

 Break the ice

Write down what God is saying to you in today's message:

TOPIC: 1 Cor.13 - Let LOVE increase and fear decrease

 Let's hear your story

1. According to Paul in 1 Cor.13:8; what never fails? (**Love**).
2. What are the three temporary gifts that Paul mentions in 1 Cor.13:8 – 10? (**Prophecy; tongues and knowledge**).
3. Can you name the three gifts Paul mentions in 1 Cor.13:13; that will remain forever? (**Faith; Hope and Love**).
4. Are the gifts of the Holy Spirit still important today? (**YES**).

 Let's go deeper

5. How can love be greater than faith? (**Faith will be replaced by sight**).
6. How can love be greater than hope? (**Hope will be replaced by fulfilment**).
7. How does 1 John 4:8 describe God and why is it important? (**God is love and God is eternal; meaning that love too is eternal**).
8. What is Jesus' command to us in John 13:34 – 35? (**Love one another; as I have loved you**).

 Let's apply this

9. Reflecting on the past three weeks; did you learn to love? Did you learn to love God; others and yourself (see Matthew 22:35 – 40)?

Love is patient	Love does not envy
Love is kind	Love does not boast
Love rejoices with the truth	Love is not proud
Love always protects	Love is not rude (NKJV)
Love always trusts	Love is not self-seeking
Love always hopes	Love is not easily angered
Love always perseveres	Love keeps no record of wrongs

SUMMARY:

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:8–13; Matthew 22:35–40; Romans 8:38–39 & Jeremiah 31:3.

READ: 1 Corinthians 13:8 – 13

- In **1 Cor.13:8 – 10**; Paul mentions three temporary gifts that will cease.
- In **1 Cor.13:13**; Paul mentions three eternal or forever gifts.

Read: 1 Cor.13:8; The Corinthian church pride themselves on the fact that they could speak in tongues and demonstrate other gifts. Paul reminds them of “the most excellent way;” the way of love. The gifts that the Corinthians so desired were temporary; faith, hope and love, the forever gifts, are permanent and therefore to be desired more. The gifts of the Spirit will ‘cease’, ‘be stilled’ and ‘pass away’, but love ‘never fails’. Love will remain forever! This would have come as a surprise to the Corinthians, who seemed to think that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were eternal.

- **However, we must not neglect the gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Read: 1 Cor.13:9 – 10; Some Bible scholars have misinterpreted these verses to support the heresy of: ‘Cessationism’, the belief that the spiritual gifts were only necessary in the first century to get the church going, but when the church finally had the completed New Testament bible, the gifts were no longer needed. The phrase ‘when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears’ have been misread to mean ‘when the Bible becomes available to the church, then the gifts of the Spirit disappears.’ This is clearly not true! The ‘perfection’ Paul speaks of here is the final and full coming of God’s kingdom when all that is imperfect; sin, suffering, death, injustice, sickness, poverty, etc. will be completely removed from God’s creation. **Verse 12;** support this interpretation, which indicates that ‘then’ (the time when these gifts will cease) is the time of Christ’s return, the time when we will see Him face to face. **The gifts of the Spirit,** though not eternally needed, are indeed needed up until the time the kingdom comes fully.

Read: 1 Cor.13:11 – 12; Paul provides two analogies to support his point:

- **First analogy** highlights the fact that the gifts are only appropriate for our earthly existence, not for eternity.
- **Second analogy** highlights the partial revelation of God that the gifts make possible, compared to the full revelation of God in eternity.

Read: 1 Cor.13:13; Faith will be replaced by sight. And hope will be replaced by fulfilment. Love will remain! Love is greater than faith and hope, in that both faith and hope depend on love for their existence. Without love, there can be no true faith; a loveless faith is nothing but an empty religious exercise. As Paul says in **1 Cor.13:2;** “If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” Without love, there can be no genuine hope; because we can’t truly hope for something that we do not love. Faith and hope are dead, without love.