

J.J.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT Part 3

1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:1-10

BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Abbey Frias 1; Layla Courneyea, Hope De Jesus Feb 19; Elsie Combis Feb 4

Anniversary : Noel and Irene Gallora Feb 7; 30 years

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

INTRODUCTION :

One time after preaching a very profound sermon, a pastor was approached by a young man and said to him, "Pastor, you are smarter than Einstein." The pastor became proud and said, "Thank you." But he thought to himself, "Hmm, why am I smarter than Einstein." So the following week, before preaching, he approached the young man and asked, "I was wondering why did you think I was smarter than Einstein." The young man said, "It is said that only 10 people in the world could fully understand what Einstein taught. Last Sunday pastor, no one could understand you."

Today, we're going to study how people will not understand you even if you tell them the simplest of things.

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

Context :

- **Corinth was a place that is very much like North America.** Progressive, intelligent, and yet so worldly.
- **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; 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?

Then Paul explains to them in 1 Corinthians 12, that the Holy Spirit has given each Christian a spiritual gift to serve each other.

Now then Paul said,

1 Corinthians 12: 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. 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”

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.

I have shared in the past week that when you became a Christian...

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.
And yet I show you a more excellent way.

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

Praise and worship without love is just noise.

Prophecy and faith without love means nothing

Philanthropy and sacrifice without love gains nothing

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.

Review :

The gift of tongues was given to declare... “the wonders of God...” Acts 2:11

Tongues of angels were used to worship God (Isaiah 6:1-3)

So even if we are praising and worshipping God but it is without love for Him and for others, we are just making noise.

*Amos 5: 21 "I hate, I despise your feast days,
And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.
23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs,
For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.*

The context of this passage is that Israel were doing the "religious duties" but they were disobeying God which shows they're not loving him and they were oppressing the poor which shows they don't love others.

To continue...

b.) 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 understand and apply this verse in our life, we need to understand the meaning of the words "prophecy, mysteries and knowledge and why faith is also said on this verse.

What is prophecy? *² And though I have the gift of prophecy*

People think that prophecy is just only about telling the future.

Etymology "propheteia" "pro" before "phemi" to declare, to make known one's thoughts

Definition : The gift of prophecy is the gift to make known the thoughts of God.

Note : Before, when the whole Bible wasn't written yet, God chose prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah and etc to declare His thoughts, His plans.

Even in the New Testament, the church needed prophets so that they would know what was on God's mind.

*2 Peter 1: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,
²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

But today, we already know what God wants us to know and it is found in the Bible.

Today, since we already have the "whole counsel of God" written in the Bible, whenever we preach the Word of God FOUND in the Bible, that's the gift of prophecy – preacher declaring God's thoughts (FOUND in the Bible) to His people.

- Prophecy is God's truth uttered.

What is mystery? *and understand all mysteries*

Etymology : mystery "mysterion" hidden thing or secret

- Mystery is God's truth unknown

Note : It doesn't mean it is unknown, the truth is not there.

Illustration : The truth is there are still many creatures under the sea. How many and what they are, that is a mystery. Or we know that women love shoes, why they love shoes, that is a mystery.

Or from a personal standpoint, we don't know why God allowed or did not allow certain things to happen in our lives...that is a mystery only known in God's heart.

Example : During the time when Job was suffering, he did not know why God was allowing it. Now I'm pretty sure he knows.

Biblical Illustration: The Old Testament people knows that God will send a Saviour to save His people. He gave glimpses of it but the details of it even concerning the establishment of the church was kept secret or a mystery until the Jesus Christ came.

Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith

Or, we know that Jesus Christ is coming again, God gave us the signs to look out for and even gave us some of the details but when it is going to happen, that is a mystery. Or who exactly is the AntiChrist and etc.

Remember there are things that God hasn't revealed to us yet that we will only know in eternity. WHAT WE MUST BE CONCERNED about are the things He has revealed already in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law

What is knowledge? ... *and understand... all knowledge*

Etymology : knowledge "gnosis" intimate understanding

- **Knowledge is God's truth understood.**

Illustration : A mechanic is someone who must have a knowledge (intimate understanding) about cars.

Illustration : At the risk of being too simplistic, here is the difference between prophecy, mystery and knowledge. If a wife suddenly sees his husband pressing his clothes, then has frequent overtime and goes out suddenly on frequent business travels, she has an inkling that something is wrong but is still a MYSTERY (truth unknown) to her. Then her mom calls her and says that she saw her daughter's husband with another woman eating in a restaurant, holding hands and then entering a motel together. The mom did PROPHECY (truth uttered) or revealed. So the wife goes to the motel, barges into the room and sees his husband in an intimate embrace with another woman, now she knows it herself...that's KNOWLEDGE (truth understood)

Why is faith mentioned also in the same verse? *and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,*

Read carefully, it is because the basis of true faith is knowledge (which is “God’s truth understood”)

Look at how Paul is describing his fellow Jews :

Romans 10 : 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

Note : A lot of people are like this, they are very religious, they have such emotional connection with a god or an idol or a statue and they think that’s faith...faith must be according to knowledge...that’s why Paul says in verse 17

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Remember, when the Bible says, “hearing” or “he who has ears, let him hear” ...it means understanding the truth!

- **Faith is God’s truth accepted**

That’s why we have faith that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven because we know for a fact and can be proven that He is the Son of God who died on the cross to pay for our sins and on the third day He rose again! It is not an emotional ascent. It is because the Holy Spirit opened our minds and hearts and we understood (had knowledge) of this fact about God’s love.

Now, the more you understand who God is, the more your faith grows. That’s why Paul says, *and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,*

Now, allow me to go on a sidetrip on why people “lose their faith” or “backslide” It is **because their grasp of the truth is not firm.** They base their faith on what they see with other people or in their situation.

Example : the church is so nice but when someone in church becomes nasty, they backslide. Or when their prayers are not answered, they backslide.

Now, here’s the application part :

but have not love, I am nothing.

Paul did not say, “it is nothing” ...he said “I am nothing”.

Etymology : nothing “oudeis” which also means “no one”

So you can also read this as but have not love, I am NO ONE OR NOBODY.

Biblical context : The Corinthian people since they are “learned” people, they think they are SOMEBODY because of their knowledge, because of their wisdom but Paul says, YOU ARE A NOBODY when you don’t love.

Why? The Corinthians think they are somebody because of they know facts about God, they can tell the truth about God, but

Look at what the Lord says through Jeremiah :

Jeremiah 9:23 This is what the Lord says:

*“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom
or the strong boast of their strength
or the rich boast of their riches,*

Isn’t this how the world thinks that they are “SOMEBODY” because of their knowledge, wisdom, strength (athleticism) or riches.

That’s why Paul calls the Corinthian church as “carnal”, thinking like the world thinks.

*²⁴ but let the one who boasts boast about this:
that they have the understanding to know me,
that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, (cheched) “loving kindness”
justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,”
declares the Lord.*

Now how do we know if someone knows and understands God?

1 John 5: 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

And a person who loves will always build another person.

1 Corinthians 8: 1 Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

In short, brothers and sisters... when you are speaking the truth to someone or declaring the truth.... And your purpose is not love...then

Truth without love makes me nothing...

SUMMONS : (The practical application)

By the way, by God’s grace, I want this church to be strong in the truth...but I also want this church to be loving in its application.

Remember, prophecy, mystery, knowledge and faith are all connected with “truth”

Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Remember, that Paul calls the Corinthians as “babies”. They think they are SOMEBODY already spiritually but they are still babies. And one of the signs of Christian maturity the only we “speak the truth in love”.

The Greek word literally means “truthing”, it means whenever we speak the truth, we live the truth ...it must be out of love!

In short, love must come out of our pores, love must come out our mouth, everything must be oozing with love.

- If you are speaking to someone and you need to tell him the truth, it must be oozing with love.
- If you are sharing the Gospel, it must be oozing with love.
- If you are to confront somebody with the truth, it must be oozing with love.

Your primary concern when telling the truth is you are doing it out of love.

The reality is telling the truth might hurt and the one that will ease the pain is love.

Illustration : When my Nanay will clean my wounds when I was young, she has to scrub it and take out the “nana” which is painful and then put “mertiolet” that red tint you put on the wound. BUT afterwards, she blows the wound with her breath to ease it. (That’s speaking the truth in love)

Note : After my story at the start, we might be explaining the truth in the simplest of terms and yet no one understands us.

Illustration : I went to the dentist for them to clean my teeth. Fortunately, I was given a dental hygienist who had gentle hands and was very patient. But my teeth was so full of plaque and tartar that she said I have to return. I had a wonderful experience. But when I came back, it was another dental hygienist who cleaned my teeth, but this lady was rough and didn’t care or ask me how I was doing. They were accomplishing the same thing (cleaning my teeth) the other one was gentle and caring but the other one just didn’t care.

Who do you think is SOMEBODY to me now? Who do you think is NOBODY to me now?

I know I still have to have my teeth cleaned but I will not definitely go back to the one who just didn’t care.

The same with the telling the truth to somebody, they will not listen to you anymore if you are just concerned about correcting him or telling him the truth but without the gentle patience the love requires.

You want people to listen to the truth of what you have to say? Show love to them first and they will hear you loud and clear.

Quote : Your action speaks louder than your words that I cannot hear what you are saying.

Speaking the truth and having faith in God is excellent.
But if it 's not done out of love, I am nothing..

Always speak the truth in love.... that is the more excellent way.

S.G.D.