

J.J.

LOVE : THE MOST EXCELLENT LEGACY

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

1 Corinthians 13: If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have 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 do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor 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 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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 completeness comes, what is in part 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 the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a 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.

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

Pray

INTRODUCTION :

A young man asked an old rich man how he became rich.

The old guy fingered his worsted wool vest and said, "Well, son, it was 1932. The depth of the Great Depression. I was down to my last nickel.

"I invested that nickel in an apple. I spent the entire day polishing the apple and, at the end of the day, I sold the apple for ten cents.

"The next morning, I invested those ten cents in two apples. I spent the entire day polishing them and sold them at 5:00 pm for 20 cents. I continued this system for a month, by the end of which I'd accumulated a fortune of \$1.37."

"And that's how you became rich?" the boy asked.

"Heavens, no!" the man replied. "Then my wife's father died and left us 10 million dollars."

I told this story because, all of us, when we die, we are leaving something behind...**IT'S CALLED OUR LEGACY. (We discussed about loving Jesus, God is love – the source, love one another)**

Quote : Whether we like it or not, whether it was intentional or not intended, or whether it's good or bad, we are leaving a legacy.

The question is what kind of legacy are we leaving?

Quote: “Our days are numbered. One of the primary goals in our lives should be to prepare for our last day. **The legacy we leave is not just in our possessions, but in the quality of our lives.**”
- Billy Graham

This is so true. The Psalmist says

Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Ok, let's calculate mine theoretically. (Of course, we don't even know what's going to happen tomorrow): I'm turning 54 this year. The Bible says that man's life if he's strong is around 80 years old. $80 - 54 = 26$ years. I multiply by 365. It means I have only 9490 days left.

So what is the most excellent legacy we can leave?

But while we're here, he is telling us how to live *the most excellent way.

NLT Translation : *1 Corinthians 12:31 But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all*

What is excellence?

Greek word : “hyperbole” from “hyper” beyond “ballo” throw; so it's a “throwing beyond”.

So the question right now, WHAT IS THE LIFE THAT IS EXCELLENT, A LIFE THAT IS GOING BEYOND OURSELVES THAT WE WILL LEAVE?

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

EMPHASIZE : Love is the most excellent legacy.

Etymology : love “agapao” when the Bible talks about love, it always uses the word “agapao” which means, “I love you not because I have to but because I want to.”

Agape love in itself is excellent (a going beyond) Example : All the signals show that there is nothing to love in this situation or in this person but still, we chose to love...that's going beyond oneself

LOVE IS THE MOST EXCELLENT LEGACY

I. THE PRIORITY OF LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

Paul was saying, you may have all the gifts and you have all knowledge and you even give your material possessions or sacrifice yourself, but if it's not done out of love, it is nothing.

Example : Even if you leave your kids a big house and some money in the bank, but they don't remember you as someone who loves them, it's not an excellent legacy.

Even if you sacrificed for them to have good education but they don't know you as someone who loves them, it's nothing.

Even if you have taught them Biblical lessons, taught them how to pray and give to charity and share your talents to spiritual causes but they don't remember you for your love, then you're not leaving the best legacy to them.

Important Illustration : I've already mentioned this before as an illustration. One of my favorite food in the world is sinigang. But what makes sinigang to be sinigang, it's the "pampaasim". What makes it an adobo, it's the "suka". Yes, you can eat the sinigang without the "pampaasim", but you can't call it sinigang. You can eat the adobo without the suka, but that's not adobo. It's like life, yes you can do all of these wonderful things for God and for men but what ties it up all together is **love. IT'S THE ONE THAT MAKES IT SPECIAL AND UNIQUE IN GOD'S EYES!**

Make sure that you do all these out of love.

1 Corinthians 16:14 Let all that you do be done in love

To live the most excellent life and leave the most excellent legacy, the secret ingredient is love.

Application : So as 1 Cor 16:14 mentioned, when you're doing something, do it out of love and people around you will enjoy what you have prepared.

Illustration: My children love their mom's cooking. One time one of my kids asked, "What's your secret on why your cooking is so delicious?" My wife replied, "Love."

Of course, the next question, how do I know if I'm doing it out of love? The Bible then showed us what love looks like.

II. THE PORTRAIT OF LOVE.

If you take a picture of love, what does it look like? Is it the first kiss of a newly-married couple? Is it the embrace of a parent to the child? Is it the laughter shared between friends?

The Bible showed us a portrait of what love looks like.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor 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 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Quick Etymology :

- **Patient** makrothymeo to be of long spirit, bearing the offense and injuries of others where we get makros and thumos from thuo to kill (remote passion)

In short, you want to kill that person, but it's remote that you will do it.

- **Kind** "chresteuomai" to show oneself mild. In short, you might be right but make sure you're kind...you're mild.

Interesting, root word is chraomai : this means; to receive a loan.

You cannot be harsh to a person na inutangan mo o pinautang ka.

Very important : when you're talking with people, talk to them as if inutangan mo sila.

Romans 13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

- Does not **envy** "zeloo" where we get "zelos"; to boil;

We've already mentioned this before, it's easy to "mourn with those who mourn" but it's hard to "rejoice with those who rejoice." Because of envy... But if you're rejoicing with other people because of their good fortune, that's showing them love.

- Does not **boast** "perperuomai" extolling one's self EXCESSIVELY from peiro "to pierce or goes beyond"
- **Not proud** "physioo" to puff up, to inflate from "physis" natural properties by which we differ from one another; our nature; pride.

Example : Bakit ako lalapit sa kanya? Remember our lesson before... "love always makes the first move."

- Does not **dishonor others** : verb "aschemoneo" noun is "aschemon" deform
In short, you do not deform others; "sinisiraan" or you're not cursing them..
- **Not self-seeking** : seek "zeleo" to demand something from others; Eugene Peterson paraphrase is "you first" - LOVE IS YOU FIRST...NOT ME FIRST

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Matthew 20:26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

- **Not easily angered** : provoked "paroxyno" sharpen; irritate
 - **Keeps no record of wrongs** "thinketh no evil" logizomai "computing, calculating"
- Example**: counting what they did to you in the past

Illustration: As we've studied also last week, "How many times should I forgive?" The Lord said, "Seventy-times seven."

As they say, people when they get angry, they either get hysterical or historical.

- **Does not delight in evil** : iniquity "adikia" injustice; deceitful, unrighteousness

Illustration: Hindi siya mangloloko ng ibang tao.

- **But rejoices in the truth** : "aletheia" what is true; facts
- **Always protects** : stego (roof) "protect; to hide; to conceal faults of others

Illustration: I remember one officemate of mine before. It's a group of us and we were exchanging jokes, then one of the men in our group started to talk about another person, his faults and we were laughing and joking about it. One of the person in the group said to us, "Pre, huwag nating pag-usapan at pagtawanan si...kaibigan ko yun."

- **Always trusts** : pisteuo (pistis) faith; having faith in God and in others

This is where the saying goes, "Always give people the benefit of the doubt." "Always presume innocence before proven guilty."

- **Always hopes** : elpizo from elpis : expecting good things

Illustration: Even if someone has hurt you and they have been sorry, always assume that they will turn out ok.

- **Always perseveres** : hypomeno "to remain; not to depart;

Love is commitment

Emphasize : So you want to know if you're acting out of love, what does it look like? Does it look like the above?

Why is LOVE the most excellent legacy we can leave?

III. THE PERMANENCE OF 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 completeness comes, what is in part 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 the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a 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.

At the end of the day, God sees everything and He will not only look at the action but the motive behind that action. We can be the most decent, most well behaved, most righteous man in the planet but if it's not done out of love, it's nothing.

In the end, God will always look at the motive of all our actions.

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 completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

What Paul is saying is that one day all of the gifts that God has given us are no longer needed. We wouldn't need preaching in heaven, we wouldn't need knowledge in heaven, we wouldn't need healing in heaven, visitations in heaven and etc. But the thing is, **was everything done out of faith, hope and of course love?**

Again, how would I know if it was done out of faith, hope and love. Remember, we can fake love, being patient, being kind in front of other people. How will we know?

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 the ways of childhood behind me

**What is the most childish thing a child can do? Mine, mine, mine.
In short, it's all about what he can get for himself.**

We know we are doing it out of faith, hope and love if we are not doing it for ourselves but OUT OF LOVE FOR GOD AND FOR OTHERS.

CONCLUSION :

The most excellent and the greatest legacy you can leave the people around us is love.

Isn't it a nice thing, when our children or our parents or our siblings will remember us not only of our values but more importantly on how much we love God and how much we love them.

Encouragement : I know that as people, sometimes, or most of the time we don't know what to do. Let your guide be, "Always choose love"

I heard one preacher say, "When you're going to err, make sure you err on the side of love."
(translate in tagalog)

Illustration : Newspaper columnist and minister George Crane tells of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. "I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me."

Dr. Crane suggested an ingenious plan "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that your're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him." With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful, beautiful. Will he ever be surprised!" And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if." For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing. When she didn't return, Crane called. "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?"

"Divorce?" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him." Her actions had changed her feelings. Motion resulted in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds

C. Morley, in Homemade, July, 1990.

1 Peter 4:8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

APPLICATION : If we discovered that we had five minutes left to say all we wanted to say, every telephone booth would be occupied by people calling other people to stammer that they love them. Why wait until the last five minutes?

Illustration: Sometimes, that what we should do. We should call up our friends and just express our love for them. Or call your spouse and just say your love for them instead of panay bilin or call our children and just say, "I love you" to them...that's it, surprise them with your love instead of sermon. Or call your parents and just tell them "I love you." Make someone's day by telling them you love them and that's it.

Yesterday morning, I received a text message from my daughter and she wrote, "Hi dad. I was just thinking about you. I love you (heart emoji)." Hope you're having a great day."

That alone made my day.

But you might say, "Pastor, it might be too late."

At the end of it all...

But the greatest of these is love.

Look at God Himself. What is the motivation He gave His own son to die on the cross for our sins.

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.

That's the reason why our God sent His Son to the world that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. It's because God loves us so much.

Story : Remember Tom, my classmate in high school who I invited to give his testimony.... HIS LEGACY – staunch Catholic...then became alcoholic a really bad one. Lost everything, his reputation, his money, his job and eventually ... that his family left him. Found Christ and by God's grace got himself clean. Shared the gospel and the Word of God to those who would care to listen. He daily puts Bible verses in his FB page. And by God's grace, he invited his entire family to go back to church. They got saved and the entire family got back together. Tom went home to the Lord and that is the legacy he left his entire family – at the young age of 50. He wasn't rich now but rich in love and family. HIS MOST EXCELLENT LEGACY – CHRIST.

(Show the post of his wife last Christmas)

Dear Heavenly Father, though Christmas is sometimes hard because we miss the ones we love, help us remember the gift You gave - Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for this gift of love. Help us receive it. In times of grief and sadness, remind us of the reason and fill us with Your Peace.

Mighty God, we ask You for the power to press on and Everlasting Father. We thank You for carrying us when it's hard to walk.

We pray You'd fill our mind with wisdom and may the Prince of Peace rule our hearts. This Christmas help us remember it's not about the people we celebrate with, but the One we celebrate!

The fact that I am using him as an example today...shows his legacy. A legacy is something that you leave even if you have already passed away...and the greatest and most excellent legacy we can leave is THE LOVE OF CHRIST... to others and it starts with our own family.

S.G.D.