

January 2, 2022

# Heaven Is a World of Love<sup>1</sup>

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

## Christianity is eschatology

I'm so thankful that God providentially arranges our preaching schedule. We pressed pause on 1 Corinthians so we could preach through the Advent season. And now as we start the New Year, we are picking it back up exactly at the place of our greatest need. What is the most vital thing that we need to hear as we begin 2022? Heaven. Why? Because, as Mortimer Adler once said, "... the ends are the first things we must think about in the order of practical thinking."<sup>2</sup> When we are preparing for a road trip, how do we prepare? By thinking about our *end* destination. How long will it take to get there? How much gas will we need? How much food/clothing will we need? What will we do when we get there? The end determines how we prepare and live now.<sup>3</sup>

## The gifts were given with the end in view

We forget that. The Corinthians forgot that. The Corinthian church separated the end from their Christian walk. They separated the spiritual gifts from the end for which the Holy Spirit gave them. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts *so that* we can help each other follow Jesus Christ more closely. So that we can love each other. But the Corinthians changed the end. The spiritual gifts became means to distinguish themselves, to make much of themselves. Enter **ch. 13**. Paul began this chapter in **v.1-3** by saying with love—without the end—all the gifts, all these privileges, all these good works are worthless. Then

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2013), pg. 323

<sup>2</sup> *Reforming Education: The Opening of the American Mind* Ed. Geraldine Van Doren (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, 1977)

<sup>3</sup> And this principle is seen in spades in our Christian walk. As one author put it "Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present." Jurgen Moltman in Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion* 3rd Edition, (Chesnee, SC.: Victorious Hope Publishing, 2021), pg. 7

in v.4-7, he gave us a vision of what love is, which is entirely different from the world's version. Now in v.8-13, Paul is going to show us why love is entirely superior to every spiritual gift: because love never ends. In the next world, every spiritual gift will come to an end. But not love.

### Heaven is a world of love

As Jonathan Edwards has said:

“Heaven is a part of creation that God has built for this end, to be the place of his glorious presence, and it is his abode for ever; and here will he dwell, and gloriously manifest himself [to us] to all eternity. And this renders heaven a world of love.”<sup>4</sup>

That's the end in view as we begin 2022. The things that we think are so important here are *nothing* if they don't serve love. What are your hopes for 2022? What are your goals? Is love for Christ, love for His Church, love for your family, love for your co-workers, love for the lost, love for His kingdom *the motivation* behind them? Do you have Heaven, that world of love, that ocean of love, in mind as you are planning out your year. As one author says “Love is not merely the Christian duty; it is the Christian destiny.”<sup>5</sup> Are you beginning this year, with that end in view?

### *The Big Idea...*

Heaven will be as full of love as the waters cover the sea, therefore choose *love* to be your end in all things.

<sup>4</sup> Edwards, pg. 326

<sup>5</sup> Roy E. Ciampa & Brian S. Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pg. 652

☆Our Doctrine

☆Our Duty

☆Our Delight

## I. Our Doctrine<sup>6</sup>

### Love never ends

Paul now reaches the Mt. Everest of love in **v.8-13**. Clearly everything he has said *thus far* applies to this age. But now he looks to that undiscovered country—to Heaven—to the age to come. Look at **v.8** “Love never *ends*.” The verb is ἐκκλίπτω *ekriptomō*. The NIV renders it “Love never *fails*.” The verb is used to describe the falling of a flower to the ground. **1 Peter 1:24-25** “The grass withers, and the flower *falls*, but the word of the Lord remains forever.”<sup>7</sup> To use this sense, we could say that love will never fall to the ground—it is not temporary—it is eternal like the Word of God.

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<sup>6</sup> For those of you just joining us in this series, please understand that Paul has been contrasting *true Christian love* to the *worldly love*. To review, nowhere does Paul say here: ‘Love is a warm feeling’ or love is a powerful emotion.’ That is worldly love. Yes we want warm feelings but true Christian loves abides even when the feelings are dead. “Love is patient” Paul says. Who do you have be patient with? Those who fail you. Love is not a feeling primarily, it’s a choice, a commitment, an affair of the will. **Secondly**, nowhere does Paul say that ‘love is nice.’ Niceness is a worldly desire to please everyone so that people will like me. He says “love is kind.” Kindness is freely performing the good that other’s need, whether that’s mercy or rebuke. Nice people don’t rebuke. But kind people carefully rebuke for the sake of truth and souls that will never die. **Thirdly**, Paul says “love does not envy.” Envy *is* the great destroyer of civilization. It is the root vice of every destructive ideology: marxism, feminism, critical race theory. “Wrath is cruel, and anger outrageous, but who can stand before envy (**Proverbs 27:4**). **Fourthly**, ‘love is not proud, or self-centered’ The proud self-centered narcissist is in love with himself, and therefore only loves others if it will serve self-love. **Fifthly**, ‘love is not easily angered.’ True Christian love manifests righteous anger when Christ’s kingdom is belittled, brushed aside, and blasphemed. But worldly love gets angry the kingdom of self is offended. **Sixthly**, ‘love keeps no record of wrongs.’ Worldly love cannot forgive from the heart, because they deny that all sin is chiefly against God. But true Christian love can forgive just as Christ as forgiven us. **Seventhly**, ‘love delights in the truth.’ Worldly love cannot truly love precisely because it denies truth. What *is love* if there are no objective standards—no right or wrong, no good or bad? But true Christians love is grounded in the eternal Word of God, made known to us through the Incarnate Word of God Jesus Christ. In summary, the love that Paul has been describing is not what you find in a Hallmark Card. It’s not sentimental love. It is a love stronger than death, hotter than hell, and more valuable than all the riches in the world.

<sup>7</sup> Paul also used it when he and his shipmates were afraid that they were going to fall on some rocks to their deaths - Acts 27:29.

Secondly, the verb is also used to describe those who fall from grace because they depend on law. **Galatians 5:4** “You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have *fallen away* from grace.” To use this sense, we would say that love can never fall away—it can never be severed from Christ—because Christ—who is God—is love (**1 John 4:8<sup>8</sup>**).

Thirdly, the verb is used to describe how God never fails to keep His promises. **Romans 9:6** “But it is not as though the word of God has *failed*.” To use this sense, we could say that love will never fail, it will always succeed even when everything else falls away.

### **The spiritual gifts will end**

But this is not true of the spiritual gifts, which the Corinthians had prided themselves in. They are going to come to an end. Look what he says “As for prophecies, *they will pass away*; as for tongues, *they will cease*; as for knowledge, *it will pass away*. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, *but when the perfect comes*, the partial will pass away.”

### **What is the perfect?**

What does he mean “*when the perfect comes?*” Two main options: **1)** The “perfect” refers to the completion of the Canon. In other words, when the NT was finished, the spiritual gifts ended. **2)** The “perfect” refers to Heaven. That is, when this age ends, so will the spiritual gifts. Now I believe Paul means Heaven for a couple reasons.

**First**, Notice he says in **v.8** that “prophecies...will pass away.” However “prophecies” in the sense of speaking forth or proclaiming God’s Word have not passed away since the completion of Scripture. In fact, in **14:1** Paul tells us to eagerly seek the gift of prophecy, *because v.3* the one prophesies/proclaims God’s

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<sup>8</sup> “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Word builds up and encourages and comfort others. This gift is still needed today long after the completion of the Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

**Secondly**, it's clear that Paul is describing *the same thing* in **v.10-12**. Track with me. The coming *perfection* in **v.10**, is *the man who gave up childish ways* in **v.11**, and is seeing *face to face* in **v.12**. Does it fit that when the Scriptures were completed the Church now sees God *face to face*?<sup>10</sup> Is that your experience? No of course not. This is clearly talking about Heaven. **1 John 3:2** "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." Meaning we shall see *Jesus face to face*. **Revelation 22:3-4** "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. *They will see his face...*"

### Spiritual children

Loved ones, in this age we are but spiritual children.<sup>11</sup> Children speak and reason and think in a very flawed manner. Our children have said and thought the funniest things. Monica and I still laugh just thinking about them. When the villain Thanos appeared on the Big Screen, one of our boys walked around snapping his fingers saying "I am inedible." Another of our boys, I won't tell you who, thought that chicken beaks prevented chickens from kissing, thereby having little chick babies very hard. Needless to say, as children, we need help learning how to speak, and reason, and think. But when we become adults, the need for that *same help* goes away. In a similar way, the church in this age is a child, we need spiritual helps. God gives us these helps through the spiritual gifts. They are wonderful gifts. But they are gifts only needed for

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<sup>9</sup> **Additionally**, he says in **v.8** that when the perfect comes "tongues...will cease." Yet in **14:39** Paul tells us *not* to forbid speaking in tongues. It doesn't make sense to me that Paul would only allow tongues for at best a mere thirty years from when this letter was written to the completion of the canon.

<sup>10</sup> also cf. Matthew 5:8; Matthew 18:10

<sup>11</sup> Even the Apostle Paul, while on this earth, claimed he only knew in part (**v.9**), that he saw very dimly (**v.12**), that he had childish ways (**v.11**).

children. In the next world—our adulthood—the need for these helps vanishes. The spiritual gifts will end, but love will continue for endless ages.

### **Will we stop learning in Heaven?**

Notice what he says at the end of **v.12** “Now I know in part [*the spiritual gifts in this age only provide partial knowledge of God*]; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” Now this doesn't mean that we will stop learning in Heaven or that we will know all things.<sup>12</sup> Infinite knowledge can't be given to finite creatures anymore than deity can be given to us. We will always be learning and discovering the glories of God and His universe for all eternity. **Ephesians 2:7** says that “...in the coming ages he [will]<sup>13</sup> *show* the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” God will show or reveal His grace to us—grace that we didn't previously know—for unending ages.<sup>14</sup>

### **How shall we *know fully*?**

So then, what does he in **v.12** “then I shall know fully, *even as* I have been fully known.” How does God know us? He knows us intimately, not through a mirror dimly—or as the Greek indicates—in a riddle. God's knowledge of us is immediate, without a veil. That's the knowledge we will have of Him. We will

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<sup>12</sup> Some have taken **v.8** “as for knowledge, it will pass away” to mean the same thing. But clearly Paul is talking about the special spiritual gift of knowledge not knowledge proper. Hodge says here: “It is not knowledge in the comprehensive sense of the term that is to cease, but knowledge as a gift; as one of the list of extraordinary endowments mentioned above, 12:8-11. Knowledge, considered as the intellectual apprehension of truth, is, as the apostle immediately states, hereafter to be rendered perfect. But...*the word of knowledge*, 12:8, i.e. knowledge in that form in which it was the foundation of the office of teacher, is to be done away with.” [Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2018), pg. 271-272]

<sup>13</sup> original “might”

<sup>14</sup> Other verses that demonstrate there is still learning in Heaven. Job 11:7-9; Job 26:14; Job 36:26; Psalm 40:5; Psalm 139:6, 17-18; Romans 11:33; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ephesians 3:20; Colossians 2:2-3; 1 Peter 1:12

know Christ through personal fellowship with Him when He comes at His appearing.<sup>15</sup>

### Faith and hope...?

But Paul goes further in showing the superiority of love. Look at v.13 “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Notice, he has shifted from talking about spiritual gifts to those spiritual graces —faith and hope—that are essential to being a Christian. It *could be* that Paul is saying that *even* these things will pass away in the next world. Faith, because in this world we walk by faith, but in the next we will walk by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Hope, because “hope that is seen is [no longer] hope” (Romans 8:24). But Paul is saying that these three things *abide*, in contrast to the spiritual gifts which pass away. So likely Paul is saying love is superior to faith and hope, because faith and hope are the root—*the beginning*—of our Christian life, but love is the full fruit—*the end*—of it. When we arrive in the next world, our primary experience *will not* be faith and hope, but love. That’s *why* Paul says the greatest of these is love.<sup>16</sup>

### Doctrine: Heaven is a world of love

And so we arrive at **our doctrine**: *Heaven will be as full of love as the waters cover the sea*. There’s no place in the sea where water is not. It is wet through and through. Likewise there is no place in Heaven that is not full of love, no time in Heaven when love will expire. Consider these 3 reasons *why* Heaven is a world of love.

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Charles Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Published by Forgotten Books 2012, Originally Published 1885), pg. 352

<sup>16</sup> “Carson reminds us that while the Scripture tells us “God is love” (1 John 4:16), ‘it is difficult to imagine how they could have said that God is faith, or that God is hope.’ Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 666

## Reason #1: The LORD dwells there

Jonathan Edwards says here:

“God...fills both heaven and earth. But yet He is said, in some respects, to be more especially in some places than in others. He was said of old to dwell in the land of Israel, above all other lands; and in Jerusalem, above all other cities of that land; and in the temple, above all other buildings in the city; and in the holy of holies, above all other [rooms]<sup>17</sup> of the temple; and on the mercy-seat, over the ark of the covenant, above all other places in the holy of holies. But heaven is His dwelling-place above all other places in the universe.”<sup>18</sup>

And this concentrated infinite love of God is the source of all of God’s rejoicing and happiness. We read in Proverbs 8 about the pre-incarnate Christ delighting before the Father in Heaven. **v.30-31** “I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.” This love between the Father, Son, and Spirit in Heaven is *why* the Psalmist says “...in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” This infinite, inexhaustible, unchangeable, eternal love of the Trinity explains *why* Paul, when was transported to Heaven and returned said that “...he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter” (**2 Corinthians 12:4**). No human words can conjure up the strength to speak of the infinite love of God’s dwelling place. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (**1 Corinthians 2:9**).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> original “apartments”

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, pg. 326

<sup>19</sup> KJV



### **Reason #2: It is the gathering place of all the Redeemed**

All the elect of God, a multitude that cannot be numbered, will gather at the throne of God and their hearts will burst with love over their Redeemer. **Revelation 5:9** tells us that all of Heaven will sing a new song; “Worthy are you...for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people *for God*.” What makes the saints in Heaven sing? That they were among those who were *ransomed for God*. God wanted them. He set His love on them, sent His Son to die for them. In fact, all Heaven rejoices when one sinner is added to this great company. Jesus said in **Luke 15:7** “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.” Why does Heaven rejoice? Because another is gathered into that Heavenly society for them to love.

### **Reason #3: Christ serves us *Himself* in that place**

When Jesus teaches about Heaven in **Luke 12:37**, He casts Himself as the Master and we His servants. Yet He shockingly turns the tables. He says “Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.” Jesus loves His people with such an insatiable love that just as He served us on earth, so He continues to serve us in Heaven. What is He serving us? Himself. **Revelation 7:15-16** “...He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.” Why will they never hunger or thirst again? Because His Divine love is our eternal food and eternal drink. Jesus Christ is the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God (**Hebrews 4:9**). We shall forever be comforted by His love, consoled by His love, satiated by His love.

That’s our **first point**. *Heaven will be as full of love as the waters cover the sea* because the Lord dwells there, because all the redeemed will gather there, and because Christ will serve us Himself for all eternity.

## II. Our Duty

3 duties...

### 1. Informatory Use

First we have a duty to *meditate* on that place. Paul tells us in **Colossians 3:2** “Set your minds on things that are above.” What will love be like in Heaven, when *the perfect is come*? Let’s begin by asking, what will *not* be there? **First**, no enemy will dwell there. **Revelation 21:27** “But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.” All the reprobate who drink up iniquity like water, who love the darkness more than the light, who are of the seed of the serpent will be shut out. No longer will that be able to hurt God’s people. Just as Abraham told the rich man ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish’ (**Luke 16:25**). Neither will any demon be allowed in that place. Satan and his fallen angels will be cast into the lake that burns with sulfur that was prepared for them (**Matthew 25:41**). Nothing will be there that will disturb the love of that place. The chaff will have been separated from the wheat, the dross removed from the gold. All sin

**Secondly**, no sin will dwell there. Even the most sanctified Christians in this age are polluted with sin. But no saint will have the least impurity in that place. Loved ones, consider the profound change that will mean. It’s not as if everyone will have equal reward in Heaven. Paul already said in ch. 3 that there will be a disparity of rewards. Some saints will be exceedingly superior with regards to the rewards that God gives them. Others will be far inferior. How will this not cause great envy and pride in Heaven as it does on Earth? Listen again to how Edwards puts it:

“Those that are highest in glory, are those that are highest in holiness, and therefore are those that are most beloved by all the saints; for they most love

those that are most holy, and so they will all rejoice in their being the most happy. And it will not be a grief to any of the saints to see those that are higher than themselves in holiness and likeness to God...for all shall have as much love as they desire, and as great manifestations of love as they can bear, and so shall be fully satisfied...and the superior in glory will be so far from slighting those that are inferior, that they will have most abundant love to them—greater degrees of love in proportion to their superior knowledge and happiness. The higher any are in glory, *the more they are like Christ*...so that the love of the higher to the lower be greater than the love of [their] equals.”<sup>20</sup>

Did you catch that? The reward is a great conformity to Christ. All will have as much love as they can bear, because all will be full according to their capacity. But some will have a greater capacity. Some will be more like Christ *in degree*. But that is what makes Heaven a world of love. Those who are ‘lower’—far from being envious—will love and adore those ‘higher’ than them because they ‘look’ more like Christ. And those who are ‘higher’—far from being proud—will love and adore those ‘lower’ than them because that’s how Christ is. So that the disparity in Heaven due to differing rewards, far from being a cause of disunity will actually cause a greater harmony of love.

## 2. Consolatory Use

That brings us to our **second duty**: *comfort*. We are to encourage ourselves. **1 Thessalonians 4:17-18** says “...so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.” So loved ones, be comforted. In the next world, you’ll never be an unloving person again. For the former things will have passed away. You’ll never be impatient again. You will always be kind and be shown nothing but kindness. You will never envy because you will have every happiness you can bear. You will never be proud or self-centered. You will never be angry. You will never keep a record of wrongs

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<sup>20</sup> Edwards, pg. 336-337

because there will be no wrongs to keep record of. You will never quote Romans 7 again because you will never do the things you don't want to do, and you will never fail to do the things you want to do. You will never have regret. You will never have mixed motives. You will never be suspicious of others. You will never be slighted. You will be clothed in white robes without spot, without wrinkle, without deformity of any kind. You will finally reach that great and glorious end to which you were predestined for. **Romans 8:29** "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." As you behold the glory of the Lord, you will forever be transformed from one degree of love to the another. Each day you will love and be loved *more* than the previous. You will be united with every Christian friend and family member that you lost in this life. You will intimately know every angel by name. Every one of God's saints in the Bible, Moses, David, Esther, Mary will befriend you and take you into their confidence. And with that Heavenly society you will forever feast off the abundance of God's house and drink from the rivers of His delight.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Admonitory Use

That brings us to our **third duty**: admonishment. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** says that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction." How does this vision of Heaven being *a world of love* rebuke us? **First**, to the believer. This vision rebukes us *if* we pursue other things *more than love*. Paul rebuked the Corinthians because they pursued the spiritual gifts more than loving each other. Can that be said about you? Or worse, are you pursuing *worldly things*—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life<sup>22</sup>—more than love? If that's you, let the Word of God rebuke you. Don't you realize that if you love little in your life, then you are living a life that is opposition to Heaven? And that means you are living in opposition to your own comfort, to your neighbor's welfare, and to Christ's

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<sup>21</sup> Psalm 36:8

<sup>22</sup> 1 John 2:16 (KJV)

kingdom. Turn back. Don't waste your life. Remember the promise of Christ Jesus "It is more blessed to give than to receive."<sup>23</sup>

**Second**, a rebuke for those who have not been born again. Whatever resolutions you have made for 2022, whatever change you are hoping to make in your life, what good is it if you don't have love? If you say, "No, but I am a loving person." Friend if you have not been born of the Spirit the only type of love you have is worldly fleshly love. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (**John 3:6**). You cannot produce true spiritual heavenly love. Which means you don't belong to Heaven. If you were allowed into that world of love, you would spoil it, you would bring with you all the vileness of your sin and make Heaven no longer Heaven. The only place for someone one who hates God, who is in love with *only* himself, is hell. It's the place where God pours out His indignation and fury. Hell is as infinitely horrible as Heaven is happy. "No love to God will ever be felt in hell."<sup>24</sup> No love of any kind will be felt there. The devils will torment you. Other damned souls will torment you. You will be a torment to your soul, because you will only know hatred and malice. Every restraining grace that prevented you from committing more evil here will be gone there. Nothing will hold you back from being as evil as you can be. And God will show you pity, no mercy. But with perfect justice, He will render to you according to your evil works. Friend, this is not a cleverly devised myth, this is the revealed truth from the God who can never lie, and you will know in a short time how invincibly certain it is. Repent of your sins. Call out for mercy now. Your sins are not too black for Him to make them as white as snow. When the thief hung on the cross next to Christ on the cross, after he lived a life of wickedness and hatred, he said to the Lord "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."<sup>43</sup> And [Jesus] said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."<sup>25</sup> Jesus

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<sup>23</sup> Acts 20:35

<sup>24</sup> Edwards, pg. 360

<sup>25</sup> Luke 23:42-43

welcomed that repentant thief into that world of love. The man didn't earn it. But He trusted Jesus. Will you?

### III. Our Delight

#### Love Incarnate

If you consider Paul's letter to the Corinthians as a whole, what was the cause of all their relational problems? They weren't practicing love. They weren't patient and kind, but were envious and proud and self-centered. They lacked love. Beloved, look at your life as a whole. What is the cause of all your relational problems? It's the same. You lack patience and kindness, you are envious, proud and self-centered. You lack love. Paul's advice to them and us is not *simply* try harder. What Paul has been doing in **1 Corinthians 13** is masterfully sketching out a picture of One who Love Incarnate.

*Though* you fail to suffer long with the failures of others (patience), this Man of Love has suffered long for all your failures. "All we like sheep have gone astray...the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."<sup>26</sup>

*Though* you have been envious, proud, and self-centered, this Man of Love made Himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant, and humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross.<sup>27</sup>

*Though* your love is easily conquered, this Man of Love could not be conquered —after He died and was buried, He rose from the dead conquering sin, death, and the devil—all for you and me.

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<sup>26</sup> Isaiah 53:6

<sup>27</sup> Philippians 2:7-8

### **A duty, a destiny, a Divine Person**

Beloved don't you see? You will not get to Heaven because you have loved well. but because He has loved you well. Love is not *merely* a duty, or even our final destination. Love is a Divine Person: the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason *why* Heaven is a world of love is because *He is* there.

### **Power for the New Year**

If you want to be more conformed to that love in 2022, then fix your eyes upon Him. That's how we are transformed from one degree to another. We become more loving by simply beholding loveliness of Christ.

Where will you find power to show kindness to that unrepentant person who continually sins against you: By beholding Christ who is kind to you though you are daily unfaithful, unworthy, and unlovely.

Where will you find the power to serve those in need, to cook meals, to clean houses, to visit the sick, to make phone calls? By beholding Christ who *still* ever lives to intercede for you, who daily cleanses you, who is right now preparing a place for you.

Where will you find the power to give money sacrificially, to evangelize the lost, to pray for your enemies, to die to your selfish desires? By beholding Christ, who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for you.

### **The Reward**

Beloved, live this out this New Year with *the end* in view. Give up childish ways. Live for that Day when you will see Christ face to face. You are going to live everlasting ages in a world of love, with the Father, Son, Spirit, with all the angels and all the saints. Don't wait. Commit yourself to living a life of love now.