

A step FURTHER

DIVING DEEPER INTO SUNDAY'S SERMON

A resource of First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale for individuals, families, and small groups that offers deeper insights into the previous Sunday's scripture text and sermon.

From the Sermon on 2/15/26 "Love as Motive"

Opening Prayer: *"Gracious God, open our hearts and minds to understand your Word today. Help us move beyond familiar words to discover the transformative power of love that flows from you. Give us courage to examine our motives honestly and grace to grow in Christlike love. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 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 do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Understanding the Context: (Explore aspects of the passage like place, adjacent scripture, and other elements)

1. What conflict was Paul addressing in the Corinthian church, and why does that matter for how we read this passage?
2. How does Paul's description of love challenge our typical understanding of it?

Key Themes: (Love as the Engine)

3. According to the sermon, what's the difference between love as a quality and love as a motive?
4. Review the diagnostic questions from the sermon. Which one resonates most with you, and why?

Application and Action:

5. Think of a recent "good deed" you performed. What was your honest motive? Was it love, or something else (recognition, control, obligation)?
6. How might the practices of worship, learning, giving, and serving help "refine our why" and recenter us around God's mission rather than our own?
7. This week, choose one relationship or responsibility where you'll intentionally examine your motives. Ask God to reveal what's driving your actions.
8. Identify one way you can practice love that might look "foolish" to the world, something that costs you without promise of recognition or return.

Group Discussion:

If you are studying with others, discuss your reflections and insights.

1. The sermon states that "living out of a place of love is going to put you at odds with the world around you." Share an example of when you've experienced this tension. How did you respond?
2. Paul says love "does not insist on its own way" and "is not irritable or resentful." In what areas of your life, (family, work, church, politics), do you find these qualities most challenging? How can we support one another in growing in these areas?

Closing Prayer:

"Gracious and holy God, thank you for the grace offered in Jesus Christ. Even when we fail to live out of love, you call us to yourself. Form us as your people through practices of worship, learning, giving, and serving. Give us courage to live in love that looks like foolishness to the world but reflects the heart of Christ. Draw us deeper into your mission of redemption and restoration. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Journal Prompt:

Reflect on this statement: "The cross did not look like wisdom. It didn't look like victory. It looked like failure. And yet it was there in self-giving love that God was reconciling the world to himself."

Write about a time when God's way of love seemed foolish or weak to you or others. What did you learn? How might God be calling you to embrace "foolish" love today?