

And Now Abide Faith, Hope, and Love  
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Introduction:

1. Three essential subjects are mentioned in this verse: faith, hope, and love.
2. In our mid-week Bible study, we have been showing from Hebrews 11 how faith is essential (vs.6).
3. Today we are being reminded of how love and hope are also essential.
4. This morning we are examining a number of passages that teach us how love plays an essential role in Christianity.
5. Let us begin by showing how . . .

Discussion:

- I. CHRISTIANS MUST LOVE EACH OTHER
  - A. Jesus commanded His followers to love one another (John 13:34-35).
    1. Jesus described His command as being "new" [John 15:12-13 -- His love is the pattern].
    2. The Lord's followers are to be identified as such by their love for each other.
  - B. The same command is given in the epistles (ex. Ephesians 5:1-2).
  - C. While these passages teach Christians to love each other, . . .
- II. 1 CORINTHIANS 13 EXPLAINS WHY CHRISTIAN LOVE IS ESSENTIAL
  - A. The letter we call 1 Corinthians shows that the church in Corinth was plagued by a number of problems that were actually symptoms of a more serious problem.
    1. The members of this congregation:
      - a. were divided into various factions (1:11-12)
      - b. extended fellowship to a fornicator (5:1-2)
      - c. settled their differences by going to court (6:1, 6)
      - d. experienced difficulties over eating meat offered to idols (8:12)
      - e. were not observing the Lord's Supper properly (11:20-21)
      - f. exalted certain spiritual gifts and looked down on others (ch.12 & 14).
    2. These matters indicate that the church in Corinth suffered from a lack of love.
      - a. Christians are to do everything with love (16:14).
      - b. However, love appeared to be lacking in everything these Christians did.
    3. (12:31) Paul said he was showing this congregation "a more excellent way."
  - B. In ch.13, we are shown three reasons why the more excellent way includes love.
    1. (vs.1-3) The more excellent way includes love because without love we are nothing.
      - a. (vs.1-2) This principle applied to spiritual gifts.
      - b. (vs.3) It also applies to all acts of benevolence and sacrifice.
    2. (vs.4-7) The more excellent way includes love because of its characteristics.
      - a. Negatively, love does not envy [is not jealous], does not vaunt itself [brag or boast], is not puffed up [arrogant], does not behave itself unseemly, does not seek its own [insist on having its own way], is not easily provoked, does not think evil [hold a grudge], and does not rejoice in iniquity [unrighteousness].
      - b. Positively, love suffers long [is patient], is kind, rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.
      - c. True love is determined by behavior -- not by words (1 John 3:18).
    3. (vs.8-13) The more excellent way includes love because love is everlasting.
      - a. Love never fails, but spiritual gifts would end when "that which is perfect" came.
      - b. If the Corinthians continued using their gifts without love, when the gifts disappeared, only strife and division would remain.
      - c. If they used their gifts with love, when the gifts no longer existed, love would continue.

Conclusion:

1. According to Hebrews 11, faith plays an essential role in Christianity.
2. We will see this evening that hope also plays an essential role in Christianity.
3. However, faith will become sight one day, and hope will become reality.
4. Love will continue and is therefore the greatest.