



1 Corinthians 13.4-8a

The greatest gift is love.

Our mission at First Baptist is to be the first responders of God's love—love first. This week we want to mature in our understanding of loving first by leading with love. We want love to be a first impulse response to opportunities provided us in our life as we encounter others. Love is a gift given to us by God. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (who incidentally might have been a little hard to love given all of his criticism of their behavior) believed that love was the most foundational, essential and central to the Christian life. The 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians is known as the *love* chapter. This chapter reads like poetry and is often read at weddings. Paul wrote the words here following his discussion of gifts of which he considered love the greatest gift of all.

Connect:

What is the first gift that you ever gave to your parents? Or what is the first gift that your children gave you?

What made the gift special?

What are your thoughts about the following statement?

A small given with great love is better than a great gift with little love.

Engage:

God gave us the greatest gift in Jesus with great love. How do we also give His great gift to others with great love?

Read 1 Corinthians 13.4-8a

Love will be tested. When Paul starts by saying that love requires patience it should be a good indication the love is not easy. You can't put a timeline on your love for someone. Love doesn't necessarily get a warm response that we might expect. When you lead with love you will need to be ready for the long game. Be patient and be kind.

Love without limits. Paul is good example of this. He faced persecution, was beaten and on the run but he didn't stray from his mission. (2 Corinthians 11:24-26) Paul preached Jesus and the new like that we have in Him. Throughout his ministry he learned to love without any limits.

Love is the fruit of maturity. When Paul taught the Galatians about the fruit of the spirit the first fruit mentioned was _____? Love! Love will become the measure of your maturity in faith. You can possess great gifts, do great things but if you don't have love? Well, you are lost without purpose.

Respond: you only love God as much as those you love the least. Who are the **least** that need **your** love? How will you love them this week?