



# Brown CG Zoom Lesson

## Better Together: Forbearance 1 Corinthians 13 – July 19, 2020

### I. Definitional Understanding:

Before we start our lesson today, we need to get a definitional understanding, what is **forbearance**? It's not a word we use often or understand well. The dictionary defines it as: patient self-control, showing restraint and tolerance; Certain Bible translations choose words like "putting up with" or "bearing with".

### II. Context and Discussion of Scripture:

We are continuing this week in the Better Together series as we round out our study of *humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance*. These describe a life characterized by a "walking in a manner worthy of the calling" that culminates in a unity within the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 13, sometimes referred to as the "Love Chapter", Paul writes about love and what it does and doesn't do. In the passage, we see that "love bears all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

#### 1 Corinthians 13 — The Way of Love (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

<sup>4</sup> *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

<sup>8</sup> *Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

### III. Group Discussion:

1. Paul writes in verses 1 through 3 about great gifts being used (tongues, prophecy, knowledge, and faith) and noble actions being done (giving away everything, and bodily sacrifice), but all without love. Love is to be our heart's motive in these things (see 1 Cor. 4:4-5). Paul spoke of these specific gifts and actions because they were so enamored by them—but they did them without love. How is it possible to do any of these without love? Without love, are any of these worth anything? How then does love

ascribe value to them?

2. Paul proceeds in verses 4 through 7 to describe how love exhibits itself through do's and don'ts. In Vs 4, how is someone able to do the right things? Why do we generally find it so difficult to do this? Why is it also important in Vs 5-7 to discuss what love is not?
3. In verse 7, Paul writes that "love bears all things". The Corinthians were wrapped up in using their gifts for their own gain; so what does it mean to bear *all things*? What is Paul "bearing" on their behalf through this issue? How is a *forbearing* love, as Paul demonstrates, helpful toward building unity within the body or a family?
4. In verses 8 through 10, Paul writes of certain gifts (prophecy, tongues, and knowledge) as "passing away". When will they pass away? What contrast is being drawn between love and gifts?
5. In these passages, Paul's uses the Greek word *agape* every time we see the word *love*. The Greeks used four different words for *love*, and *agape* stands as the most sweeping and grand; it's defined as a divine, self-sacrificing love for the good of another without expecting re-payment. Does this alter or strengthen your understanding of 1 Corinthians 13?

While we all fail to live out *agape* love as characterized by 1 Corinthians 13, the gospel gives us hope in light of this failure. In verse 12, Paul writes about seeing "in a mirror dimly" now, and points us toward a glorious truth that one day we will be "face to face". Praise God for his steadfast love, and for the hope this gives us!

#### IV. Responding in Prayer:

1. Pray for our church—elders, deacons, staff, volunteers, members, and everybody our church ministers to—as we continue to navigate unprecedented waters. Pray that we as a church would walk in a manner worthy of our calling—one exemplified by a humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance—and that we would be eager to display a *unifying love*, especially during this time when it is easy to be *apart* and *divided*.
2. Pray for those affected by job loss and economic hardship during this time. Pray that the Jobs Ministry and the Biblical Finances Ministry which offers financial coaching would be effective ministries of grace and hope to those hurting, and that God's provision would be on those crying out to him right now.
3. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, *give thanks in all circumstances*; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:16-18). It is hard to be thankful sometimes. Yet, even then, we are to pray to God *often*, stirring our souls toward rejoicing and thanksgiving, especially now.