

Christian Essentials – Pt. 1
Faith, Hope & Love - Faith Comes empty but leaves full.

In **1 Corinthians 13** we find the apostle Paul speaking about **the imperfected state that we as Christians find ourselves in** while we wait for the time when we will see Jesus face to face. ***He is comparing our lives as to what they are now and what they shall be like at the return of Jesus Christ.***

The Greatest Gift:

1 Corinthians 13:8-11 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

He mentions several things that we now have in part of which are **needed until we see Jesus face to face** and then he gives: **Three essential ingredients that are needed in our lives right now; faith, hope and love.**

1 Corinthians 13:12-13 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³**And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

- We lack clarity **about the right way to love.**
- Like a cloudy mirror, we don't perfectly **reflect Jesus** to other.

Many of the things that we now find **essential** for our Christianity and spiritual walk in this life **will not be necessary** when **we live and reign with Jesus forever.**

- **Love is the one thing that will remain **constant.****
- It will be a part of our lives **now and in eternity.**

Faith, hope and love are the three major essentials to the Christian life -

- Which are necessary to keep us on course
- So that we **do not shipwreck** before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of God's great love towards us, when Jesus is revealed, we shall be like Him. **This is our hope, and this is what we put our faith in.**

God Is Love – Living as Children of God:

1 John 3:1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

- **As believers, our self-worth comes from the fact that **God loves us and calls us his children.****
- We are his children **NOW**, not sometime in the distant future.
- Knowing that *we are Gods children* should *encourage us to live as Jesus did.*

We are all on a ship, so to speak, that is **sailing towards our eternal destination** that **Jesus is preparing for us** at this very moment.

- **Believing** in Christ begins the process of **becoming more like him.**

Jesus Is the Way to the Father:

John 14:2-3 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

- The disciples were obviously worried about death and what happens afterwards.
- The way to eternal life, though unseen, is secure for us...
- IF we trust him with the future!
- *The only issue that may still be unsettled* is **our willingness to believe in him**

The problem is that the ship we are sailing on **must sail or pass through** all kinds of **muddy and murky waters** as well as the many storms that it encounters along the way.

We live in a world that has created for itself **many turbulences and disorders.**

It is a world that is **on a destructive course**; and ***we as Christians must sail against the tide of*** unbelief, violence, wickedness and corruption.

There is always the possibility of suffering shipwreck along the way and losing all that we have been given by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul warned Timothy to have faith and a good conscience before God so that he would keep himself from suffering shipwreck as some had already done.

Fight the Good Fight:

1 Timothy 1:18-20 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹having faith and a good conscience, which **some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck**, ²⁰of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

- ***How can you hold on to a good conscience???***
- **Treasure your faith in Christ more than anything else and do what you know is right.**
- Each time you ignore your conscience, **you are hardening your heart.**
- Eventually, your capacity to tell right from wrong will diminish.

The truth is that there are many potential dangers around us that do have the potential of causing us to shipwreck.

We live in perilous and evil times with many demonic and destructive forces that are trying to shipwreck our faith as well.

If we continue to walk in faith, hope and love we will sail through life's many disturbing waters with our faith intact.

Difficult times for Christian service – perilous times:

2 Timothy 3:1-2 But know this, that in the last days perilous times **will come**: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

- **The conflict we experience** in particularly divisive political climates can epitomize what we see in these verses.
- **Don't enter into this kind of dialogue.**
- **Guard your heart, mind, and words.**
- Remember that you represent Christ in your response, even when you hold strong convictions.

Prech the Word:

2 Timothy 4:1-2 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **2Preach the word!** Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- **No matter how much the Truth hurts, we must be willing to listen to it *so we can more fully obey God.***

All of this creates a stormy environment for us to sail in or walk out our faith. There are **many pitfalls, trials and obstacles** that **we must** navigate through.

***The Importance of Faith, Hope & Love.

Faith, hope and love have been given to us so that we will have the Christian essentials to navigate our lives! securely in this world until that glorious day of seeing Jesus face to face.

1. Why Faith is Important

Although we have been given a glimpse of our final destination, there are ***many uncharted seas*** of which can **only be navigated through by faith.**

We cannot see with our carnal eyes where we are going in our spiritual quest for God.

Faith goes as far as it can see, and when it gets there, it will always be able to see farther.

Seeing the Invisible:

2 Corinthians 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- **Paul gives us a strategy for *how to cope with* terrible illness, persecution, or pain.**
- **We are to fix our hope not on this life but on the life to come.**
- Knowing that **we will live forever with God** in a place without sin/suffering.
- This can help us **live above the pain that we face in this life.**

By Faith We Understand:

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- **Faith starts** with **believing God's goodness and truth-that he is who he says he is.**

During life's many perplexing dilemmas **faith is able to grasp and seize that which is ahead.**

- It is the **conviction of the reality** of all that **we cannot see** with our carnal eyes.
- It is a **firm belief** in something for which **there is no proof.**

Hebrews 10 has much to say concerning **the importance of walking by faith** during life's many challenges.

The Just Live by Faith:

Hebrews 10:32-39 - 32 Don't forget all the hard times you went through when you first received the light. 33 Sometimes you were abused and mistreated in public, and at other times you shared in the sufferings of others. 34 You were kind to people in jail. And you gladly let your possessions be taken away, because you knew you had something better, something that would last forever.

- ***Hebrews encourages believers to persevere in their Christian faith and behavior when facing persecution and pressure.***
- **We don't usually think of suffering as good for us, but it can build our character, our patience, and even our joy.**
- ***During times of great stress, we may feel God's presence more clearly!!!***

35 Keep on being brave! It will bring you great rewards. 36 Learn to be patient, so you will please God and be given what he has promised. 37 As the Scriptures say, "God is coming soon! It won't be very long. 38 The people God accepts will live because of their faith. But he **isn't** pleased with anyone who turns back."

39 We are not like those people who turn back and get destroyed. We will keep on having faith until we are saved.

- The Bible gives us a clear choice between **two life directions:**
- **Throwing away our confident trust in Christ** or
- **Patiently persevering with Christ** to the end.
- **Continue to walk with Christ** even if it looks **more difficult or treacherous.**

Any time we begin to focus too much on the storm around us or the situation we find ourselves in, we begin to lose sight of God, and our faith begins to diminish.

- *We must continue to stay focused on that which is unseen to the carnal eyes.*

Unbelief puts our circumstances between us and God, but faith puts God between us and our circumstances.

2. The Necessity of Hope

Hold Fast Your Confession:

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

- *Our hope is based on that which is unseen.*
- It is a *desire accompanied by expectation* of or belief in fulfillment of it.
- It is to cherish a desire with *expectation of fulfillment.*

A few years ago, *the psychology department of Duke University* carried out an interesting experiment. They wanted to see how long rats could swim. In one container they placed a rat for whom there was no possibility of escape. He swam a few moments and then ducked his head to drown.

In the other container they made the hope of escape possible for the rat. The rat swam for several hours before finally drowning. The conclusion of the experiment was just the opposite of our common conclusion.

We usually say, *“As long as there is life, there is hope.”* The Duke experiment proved, “As long as there is hope, there is life.”

From Suffering to Glory:

Romans 8:24-25 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

- Throughout the book of Romans. *Paul presents the idea that salvation is past, present, and future.*
- **We look ahead with hope and trust** toward the complete transformation that lies beyond this life, when we will be made like Christ.

Hope is the anchor of our soul

- Hope holds us together when everything around us seems to be caving in.

When the storms begin to rise against you, you simply throw out the anchor of hope until the storm begins to subside.

Hebrews 6:18-20 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹**This hope we have as an anchor of the soul**, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, ²⁰where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

- These **two unchangeable things** are God's promises and his oath.
- **God embodies all truth**; therefore, he cannot lie, and we can be secure in his promises.
- Don't let go no matter what happens around you!!!

3. The Necessity of Love - *The greatest of faith, hope and love is love because it is the bond that holds everything together.*

- Where would we be without the love of the Father, or
- Where would we be without the love and support of our brothers and sisters around us?

Not Philosophy but Christ:

Colossians 2:1-5 - I want you to know what a struggle I am going through for you, for God's people at Laodicea, and for all of those followers who have never met me. ² I do it to encourage them. Then as their hearts are joined together in love, they will be wonderfully blessed with complete understanding. And they will truly know Christ. Not only is he the key to God's mystery, ³ but all wisdom and knowledge are hidden away in him. ⁴ I tell you these things to keep you from being fooled by fancy talk. ⁵ Even though I am not with you, I keep thinking about you. I am glad to know that you are living as you should and your faith in Christ is strong.

- The fact that Paul wanted this letter to be passed on to the Laodicean church indicates that false teaching may have spread there as well.

- *As a matter of fact, Christ would later rebuke them for their lukewarm commitment! (Rev. 3)*
- **Paul** was counting on ties of love to bring the churches together to stand against this heresy and to encourage each other to remain true to God's plan of salvation in Christ.
- **Our church must be** encouraging, unified in community, committed to carrying out Christ's work!!!

What Christians should do – Living the New Life:

Colossians 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

- **Christians should Live in peace!**
- To **“put on” love** leads to peace between individuals and among the members of the body of believers.

CLOSE:

Do problems in your relationships with other Christian's cause open conflicts or uncomfortable silence?

- Consider what you can do to heal those relationships with love!

Love is more important than anything else.

It is what ties everything completely together.

Let's not be swept aside and shipwrecked by the many storms and upheaval of our times,

- But rather **walk in faith, hope and love**
- **Setting our sights on the eternal purpose of God.**