



A more excellent way ...

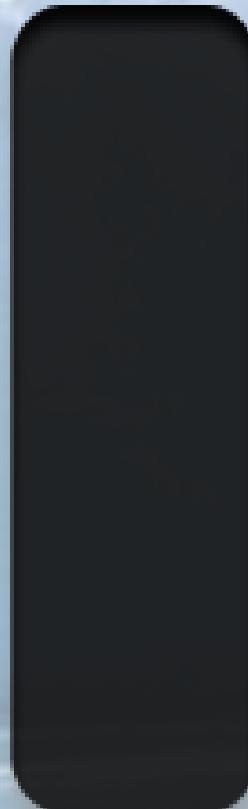
The First Letter of Paul to **Corinthians**

A daunting privilege **1 Corinthians 13**

- Who has heard this at a wedding?
- We arrive at the central theme –
the big idea

1 Corinthians is essentially a rising tide of question after question

- A litany of complaints
... accusations...
practical problems
- Just for a minute, Paul
switches tack
- *“Great questions... but
I need to tell you ... a
more excellent way”*



“Here is something greater...”

- Up to Ch12 and from Ch 14, the church is disappearing under the weight of its own issues
- Paul decides to cut through these

Here is something greater ..

- *Factions and disagreements*
- *Sexual conduct*
- *Headship / wearing of head coverings*
- *Food offered to idols*
- *Tongues & spectacular manifestation of gifts*

... a more excellent way

They didn't ask him about this!

- To Paul their questions were important and yet
- ... they are rummaging around in the weeds
- Underneath the litany of requests, arguments and complaints, they are missing something vital
- So too OUR issues quickly fill the skyline ... we can have great discussions on theology or quiet times great plans for our building.... great house-groups

... and completely miss the point

So we must take care

- This is not “beautiful poetry” ...



... as much as instructions for holy living

- Lets dive in ...

And yet I will show you a more excellent way

I may speak in the languages of men or of angels, but if I have not love, I am just a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.² I may have the gift of prophecy and be able to fathom all mysteries, and I may have the faith to move mountains, but if I have not love, I am nothing.³ I may give all I possess to the poor and hand over my body to hardship that I may boast,^{b]} but if I have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ Love does not dishonour others, 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 Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails ...

3 aspects of Love according to Paul

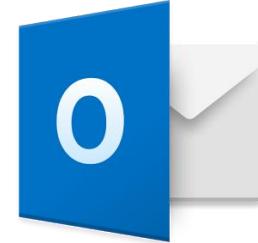
1. Waiting patiently
2. Not boasting
3. Not keeping a record of wrongs

Waiting patiently ... is love

- For some of us this is not a good start
- I wish I was known for “being patient”



NETFLIX



- ... And our culture does not encourage patience



How would your family describe YOU?

- A patient person:
 - Doesn't need to be heard first
 - Doesn't have a short fuse
 - Isn't touchy
 - Waits for the right moment



Is there an antidote?

... a more excellent way?

- Do the opposite
- Pray and expect tough situations

Love does not blunder inlove does not
blurt out..... **Waiting patiently is love**



Not boasting ... is love

- This one sounds easier! or is it?
- Corinth: people were parading gifts, insisting they had “the truth”
- In Corinth there was boasting and competition ... Paul’s harsh reply to them and to us?
- Love neither envies nor brags



We don't do that!... (do we?)

- Have we ever paraded our children's achievements thoughtlessly?
- What's the other reason we “really need” the 2017 number plate or the latest iPhone 7
- Have we even “boasted” of our church here at Lymm?



Is there an antidote?

... a more excellent way?

- There's nothing wrong in sharing conversation on our kids ... our worship band BUT
 - Think about how you say it and more importantly
 -who you are saying this to
- Often Paul's answer can be boiled down to ... “think about the other person”
- We are not into false modesty ... but think about the other

Not boasting ... is love



Keeping no record of wrongs ... is love

- Oops .. Another tough one!
- Actually if we stop and examine Paul's description, every one of these is tough ...
- Competition in Corinth was causing resent
- Keeping a record of wrongs - “resentful”
 - When we bring back the time somebody offended us
 - It makes us feel good
 - But its not love



Are there people who annoy YOU

... AND you resent it ... store it up?

- Of course not! (...oh really?)
 - The person at work who “had that coming”
 - Has someone in this church offended you?
Do you prefer to “sit somewhere else”?
 - Closer to home – the downward spiral of recrimination



Is there an antidote?

... a more excellent way?

- Of course we will disagree – that is FINE – holding on to the hurt isn't
- Antidote
 - Start praying for them - now
 - Stop worrying about quiet times Bible knowledge or your jobs .. And pray for that person
 - And God will do something (actually quite annoying)
 - It goes against the grain
... but so does love



Not keeping a record of wrongs... is love

Corinthians

Let's pause and step back

- I wish I could have brought a different sermon today (for you and for me)
- Every one of these verbs is a call to discipleship
- Try reading it again – to yourself
- But for now lets step back ...

1 Corinthians 13



What's the BIG idea?

...what's the common thread here ?

THIS love is about doing

- Nothing to do with feeling
- This love DOES STUFF - when it **doesn't** feel like it
- Selfless, lasting concern – not because we want something back
- Small acts that may appear “foolish”!
- One last thing ...

LOVE
DOES
STUFF

Feelings may pass

- In all our relationships there is a winter - we don't FEEL in love
- Marriage – & all relationships

Love is what remains ...

... when feeling in love has fallen away

- On that day you have the choice: chase a feeling or ...
- “do love” anyway ... the positive remark, the kind deed



Love is what remains when feeling in love has fallen away

- Love is what remains when just getting on has fallen away
- Son / daughter / brother / sister / parent
- Can deeply upset ... disappoint ... let us down again
- Not letting them off but choosing to say something positive rather than what you feel



Love is what remains when feeling in love has fallen away

Love is what remains when being
friends has fallen away

- The person you worked with
for 20 years ... push came
to shove ... stabs you in the back
- But you choose to forgive ...
- And call them a friend
... anyway



While Jesus was walking ...

- Do you think he FELT in love with you or I?
- Not a feeling - not an emotion, but love that does stuff
- God remained when feeling in love had fallen away

*Love remained when feeling in love
had fallen away*



A more excellent way ...