

Greetings from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Amen

1Cor 12:31-13:13

Sermon Title: "Reflecting God's Love"

God's Word in 1Corinthians 13:31b reads, ***And I will show you a still more excellent way.***

The past two weeks we have heard that God has given each one here at Trinity Lutheran Church at least one gift or maybe more to use as a member of the body of Christ. You are the body of Christ. For what? God tells you through Paul's letter to Corinth, what that is! The more excellent way is God's Love reflecting in you, to all! For without God's Love there would be no Gospel, no faith, no hope, no salvation, nothing. Mankind would have continued in its sins! In sin you would pursue the evil sinful desires of your hearts. In sin you would pursue power, money and fame for yourselves. In sin you would be impatient, rude, envy, arrogant and rejoice in wrong doing.

1Corinthians continues: ***And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give***

***away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.***

For knowing God's Salvation Plan, understanding it, knowing the mystery of the ages, and moving mountains and still have God's Love in your head (head knowledge) rather than His Love filling your heart, you have not gain anything that is precious or worthy from God. Without God's Love in Christ in you, you would have continued dead in your sin. God has calls you by the Gospel and made you alive in Christ, filling your heart with His love.

In Corinthians, God's Word describes God's Love: ***Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.***

This is what He has done in your Baptism; filled your heart with His love to overflow to others. But your sinful flesh is still lurking around you to grab you once again. As it grabs onto you or trips you up, you do not reflect God's Love to others. His love that He fills you with is patient and kind. But it does not show through you when your sin grabs you, or chokes you and causes you to be impatient and nasty. And many times sin causes you to

be envious of others and boast for ourselves rather about others. And too often you boast in yourself, “I ... I ... I” —rather we should boast in the Lord, of the Lord and for the Lord.

***Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.***

As a child of God we may yet think as a child for we have not matured in God’s Love as we should. As a young child of God we look and desire the gifts of prophecies, speaking in tongues or other spiritual gifts. Just as the Corinthians were mistaken and looked upon certain gifts being more important than others, you may be also drawn into the thinking that different gifts are more excellent than others. And you may be drawn away from the more excellent way as you pursue spiritual gifts in a childish way. For another childish way of thinking, is ‘to obtain’ the gift to just ‘have’ the gift rather than for the gift to reflect God’s Love.

The more excellent way is reflecting what you have been given, God’s Love in Christ – simply letting God’s Love in Christ have its way with you ...

both for yourself and for others. For God's love never ends for you. Christ's love is always patient, kind, never boasting, self seeking or self fulfilling. Christ came and out of His sacrificial perfect love, He gave Himself to be a ransom for your sins and for all mankind sins. Out of love, Christ went to the cross to die for you. Out of Love, God raised Christ from the dead for you. Christ ascended to heaven and Christ intercedes for you at the right hand of God the Father out of love for you. Christ answers your prayers, the best for you, out love for you. God gives you faith out of love for you. God gives you hope because of love for you. God feeds and sustain your faith out of love for you.

***For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.***

Christ comes each Sunday to fill you with His blessings and forgiveness and His love. You see Jesus dimly with your eyes of faith. You hear God's Love for you in the Words of Absolution. You hear His Love for you in His Word. You taste and see Christ's love for you in the Lord's Supper. As the Lord shapes and molds you, in His hands, you reflect God's Love. Maturing then is defined as allowing God's Love to reflect more fully, or not getting in

the way. Maturing we see God's Work and seek for Him to reflect and do His work in you rather than you doing your works. You now know only partly His Love for you but you will know perfectly and fully His Love for you in heaven.

**IN CHRIST'S LOVE, GOD HAS CALLED YOU; ..... IN CHRIST'S LOVE  
GOD FEEDS YOU AND SUSTAINS YOU TO REFLECT CHRIST'S LOVE;  
..... IN CHRIST LOVE, HE BRINGS YOU TO HIMSELF.**

For love is why faith and hope exist. For faith and hope are surrounded by, and supported by love, God's love. All of this He does for you and the Love He gives you is for the purpose of keeping you in the one true faith. And Him keeping you in the one true faith and in His love, He will call you to Himself where you will see Him clearly and abide in Him and with Him in His perfect love forever. For a little while you will 'see Him dimly' then you will see Christ 'face to face.'

And may the peace of God, which is beyond all human comprehension, keep your hearts and minds through your faith in Christ Jesus. Amen