

J.J.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT Part 2

1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:1-10

Imagine we are now entering February.

February is called the month of love and that's what we are going to discuss for the next 3 weeks... The most important ingredient.

INTRODUCTION :

Story : In the time of kings and queens, there was one princess who was so ugly that no prince wanted to marry her. The king was disturbed about this but since he wanted an heir to throne after the princess, he decided that a commoner will do. So he gathered all the handsome young men in the kingdom to see if anyone is worthy to marry the princess. When the young men arrived, he said that he is finding a husband for her daughter, the princess. He offered half of his kingdom to the one who will marry her daughter. The king thought since these were commoners, surely, a lot of these men would love to marry her daughter. But he was wrong, his daughter was so ugly on the inside and on the outside that no one would marry her. And yet the king thought, the commoners would surely want her and wanted to test them immediately to see if the motives were pure. He brought them to a pond full of crocodiles. So he said, "I will offer half of my kingdom to the man who will marry my daughter. On one condition, you have to swim across this pond full of crocodiles." The young men looked at each other and no one wanted to jump in. The king was worried until one brave soul jumped in and swam quickly across the water full of crocodiles. The king and queen were elated and the princess was flattered. When he got out of the water, the king said to him, "Since you were the only one willing to swim with crocodiles for my daughter, you can now marry her and half of my kingdom is yours. What can you say about this?" The man still trying to catch his breath because of the swim spoke, angrily pointed to the other young men on the other side and said to the king, "Your majesty, I just wanted to know who pushed me into the water?"

There are times we can do good or noble things simply out of duty or we have been forced to. If we don't do it out of love it is nothing.

1 Corinthians 12: 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. 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.

Pray

Illustration : My wife cooked sinigang last night.

God asks you to make sinigang. What's the most important ingredient when it comes to sinigang, "pampaasim"

You might say to God, "Lord, I've got water and boiled kangkong and baboy" but if there's no pampaasim, that's not sinigang.

Or you might say to God, "Lord, I know how to cook the best sinigang and I've taught others how to cook sinigang" the way you want it and but if there's no "pampaasim", that's not a sinigang.

Or you might say to God, "Lord, I worked hard for this sinigang, I bought the best pork and the freshest vegetable and I even gave my last money just to cook for you this pork with kangkong and I even placed gabe and kamatis on it" But without pampaasim, it's not sinigang.

Note, God is not saying the other ingredients are not important but what he is asking for is "sinigang" and if there's no pampaasim, it's not sinigang.

Just like what we do in church, God is not saying the things we do for Him is not important like going to church, attending Bible study, serving others and etc...but without love, it's not what He is looking for. It is nothing.

Context :

- **Corinth was a place that is very much like North America.** Progressive, intelligent, and yet so worldly. In the heart of the city is the worship of goddess Aphrodite. Part of their religion is there are around 10,000 priestesses (prostitutes) who have sex with men so that they will feel closer to the gods.
Isn't it the same with our society today? Progressive, intelligent, pursuit of pleasure is the highest goal and worships sex – just look at what you watch on TV
- **The Corinthian church was founded by Paul.** Obviously, this is a very intelligent church and have practical wisdom but it's a troublesome church.
 - **Full of division** (I follow Paul, follow Apollos, people who are so proud which they say, I don't follow anyone except Christ alone – sounds so spiritual but really full of pride (1 Corinthians 1-3) because people were thinking that they are wiser than others (1 Corinthians 3:18)
 - **full of immorality** (sexual immorality), that's why Paul has to say that their body in *1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*
 - **Full of pride;** the church has a problem with submission (women submitting to husbands and church members submitting to one another 1 Corinthians 11; the Lord's supper) and also has a problem of flaunting their spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12)

***No wonder Paul says**

1 Corinthians 3: 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

Then Paul explains to them in 1 Corinthians 12, that the Holy Spirit has given each Christian a spiritual gift to serve each other. Each one is important in the church because all of us has unique gift that God has given in order to be used.

1 Corinthians 12: 4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.
7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable

Illustration : The parts of the body were discussing who is the most important of them all. The mouth said, "I am most important because without me you cannot communicate". The hand said, "I am the most important because without me you cannot work". The feet said, "I am the most important because without me you cannot walk" And all the other parts of the body were boasting that they are most important until the one said, "We are all important except for the butt hole" He only takes care of our dump and he stinks all the time. The butt hole became angry and decided not to speak for days. And the other parts of the body realized how important he is also to the whole body

Now then Paul said,

1 Corinthians 12: 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Paul is saying, the gifts of the Spirit is important for the body to function well. **IT IS EXCELLENT BUT THERE IS SOMETHING MORE EXCELLENT THAN THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.**

What is the more excellent way than the gifts of the Spirit?

Galatians 5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

Note : We know that joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control is only possible if there is love.

Now, "love", meaning, Christlike love is the "fruit of the Spirit". It cannot be produced consistently and with sincerity on your own.

REMEMBER When you became a Christian, here's what you have inside of you...

Romans 5: 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

So in order for us to produce the fruit of love, we must be connected to the Holy Spirit

John 15 : 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Love is an overflow of what God has poured already in our hearts but it can only happen if we are connected (filled, walk) with the Holy Spirit.

***Quote** : Love is the overflow of joy in God that meets that needs of others - John Piper (Desiring God)

So you may ask, "How can I be filled with the Spirit?" There's nothing mystical about it. It's just about letting the Holy Spirit take control of your life and your situation.

Quote : "To be filled with the Spirit is not having more of the Spirit but the Spirit having more of you."

In short, are you in control (meaning your flesh, your lust, your temper, your pride, your greed, your envy, your hatred) or have you given control of your life to the Spirit.

Application : When we have been slighted, insulted, rejected by others, our tendency is to assert ourselves or retreat ourselves. But to a Christian, since he knows he or she has the Holy Spirit, they will give themselves more to the Holy Spirit during this time. They will say, "**Oh Holy Spirit, I give to you this situation and that person and I will just let the love inside my heart overflow to him or her.**"

That's why it's easy to spot a person who is not yielded or abiding in the Holy Spirit, who in the words of Paul is *carnal, as to babes in Christ.*

How? There is no love, nor joy, nor peace, nor forbearance, nor kindness, nor faithfulness, nor gentleness or self-control in their lives.

Challenge : Are you carnal or spiritual? Are you a baby or are you mature?

Answer this for yourself : Do you do things out of love? Is there joy or peace in your life? Do you react with patience, or kindness or faithfulness or gentleness? (This is tested in times of strife, insult, rejections, suffering) Do you have self-control? (Or do you insist on doing what you want?)

And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Etymology : more excellent "kata hyperbole" more (kata) and (hyperbole) beyond all measure; **And he explains that something that is beyond measure, the most important is "LOVE"**

***Quote** : We can be excellent without love but with love we will be more excellent.

a.) Piety (Praise and worship) without love is just noise.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

tongues of men - I have already explained to you extensively in the past that the gift of tongues is gift of “languages”

In short : It's a gift that you don't speak that a foreign language then you instantly begin to speak it. It is not the babbling speech that

Example : You don't know Chinese before and instantly you began to speak Chinese. Or you are Visaya and you don't know Ilocano and you can instantly speak Ilocano

Etymology : glossa “language or dialect” used by a particular people

That's why the Bible says,

Philippians 2:11 ...every tongue (language; glossa) *should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..*

Revelations 7:9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues (languages; glossa) *stood before the throne, and before the Lamb.*

More proof? See how Luke interchanged dialect and tongues (language) on Pentecost

Acts 2: 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages; glossa) *as the Spirit enabled them.*⁵ *Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation* under heaven.⁶ *When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language* (dialect; dialektos) *being spoken.*⁷ *Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?*⁸ *Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?* (language; glossa)⁹ *Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,*¹⁰ *Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome*¹¹ *(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues* (languages; glossa)!"

The gift of tongues is the gift of speaking a foreign language you do not know before.

Note : I used to speak in babbling terms before but since I am beholden to the truth (the word of God), I follow God's word rather than my own experience, no matter how esoteric or ethereal it may have been during that time.

***So now, why are the gift of tongues (languages) given at that time?**

we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues

Note : It is used to declare the wonders (PRAISE) God so that other people during that time would hear and DIRECTLY attribute that the GIFT comes from God.

That's why in 1 Corinthians 14

1 Corinthians 14:2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue (language; glossa) does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.

So the gift of languages is used to praise God.

Now you may ask (this is a sidelight)

Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.

You have to see the context again.

- **They are in Corinth.** They speak only one language there, Greek
- **The Corinthian church was trying to flaunt their gift,** that they know other languages (maybe Phrygian, Arabian, Cretian and etc) and praising God in these languages which the ordinary Corinthian who only speaks Greek cannot understand.
Indeed, no one understands them
- **They are not doing it out of love but to flaunt their gifts.** That's why Paul says in verse 1
1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow the way of love

To continue :

Though I speak with the languages of men and of angels

Note : This is the only time it was used in the NT.

What does it mean?

We already know that tongues of men were used to declare God's wonder.

NOW, in the Bible whenever you see a glimpse of angels in heaven, **WHAT DO THEY DO AND SAY?**

THEY WORSHIP GOD...AND THAT IS THE PLACE WHERE PERFECT WORSHIP HAPPENS!!!!

(Read Isaiah 6; Revelations 4 and etc)

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

*"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!"*

Application : So now Paul is saying even if you are perfectly praising and worshipping God with your words, *but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

(Demonstrate it with the cymbal of the drums – full blast)

Biblical Illustrations and Applications :

Matthew 15:8 These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Look at this : We can speak praises to God without loving Him and it counts to nothing.

God wants our whole heart, mind and soul when we praise and worship Him. And our love for Him shows in our obedience to Him.

1 Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Note : Burnt offerings and sacrifices is a form of worship but God is saying, obeying me is better than any form of worship. And if we really love Him, we obey Him.

Another Biblical illustration :

Matthew 5: 23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Notice again, the principle of the “first move” brother or sister has something against you, (it’s not you have something against them but they have something against you)

To go to them is an act of love because you don’t want anyone feeling bad against you.
Then you can worship and it wouldn’t just be noise.

The corruption of Satan on this one : Some people will not go to church because they haven’t forgiven or asked for forgiveness from others. When the thing they should do is “obey” because they love God so they would need to go and ask for forgiveness or forgive the other person.

1 John 4:20 f someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see

SUMMONS

C.S. Lewis once said that he is an adjective pointing humbly to the Noun of truth who is Christ.

We have just talked about praising and worshipping God out of love and with love.

To praise God is to usually describe Him with adjectives.

Example : You are great (adjective) God (noun)! You are a loving (adjective) Father (noun)

Our lives must be an adjective to Christ who is the Noun.

If we are rude then it cannot connect to the Noun of Truth

Example : Rude Christ (rude is the adjective and Christ is the noun)...it just doesn’t match and even abominable... Sulking Christ , Harsh Christ, Envious Christ (this doesn’t match and therefore doesn’t glorify Him) and it hurts the ear (clanging cymbal)

But if our lives and reaction is loving, then the adjective LOVING AND GENTLE CHRIST...THAT PERFECTLY MATCHES AND POINTS PERFECTLY TO CHRIST OUR LORD!

***Remember :** If we claim to be a follower of Christ, our life must describes who He is. You are the adjective, He is the Noun.

So before we can declare the praises of Christ, that He is full of love, full of compassion, full of grace...let our very lives declare Christ first!!!

If we claim to be a follower of Christ, then our life must be described as someone who is obedient to Him

If we claim to be a worshipper of Christ, then we life must be described as someone who is full of love for Him.

Next week :

Prophecy and faith without love means nothing

Philanthropy without love gains nothing

S.G.D.