

PROPERTIES OF LOVE: Bears, Believes, Hopes, Endures All Things (1 Cor 13:7).

- A. **Love is tenacious** (persistent, determined) it “never fails”, it never gives up, it presses on, it never tires out.
1. On Tuesday, December 11, **three months** after the twin towers were attacked; firefighter Lee Eelpi finally found the body of his fellow firefighter (his son) Jonathan.
 2. Lee refused to give up, because his love for his son was greater than the pain of the search.
- B. **Jesus is the** prime example of that kind of love (Phil 2:5-8).
1. When we were dead in our sins, He went out to search for us (expand).
 2. Why did He endure so much trouble & pain for us? Because His love for us was greater than the pain of the search – *His love is tenacious*.
- C. **So love will** simply not allow us give up on people; it never tires in the pursuit of doing what is best for others.

1. This is the love God had for the remnant of Jews (Jer 31:3; cf. Psa 136:1, 4-9, 23-26).
2. Today, God offers that everlasting love in & through Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:37-39).

- D. **This is the** characteristic of love that Paul described in 13:7: it bears, believes, hopes, & endures all things.
1. It is a quartet singing in perfect harmony to convey the fact that love does not give up.
 2. We can come up with all kinds of excuses to withhold our love from someone & feel justified.

[But the love of God calls us to is a greater & more genuine love, a love that is according to His nature.

The first voice of the quartet is...]

I. LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS

- A. **The first thing** that may come to mind is the bearing of another's burdens (baros) or troubles (Gal 6:2).

1. That is certainly important, for in doing so we “fulfill the law of Christ.”

B. **But Paul used** a different word here (stego), one that used very few times in the Scriptures.

1. This word “bear” literally means “to roof over” (Strong’s); to protect or keep by covering, to preserve; to keep secret; to hide, conceal (Thayer’s).

2. So Paul is calling on us to cover “all things” (our relationships) with a cloak of love (endure, suffer, **1 Cor 9:12**).

3. Peter used a different Greek word, but the meaning is the same (**1 Pet 4:8**; cf. **Prov 10:12**).

C. **Put another way**, “Love is willing to “put up with” a lot of grief to do what is best for someone else.”

1. {Apathy, arrogance, hostility, poor choices, failure to take advice, etc.}

a. Did you have any of those traits - or - did you do any of those things before you became a Christian? Did you afterward?

b. And yet, the Lord bore with you (put up with us; covered, protected) in order to bring us through a period of growth.

2. Imagine what a difference a love that bears all things would make in your home & in this church.

a. No one would ever flair up in anger, throw up their hands & walk away for good.

[Now only God can forgive sin, but we can imitate the mercy of His forgiveness by bearing or covering the wrongs of others instead of broadcasting those things to others.

The second voice of the quartet is...]

II. **LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS**

A. **Love chooses** to believe the best in others.

1. Does that mean we should be naïve & think that people always want to do the right thing? No.

2. It means we should give people all the time, teaching & opportunity they need to do right.

B. **And because love** believes the best in others, then love does not quickly jump to bad conclusions about a person's character, motives & potentials.

1. So because love does not think the worst, it is not cynical (pessimistic, skeptical, distrustful, suspicious).
2. Let me ask you. Do you think God believes the best in you? Do you say, "Well yes, God knows my heart."?
 - a. But how much evidence have we given Him that He should believe the best in us?
 - b. Maybe not much, & yet we still cling to the hope that He believes the best in us
 - c. So shouldn't we give that same opportunity & hope to others?

Heb 5:9-11 – And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 ***of whom we have much to say, & hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.***

Heb 10:25 – ***not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some,*** but exhorting one another, & so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Heb 6:7-9 – For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, & bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it bears thorns & briers, it is rejected & near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, ***we are confident of better things concerning you,*** yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. Lyrics to "She Believes In Me" – Kenny Rogers

[A person who loves – will help people reach the potential they have of being children of God. AND a person who loves – will put their faith in a person as long as they possibly can.

The third voice of the quartet is...]

III. LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS

A. **Love refuses to** accept someone's failure as final.

1. Have you ever given up on a person ever being obedient & faithful to the Lord?
2. Have you ever invested a lot of time & energy in someone's spiritual growth, only to wonder if it was a waste of time?
3. Paul could have felt that way about the churches he planted & worked with, but he didn't.

- a. He felt it necessary to “urge & exhort” the Thessalonians to refrain from sexual immorality (1 Thess 4:1-8), & yet, of that church he said, “*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming*” (1 Thess 2:19)?

[We’re not saying that there is never a reason to stop bearing with someone or believing the best in someone or hoping that he or she will do what Lord requires.

But Paul is telling us that when we see a spark of interest in someone we should strive to keep it alive by hoping for the best possible outcome.

The fourth & final voice of the quartet is...]

IV. LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS

- A. Love never gives up; it never tires out in the matter of bearing (suffering), believing & hoping.

1. The word “endure” means “to persevere under misfortunes & trials; to hold fast to one’s faith in Christ through persecutions (Matt 10:22); to endure ill-treatment bravely & calmly (1 Peter 2:20) – *which we are willing to do because of our love for Christ.*

- a. As when a soldier is in the thickest part of battle, surrounded by the enemy, & yet he keeps on fighting; he doesn’t retreat because he loves the cause for which he fights – *he endures all things.*

2. So Paul is not talking about a love that can only handle a few minor annoyances.
3. A love that endures can stand in the face of a bitter opponent, against strong opposition, & continue to love – *remember love is tenacious!*
4. Once again, our Lord is the best example of love that endures all things.

John 1:10-13 – He was in the world, & the world was made through Him, & ***the world did not know Him.*** 11 He came to His own, & ***His own did not receive Him.*** 12 **BUT** as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Isaiah 53:3 (Notice how the treatment affected Him) – He is ***despised*** & ***rejected*** by men, a Man of sorrows & acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was ***despised***, & we ***did not esteem*** Him.

Luke 19:14 (Minas) – But his citizens hated him, & sent a delegation after him, saying, ***‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’***

Luke 20:13-15 (Wicked vinedressers) – "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.' 14 But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' 15 **So they cast him out of the vineyard & killed him.** Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

John 3:31-32 – He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly & speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 And what He has seen & heard, that He testifies; & **no one receives His testimony.**

- a. All that mistreatment did not prevent the Son of God from doing what He came here to do – *His love endured all things.*

[So love is not love when it leaves you behind, love is only love when it endures to the end.

A song written by George Matheson: "Oh, love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee. I give thee back this life I owe and in Thy ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be."

God's love will not let us go. He will not write us off. He will bear with us, believe in us, hope for us & endure all things with us until the end (Heb 13:5-6; 1 Cor 1:7b-9).]

CLOSING

- A. **Love will push** us to the limits of our ability & take us out of our comfort zones.
- B. **Love demands** the most strenuous discipline, & yet it produces the most exhilarating joy.
- C. **For the Christian** love is the indispensable basis for every thought & word & action.
- D. **Indeed one cannot** know God without it.

1 John 4:7-8 – Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; & **every-one who loves is born of God & knows God.** 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- E. **We are blessed** to have Paul's wonderful description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 to give substance & meaning to a word that is so often misunderstood.
- F. **Finally**, God didn't give up on you. He has endured all things to make it possible for you to be saved, & now He has put His hope in you that you'll respond. Come in faith, repentance & be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, in the name of Jesus who loves you.