

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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“Faith, Hope, and Love Remain – These Three”

1 Corinthians 12-14 contains the most extensive teaching in Scripture about miraculous spiritual gifts Christians had prior to the completion of God's written Word. Among the carnal views the Corinthian brethren had of these miraculous gifts was an exaltation of the gifts themselves above the attitude of love with which the gifts were to be exercised.

This provides the setting for the beloved chapter, **1 Corinthians 13**. The chapter shows that walking in love is more important than how many gifts one had, or how “impressive” one's gifts were.

One of the ways this point is shown is by comparing the duration of the age of miraculous gifts to that of love. **Verse 10** of the chapter says, “*when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.*” **Verses 8-9** show that “*that which is in part*” refers to miraculous gifts, like prophesying, speaking in tongues, and miraculous knowledge. These gifts would no longer be needed when the written Word (“*that which is perfect*”) was completed. Thus, these gifts would be “*done away*” with.

On the other hand, **verse 13** says, “*faith, hope, and love remain – these three.*” The Holy Spirit through Paul foretold of a time that miraculous gifts would no longer be possessed by Christians, but faith, hope, and love still would be.

This time has been realized for many centuries now, and thus we can perhaps appreciate **1 Corinthians 13:13** in a way that would have been difficult for the Corinthian brethren. None of us can speak in tongues,

miraculously heal people, etc., but faith, hope, and love continue to be of utmost importance.

Faith, for instance, continues to be the *foundation* of the faithful Christian's life, as it was in the first century.

As Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:7**, “*for we walk by faith, not by sight.*” The Christian sees by faith what cannot be literally seen with the eyes. This “spiritual sight” comes from the Word of God, which produces faith in the hearts of sincere hearers (**John 20:29-31**; **Rom. 10:17**; **Matt. 13:23**).

Hope continues to be the *anchor* of the faithful Christian's soul, as it was in the first century.

As the writer said in **Hebrews 6:19**, “*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil,*” The faithful Christian lays up “*treasures in heaven*” (**Matt. 6:20**) and has assurance, by faith (**Heb. 11:1**), that God will grant to the righteous exactly what He has promised.

Love continues to be the proper *motivation* for the faithful Christian's obedience, as it was in the first century.

As the Holy Spirit through John said, “*this is loving God, that we keep His commandments*” (**1 John 5:3**). **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** show how love for others is at the root of treating others rightly (also see **Rom. 13:9-10**).

While miraculous spiritual gifts had an important purpose, the Holy Spirit through Paul made clear that their role should not be made into something more than it was.

At the same time, faith, hope, and love should not be under-valued, but appreciated and pursued, as they are at the core of the Christian's life, both then and now.

“Blessed Are Those Who Mourn”

At the beginning of His “sermon on the mount,” Jesus taught “the beatitudes,” in which he described the person who is blessed by God. In this context, Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*” (**Matt. 5:4**).

There are a few possibilities for what type of mourning would lead one to be blessed by God. Jesus may have been referring here to one who mourns due to persecution, or one who sorrows for the wickedness of the world. He may have simply been referring to the faithful when faced with *any* trials of life, whether persecutions or other kinds of hardships.

In the immediate context, though, it appears quite possible that Jesus is including one who mourns with godly sorrow over his or her sins.

Notice **2 Corinthians 7:9-10**: *I now rejoice, not that you were grieved, but that you were grieved to repentance. For you were grieved in a godly way, that you might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, which brings no regret. But the sorrow of the world produces death.*

One who is poor in spirit (**Matt. 5:3**) will recognize how grievous sin is, and thus will be led to mourn over his or her sins, and meekly turn to the One through whom we can be forgiven (**Matt. 5:5**). Those who have such godly sorrow that yields repentance find comfort in God.

“Blessed Are the Meek”

One of the beatitudes Jesus taught in His sermon on the mount is, “*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*” (**Matt. 5:5**).

Meekness is often viewed as a weakness by the world. In God’s eyes, it is a strength. Jesus showed meekness (**Matt. 11:29**), and God expects *us* to show meekness to all (**Titus 3:2**).

Meekness involves humility, self-control, gentleness, submissiveness, and mildness of temper. This virtue allows God to direct our steps.

One who proudly believes he or she does not need guidance from anyone will not “*receive with meekness the engrafted Word*” (**James 1:21**).

God is our Master, and we must meekly allow Him to steer us in the direction He wants us to go. Submissiveness should be applied to certain earthly relationships (**Rom. 13:1; Eph. 5:21-22; 6:1; 6:5**), but it must be foremost directed toward God.

Those who are meek are often belittled by those of the world (cf. **Num. 12:1-3**). Because the meek don’t insist on having their way all the time and show submissiveness in ways that’s proper, they are often seen as weak.

God upholds those who meekly submit to Him, though (**Psalms 147:6**), and we must all put on meekness (**Col. 3:12**) in order to be one who finds favor with God.

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