



Table Talk II

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • ILT Dean of Chapel

Quinquagesima Sunday | March 2, 2025

1 CORINTHIANS 12:31B-13:13

"When I became a man, I gave up childish ways."

Vs. 11



Paul continues his teaching on spiritual gifts with what has magnificently been called "The Love Chapter." As it stands, this soliloquy on love permits itself to be easily abused and that abuse usually comes in the definition of "love." We, in our sinfulness, are all too eager to define love in a way most advantageous to us... most useful to us and our own agendas, religious or not. Because we so abuse the word "love," God has taken its definition away from us and provided his own. Love—that is, God's love for the world—is nothing other than his giving of Jesus Christ. To deliver God's love is to deliver Jesus Christ. Read through this passage substituting "Jesus Christ" wherever the word "love" occurs.

Paul then goes on (vs. 8) to address the temporality of the spiritual gifts: they will pass away. He illustrates the temporality of the spiritual gifts by comparing them to the transition from childhood to adulthood. "But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." When adulthood comes, childhood passes away.

Psychologically, there are two things we know about childhood: children practice 1) magical thinking and 2) instant gratification. Magical thinking has two main parts. In one part, the child believes actions have no consequences.

In the other part, the child believes they can possess things without any preparation. So, when the child demands pizza now, the practice of magical thinking ignores all the preparation necessary for the delivery of the pizza. Likewise, if the child leaves home in pursuit of having that pizza now, all the consequences of that leaving are ignored through the process of that magical thinking. You can see how this magical thinking combines with instant gratification. Instant gratification has no ability to wait. It has no patience. It is unable to live in hope.

Because you and I remain children, we remain subject to magical thinking and instant gratification. These childish practices undermine faith and hope. Magical thinking turns faith to sight. Instant gratification cannot live by hope. God in his love, Jesus Christ, must give us a foretaste of our adulthood before the perfect comes so that faith, hope, and love will be ours.

Table Talk: Describe some ways in which the word "love" is misused.

Pray: Heavenly Father, grant me relief from my childish ways so that I might walk by faith and not by sight, and that I may live in hope. Amen



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1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13 ESV

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away everything I own, and if I give over my body in order to boast, but do not have love, I receive no benefit.

4 Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. 6 It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. But if there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be set aside. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, 10 but when what is perfect comes, the partial will be set aside. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became an adult, I set aside childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror indirectly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known. 13 And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.



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