



The Virtues of Christmas

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

December 26, 2021

Pastor Mickey Klink

Introduction

Christmas ministers to us by helping us remember and apply the three theological virtues to our lives.

The Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² 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. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:13 lists the three theological virtues of the Christian faith: faith, hope, and love.

2 Peter 1:3-8: ³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2) Christmas ministers to us by highlighting all three theological virtues of the Christian faith.

Response

Father, help us to grow in faith, hope, and love this Christmas.

Small Group Questions

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- 1) Starter Question: How does the annual celebration of Christmas minister to you or help you deepen your faith in Christ?
- 2) Read the text aloud and discuss together any significant observations or issues needing clarification.
- 3) How do vv. 1-3 teach us that all the gifting in the world without love is “nothing,” and why is that true?
- 4) Read through Paul’s definition of love in vv. 4-7. What do those descriptions teach us about love?
- 5) How do these descriptions explain that love is best defined not as feelings but as actions?
- 6) What does Paul mean in v. 8 when he says, “love never ends?”
- 7) Who or what is “the perfect” in v. 10?
- 8) What do vv. 11-12 teach us about growing as a Christian and the full maturity to which we will attain at the return of Christ?
- 9) V. 13 lists what the church has long received as the three theological virtues of Christianity: faith, hope, and love. How would you define each of those virtues?
- 10) How should those virtues, especially love, be evident and active in the daily life of every Christian?

Further study this week: Reflect and meditate on the Christmas story in Luke and Matthew: Luke 1:1-25 (Mon); Luke 1:26-56 (Tues); Luke 1:57-2:21 (Wed); Matthew 1 (Thurs); Matthew 2 (Fri).