

2016/1: A Wedding Message (1 Cor 13:1-3)

by BS Poh

We have just read 1 Corinthians 13. This chapter in the Bible is clearly an ode to love. We must not forget that it is part of the Bible. It is, therefore, a revelation of God's will to us. Since it is the revelation of God, there are two things we must learn from it. First, it is a prophecy concerning the age we are living in. Second, it teaches us how we should live.

Prophecy

Let us consider the first point, namely that it is a prophecy concerning the age we are living in. At the time when this portion of the Bible was written, the miraculous gifts were still around. Some servants of God could prophesy, i.e. to reveal God's will directly. Others could speak in tongues, i.e. to use languages they never learned before to preach the gospel concerning Jesus Christ. Yet others had the gift of knowledge, by which they knew of things hidden from others.

We are told in verse 8, "Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away." The question is, when will all this happen? We are told in verses 9 & 10, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." The contrast is between what we know partially, and what we know completely. The word "perfect", therefore, cannot be a person or a place. It cannot be a reference to Jesus Christ or to heaven. Instead, it is a reference to the complete revelation of God's word. The word "perfect" in the original Greek language means "complete". The apostles and prophets have all died. They have been used by God to give us the complete Bible. The Bible is sufficient for us to determine God's will until Jesus Christ returns to judge the world.

How we should live

The second point is that this passage shows us how we should live. In the age when the completely written will of God is found in the Bible, there is no need for us to speak like a child, to understand like a child, and to think like a child. Instead, we are to become man, and put away childish things. In the past, mirrors were made of polished metal by which we could only see ourselves dimly. Now, we have the Bible, which is God's word. It is better than the mirrors of olden times, by which we can see ourselves as though we meet a person face to face. We may know ourselves just as we are known by God.

Jesus Christ says in another part of the Bible, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6)." This tells us that when we know Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we will become God's children. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He came to this world to take upon Himself perfect human nature. As God and Man in one person, He laid down His life on the cross of Calvary to pay for the sins of His people. Whoever repents of his sins and trusts in Jesus Christ will be forgiven by God the Father. Only those who have faith in Jesus Christ can have the certainty of arriving in heaven. This is called "hope". Those who have faith in Jesus Christ, and the hope of seeing Him in heaven, will have love. We read earlier, "And now abide faith, hope,

love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13).” Love is the greatest because it will continue on in heaven, when there is no need of faith and hope anymore.

Love

Let us say something about “love” as we conclude. The “love” spoken of here is not romantic love, or family love, or friendship love. It is the Greek word “agape” which means the giving of oneself for the good of others who are undeserving. When God sent His Son to this world to die for sinners, it is “agape” love. When Jesus Christ willingly died on the cross to pay for the sins of His people, He was showing “agape” love. This love is given to those who have repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus Christ to be saved.

We are here today to witness the wedding of C and M. They are two individuals who have repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation. C became a true Christian when he was 19 years old. M became a true Christian when she was 13 years old. They met in Michigan, America. God brought them together and they will now be united as husband and wife. In their marriage, they are to show more and more of this “love” to each other. Another part of the Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph 5:25).” It also says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...let the wife see that she respects her husband (Eph 5:22, 33).” Together, they are to show more and more of this “love” to other people. They are able to show this “love” only because God first loved them.

Conclusion

C and M, we wish you God’s blessing in your life together. This message is a reminder of our indebtedness to God’s mercy, shown in Jesus Christ. Let us look to God for strength and seek to honour the Lord Jesus Christ. “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (13).”

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