1 Corinthians

**Lesson Objectives**

* Understand the critical role love plays when using our spiritual gifts
* Realize our shortcomings in God’s expectations for loving one another and trust in Jesus’ work on our behalf

Chapter 13

Fields of Battle: Agape vs. Movie love

**Worship** (CW:495:2)

A: Love is humble; love is gentle;

**B: Love is tender, true, and kind.**

A: Love is gracious, ever patient, generous of heart and mind

**B: May love be ours, O Lord!**

**Before We Begin**

Compare how the following items would be treated in a movie vs. how they might play out in reality

* Reasons why a couple starts dating/gets married  
  They’re both super attractive  
  They’re polar opposites and magically fall in love  
  It’s a fairy tale type of story
* A couple gets into an argument  
  They should break up  
  One party is definitely to blame  
  A big romantic gesture is needed to solve things
* Running to stop someone from leaving on a plane  
  Very romantic vs. getting arrested
* A team of people from wildly different backgrounds tries to win a game/solve a problem  
  After initial hiccups, the team figures things out and unites for a common goal with a grudging respect for one another  
    
  The larger point: what God expects of us is actually GREATER than this. Never fear, however, because He gives us the strength to carry it out.

Agape love means….ἀγαπάω (agapao) denotes love on a different, higher level, meaning to love, value, esteem, feel or manifest generous concern for; be faithful towards; to delight in; to set store upon,

"The substantive agapee from the verb agapao is as Trench remarks, 'a purely Christian word, no example of its use occuring in any heathen writer,' and it was employed by the inspired writers, to denote love in its highest and purest sense--a love which embraced as its proper objects both God and man."

CFW Walther: “\_\_Faith\_ fills the heart with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_love to Christ\_\_, a love not only of words, but an inner living power, showing itself in \_\_\_\_\_deeds\_\_\_\_. It is a love which not only makes one \_\_\_\_willing\_\_\_\_\_\_ but also \_\_\_\_\_\_capable\_\_\_\_ of keeping Christ’s word.”

**…But Have Not Love (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:3)**

1. Chapters 12 and 13 deal with the importance of spiritual gifts.
   1. What do we learn about serving when Paul compares us to an instrument?  
      Like a dead instrument of brass he would have become, like a clanging cymbal, both of which yield forth a tone when struck, the one a dull, deep tone, the other a shrill, penetrating tone, but are absolutely without life. Mark that the idea of instrumentality is brought out. The Christian that possesses any gifts is an instrument of the Holy Ghost in using them for the service of his neighbor. To parade any gifts before others for the gratification of vanity, for show, and in the expectation of praise, is to invite the severest censure of God.

Spiritual gifts lose their importance and effectiveness unless those possessing the gifts use them in selfless love.

* 1. Build on that thought with Paul’s thoughts in Ephesians 4:16: “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

**Paul makes it clear in verse 16 that every Christian has a role in the church  
The church suffers when any Christian wastes his or her gift**It gives encouragement to all believers to serve their Lord no matter how insignificant they feel they are.  
Stoeckhardt: “The growth of the entire body happens according to the effort that each individual part exerts, according to the measure of Christ’s gifts fitting for him. Not only teachers, but every member contributes according to the measure of his gifts, knowledge, experience, and faith.”

**MIT #1**

**Each Christian has a spiritual gift to use in love for the good of the church.**

* 1. Take those truths and write down a brief summary of what you would say to encourage a young person to serve at Beautiful Savior.  
     Let this be your encouragement as well  
       
     Most excellent way = Way of love that encourages us to use our gifts for the good of the church

**Love in Action (13:4-7)**

1. Look through each verse and list examples from Jesus’ life that demonstrate him fulfilling God’s expectations for love.

**MIT #2**

**Jesus already fulfilled God’s expectations for love perfectly in our place**

* 1. Verse 4  
     Jesus’ patience with his disciples; Jesus taking time to heal the crowds who surged around him; Jesus giving all glory to his Father  
     How different the life-style of the Saviour! His life was centered in others and not in self. How patient He is with His disciples who very often were to be found in the "slow learners" class. How kind He is with the father who said, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Before Pontius Pilate the Son of God does not act conceited. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, He opened not His mouth" (Is. 53:7).
  2. Verse 5  
     Jesus never did miracles for himself; Jesus’ respect for those who were hurting; Jesus saying “peace be with you” on the night of Easter Sunday
  3. Verse 6  
     Jesus took no joy in the sins of others, not in Judas, not in the Pharisees, yet Jesus stood up for the truth at all times  
       
     "The trait here brought out, is that disposition to rejoice in the downfall or injury of others, which springs out of ill-will or jealousy, and which is gladdened when those who are envied for their advantages are compelled through some mis-step to come down from their high position and incur disgrace."
  4. Verse 7  
     Jesus’ absolute trust in his Father in Gethsemane, Jesus’ endurance when rejected by many and when suffering on Good Friday  
       
     Jesus shows us how to use knowledge as He reveals the Father's mind so that the world might know of the Father's love. Jesus knew the world was bound for hell. Love moved Him to do something about it. He died for the Christian world's sins of knowing and not loving.

1. Describe how people in the following situations might struggle with the expectations in this section. Then describe a real life action that would be a fulfillment of the expectations listed here.

Fulfillment

Struggle

* 1. A teenager  
     Rejoicing in evil; gossiping, disrespecting   
     parents and authorities

Standing up for God’s Word; obeying your parents, giving glory to God for success

* 1. A parent of a teenager  
     Impatience with their kids

Forgiveness when your children fail

* 1. A parent of a young child  
     Not self-seeking, not easily angered,

Patience, gently correcting your children

irritated by a show of ingratitude

* 1. A 20 something working in an office  
     Not envious, not delighting in evil of the  
     bar scene, not boasting

**MIT #3**

**Love is more than feelings.**

Not being easily angered with your coworkers, reaching out w/ invites

* 1. Husband or wife  
     Keeping no record of wrongs

Burying their sin with Christ

**Love Never Fails (13:8-13)**

1. How do verses 9-12 impact the way you…
   1. …view God?  
      The fullness of God’s greatness is still hidden to us  
      P.E. Kretzmann states, "...in heaven every believer will see, know, understand the fullness of the divine essence, attributes, plans, counsels in a perfect and blessed understanding, so thoroughly as he himself was known of God when the Lord changed his heart in conversion."26 In this context Luther comments: "I shall know Him then in the clearest possible manner, without covering; for the covering was not taken from Him, but from me, for He has none before Him."
   2. …speak with Him?  
      I am a child  
      He’s in charge and knows what’s going on

**MIT #4**

**God is smarter than I am.**

* 1. …react to things in your life?  
     Seeing as in a poor mirror  
     Our knowing in this world is imperfect, inadequate for a complete understanding of God, of His essence, of His will. There are only small parts of the eternal, heavenly truth which we understand, even with our enlightened Christian reason. We have no comprehensive view of the total, of the connection of the divine thoughts and counsels; the fullness of God's greatness and majesty is still hidden from us. We know only so much of God's essence and will as is necessary for our salvation.

1. God has called us to the daily task of destroying selfish “love” and building Christian love. List three obstacles we might encounter. Then list three things that will help us perform this task better.
   1. Obstacles

impatience, possessiveness, phonyness. Sinful man, in his fear of losing what he mistakenly calls his own (after all, it comes from God), begins to hoard it all for himself. He refuses to share. As Christians must we not admit that much of life is spent in posturing, trying to be something or somebody that we are not. The attempt only results in more phonyness and dishonesty.

**MIT #5**

**Strength in my daily struggle to love comes from God.**

* 1. Helps  
     Going back to the cross  
     Regular worship and Bible study

Interpersonal encouragement

1. How will Christian love bless our work at Beautiful Savior?  
   Christian love will lead members to think of others first and seek their good. Christian love will lead members to use their time and resources to God’s glory.

Our words must be bound together with the mortar of Christian love. Only then do we build God-pleasing relationships in the home, the congregation, the District, the Synod.

In heaven, the saints of all ages shall have the joyful and confident expectation of receiving only good from God. We will always be able to hope for the best. Since heaven is eternal, it will not be enjoyed all at once. Happy expectations will be a part of the heavenly bliss. Now, hopes are often thwarted. Then, hope will never be frustrated.

**Review:**

Thankfulness:

Sin:

Reminder:

New: