

# The way of love part two

## Introduction

Part two of two.

Last week:

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

### **1 Cor 13 (ESV)**

Faith and hope.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

### **Hebrews 11 v 1 (NIV)**

Faith about believing and trusting. (Not enough to just believe it's true)

Not 'blind faith', it has a basis, we grow in our faith, we can believe and trust God to act in character and be consistent.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

### **Romans 10 v 17 (ESV)**

Faith directly related to the word of God (both the written word and Jesus the 'Word of God).

Faith is about believing that God is who he says he is, and that he will do the things that he has said he will do, and trusting in him to act in character and do the things he has promised.

Faith is about now, hope is about the future. Faith about the heart, hope was about the head.

Looked at faith, hope and love in the New Testament - these three together were themes in a number of books.

Faith and hope not about why God loves us:

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8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

### **Romans 5 v 8 (ESV)**

God's demonstration of love for us came whilst we were still far away from him.

Today - 1 Corinthians 13 in the middle of passages about the church. How do we work this stuff out? How does having faith and hope in God, and being loved by him affect the way I live my life, and affect my church?

Not going to tell you what to do!! Will tell a few stories that demonstrate the principle, let you apply it to your lives.

## **Working it out - faith**

1 Jericho was shut up tight as a drum because of the People of Israel: no one going in, no one coming out.

2-5 God spoke to Joshua, "Look sharp now. I've already given Jericho to you, along with its king and its crack troops. Here's what you are to do: March around the city, all your soldiers. Circle the city once. Repeat this for six days. Have seven priests carry seven ram's horn trumpets in front of the Chest. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, the priests blowing away on the trumpets. And then, a long blast on the ram's horn—when you hear that, all the people are to shout at the top of their lungs. The city wall will collapse at once. All the people are to enter, every man straight on in." 6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and told them, "Take up the Chest of the Covenant. Seven priests are to carry seven ram's horn trumpets leading God's Chest."

7 Then he told the people, "Set out! March around the city. Have the armed guard march before the Chest of God."

8-9 And it happened. Joshua spoke, the people moved: Seven priests with their seven ram's horn trumpets set out before God. They blew the trumpets, leading God's Chest of the Covenant. The armed guard marched ahead of the trumpet-blowing priests; the rear guard was marching after the Chest, marching and blowing their trumpets.

10 Joshua had given orders to the people, "Don't shout. In fact, don't even speak—not so much as a whisper until you hear me say, 'Shout!'—then shout away!"

11-13 He sent the Chest of God on its way around the city. It circled once, came back to camp, and stayed for the night. Joshua was up early the next morning and the priests took up the Chest of God. The seven priests carrying the seven ram's horn trumpets marched before the Chest of God, marching and blowing the trumpets, with the armed guard marching before and the rear guard marching after. Marching and blowing of trumpets!

14 On the second day they again circled the city once and returned to camp. They did this six days.

15-17 When the seventh day came, they got up early and marched around the city this same way but seven times—yes, this day they circled the city seven times. On the seventh time around the priests blew the trumpets and Joshua signalled the people, "Shout!—God has given you the city! The city and everything in it is under a holy curse and offered up to God.

"Except for Rahab the harlot—she is to live, she and everyone in her house with her, because she hid the agents we sent.

18-19 "As for you, watch yourselves in the city under holy curse. Be careful that you don't covet anything in it and take something that's cursed, endangering the camp of Israel with the curse and making trouble for everyone. All silver and gold, all vessels of bronze and iron are holy to God. Put them in God's treasury."

20 The priests blew the trumpets.

When the people heard the blast of the trumpets, they gave a thunderclap shout. The wall fell at once. The people rushed straight into the city and took it.

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21 They put everything in the city under the holy curse, killing man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey.

22-24 Joshua ordered the two men who had spied out the land, "Enter the house of the harlot and rescue the woman and everyone connected with her, just as you promised her." So the young spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, and brothers—everyone connected with her. They got the whole family out and gave them a place outside the camp of Israel. But they burned down the city and everything in it, except for the gold and silver and the bronze and iron vessels—all that they put in the treasury of God's house.

25 But Joshua let Rahab the harlot live—Rahab and her father's household and everyone connected to her. She is still alive and well in Israel because she hid the agents whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 Joshua swore a solemn oath at that time:

Cursed before God is the man

who sets out to rebuild this city Jericho. He'll pay for the foundation with his firstborn son,

he'll pay for the gates with his youngest son.

27 God was with Joshua. He became famous all over the land.

## **Joshua 6 (The Message)**

Hebrews recounts this as a great demonstration of faith. Why? God spoke and told Joshua to do something (pretty daft by all appearances), and he did it. It looks like a 'trust exercise', because Joshua would have looked pretty silly had God not done what he had promised.

Did they try to explain it away afterwards? Did they forget the way God acted when they trusted him and believed what he said was true? Straight away - read Joshua 7!! But there's still a growing in faith after they took a step of faith.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land. 2 And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king

## **Joshua 8 v 1 - 2 (ESV)**

God reminds Joshua of how he has acted in the past to build his faith for things he is about to do.

What if we have little faith?

Last week - what's important is in whom we have faith.

For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

## **Matthew 17 v 20**

Jesus said that amazing things were possible even with a little faith!

## **Faith & Sacrifice**

Faith is sometimes costly:

11 One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. [3] 12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" 14 He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." 15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

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### **Exodus 2 v 11 - 15 (ESV)**

Hebrews explains how this is important:

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

### **Hebrews 11 v 23 - 25**

Sometimes God tells us to do things we don't want to do, or prevents us from doing things that we would like to do. Faith is all about believing and trusting in him - he's not some selfish overlord who is only interested in his own agenda, a life of faith is one that brings satisfaction and joy. Faith is about realising what we were created for, the reason for being.

## **Hope**

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him

### **Genesis 12 v 1 - 4**

Abraham demonstrated faith and hope - faith that God would do what he said he would do, so he trusted him and believed him and did as he was asked. Also hope - hope that he and his wife (who were both old and childless) would found a 'great nation'. Abraham had a faith in God for now, and a hope in God for the future.

8. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth

### **Hebrews 11 v 8 - 9, 13 (ESV)**

The things that Abraham hoped for, he never saw come to fruition. C.f. William Wilberforce (died 3 days after act of parliament was passed to abolish slave trading).

Our ultimate hope is to be with Christ, in salvation, fully enjoying the new heavens and new earth.

"Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next."

"Aim at heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither"

### **C.S. Lewis, Basic Christianity**

Hope for the future is about security and safety in who we are and where we're going. It's about facing life head on because we know that our ultimate destination is a place worth going to.

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### **The way of love, a happy ending.**

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

#### **Romans 15 v 13 (ESV)**

The faith-filled, hopeful life is a life of joy built on the security of knowing we are loved, and will be saved through faith, because of love.

13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

#### **1 Cor 13 v 13 (ESV)**

Part one - God showed us how much he loves us by sending his son to die so that we could have right relationship with him (lives of faith). In his love he showed himself to be faithful, one in whom we can put our faith entirely. He also gave us a hope - never to be rejected, always to be accepted, to receive love, salvation and joy.

How does it work? Believe him, and trust what he says is true, live a life of hope for the certainty of the unseen - a glorious future of an eternity with him. Believe him, trust him, hope in him and find out for yourself.