



# **Message Transcript**

## **Maximizing Your Gifting**

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Well, thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. Would you do me a favor? Would you welcome our Broomfield campus, who's worshipping with us this morning?

So glad to have you. Now, on your way in, you may have seen that we were passing out cards. You will need one of these today during our service. If you don't have one, if you just put your hand in the air real quick and just hold it up and keep it up, we'll make sure that some cards come your way. No problem.

We're glad that you're here, and we'll show you what this is going to be. So regardless of what campus you're on, just hold your hand up. Keep it up. One of our ushers will bring by a card so that you can have it, as you will need these during our service. So please just keep your hand up until you get your card.

Okay? And with that, let's just go before the Lord. Let's pray. Let's ask for his living and active word to speak to us this morning. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we just give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And, Lord, we just ask that during this time this morning, Lord, that your living and your active word would speak to us, Lord, that we'd be changed, that we would never be the same, that you would have your way with us. And, Lord, you are always speaking through your word. And so, Lord, we want to be receptive. We want to hear.

And, Lord, I believe no matter who walked in these doors and what campus that they're on or where they're listening, Lord, that you have a word for them. So, Lord, have your way this morning, Lord, let us hear you and put into practice the very things that you show us. And so now, Lord, we come before you collectively as your people, saying that we are ready to receive your word, to hear it, and to put into practice the very things that you show us and all God's people who are ready to do that, agreed. By very loudly saying with me, amen. Amen.

You know, I did it again this week. Maybe you've done it, too. Where I leave my house, I get ready. I go get in the car, I'm all ready to pull out. But I forgot one thing.

Keys. My car works fine, but without keys, it doesn't go anywhere. And it's kind of humorous now, because when I walk back into the house, my wife's usually holding them or something like, here you go. I knew you'd be back. Right?

Because while there's nothing wrong with the car if I don't have my keys. It doesn't perform the way it needs to perform. As Paul is writing to the Corinthians, he's been talking about spiritual gifts in great detail and talking about how all these gifts are operative in their church. And even though there's been abuses on the gifts, and even though people have been self indulgent, even though people haven't lived the way they've wanted, he's actually told them to aspire to greater gifts and seek greater gifts, and don't forbid the speaking of tongues and all these different things. But he's going to tell us something today that the Corinthians have forgotten.

And without this thing, they're not gonna be able to operate the way they were intended to operate. And so this entire chapter, if you'd open your Bible up with me to first corinthians, chapter 13, we're gonna talk about the things that the Corinthians had forgotten when it came to the operation of their gifts. And that thing is this. It's a simple word. It's love.

Love. Without love, none of the gifts operate the way that Jesus Christ intended the gifts to operate. Let me say it this way. Without love, church can't be what church was supposed to be. Without love, you can't be in christian service the way you're supposed to be.

Love is the centerpiece of all christian service, the way that we love. It shouldn't come as a surprise. Any reading through the Bible, any casual reading, you would come across John, chapter three and verse 16, which says, for God, so what? So loved the world that he gave, that he was generous with his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him would not perish, but would have eternal life. Love is predicated throughout.

First John, chapter four, talks about love all over the place. First John, chapter four, verse seven, says, beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God, and he who doesn't love does not know God, for God is love. And it goes on to say in verse ten, this is love. Not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice or as a propitiation for our sins, love is the centerpiece of all christian service.

And yet, even though we know this, even though we can nod our head and say, yeah, I got it, I know this. Just knowing it in our head is not enough. It's got to come through our heart. It's got to be exercised. I mean, even Jesus, when he met the Pharisees and they came to him to test him and said, hey, what's the greatest commandment?

Do you remember how he responded in Matthew 22? Starting in verse 37? He said, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself. On this, all the law and the prophets hang on this you can be sure if you have love for God and love for other people, you're fulfilling everything that God wants.

As a matter of fact, Jesus went so far as to say in John chapter 13, this is how people are going to know that you belong to me. This is how people are going to know you're my disciples. This is how people will know that you're followers of me. By what? By the love that you have for one another.

I mean, love is the litmus test of all that God would have for us. So, especially when it comes to spiritual gifts, I mean, at the end of chapter twelve, Paul says, after he's kind of been wrapping up this idea of, here's what spiritual gifts are, he's like, now let me show you a more excellent way, or let me show you a way that's far beyond comparison. Let me show you how to use your gifts in a way that will have such dynamic power in your life. And if you want to know individually how they're to operate, and you want to know as a church how they're to operate, that's why Paul wrote one, corinthians 13, now, if you're familiar with this passage, which many of you will be, you'll get to a place where you realize, oh, this is the wedding passage. How many of you had read this read at your wedding?

I can't remember if we did or not. Personally, I was trying to think about that today. I'd have to go back and watch the DVD. But many weddings have it. It's a great place for weddings to have this because it's talking about God's character of love and what love is.

The beauty of having it at a wedding is when a husband and wife are getting married, they have no idea what that passage is about. Because love gets tested over

time, right? Every relationship you have this love is going to be tested over time. And certainly when it comes to spiritual gifts and when he is talking about spiritual gifts, we have to understand one. Corinthians 13 is nestled right between twelve and 14, where he's laid out all the operation of spiritual gifts.

And in chapter 14, he's going to talk about tongues and prophecy, and right in the middle, he's like, hey, you better get this one. It's the motivation and the foundation for everything. It's love. And so the first thing he highlights is that this love is paramount to all christian ministry. Love is paramount to all christian ministry, all christian service.

It is the most important thing. You get this right, a lot of other things fall into place. You get this wrong, and everything goes haywire. You have a love for God and a love for others. Everything falls into place when it comes to spiritual gifts.

If you have a love of Christ and a love for others, they fall into place. And as we've been talking, spiritual gifts are for the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the edification of his body, for the advancement of his kingdom. So we got to get this love thing right. And here's what Paul writes. He starts with hyperbole.



He says, if I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor and if I surrender my body to be burned but do not have love, check this out. It profits me nothing.

I mean, Paul is speaking in grand hyperbole here, talking about some of the extreme things that one could do that without love or a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Without love are nothing. Without love prophets, nothing. And look at some of the things that he talks about. He's going to talk about tongue speaking, and we're going to get to that next week when we talk in chapter 14 about what tongues are and what prophecy is and how all that works and how all that operates in the church.

And here's what Paul says. If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, but I don't have love, what am I? I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. He says if I have the gift of prophecy, I mean, he starts with speaking gifts. He says, if I speak with all

the wisdom of God, if I have all the eloquence that I've ever needed, if I have angelic eloquence in what I say, but I don't have love in my heart, I'm nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And I'll explain what that is. In just a second, then he gets to some of the believing gifts where he says, if I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. In other words, if I have the kind of faith that can say to Pike's peak and Mount Evans, y'all need to switch and they move. But I don't have love in my heart. I'm nothing, right?

I can know all mysteries. I can know all knowledge. I can be the best Bible student in the world. I can know all about God. I can believe all about God.

But if I don't have love for God in my heart and love for God's people, nothing. So it doesn't matter what I speak, and it doesn't so matter much what I'm believing in. Without love in my heart, it doesn't profit anything. And then he goes on to say this. When he talks about the servant gifts, and if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, he's not talking about if I tithe here.

He's not talking about if I give a little over my tithe. He said this. If I give all my possessions, I give everything away to the poor, everything I have, okay? And then goes on to say this, and I surrender my body to be burned, I give it all away and I die at the stake, burning to death. But I have not love.

It profits me nothing. I get nothing out of that. I mean, and think about this. What we celebrate in church, what do we celebrate? People who speak well on behalf of Jesus, people who believe well on behalf of Jesus, and people who serve well on behalf of Jesus, and I think we should champion that in the church.

But if it doesn't have the motivation of a love for Jesus Christ and a love for God's people behind it, it's nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. That's what he's saying. It is so foundational. And for those of you here that are sitting here saying, we know all this, I mean, God is love. God is love.

I learned it as a little girl. I learned it as a little boy. I get it. I get it. I know you

get it.

Here's my question. Are you practicing it? Do you have a genuine love for Jesus? And do you have a genuine love for God's people? And whether or not you have a genuine love for Jesus is predicated on whether you have a genuine love for God's people.

Because in first John, chapter four, he says, how can you say you love God, whom you haven't seen, when you don't even love your brother, whom you have seen. Right? You're lying to yourself. If you don't have a love for God's people, you don't have a love for God. Because God loves everybody.

That's just who he is. And so Paul is saying, hey, when it comes to spiritual gifts especially, let me show you a more excellent way. Your motivation needs to be right on with God. Right? I mean, in first corinthians 16, later on, we're going to get to this verse.

It says, let all that you do be done in love. I mean, that sums up a lot. Love, love. Love for God, love for others. Now, how do we get this?

We get it through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who laid down his life for us and rose from the dead, who offers us love. And once we receive his love, we're able to extend it to others. But without it, we're nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. You wonder why some people aren't in church today.

You wonder why some people aren't around today. It's because they didn't see the love we had for one another. They saw a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Do you know why you push back at different parts of God's word even though you know in your head it's true, but it makes you mad because at some point in time, it became a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Let me explain.

I brought some props, okay. And just so you know, I've never had a single lesson in my life, right? These are called cymbals. Right. Fortunately, I had a brother that was in a marching band once upon a time, and before he was in the drum line, he was a

cymbal player, right?

So I think I could have been a cymbal player, too. Maybe not. But this is what Paul is talking about. He's saying if you preach with all the eloquence in the world and you have prophecy and you know how to speak into somebody's life and you know everything that's going on, but you don't have love in your heart. Here's what it sounds like.

That's what it sounds like to people. And by the way, one of our worship people this morning told me, he's like, jeff, I know how you can do that. To make it louder. I can give you a lesson. I'm like, no, this will be just fine.

But you think about it. Some of you grew up. Or some of you were in a church where a preacher didn't have love for his people, and that's exactly what you heard. It wasn't that what he was saying wasn't true. It's just that you heard this and it was like, stop.

Stop. Some of you are saying that right now, right? How many are saying stop? You get the point. And see, here's the problem.

Because sometimes, I mean, the further away you are from it, it doesn't bother you as much. So if my back is to you and I'm doing this, I mean, that doesn't bother you much. If it's another church, it's another pastor. I've heard about it. It's not that big of a deal.

But the closer that I get to you and the louder they become, and if I came down there and banged it right in Ricky's ear, he'd get up and leave or he'd push me over or something. He wouldn't tolerate it. Right. And that's what happens when we have a gift that doesn't have love. And that's why sometimes when I preach the word and the word is true, and even when you see it in your bible, yeah, that's true.

But it doesn't feel right. Because here's what you hear. Because for some of you, like when I talk about men being the head of a household, that's true. Scripture teaches that men are to be the spiritual leader of a home. But I know many of you are hurt by your father, and many of you are hurt by the men in your life, and many of you have

been abused by them.

And so when I stand up here and say, men are the spiritual leaders in the home, here's what you hear. And because you hear that, you're like, I don't believe that guy, and I'm not going to this church anymore. That's not what you're hearing. You're not hearing the love of God. You're hearing what your experience was.

And how many more could we talk about when it comes to spiritual gifts? Holy cow. I was an itinerant evangelist. I've been every possible kind of service, with the exception of a snake biting church, haven't been to that one yet. But every other thing, I think I've experienced people falling down, slain in the spirit, moving, genuine ungentuine.

I mean, I've seen all sorts of crazy. And if you've been around that, for some of you, when it comes to prophecy in tongues, here's what it's been for you. That's what was going on in Corinth. Because you know what? You guys had enough of this.



You get the point, okay? Here's what was going on in Corinth. What was going on in Corinth was everybody was using their spiritual gift for themselves, and nobody had a love for God, and nobody had a love for the people. What they had was, here's who I am, and here's how gifted I am, and you need to listen to me, or you need to believe like I believe, or if you only served like I served because I'm so awesome at it. And when you get people that don't have a love for God and don't have a love for his people, this is what it sounds like.

And then you go out in the streets. Have you ever seen an evangelist be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal? They're preaching the same truth that you believe, that Jesus Christ died on the cross, that God has an incredible love for you, but they don't have a love for God or a love for people. And it sounds like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And people are rejecting the message, but they're not really rejecting Jesus.

What they're rejecting is the presentation of somebody who is presenting him in a way that's not loving. Amen. And so that's why Paul is saying, hey, before we get to this whole spiritual gifts thing, before we talk about prophecy in tongues, you better get this right. You got to have love for God and love for others. And here would be a little quiz.

You could give yourself those areas in your life, like when you walk into church or you're around other Christians where you feel like pushing back. Chances are you had somebody in your life that was a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And just because they were doesn't mean you need to reject the truth of God's word. What you need to do is forgive the person that was the noisy gong or the clanging cymbal in your life. Amen.

That's what it means to love. And so love is paramount to all ministry. I mean, you can put up with a lot of nonsense as long as you know that there's love, right, in a marriage, as long as there's love for God and love for each other, there's a lot of other things that can look different and be challenging. It can be okay with your children as long as there's a love for God and a love for them. A lot of things can work out in a church.

As long as there's a love for God and a love for his people, it can be a little different and weird. It can work out. But love is the motivation and the foundation for everything it's predicated on, because that's what the gospel of Jesus Christ is

centered on, is his love for us. So how could we serve him if we didn't have the same love for his people and we didn't have the same love for his father? That's what it is.

Love is paramount to all ministry. It's not about your giftedness, because to the extent that you're gifted, it was given to you by the Holy Spirit. It's not yours. People don't need your giftedness. They need the love of God in you that uses your giftedness for his glory.

Amen. That's what he's talking about. So love is paramount to ministry. Then he says this in these very, very familiar verses of one corinthians 13 four, seven. Here's what he says.

You need to receive the love of Christ so you can extend it. When it comes to your spiritual gifts, you need to be able to receive the love of Christ so that you can extend it. And Paul's going to define love, what it is and what it isn't. So let me just spell it out for you. Let's read through it and then we'll unpack it.

Here's what he says. Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not jealous, it does not brag, it is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly. It does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

That's what love is. I mean, it's a beautiful, I mean, holy spirit inspired text that tells us everything that love is and love isn't. And as you're listening to this, I just want to tell you this. This can be a heart check for you. But I also want you to know from the get go, this is not for you to walk out of here with a to do list, because there's not one of us here that gets any one of these right every single time.

Because think about all your relationships. I mean, perhaps you have a marriage relationship or a kids relationship. You have friend relationship, work relationships, neighbor relationships, school relationships. You have all sorts of different ones. And let's just be honest, some people are easier to love than others.

That's why this is a comprehensive definition of what love is. How about this one?

Love is patient. Some of you are like, okay, stop right there. That's enough.

I got my full money's worth today in church. Love is patient, like most of us think. It means, like, waiting in a line and not getting upset. It's really the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate. That's what patience is.

It's the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate. It's long suffering. When somebody wrongs you and you continue to love them back. Sometimes in the most intimate relationships you have, like inside a marriage, when somebody does something intentional or unintentional and it hurts, do you have the ability to love them back? It's not being easily provoked.

Right? Some of you have children that you love, that you've raised in the ways of the Lord, that are now rebellious. They are going the exact opposite direction of everything that you modeled and taught in your home. They're trying your patience. Can you still love them?

That's what it means to be patient. Long suffer with them. That's a definition of love. And by the way, if you can't be that way, it's only because you haven't seen how God sees you. See?

I mean, if you have a hard time with suffering, long with other people, here's what you can do. Here's a great prayer. I promise you God will answer it very, very quickly. God, has there been any area in my life where you've had to suffer along with me? What are they?

Whoosh. Watch the Holy Spirit show up in your life. He will show you myriads of opportunities where he's born with great patience in your life, not just before you got saved, but after you got saved, not like last week, but like yesterday and like today. And he's gonna show you things in your life where he's still bearing with great patience in your life. And once you can receive that, and you know, God, if you love me that much, how could I withhold that from anybody else?

One of the reasons we're not patient with others is because we don't realize how patient God is with us. If you find yourself, like, I can't suffer along with other people,

it's because you don't realize how much God has suffered long with you. Amen. What's kind? Love is kind.

That's just benevolence. Goodness, kindness. It's just generally being good to other people, right? The Bible says it's the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance don't you love that? It's not God's wrath that leads us to repentance.

It's not God coming down and shaking us, saying, I hate you if you don't repent. No, it's God's love that was demonstrated on a cross at Calvary where Jesus Christ stretched his arms out saying, I love you this much, no matter what. If you never, ever accept me and never ever confess me as your lord and savior, that will not change the fact that I created you and I love you with an unconditional love. And I want to shower you with good, because that's the kind of God that I am, right? So how can you be good to realize how good God is to you?

Every good and perfect gift you have is from him. The air that you breathe is from him. If you're able to walk into this building, that was a gift from him. If you have your health, that's a gift from him. If you have any relationship at all with anybody who's

kind to you, that's a gift from him.

If you have any resources whatsoever, that's him. If you had shelter over your head last night, that was him. If somebody spoke a kind word into your life, that was him. I mean, any good thing is him. And when you realize all that comes from him, then what do you want to do?

I want to pour that out to others so other people can experience how good my God is to me. Love is patient. Love is kind. What is it not? It's not jealous.

Love does not brag, it is not arrogant, and does not act unbecomingly. Jealous simply means this. Jealous is the idea of intense, negative feelings towards others. I think it's simpler than that. I think it's not being able to celebrate other people's success, that's jealousy.

I mean, that's how I put it in layman's terms. It's when you look at other people



and you ask the question, why is it so good for them when it's not so good for me? Why do they get to make that amount of money when I'm better at my job than they are? Why do they get to live in that house? How come their marriage doesn't seem to have these problems?

How come they're dating and I'm not? How come they got into that school and I did? How come? How come? How come?

Why? Why? Why? That's jealousy. Love isn't like that.

See, love is content in who you are. Love is content in what God's done in your life. Love is knowing that God loves me with an unconditional love. So I don't need to be jealous of others. Love is knowing that God is an abundant God.

So by giving to others, God's not robbing me. I mean, when other people are successful or blessed or something, that's a way for me to celebrate them because that's my God that gave that to them. I'm excited that he's working in their life, not how

come I didn't get it. Love celebrates other people. It's not jealous of other people.

Right. What about this? Love does not brag. Bragging is pretty easy to define. It's when you're the center of all attention.

It's when you're the one talking about yourself. I mean, usually the braggart has three favorite people. Me, myself, and I. And that's who I like to talk about. Right?

And they talk, talk, talk, and they name drop, and they're always talking about their successes and what they've done. And, hey, you know who I'm talking about. You got the person in your mind. You're like, that's the person. You're like, they needed to be here for this weekend.

I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about us. That when we can be this way. I mean, as I've liked to say before, the braggart is the one that says, you know what? That's enough talk about me.

Let's talk about you for a second. What do you think about me? Right? I mean, that's the braggart. Every conversation centers around them.

Their accomplishments, their wife, their kids accomplishments, their husband. Who they've done, where they've been, what they've done in order to create jealousy in you. Right? That's the braggart. Love's not like that.

Why? Because love's content, and love has the ability to ask questions, and love has the ability to care about other people. And love's engaged with others. It is not arrogant or it does not act unbecomingly. All these four go together.

Arrogance is really an exaggerated self perception. It's ego. That's what arrogance is. Arrogance is the idea that I'm so needed. In every relationship I'm in, I am so needed.

My marriage wouldn't be what it is without me. My kids wouldn't be what they are without me. This church would not be able to survive without me. I mean, it's me. It's me.

It's all about me. That's arrogance. Arrogance is an inflated self perception. Arrogance is like, it's about me, right? And to act unbecomingly is the result of arrogance.

Your bible may read rude. That's what acting unbecomingly means. It's rude when you see a person who thinks the whole world centers around themselves and they're arrogant. They will always be rude. I remember one of my first experiences as a kid was about when I was twelve years old and we went with another family and we were having breakfast out of town and there was a guy there that owned all sorts of buildings and that's all he ever talked about was how awesome he was.

And I remember as a twelve year old feeling uncomfortable around this guy. Sure enough, we were served breakfast that morning. This guy was one of those guys. And

I've had food served that's cold or not ripe, but there's ways that you can ask. It wasn't his way.

He called the waitress over and in the loudest voice so that the whole restaurant could hear, just tore into her and said how horrible the restaurant was, how bad the food was, how this was a despicable place, how he was a manager, how he was an owner. He would never tolerate this. The fact that you would serve me this food and not know it was bad, I mean, just went off and I was twelve years old, ready to crawl under the table. I'm like, who is this guy? I don't like him.

Right? That's what it means to be rude. You ever seen rude people? They're everywhere. They're everywhere.

They're in grocery stores, they're in airports, they're in churches even. They're everywhere. Rude people falsely think that the whole world revolves around them and they're upset if you didn't get that memoir. And that's why they act the way that they act. That's not love.

Love continues to love God and love others, right? And then he ends by saying this. This is huge. It does not seek its own, is not provoked and does not take into account wrong suffered. Okay?

Seeking its own goes right along with everything we've been talking about. My life is about me first, and I'm seeking what I need first. And if other people have needs around me, that's fine. If I have time for that ever, I'll get there. But I'm not caring about other people first.

I'm thinking about myself. Provoked means this. Provoked is easily angered. Love is not easily angered. You ever around somebody that gets easily angered?

Everything's hunky dory. Everything smiles, everything's giggles, everything's great. One thing goes wrong and they go from like zero to 110. That fast. Somebody cuts them off in traffic and they just lost it.

I mean, they can't even contain themselves. They're so mad. I mean, it's not even a big deal to you, but to them it was the end of the world. I mean, they're out of their mind. They're so mad, everybody else around them is now uncomfortable.

Right? That's what it means to be provoked. Love's not like that. Love can handle when things go wrong. Because why?

Because my life's not about me. It's about Jesus and about other people. So of course things are going to go wrong, right? How about this? It does not take into account a wrong suffered.

We have to talk about this church. Okay, let me tell you this. The number one sin I have seen since being a pastor in a church is unforgiveness. Not even a close second for me. Not even a close second.

Because unforgiveness produces bitterness, resentment, anger, self centeredness, all sorts of stuff. You don't keep records of wrongs. You want a sure way to blow up your marriage. Let me give you advice of how to blow up your marriage in very short amount of time. Keep records of wrongs.

When your spouse wrongs, you keep a journal of it and make sure that you bring it up all the time. Right? That is a surefire way to have a horrible marriage. That's a surefire way to have a horrible any kind of relationship. Right?

Love doesn't do that. Why? Because the gospel doesn't do that. I love Jesus because Jesus doesn't hold my sin against me. It always goes back to Calvary.

And when I confess my sin, he's faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. And when I sinned today or when I sinned yesterday, he doesn't say, I knew it. You're such a horrible sinner. I mean, look at this list that I've had to forgive for you. And when I come back to Jesus and confess something that's already been forgiven, it's like I picture Jesus at the throne.



Like, what? What are you talking about? What sin are you talking? The one you confessed. I already forgave that.

That's gone. I don't keep. I don't keep records of that anymore. You cannot call yourself a Christian and harbor unforgiveness. You cannot call yourself a Christian and keep records of wrongs in other people's lives.

You can point out truth to other people speaking it in love. Like, hey, this is really challenging sometimes because there's a consistent pattern here that's really challenging to be with you in it. That's fair. But you don't keep records of wrongs. When you keep records of wrongs, let me tell you, the person is going to get hurt the most.

You are. Because when you keep records of wrong, bitterness, resentment, pain, hurt, you just stuff it and stuff it and stuff it and you bleed on everybody you're around. You ever get around people like that? They can't wait to tell you about that

person and this person and that situation and that, and that pastor and this person and that boss. And you can look them in the eye if they're a christian and say, well, it's because you have unforgiveness in your heart.

So let me give you a sure fire way to take care of unforgiveness in your heart. How many have been hurt by somebody before in their life? I want to know who I'm talking to. Okay. Nudge your neighbor that didn't have their hand up and say, it's coming.

It's coming. Okay, it's gonna happen. We live in a world that's full of sin. It's gonna happen. Okay, what do we do?

Here's what you do. Here's the best thing you can do when somebody wrongs you, you pray God's blessing for them and you pray God's compassion for them that you would have the same love for them, them that God does. And you continue to pray that until your heart catches up with your head. That's how you get rid of bitterness. If you don't do that, what's going to happen is don't pray for them.

Jesus said to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. So what you do is you pray, God, give me your heart for them. I don't like the way they treated me. I don't think it's right. That's why I'm asking that I would forgive them.

Give me the will to forgive them. But Lord, I'm going to put a blessing on them. I hope their life goes better than it's ever gone. Give me the compassion that you have for them, Lord, you deal with them. I love them.

I love them. I want to love them. And, Lord, let my heart catch up with my mind because I'm not feeling it in my head right now. My head's like, no, you don't. But my heart's saying, I need to do this.

You pray blessing over people and compassion over people. Your heart will catch up. And here's who wins on that. You do. Because guess what, then you don't have any enemies.

Well, Jeff, I know that person hates you. Well, I don't hate them. Matter of fact, the more they hate me, probably the more I prayed blessing over their life. That's the cure. That's what love does.

Love doesn't harbor bitterness and say, well, how do you do that? Isn't that exactly what our savior did? I mean, right before he died, he stretched out his arms and what did he say? Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He didn't say, father, get them, for they know not what they do.

Said, forgive them. Right? If that's who you say you serve, if that's your lord, then that should be your words, too. Of course you're going to get wronged. Of course you're going to have opportunity to forgive.

Don't harbor that. Then he says this. It does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth. Love always rejoices in what's right. It's consistent.

Love just doesn't talk about, I love the word, I love the word. I love the word. The person who loves the word celebrates when they see the word being lived out in somebody else's life. There's a consistent pattern. It doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness.

It doesn't laugh at the things like, well, I couldn't laugh at that in church, but I could laugh at that outside of church. I couldn't act like that in church, but I could act like that outside of church. There's a consistent growing in that so that we can become what God wants us to be, and we have to receive this from Christ. We have to be so rooted in the gospel in order to extend this. And then he goes on and says this, love bears all things.

Love hopes all things. Love believes all things. Love endures all things. What does that mean? It means it bears all things.

See, sometimes we say we love people until they do something silly or stupid, and then we're like, yeah, I'm done with them. I don't want to be seen with them. I don't want to stand with them. Because if someone sees me standing with this person

that wasn't acting very loving, they're going to associate me with that. What did Jesus do?

The only people he could ever associate with were miserable failures. That was his only choice. And so what did he do? He came right up alongside of him until he got this pejorative nickname called the friend of sinners. That should be our nickname, too, because that's the only choice we get to hang out with, too.

Right? And are we friends of them? It doesn't mean Jesus encouraged sin. He rejoiced in the right. He didn't rejoice in the wrong, but he genuinely bore with and loved all people.

Love bears all things. It believes all things. Love is believing the best about other people. Love is not pointing out you'll never make it. You'll never accomplish this.

You're stupid, you're lousy, you're fat, you're gross, you're this. No. Love sees what Jesus sees in other people and can call it out. I believe you can do that. I believe

you can do that.

Is that what God's putting on your heart? I believe that he can do that through you. That's what love does. And when love is operative in a church, people flock to a church because nobody's getting enough love. Nobody's getting enough people in their lives saying, I see it in you.

I see Jesus in you. I see what he wants to do in you. Would you do that? It believes all things. It's way easier to point out faults than it is to point out strengths.

We live in a society that looks to point out faults. I mean, we look to see what's missing. We look to see what's absent. We look to see what's not there. Most people, when they look at me, they'll say something like, jeff is bald, like, I lost something.

Most people don't look and say, what a gorgeous head. It's a good thing God removed the hair, right? We look at the negative. We look at what's lacking. We look

at what's missing.

They can't, they can't. They can't. If we were the judge of anybody, nobody would do anything but look in the mirror, for heaven's sakes. I mean, look at all of our faults, and yet God still uses us. Who are we to say God can't use somebody else?

Paul said, if God can use me, he can use anybody. I'm the chief of all sinners. I'm telling you as your pastor, I know how to sin as well as anybody. I know I do. And if God can use me, he can use you.

Believes all things. I believe this can get better. I'm believing this can happen. It hopes all things. Hope is the eager expectation that it's going to get better.

When you're praying for somebody who's sick, when you're praying for somebody who's struggling in their marriage. When you're praying for somebody as a wayward child, when you're praying with somebody struggling with an eating disorder, love hopes. Hey, I'm believing not only that it's going to happen, but I'm hoping that



your best life is ahead of you. Your best days are coming. I'm believing that that's what love does.

And love endures. Endurance means there's going to be times where you want to quit on love. Perseverance means there's a time it's going to fall over and stumble. Perseverance means there's going to be a time where you're going to be like, there's no way. This could never.

I mean, I can't even, barring a miracle, this couldn't happen. Well, love believes in miracles. Love believes God can. Even when we can't, it endures. I'm sticking with you.

Even if you go the other way, you're still my daughter, you're still my son. I'm walking with you. I know Jesus loves you even though you're not receiving it right now. And I'm staying with you because I want my testimony to be that you knew that there was someone walking alongside of you even when you were rejecting me. That's what love does.

Love always does that. Love endures. Now, when you read this, there's not one area of this love that you would say arrived, sent home. I'm good on that one. You know, I got at least four to work on, but seven of them, twelve of them, pretty good.

I mean, we don't say that there's not one of us that has every single one of these things down. There's room to grow in every single area. So again, hear me clearly. This is not a let me get in your face and make you feel bad on a Sunday morning. This is the message.

Our savior embodies all of these things. He is full in all of these things. He's demonstrated all of these things to you. He loves you with an unconditional love. Here's how you can receive this.

By believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead. It's not just an objective thing to know, although Jesus is objective and he's a real God man, and you put your faith in him, but there's a result of what happens through that. You get to receive all of that love in your heart. You get to experience all

the love that God has for you so that Jesus can use your life to extend that love to other people. This is not about you getting better.

This is about you pressing in and receiving more from the one who is perfect. Amen. And that's why we read this. I don't read this and say, God, I need to get better at all these things. He's like, yeah, I know.

I already knew that part. It's, God, I want to receive from you what your patience looks like in my life and what your kindness looks in my life, because I want to know what it looks like so I can be better at extending that to others. And, God, I want to study your word to see how you rejoiced in righteousness and didn't rejoice in unrighteousness so that I can be a champion for that in this world. And, God, I want to know what it looked like for you to walk alongside unlovable people who rejected you and were hurtful to you so that I can have the strength, Jesus, to do the same that you did. Cause I need that kind of love in my life in order to be able to extend it.

And do you know Jesus is willing to do that in your life? You know, he's willing to extend that kind of love to you. He loves you with an unconditional love. I mean, you

can go on. You can go on record, I tell you on the authority of God's word every week when we leave our service, that you are loved.

And I'm not telling you because I want to believe that. I'm telling you because God's word says it. You are loved. He loves you with an unconditional love. Now, if you have people in your life, because for some of you that are here, that are doing great things for the Lord, it's because there was one or two or three, three or four, maybe a handful of people in your life that believed in you when you didn't believe in yourself, that walked alongside of you when you were kind of ugly, that cared about you, that saw things in you when you weren't fully put together yet, and they kind of put their arm around you, said, yes, you can.

Oh, I believe in that. Oh, you can do that. If I could do that, you could do that if you know who those people are and you're thinking about them in their head. Can I give you an application? Call them or write them a thank you note and tell them, because they don't realize how much of an impact they've had on your life and then be that same person that they were to you, to whoever God puts in your path.

That's what he's talking about. That's what it means to be loved. That's what it means to receive the love of Jesus so that you can extend it. And then finally, Paul says, when it comes to your spiritual gifts, here's how he ends this section. He says this, be dedicated to maturing in love because it never fails.

When it comes to spiritual gifts, be dedicated to maturing in this love. It means we're going to grow in this love, because love never fails. That's how he starts verse eight, love never fails. Your version may read, love never ends right. It means you can never choose to love God or choose to love somebody else where it's a bad thing.

It's always right to choose to love God and choose to love others always. It can be painful, but it's always right. It never fails. It never fails. God.

It won't let down the kingdom. Loving God and loving others is paramount. Love never fails. But notice what he says. But if there are gifts of prophecy, they'll be done away with.

If they're a gift of tongues, they will cease. If there is knowledge, it will be done away with. Why does Paul pick these three? Because the corinthians thought they were more knowledgeable than anybody. They loved the gift of prophecy and speaking, and they love the gift of tongues, the three things they enjoyed the most.

He's like, those things will go away. But let me tell you what won't love. Won't love is more important than the spiritual gifts in which you're operating. How you operate in these gifts is foundational to what you do. And then he says this, for we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away with.

Let me tell you what the perfect is. The perfect one is the Lord Jesus Christ. And you're going to see in a minute that when the perfect one comes, we will know fully, even as we have been fully known by Jesus. While I believe that the Bible is perfect, inerrant in every way, and is a representation of all that the Lord Jesus Christ is, this is not the perfect one Paul is talking about. And here's how I know that's for sure, because I already have that.

And there's nothing wrong with this, but there's a difference between looking into this word and standing face to face with the king of kings and the Lord of lords, eyeball to eyeball, and hearing him directly speak to me. That's the perfect. And when the perfect comes, what we won't need anymore gifts? I went away from my artwork this week on purpose. I've had two weeks of drawing Jesus on a board that you've made fun of.

But when the perfect Jesus comes in, all of his fullness, he doesn't need us to operate in our gifting anymore because he's already here. Let me tell you what happens to my career as a preacher. The day Jesus Christ shows up. The second he shows up, my career is over. Right.

Don't need me to preach. We'll listen to Jesus. We like him better. I do, too.  
Right?

All the gifts are done when Jesus gets back. That's what he means. Because notice what he says. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child. When I became a man, I did away with childish things.

There is nothing wrong with being a child. Did you know? There's nothing wrong with being a child. I have three children. We have this little joke in my house.

My youngest one's going to turn five here in about a week and a half. And there's times where she'll have a moment as a four year old. And during those times, or sometimes I'll look at Kim and be like, what is her problem? She's acting like she's four years old, right? Cause she is.

And I don't really mind, but if she acts like that when she's 24 years old, it's going to be a major issue. Right. Because why? Because we want her to mature in it. Here's what Paul's telling people, use your gifts, but here's what you need to mature in, because the Corinthians, we're always wanting to mature in their gifts.

We want to be better tongue speakers. We want to be better prophecy guys. We want to be. Here's what he's telling. Get better at loving God and get better at



loving one another.

If you can get better at that. Everything else will fall into place. When we begin in our journey with Jesus, we're like little children. We're babes in Christ. Here's what you want to grow in.

Grow in your love. If you grow in your love for God and your love for each other, your gifting will take care of itself. God will use a heart that's rightly related to him and notice what he says. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

What's he saying? The Corinthians were known for their bronze medal mirrors. I mean, that's what they sold all over the place. And here's what he was saying. There's a difference between seeing a reflection of Jesus than seeing him face to face.

There's a difference between looking in the word and studying his word and having your heart full when God begins to show you things and the Holy Spirit reveals

things. But one day when he's standing before you and says, hey, Jeff, well done, good and faithful servant, let me present you faultless before my father with such incredible joy because I love you. It's going to be different than just reading the word because the living word will be here presenting me to his dad. He said, when that happens, that's better. Here's what he's saying.

All gifts are just partial. All gifts are partial. Nobody has all the gifts. And even the most gifted people you meet don't have all the one they're trying to talk about. Jesus Christ is the reflection of those gifts.

And to the extent that those gifts point people to Jesus. Good. To the extent those things point people to themselves, wrong. You can preach the word and have people say, what a great speaker. You can preach the word and say, what a great God.

Right. You can have people operate in gifts of mercy and say, what a merciful person. You can operate gifts of mercy and say they serve an awesome God. Here's what he's saying. Mature in your love for one another and mature in your love for God.

So that when you exercise your gift, people have a greater love for Jesus than what they had before. And he ends by saying this. But now faith, hope and love abide or remain these three. But the greatest of these is love. Why?

Well, faith is really important, wouldn't you say? I mean, to believe on Jesus Christ alone is the most important decision you'll ever make is to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and confess him as your Lord and savior. And I'm just telling you, if you've never done that, you do it right now in your seat and you tell him, Jesus, I believe that you, you came from me, that you're the God of the universe. You died. You rose.

I'm confessing you as Lord. I need you in my life. You do it right now where you're at, most important thing you'll do. That's faith. That's believing that Jesus came, loves you and died for you.

Right? And then there's hope. Hope is the result of what that faith produces. Like I am hoping, like, I'm so excited about the day that I get to meet Jesus Christ, right? I mean, I'm, like, thrilled about it.

Like when I was sick earlier this year, I mean, there were a couple days where I was saying, I've never really been laid around before like that, or sick like that, where I'm like, lord, I don't know why people, when they're super sick, don't want to just go see you. Because I'm kind of ready to go see you right now, right? I mean, that's a goal of my faith. I want to see Jesus. So, like, if I get really sick or if I get in a car accident where I'm, like, brain dead or something, send me home.

I want to go home. Like, that's the goal of my faith, right? That's what I'm hoping for. That's faith and hope. But why is love more than faith and hope?

Because here's why. Because when you see the resurrected Jesus Christ, you won't need faith anymore, because faith is not by seeing, you'll see him, you won't have any faith, because he'll be right there. And hope will be realized. That's already going to be done. Away with what's left.

Love. Love for all eternity. The infinite loving God continues to reveal and pour out his love in and through your life. Love is the greatest faith, hope, and love remain these three, but the greatest is love. He's like, you want to prepare for eternity.

You want to get yourself right for what's coming. Here's what you're going to do. You're going to grow and mature in your love, because that's the most lasting thing you can have. And just so you know, at your funeral, here's the only thing people are ever going to talk about, whether you loved or whether you didn't love. I've done a number of funerals I've been to even more.

And when somebody's in a casket or an urn and they're doing a memorial service or a funeral, nobody's talking about their accomplishments. Nobody's saying, man, he sold a lot of business. He spoke a lot of messages. Nobody's talking about that. They're talking about whether the person was loving or not loving.

He was a good dad or a bad dad. That's all they talk about. Why? Because love

is the remaining quality. You want to be more like Jesus?

Grow in your love. How do you grow in your love? By pursuing the one that loves you unconditionally. And we're a church that wants to grow in that loving God and loving others being the centerpiece of all christian discipleship. So the way I wanted to end our service today on both campuses is a little different.

You were given a card when you walked in, and one of the ways that I think is one of the most loving things you can do for another is to pray for them. How many would agree with that? Seven, eight? Okay, good. A lot of you, you're just going for your card.

Make sure you have a card. Here's what I want you to do. Philippians four, verses six and seven, says this, be anxious for nothing. I won't have you raise your hand, but for some of you, you're anxious about a lot. Right now.

You're worried about a lot. As a matter of fact, there's some things that you've been praying for over and over, that if you said, let's pray for this again, you would say, I don't want to pray for this again. I prayed for this too much already. Okay, so here's what I'm gonna have you do. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything.

By prayer and petition with thanksgiving present, your request to God and the peace of God which guards your heart, will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. I want you to write down a prayer request on this one that somebody else is gonna pray for you. You can put your name on the card if you want, but you don't have to put your name on the card because God knows who you are. So it can be a private one.

You know, just, hey, pray for this. Pray for this. Right? But I want you to write down that thing that's causing you to be anxious, that you would say, man, if God would just answer this, it would take away so much anxiety in my life. And let me just tell you something else about your prayer request.

You may think it's not a big deal, and I'm kind of embarrassed if somebody else read that. But here's why it's a big deal. Because it's a big deal to you, and it's a big deal to you. And it's a big deal to you. Some of you are anxious.

You've been praying this thing over and over. What's the thing you want God to lift? So I want you to go ahead and just take a moment. Just jot down that one prayer request that you have, that one thing that you're like, hey, maybe it's my marriage, maybe it's my finances, maybe it's a relationship. Maybe it's a wayward child.

I mean, I'm just writing this down. God, if you could just take this out of my life. I'm just. I'm tired of praying this. I'm too heavy with this and just write that down.

On both campuses, then what we're going to do during the singing of the song, I'll explain what we're going to do. Here in Englewood, we have four tables in the back and two tables up front. In Broomfield, you'll see tables up front, you'll see what you can do. But during the singing of the song, all I'm going to have you do is just come drop your card here and pick up somebody else's card and go back to where you're standing until we finish singing that song. And then I'll tell you what we're going to do,



because we're going to pray for one another's burdens today.

That's how we're going to do it. And you're going to have somebody else in our church pray for that. If you set down a card, please pick another card up. Don't just subcontract your prayers. Hope somebody in this church prays for me.

I'm not praying for anybody. No. One of the ways that you'll see your prayers answered is when you're lovingly enough willing to pray for one another. Okay? So as you do that, just drop your card off.

As soon as the song starts to go, pick another card up, go back to your seat, we'll finish the song. Like I said, there's different stations throughout the entire church. If you didn't get a card, there's cards at the table that you can fill out there. All right? And we're going to make sure everybody's had a chance to exchange the cards.

And I'll come back up and pastor Michael will come back up on the Broomfield campus. So would you stand with me? Lord, we just give you praise for who you are.

And, lord, in this great act of love that we're going to do by praying for one another and bringing people to your throne. Lord, do a work in our church.

We give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise. Lord, hear us in Jesus name. Amen.