

Love Is Not Easily Angered

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[0 : 00] In some ways I feel like I don't really need much of an introduction because of that testimony. That is exactly what we've been talking about.

I've been talking about in these afternoon Sundays that spiritual gifts are good, but love is the most excellent way. I so appreciated Stephan's encouraging word for us from 1 Corinthians 13 last Sunday.

I was nodding my head and saying, preach it rather the whole way through. Gifts are good, love is better, and so what should we be seeking? What should we be really wanting more than anything else?

It's Christian love. Doctrinal accuracy, I talked about that this morning. It is necessary, accurate, precise doctrine is good, but Paul says, If I can fathom all mysteries and have all knowledge, but without love, I am nothing.

And I can be full of good works. I can give all that I own, all I possess to the poor, but without love I gain nothing. And so this word from 1 Corinthians 13, it is for us.

[1 : 19] It's for Grace Fellowship Church. It's for Reformed Baptists. This word is for you. It's for me. You can have the greatest gift, the greatest spiritual gift, but if you have not love, you are nothing.

And the opposite is true as well. You cannot be gifted very much at all. You cannot be all that gifted, but if you have love, then you do have everything.

You'll find a way to serve. You'll find a way to be useful. Love will give you the wisdom. Love will give you the strength. Love will help you to be useful, pleasing to God, even if your gifts are not all that to speak of.

Now, am I being too strong? Well, not according to the Apostle Paul. He says love is the most excellent way. And now these three remain faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love. And so I do feel like this is a sermon. This is a message. This is something that we need to hear again and again.

[2 : 29] And I'm going to beat this drum as long as I have a voice. The Apostle John, he preached into his 90s, at least according to church tradition. And Jerome, the church father, said that when he was too old and infirm to stand anymore, they would carry him in into where the people were meeting on a stretcher.

And he would prop himself up on one elbow to give his sermon. And his sermon would be this, little children, love one another. And then he would lie back down and his friends would carry him back out.

And every week it was the same thing. This is what Jerome says. And it happened again and again. Little children, love one another. And until finally one day the story goes, someone asked him, John, why is it that every week you say this same thing?

Little children, love one another. And John replied, because it is enough. It's enough. This is what you really need to know.

And so, again, we want to hear John's words again, that little children love one another. And 1 Corinthians 13, 5 says that love is not easily angered.

[3 : 44] That's what we're going to talk about. Love is not, the ESV says, love is not irritable. Love is not irritable. It's not touchy.

It isn't easily provoked. It isn't easily set off. It isn't easily offended. And that's the love that we need. Where we're not going around feeling like we're being insulted.

So, are you easily insulted? Are you easily offended? Is something always setting you up, setting you off?

Is your, they're doing something wrong. Is that meter in your brain and your heart set all the way to 11 and you're picking up everything? It's too sensitive. Let me ask maybe in a different way, a more blunt and plain way.

Is everyone around you an idiot? You go to work and the people you work with, they're idiots. The drivers, the people in line at the store, the people in front of you, the office workers, the government employees, the customer support people on the other end of the line.

[4 : 56] Your fellow employees, your bosses. Are they all morons that can't get their life together, their act together? Well, some people can go through life permanently ticked off like that.

They're doing something again. They're not doing it right. They're, and you're easily irritated, bothered, always something. Another way to think of it, are you a velvet jacket?

Can you imagine wearing a velvet jacket? And there you are walking through your day, walking through your life and all the lint and all the little strings and all the dust. It's all just collecting on you. It all comes right to you.

Is that you where you just walk through life and offenses and annoyances and irritations just stick to you?

At church. I can't believe she said that. I can't believe she did that. Oh, is someone doing something, saying something that bothers you?

[5 : 57] What Paul says is that is not Christian love. Christian love is not irritable, easily annoyed. Love covers over a multitude of sins, a multitude of annoyances and irritations.

In love, our focus isn't on us and what they are doing to us, but rather our love, in love, our perspective is much more outward. I'm more concerned about the good that I can do to them or the evil that I can avoid doing to them.

And so, yes, you, there might be occasionally a time where we have to do what Jesus talks about in Matthew 18. We have to say something to someone.

But again, the emphasis in those cases, according to Paul, and what this is talking about, is not our hurt feelings. It's not the offense done to us and how we're feeling about it.

Some Christians always have a list of people that they need to talk to. Some list of people that they need to, well, I need to confront him. And they said this, and so I really need to talk to them about that need for confrontation, need for Christ's sake to tell them what they're doing wrong.

[7 : 14] And that whole direction, that whole attitude and disposition is not how Christian love works. Where Christian love lives in the heart.

There is going to be much more charitable, easygoing, not so offended, not so bothered, not so annoyed. I'm not touchy and sensitive.

No, in love, I cover it over or in love. I don't even notice it. I don't worry anything about it. I've had times here where people have apologized for something that they've done to me, and I don't even know what they're talking about.

They felt guilty or like it really offended me, and I had no idea what they were talking about. And the reason is, is I love them. So they have lots of slack.

They have lots of grace in my heart. There's been other times where people have said something little that they didn't mean anything by it, and that's bothered me.

[8 : 20] Now, what's the difference? And I was stung. They didn't think it was a big deal, but I was stung. And well, it wasn't love then. What was it?

Pride. It was pride. And that is the dirty little secret hiding behind all those little things. Behind all those little irritations and all those annoyances and all those, I can't believe they did this.

And they messed up. And I can't believe they didn't use their turn signal. And I can't believe they have 23 items in the 10 and less item. All of that. It's pride. Listen to Jonathan Edwards at this point. And just tell me if he isn't right about me and about you, about us. He says this. Pride is the one chief cause of undue anger.

It is because men are proud and exalt themselves in their own hearts that they are revengeful and are apt to be excited and to make great things out of little ones that may be against themselves when their honor is touched or their will crossed.

[9 : 26] But as we have already seen, love is utterly opposed to pride. And so we can't and we shouldn't delude ourselves.

All those little irritations, all those annoyances and those people doing things and saying things that bother us. And I can't believe they didn't do that.

And I can't believe they said that or didn't say that. Why are we so set off? Why are we walking around with these velvet jackets, picking up lint and dust and strings and everything else so touchy and so irritable?

It's because we're proud. We're proud. James for it's that go to verse for so much Christian counseling.

James for why are there fights and quarrels among you? So why are feelings aroused and you're getting after people? Why are there fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

[10 : 29] You want something, but you don't get it. You kill and you covet, but you cannot have what you want.

You quarrel and you fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. In a word of pride. I want what I want.

I deserve it. I should get it. I have rights. People owe me this. They owe me this respect, this appreciation, this tone of voice, this easy way of life.

They should see things my way. So brothers and sisters, it's our pride that makes us so irritable. It's not them.

And it's not everything that they're doing. It's us. It's me. We're so full of ourselves sometimes that we won't be happy until the whole world is doing what I want, how I want it, when I want it, for all the reasons that I want it.

[11 : 38] In other words, I'm not happy because I'm not being treated like God. And so we need to repent. Irritability, easily annoyed.

Someone says something we don't like and we snap back. It's not a little sin. It's really just pride lived out. And so we need to repudiate it and reject that whole way of thinking that says, you know what?

This world is going to be okay when it's doing what I want and how I want and when I want and why I want, for all the reasons that I want. We need to repudiate and reject that way of thinking this isn't my world.

This isn't my world. All those drivers don't exist for me. The people in the grocery store don't live for me. My children are not for me.

My spouse is not my servant. And we need to reject that way of thinking this world doesn't exist for me. This is God's world.

[12 : 40] It's his agenda. He has a plan. And it's a plan that includes all those people. It includes all those drivers and those people in the grocery store and that person on the other end of the customer service line.

And it involves my computer breaking down and my tire going flat. It involves all of these things and all of these people. It includes them.

And I have to reject this notion that it's my will and my agenda that is what is supposed to be.

In his heart, a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. And what I'm saying is the end of irritation happens.

We quit being so irritable when we repent of that pride. We forsake those kinds of thinking.

[13 : 37] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand. Pride makes me so touchy. And then the only answer then is to stop living in this God delusion that I'm God and I should be treated such.

It's pride. But I think there's something else there, too. And it's this question. And is this God's love for you?

Irritable? Touchy? Easily annoyed? Is this what you think of God's love for you?

Is this what he is like? I just want to say, dear brother or sister, that isn't God's love for you. God is not irritable and touchy. His they are doing something wrong.

That that meter is not turned up to 11. And he's always on edge and always ready to strike out and always so annoyed. Ephesians says Ephesians 5 says we are dearly loved children.

[14 : 45] Dearly loved children. I know I want you to think, why do grandmas and grandpas let grandchildren get away with murder? Get away with murder. Um, it's because they are dearly loved.

There's miles of grace. There's miles of patience because grandma or grandpa loves them like crazy. And I'm not saying that God takes our sin lightly.

I'm not saying that at all. Or he has no problem with it. But I am saying again and again, the Bible and God himself says, this is what I'm like. I am slow to anger, abounding in love.

He doesn't say it once. He says it repeatedly throughout the scriptures. And so that's your father's heart towards you. He isn't irritable and touchy and graceless.

Always has a problem. Always on the lookout for when you're going to do something wrong. You're dearly loved and he cherishes you. He delights in you. And so we don't stand with him under law where it's just his demand and our failure.

[15 : 56] And that's what it that's what it is. No, through faith, we have been justified. We've been made right. We've been declared right. And so we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our relationship is marked by peace. You get along. We stand in grace. And he delights to love us. God enjoys to love us. The blessing to bless us. So you enjoy blessing your children. You enjoy blessing and loving your spouse or your friends.

You enjoy that closeness that you have with them. I just I hope down there in the fellowship hall you you enjoyed friendship and fellowship and the delight of being one with another and loving each other.

And that's how love works. And that's how our relationship with God is working. God's God delights to love us.

[16 : 59] And knowing that love that he has for us makes all the difference. It makes all the difference with all those little irritations. So you make an appointment for the repairman.

And he's late. What does pride sound like? What is forgetting God's love for me sound like? Where when I make an appointment, I keep it.

That's what pride sounds like. If that repairman was going to be late again, then at least he could do his call. I may not be perfect, but at least I'm more responsible than he is.

And when he gets there, we either let him have it or maybe just a few snide comments off to the side. But certainly we go and complain to somebody about what he's done and or we ran on Facebook or whatever.

But how different is Christian love? I respond graciously to the repairman because Jesus is gracious with me.

[18 : 08] He loves me. And so I love the repairman. My father is patient with me. He has a plan for my day. And guess what his plan includes? His plan includes that repairman being late.

And it's going it's going his way. And my father loves me. And so I don't just act patient and kind like I'm putting on a mask. I am patient and kind. Because my father loves me.

Things are going just fine according to his will. So there's no complaining and there's no bruised ego. There's no fretful spirit.

I'm not bent all out of shape. I am dearly loved. So I love in return. God's been slow to anger, forgiving and kind to me.

And he delights to do that. And so I do that for others. And when someone says something insensitive to you here at church.

[19 : 11] And maybe you don't get the notice that you want. The thanks. Or the praise. You're not irritated. You're not put out.

No, you just go on loving them. You go on serving them. Because God loves me. He notices. He cares. He understands. He and he's put up with plenty from me.

Way more than I've ever put up with anyone else. Has any. And if he's loved me like that and still pushed in with love and affection for me.

Then I should do the same. Because you know what? Our God has done. He's put all of our sin behind his back. And love he's smiling and love he's not on my case for every little thing.

Now again, does he take our sins seriously? Yes. Does he mean to cleanse us of all of that? Should we be pursuing holiness? Absolutely. But because all of my sin is nailed to the tree.

[20 : 16] And Jesus has paid it all. And it's all fully paid. And justice is satisfied. There's grace for me. There's no more wrath. There's no more condemnation. The attitude.

His basic attitude is not. They owe me. I have to repay. Now his attitude is of grace towards us. And so let's go in the joy of that.

Let's go in the joy of that. And things are going to happen. Irritations and annoyances and offenses and everything else. It's going to happen.

We're here. We're living in a world of sin. I'm a sinner. You're a sinner. It's going to happen. And so instead of being so irritated and prickly around people.

Let's remember God loves us. And let's remember this world isn't for me. It doesn't exist for me. It's not about my pride. It's not about my pride. I'm here for God. Those people are here for God.

[21 : 20] And let's repent of that pride. Let's go in the joy of the Lord. And let us love one another. Just like John said. Let's go on doing that.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you that we have peace with you. And that though we sin against you daily and regularly and frequently.

You're so slow to anger. You're so abounding in love. Thank you that you take our sins seriously. And yet in that you don't drive us away and cut us off and have no relationship with us. But you stay with us.

And you stay loving us. And you don't let all of our sins so irritate you and annoy you that you turn your back upon us and have nothing to do with us.

[22 : 25] You don't give us the silent treatment. But you go on loving and even pleading with us to repent. And so we thank you that that is your heart for us.

That we stand in grace because of Jesus Christ. And we want to stand more securely. And we want to stand more boldly in that grace and in that love.

So Holy Spirit, come and teach these things to our hearts. We know them in our minds, but teach them in our hearts. So that in such a way that we're not so irritated when things don't go our way.

We're not so prickly with people and so easily insulted. Please help us to love in the same way that you love us. We ask this for Jesus' sake.

Amen.