FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Some elements of the Christian faith will no longer be needed. Why? The reason lies in what God has planned for the future.

What does the future hold? The phrase “when perfection comes” refers to that day when the work of Jesus will be complete, fully matured.

When God’s work is complete, fully matured, it will mean that our “immaturity” is abolished and in its place will be a new found maturity that will enable us to worship God fully.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

The permanence of love, along with faith and hope, is the main reason for urging the Christians to work at it now.

Faith, Hope and Love are a part of the future.

We need to have as our goal the growing in faith, hope and Love.
THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY

1 Corinthians 12:31, And now I will show you the most excellent way.

1 Corinthians 13 — 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not 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 have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

The Christian experience, exercised without love, ___________________________

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

LOVE DEFINED

Love is defined not by adjectives but _______________ (15 times in three verses).

Love is defined not by emotion but ____________________________

Love is defined in its ____________________________, Love is not something _________________ in the heart but rather something put on ____________________________.

This type of love does not ____________________________.

This type of love must ____________________________.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Some elements of the Christian faith will ___________________________. Why?
The reason lies in what God has ____________________________.

What does the future hold? The phrase “when perfection comes” refers to that day when the work of Jesus will be ____________________________.

When God’s work is complete, fully matured, it will mean that our “immaturity” is abolished and in its place will be a new found maturity that will enable us to ____________________________.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

The ____________________________, along with faith and hope, is the main reason for urging the Christians to work at it now.

Faith, Hope and Love are a part ____________________________.

We need to have ____________________________ the growing in faith, hope and Love.
OPENING

• Discuss the following question in your group: Do you think God has a goal that He would want every believer to pursue? What do you think that goal is?

GOING DEEPER

• Read the following texts and single out any common themes:

  1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NIV84) — 3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

  Colossians 1:4–5 (NIV84) — 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints — 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel

  • Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and then reflect on the following quote:

    Lewis Smedes in his book Love Within Limits, pages 61-65, outlines the following approach in his excellent study of this chapter. Among other insights, he notes that God has limits to his patience, and so must we, but “when I turn off suffering for the sake of my pleasure, I turn it off too soon.” Neither does patience include the toleration of evil. Kindness is both intelligent and tough; “without wisdom and honesty,” it “easily becomes mere pity, bound to hurt more people than it helps.” Love transcends jealousy without destroying it; it is right, for example, to be upset when someone runs off with your spouse! “Love does not move us to seek justice for ourselves,” but it should “drive us to move heaven and earth to seek justice for others.” Love does not disguise or unleash anger; it does not remove irritants from our lives or reduce irritability by forbidding anger. Rather it meets our deepest needs, enabling us to respond differently to enraging circumstances, reduces the potential for frustration, gives us the power to communicate anger appropriately, and increases our gratitude for the way God has worked in our lives.

    In what ways do you agree/ disagree?

  • Pastor Bruce stated the phrase “when perfection comes” refers to the work of God reaching completeness, full maturity. This coming day will have a transformative effect upon creation as well as upon mankind in particular. In light of today’s sermon, why should we make it our life’s ambition to pursue the virtues of faith, hope and love?

CHALLENGE

• Faith, hope and love are an integral part of the future as well as the present. What are some concrete ways we can grow in faith? Hope? Love?