

[CON]VENIENCE

— A White's Chapel Sermon Series —

[Con]venience: Love is Inconvenient

OPENING PRAYER

Invite a member of the group to lead prayer.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 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 do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

This scripture is one of the most popular scriptures read during weddings. While this text can certainly be applied to the love that a married couple may share, its original intent was to be applied to the body of Christ. Paul writes the letter to the church at Corinth that he established. Paul spent 18 months planting the church. At the end of the 18 months, Paul left Corinth. In his absence, divisions developed in the church. Paul writes this letter to the Corinthians to address those divisions. One of the issues is that people started to value some spiritual gifts over others; in order to help people at Corinth understand the value of each member of the church, Paul compares the Church to the human body. Each member of the body is important. Moreover, he says we are the Body of Christ. Next, Paul states that even more important than spiritual gifts is love. After all, God is love. The greatest commandment is that we love God with all of who we are and love our neighbor as ourselves.

But what is love? My mother has demonstrated the love of God to me. I know what love is because my mother taught me through her words and actions. However, not everyone has the same testimony. Some mothers do not know how to show love because of a variety of complicated reasons that are too numerous to discuss in this limited format. As a result many children carry those wounds well into their adulthood. If not addressed in a healthy manner, it could create a cycle.

So other than the love that is given to us from those who love us, how do we learn what love is? Television, social media, books, music and streaming services all provide us with images of what love looks, sounds, and feels like. Often these sources provide us with an unhealthy understanding of love. It is an easy kind of love, a convenient kind of love. The church at Corinth seemed to struggle with this issue, just as many of us struggle today. So, Paul tells them that love is ever-giving, ever-understanding, rejoices in others' successes, does not insist on its own way. The love that Paul defines isn't convenient, it's inconvenient.

GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Share where you've seen God at work in your life this week.

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What are your highs and lows for this week?

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Define love in your own words.

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Share a time when you experienced the love of God as defined by Paul. What impact did it have on your life? What did you learn about God? About yourself and others?

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How do we move toward forgiveness when we've been hurt by those we love?

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How are you going to put into practice this kind of love in your daily life? (You may already be putting it into practice, but how can you be more intentional or effective in this area of your life?)

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PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/concern.

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CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Please answer these during your personal devotional time at the end of the day or do it as a couple or family.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, "what made you happy today?"

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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