:12-13**, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Love always perseveres. The word used here means to endure; it is a military term used of an army holding a vital position while under heavy attack.

While being stoned (Acts 7:60), Stephen fell to his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." After he said that, he died, and went to heaven.

**2Corinthians 4:8-9**, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."

**Verse 8a...** Love never fails. The word "fail" has the basic meaning of a flower or leaf falling to the ground, where it withers, and decays, i.e., dies.

*God's love will never fail or die. The word never here refers to time, not to frequency, i.e., at no time will divine love ever die, for God's love is permanent, it lasts forever, because God is eternal and God is love.*

**John 11:25-26**, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

The permanence and eternal nature of God's love through Christ is not easily comprehended, but God does allow us to understand His unconditional love for us.

**1Corinthians 2:9-10**, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit."

**John 4:14**, To the Samaritan woman Jesus said, "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

**John 6:51**, To the crowd near Capernaum, Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

**John 14:1-3**, On the last night before His death, He said to His disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

**6**, "Jesus said, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" **16-18**, And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." **21**, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." **23**, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

God's love is victorious against all odds, all opponents, the devil, even death itself; God's love **always** protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres. God's love is eternal, the greatest of all things, now and forever, in Christ.