

Empire Church of the Brethren
Sunday Service Sermons

15 March 2026

Love: A Visible Ethic

Text: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects. Always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres". 1 Cor. 13: 4-7.

Do you remember: What the world needs now is love sweet love?

In this wonderful chapter, the Apostle Paul calls us as followers of Christ to a life of giving.

Love is something we do.

Our problem with this passage is not that it is difficult to understand; quite the opposite, it is too easy to know exactly what is being asked of us.

Our problem is being willing to do it.

These verses are amazing both in their simplicity and in their profound meaning..

Such living would revolutionize our relationships in our homes, churches, and society.

Fifteen verbs of the passage reveal what it would mean to make our faith and hope tangible.

In them we see both what love does do and what love does not do.

What love does do.

Love suffers long.

How does this description translate into action.

Look at a small part of Abraham Lincoln's life.

Stanton cruelly maligned Lincoln's name, yet Lincoln made Stanton the minister of war because he was the most qualified.

Not only that but Lincoln always extended Stanton every possible courtesy.

After an assassin's bullet prematurely ended the president's life, Stanton said, "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen."

Suffering long had revealed Lincoln's strength.

Love acts kindly.

Once a layman decided that a seminary professor was a heretic.

The layman conscientiously tried to get the professor fired.

However, the layman explained to the professor that his actions were motivated by a love for him.

Needless to say, most of us hope that we never have a friend like that.

Love acts kindly; it does not work for the detriment of another.

Love rejoices in the truth.

Have you noticed that arguments often have little to do with veracity and more to do with sinning?

There are usually three sides to every story your side, my side, and the right side.

As Christians, we need to seek that third side, the truth.

Love bears all things.

No insult can sidetrack love from the pursuit of its end.

Hosea pictures God as faithful to Israel, yet Israel turned to other loves.

In Chapter eleven God asks rhetorically if he should allow Assyria to rule over Israel.

Then he answers his own question: "How can I give up on Ephraim?"

God's heart knows how to love and to continue loving despite rejections, trouble, and heartaches.

Love also believes all things.

Love creates a climate of trust.

Some people are very suspicious because they have never learned to trust.

Love prefers to be overly generous rather than overly suspicious.

Love hopes all things.

Christians believe that sin, death, and evil have ultimately been swallowed up; it follows that we believe that the sin and evil of an individual can be transformed by a saving encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel is the good news of a second chance, a third chance, ad infinitum, and thus we believe that the last word has not been spoken yet about individuals.

Even in depravity there is hope.

Love endures all things.

The verb means to conquer, and it is well illustrated in the story of George Matheson, who had lost both his sight and the woman he loved.

Yet he still wrote in one of his prayers that he hoped that he might accept the hand that he had been dealt "not with dumb resignation but with holy joy; not only with the absence of murmur but with a song of praise."

Love can wait through the stillness of silence, the darkness of night, the coldness of death.

This is a palpable love.

What love does not do.

Sometimes we learn what something is by understanding what it is not.

Love does not envy.

Often we want the belongings of another.

Sometimes we even resent others for having something we want; worse, we resent God for what others have.

Envy points to someone who is more concerned about the well-being of self than the well-being of others.

Love does not envy.

Love does not boast.

To boast is to lose one's perspective.

We brag when we think that we have accomplished something unique.

We brag when we assume we accomplished it on our own.

The self-made man syndrome is a laughable fallacy.

There is no place for boasting in a loving life.

Love does not puff itself up.

The Corinthians were so esteemed in their own eyes that they had become like an inflated balloon.

Love does not puff itself up; rather it builds others up.

Have you affirmed anyone recently?

Have you told anyone that you like or appreciate them?

Love does not behave rudely.

Love is sensitive,

Rudeness displays a lack of regard for the other person's feelings

Speaking the truth is never an excuse to criticize; we are to speak the truth in love.

Love does not seek its own advantage.

Love focuses on responsibilities rather than privileges.

In love we think more about our duty than what we are owed.

Rather than selfishness, love is selflessness.

It is a quality of love characterized by a bigness of spirit.

Love does not lose its temper.

Love does not make life miserable for others.

Anger is devastating.

Children have been psychologically mutilated because of their parent's wrath.

Lives must be cushioned in love.

Love does not keep a record of wrongs.

Have you ever been in a discussion and asked someone what you did wrong and they hit you with a list of many things?

They kept a mental record.

Part of the great art of living is to learn what to forget.

Love does not delight in evil.

Some of us just love to hear about other's troubles and shortcomings.

A gossip does not have to enjoy telling information: a gossip may be one who enjoys hearing it.

Additionally, gossip is not defined by its truthfulness; gossip is defined by its negative effect on others.

We should feel free to talk about other persons as long as we say good things.

Every person on earth CAN perform the greatest work in the world, to love.

We all can make love visible.

After some children ruined some concrete a pastor had put down and he went off in a rage a neighbor asked him about all the love he had preached about.

He replied, "I love children in the abstract but not in the concrete.

It is the difficult moments that show who we really are.

In his last days the apostle John had to be carried about.

As he was carried into church he always said, "Love one another."

Upon being asked why he always said this he replied, "If that alone is done, if you love one another, that is enough."

Let us love one another as God loves us.