

J.J.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT Part 4

1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:1-10

February 14, Valentine's Day

INTRODUCTION :

Girl : Do you love me?

Boy : Yes, of course

Girl : If you love me, would you die for me?

Boy : No

Girl : What?

Boy : Because my love for you is undying.

We'll conclude today by God's grace about the most important ingredient

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

- **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**
 - **full of immorality** (sexual immorality),
 - **Full of pride;**

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?

Quote : Love is the overflow of joy in God that meets the needs of others – John Piper

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.

b.) Prophecy (Truth) without love makes me nothing

. 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.

To continue...

- **Did you practice being loving this week?** When I mean practice, did we practice it with the people who doesn't deserve your loving. To love a person who is easy to love, that comes naturally and is easy. You don't need supernatural powers for that.

Matthew 5:46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

Now I emphasized the word "reward". Because there might be some people out there WHO THINK IT'S WRONG to say that we serve God because of the rewards He will give us.

Brothers and sisters, there's nothing wrong with serving God and expecting a reward from Him. In fact, God wants us to expect rewards from Him when we serve or give or follow Him properly.

Proof?

- **The Greek word itself for reward "misthos"** is mentioned 28 times in the New Testament.
- **There are so many promises of reward** to God's people

Examples :

Matthew 19: 29 And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life.

*Matthew 10: 41 If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God, **you will be given the same reward** as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, **you will be given a reward like theirs.** ⁴² And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, **you will surely be rewarded.**"*

And of course, GOD CALLS HIMSELF A REWARDER.

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must ; believe that He is, and that **He is a rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him.*

Etymology : rewarder "misthapodotes" from "misthos" reward "apodidomi" one who delivers; one who pays off, discharges, gives back

That's why when you serve God according to His will and His way, IT'S OK TO EXPECT A REWARD FROM HIM...specially those who are persecuted or insulted because he or she is a follower of Christ.

Matthew 5: 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

People who understand this concept become bold in sharing Jesus Christ with others and live lives that truly reflect Him.

Illustration : What if Bill Gates goes into your home because he sees you are using Microsoft and chooses you and says, "Jerry, I know you believe in Microsoft because you are using it. I'm now making you the official Microsoft ambassador. Please wear a shirt of Microsoft everyday at work and as much as possible, don't get into a quarrel with anybody because you carry my company Microsoft with you and then tell at least 50 people who are Mac Users to switch to Microsoft because it really is the best operating system in the world. After two years, I will give you \$10 Million dollars if you do this. I guarantee that and here's a postdated check."

Or let's bring it closer to our study. What if the owner of Chick Fil-A Samuel T. Cathy who is worth 4.5 Billion dollars would say to you. "Jerry, can you please share the Gospel to your 10 friends and all your family and once you've done that, I'll come back and give you \$1 Million dollars. Guaranteed."

I'm pretty sure, most of us would share the Gospel because of the rewards.

And doing it because of the rewards shows FAITH! (But in this sense, faith in Bill Gates or Samuel...I'm talking metaphorically of course, because you believe Bill Gates or Samuel will give you the money showing that you believe in their trustworthiness (who they are) and their capability (what they can do).

Isn't God more powerful and more capable than Bill Gates or Samuel Cathy? No one is like Him.

Application : Here is God telling us to share the Gospel, to reflect His Son Jesus Christ to the whole world even if the world laughs, persecutes, rejects or insults you and promises you a GREAT REWARD.

¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven,

The problem is we don't believe Him and His promise of a great reward which is a trillion times more than a million bucks.

But look at this :

Revelation 22: 12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done .

Now, why am I talking about rewards?

It's because even if we do all of these things, without the most important ingredient...which is L-O-V-E, we forfeit the reward.

c.) Philanthropy (sacrifice) without love profits me nothing.

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.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.... but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Etymology : bestow “psomizo” to break it into bits or crumbs and putting it into the mouth. It’s like giving all that you have, breaking it out into pieces and giving it to as many people as possible. This is the ultimate giver or charitable person.

God is not saying here that you shouldn’t give to the poor, what He is saying, when you should do these things, make sure you do it out of love.

Because there is a kind of giving that isn’t out of love.

Matthew 6: 1 “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.”² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.³ But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly

Why will that person lose his reward from the Father? It’s because he does this out of love for himself rather than love for others and love for God.

But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing... it means, you are just so concerned about the glory of God and the need of others that you don’t even notice yourself already.

IT’S ALL ABOUT THE HEART. You do this out of love for God because you want all the praise and glory to go to Him.

Matthew 5: 16 ... the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Because beloved of God, when you give and people see that you are giving out of love for them and people see that you are doing this out of love for God...here’s the result :

2 Corinthians 9: 11 Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.”¹² So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

Biblical Illustration of giving out of love :

Luke 21: 1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, ²and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; ⁴for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.”

Quote : We must not give out of our wealth but out of our poverty.

People ask me, "Pastor, how much should I give to God? 10%, 5%, 20%...before or after taxes?" My answer is, "How much do you love God?"

Look at *Proverbs 11:24 One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.*

Remember this : When you are giving to God, He doesn't need your money, He owns the cattle on the hills...He owns everything (Psalm 50:10)...

Deuteronomy 8:17 then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'

¹⁸ "And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth,

Now, you are giving generously because you're showing your gratitude to Him that He has given you the strength and the ability to create wealth....and that show of gratitude is a show of love.

And when you give out gratitude, out of love for God...you're not giving out of duty nor out of guilt...it's out of love and it's easy to give. It's such a privilege to give. That's why Paul says *2 Corinthians 9:7-9 Let everyone give as his heart tells him, neither grudgingly nor under compulsion, for God loves the man who gives cheerfully* (J.B. Phillips Paraphrase)

Make sure you are giving out of love and you will never lose your rewards.

and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Context : Paul is talking about martyrdom here. We may not know where he gets the idea of a body being burned for a cause here. Maybe he's remembering, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego or there's a place in Athens called, 'The Indian's Tomb' where an Indian burned himself in public and a monument was placed for him.

But wherever Paul got the idea, he's talking about martyrdom and the ultimate sacrifice you can give, is to give your life and Jesus is saying, if you want to show how much you love another person, you give your life to that person.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Now Paul is saying and implying that you can sacrifice yourself without love for God or for another person but a love for oneself.

Quote : Love is self-sacrifice but all self-sacrifice is not necessarily love. – John McArthur

Application : We might sacrifice our time and give our talents to God but if we don't do it out of love, there's no reward for it.

Example :

- Attending Bible study or church activities can be an act of sacrifice because you are giving up a time in your life. Do this out of love and not out of obligation. If you do this, it is easier to wake up
- Serving in church is an act of self-sacrifice but make sure you are doing out of love and you will be glad and full of joy when doing it.

When you do these things out of love, God has a reward for you. Expect it when He comes.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, 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.

One of the things that I missed during the pandemic is our fellowship and church activity, like the mission boxes or the Seniors BBQ, you've sacrificed your time and I can see in your faces that you were doing it out of love. WHAT A JOY TO WATCH! PERSONALLY, I LOVE SERVING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING OUT LOVE BECAUSE YOU'RE EASY TO DEAL WITH, YOU HAVE A SMILE ON THEIR FACES, AND WE'RE HAVING FUN!

Have you noticed that when you do things out of love, the task becomes easier and lighter? **On the other hand, when you serve with people na nakasimangot, ang bigat and the worst thing is, it's also contagious.**

So again, may I ask, ``Are you becoming a more loving person and full of joy`` Or are you complaining a lot nowadays and ang bigat ng buhay mo...maybe, you``re always looking at yourself ``inaapi`, what you don't have, what other people did to you and etc.`....start doing things again out love for God and others.

Here's the secret : Focus on being loving rather than focusing on others who are not loving.

I love this one song when I was young :

``Let's forget about ourselves and magnify the Lord and worship Him.``

Let`s just forget about ourselves and show others WHO IS IN US, CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

Illustration : Mary, one of the missionaries we support...when I first met her...I sense that she loves what she's doing and it's not out of duty...but out of love and the result, she forgets herself and just magnifies God in her life.

CONCLUSION :

I pray that as a church, we will start serving, we will continue giving, we will continue sharing the Gospel, we will continue to worship the Lord...these are all excellent but never forget the most important ingredient....love.

Now why and how do we do this?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

If we remember that it is because of God's love that He gave His one and only Son, not because of what we did that we are saved then all of our service to Him and to others will be motivated by love.

Illustration : The wife who had a cruel husband and the man verbally abuses her and sometimes hits her and she was crying always and her friends see that and they have an idea that the husband was cruel. Then a sudden change of events, the husband died of a heart attack.

After a few years, she remarried again, this time the husband loves her so much. He serves her, cooks for her sometimes, compliments her, takes care of her and takes the time to talk and listen to her. Now one time one time her friends visited her and she was cooking and and they saw her crying and the friends became worried that she is being abused again and asked why she was crying. She replied, "No, these are tears of joy. It's because I remember, I was doing the same thing for my former husband and I was doing it out of duty, now I realized, I'm doing the same things and it's different it's because I'm doing this now out of love.

If we only realize how much God loves us and gave even His own Son for us, then whatever we do, we will do out of love.

S.G.D.