

6.2 Love: The Excellent and the Everlasting

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Date: 11 September 2022

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[0 : 00] So we're going to turn now to our Bible reading. We are once again in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, and we've reached chapter 13, a well-known and much-loved chapter.

So do turn 1 Corinthians 13 up, and we'll read this whole chapter together. 1 Corinthians 13, beginning at verse 1.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

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.

If I give away all that I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

[1 : 19] Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way.

It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away. For we knew in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 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.

For now we see in a mirror dimly. But then, face to face. Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully.

[2 : 36] Even as I have been fully known. So now, faith, hope, and love abide. These three. But the greatest of these is love.

Well, amen. This is God's word. And we'll return to it shortly. Well, do turn again in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

The love chapter. And isn't love lovely? Well, this passage is one of the best known in all of Scripture.

A passage that has broad appeal. Because it is, in many ways, a masterpiece of prose and poetry. And because in the very fabric of our being, we long for relationships.

We're made for them. And so love resonates with pretty much everybody. And so, as is often thought, where better to find out about love than in the love chapter?

[3 : 49] And so weddings and rom-coms and all kinds of things like that make reference to the beautiful description of love in these verses. But, and I'm sure most of us knew that there was a but coming here.

But, Paul writes these verses for a very particular reason. And it isn't really to say that isn't love lovely. Remember, these verses come at the very heart of the section on the spirituals.

This isn't an aside. This isn't a deviation or a distraction. Paul hasn't lost his train of thought. Quite the opposite. The heart of the issue that surrounds the so-called spiritual gifts.

Although, remember, that isn't actually a category that the Bible ever talks about. Spiritual gifts isn't a Bible phrase. And it isn't a category of things.

But the heart of this issue around who and what is truly spiritual centers on this chapter. The Corinthians have a clear way of defining and determining who the truly spiritual people are.

[5 : 02] And it's by doing overtly spiritual looking things. The thing they seem to hold at the very top of the talent tree is being able to speak in tongues.

Whatever that means. And the truth is we can't be absolutely certain and exact about what Paul and the Corinthians actually mean by speaking in tongues. However, we will see what we can be sure of regarding tongues when we get to chapter 14 next month.

But we can be fairly certain that tongues in Corinth was the marker of the truly spiritual. The mighty Corinthians loved tongues.

And Paul has been painstakingly correcting the mighty Corinthians throughout this letter. So notice where Paul ended chapter 12. He said, be zealous for the higher gifts.

Which isn't the so-called spiritual gifts. Because that isn't a Bible category. But I think he means every gift that is ours in Christ. As Paul says we have in chapter 1 verse 7.

[6 : 13] He says, be zealous for the higher gift. And I will show you a more excellent way. And that excellent way is love. As we see in chapter 13.

And then notice chapter 14 verse 1. How does it begin? Pursue love. So the thread that holds this issue together.

The diagnosis and the cure. Are all found in chapter 13. But I think chapter 13 might be more important than just dealing with the spirituals issue.

Its appeal. Its beauty. Its wonderfully crafted words. Suggest the greatest of care and thought was taken by Paul over this. And indeed the central idea of chapter 13 so vividly describes.

That chapter 13 so vividly describes. Is absolutely in sync with Paul's prescription for the Corinthian disease. Chapter 13 has a prominence.

[7 : 21] A rightful prominence. Because it cuts to the very hearts of the Corinthian problem. So for a church that are divided between the mighty. Who think they have it all now.

Who think that they're kings. And then the weak. Those who are marked not by the glory of resurrection in this age. But who are marked by the weakness of the cross.

That's the divide. And chapter 13 exposes something fundamental that was lacking in Corinth. That fed that divide. They were lacking the genuine and distinguishing mark of the true church.

Of the true church. Of the true people of God. Love. A love modeled after the cross itself. Well let's look at what Paul says about love.

The first thing he says is. That. He shows us the fruitlessness of giftedness without love. Verses 1 to 3. The fruitlessness. Of giftedness without love.

[8 : 22] It's possible to be filled and empowered and endowed with all manner of gifts. And giftedness. And yet be desolate when it comes to love.

And thus to be nothing before God. It happens again and again. That those who are perceived to have the most pronounced gifts. Are the people who are placed in the roles of prominence in the world.

And in the church. But we know that in Christ's church. Character must trump competency. There are many examples in recent times. Where those with flawed and unproven characters.

Have been thrust into positions of great responsibility and influence. Because they're gifted. And when choosing who's going to lead a Christian union at university.

Or when choosing ministry apprentices for a church. Or when choosing those who are going to lead teams and ministries. It's so often the case.

[9 : 25] And so easy to do. That those who can do it all. Those who have natural charisma. And huge capacity. And sharp minds. Those who are wordsmiths.

They fill all the roles. But competence. Without conviction and character. Is open to great corruption. And instead of doing wondrous things with such giftedness.

More harm than good. Can be done. And that's what Paul spells out here. In quite stark language. Verse 1. If I speak in the tongues of men.

And even of angels. But have not love. Then I'm a noisy gong. A clanging cymbal. A lot has been assumed from this verse.

Many speculate that tongues is a heavenly language. A language that angels speak. Because of what Paul says here. But I don't think that is what Paul is saying. He speaks about the tongues of men and angels.

[10 : 27] And he has spoken that way throughout the letter. We've seen angels come up again and again. And his point has nothing to do with the specifics of what is spoken. But instead of what is missing.

In essence. Paul is saying. That in speaking whatever language. The languages of men. Or even if they do think they speak a language normally reserved for angels. Or even if they speak a language that only God himself can understand.

Well if they do even that. But are devoid of love. Then it's nothing. It does nothing. Paul says.

Don't get caught up in the act of speaking. But be concerned with the heart that lies behind the speaking. If the words a church speaks are but a performance. If the act of preaching is what is revered.

Then the lasting fruit of these will be like a loud discordant clashing of symbols. A true church heralds the gospel. Because it's concerned for the fate of humanity.

[11 : 35] Words are spoken and held out. Because love beckons us to. Love for the Lord. And love for his people. He's not a person. He's not a person. He's not a person.

He's not a person. He's not a person. He's not a person. He's not a person. He's not a person. He's not a person. A true minister preaches because he longs that those under his care are being shaped ever more into the likeness of Christ. He preaches because he knows the flock entrusted to him need to be fed.

And there's nothing more loving that he can do than to lift dripping heads to see the wonders of Christ. But it's so easy to distort these things, isn't it?

Look at verse 2. Someone can have the ability to connect the truth of the gospel to every facet of contemporary life. Having deep and profound insights into the gospel.

Full of faith. Bold. Full of endeavor and adventure to achieve things for the Lord. But when there is no love. When it's not flowing out of a genuine love for the Lord and his people.

[12 : 39] Then these things are nothing. Similarly, verse 3. Someone could be the most generous person alive. Giving to everyone in need.

Never passing by someone in the street who asks for money. Always responding to any need in the church or any shortfall in the budget. Someone could even be prepared to do dangerous things for the Lord.

To place themselves in a position where they may lose their lives. But when it isn't done out of love. Then it's nothing. No grand possession of gifts can ever make amends for or excuse or permit.

The lack of the most fundamental mark of the true Christian. Love. Isn't that what Jesus himself said? The thing upon which the world would be able to judge whether we belong to him or not.

Is our love for one another. You may look at verse 3 and find that somewhat surprising. Isn't it loving to give to others? Isn't it loving even to be prepared to give one's life up?

[13 : 49] But we must be wary here. The truth is that not all deeds of sacrifice are done out of love. How easy is it to call love what is actually self-centeredness?

Where we do things for others, yes. But really we're doing them to soothe our own consciences. Or we do things to be seen to do the right things. To be thought of as loving.

Rather than actually wanting to be that. At times of great trouble it's easy for us to assuage our own sense of wanting to be helpful and supportive. And so often that's what can mark our response.

Trying to find means of satisfying our own desire to express love and support. Rather than actually trying to do what will be a real balm to someone in agony. C.S. Lewis talks of this kind of thing, doesn't he?

In the example of Mrs. Fidget. It's worth reading it if you never have. It's in The Four Loves. He describes the woman who let everyone know that she did everything for her family.

[14 : 55] She bent over backwards to be serving her family. Whether they wanted it or not. Because she loved them. So much so that they were burdened by feeling bound to help her.

To help her help them with things that they didn't actually need help with. She exhibits a need to be needed. A want to be wanted. A desire to appear loving for love's sake.

Or in the church. It's very often the case that you can find a devoted martyr. Where I serve more than any.

Oh, if only people noticed all that I do. If only others served as much as I do. Nobody ever notices. Nobody ever gives thanks. Why do I bother?

But I'll keep on serving so that I can keep on complaining to others about it. Except that isn't done for the Lord, is it? When done like that, it's done for ourselves.

[16 : 02] The Lord has gifted each and every one of us uniquely. Making us into a body where every single one of us is indispensable for each other. And we are to pour ourselves out for one another.

And there's a danger for us. That the more our service is seen. The more obvious it is. The more appreciated it will become. And the more plodits we will receive.

And the more we want to do it for those reasons. Look at what Paul says. Those who display giftedness without love. Love for the Lord and his people.

Verse 1. They're like clanging cymbals. Good for nothing. Verse 2. They are nothing.

Verse 3. They gain nothing. And notice too what Paul says. Or he doesn't say the gift of prophetic powers is nothing without love.

[17:08] Notice what he says. He says, If I speak in tongues but have not love. I do nothing. I am nothing.

I gain nothing. He doesn't focus on gifts. Because that isn't a biblical category. But instead he focuses on the individual.

Whatever you or I do. If we have not love. We do. And we gain nothing. Well that's a chastening word.

But Paul doesn't leave us there. For he goes on to show us the face of genuine love. Verses 4 to 7. He shows us the face of genuine love. Now love is not an abstract thing.

It's not a sentimental feeling. Love has a face. Love comes to us. Embodied. There are two ways that Paul uses these verses.

[18:08] To make his point to the Corinthians. Firstly he uses them to expose what the Corinthians are not. And secondly he uses them to once again draw them to the cross of Christ.

To its power and its pattern. So first. Exposing what the Corinthians are not. Though these are beautiful words.

If you were a member of Christ Church Corinth. This was anything but a lovely message. This is the second passage in 1 Corinthians that could be read and thought.

Oh isn't that a really lovely encouragement. Back in chapter 1 the letter opens with Paul talking very expansively about what Christians have been given. And how all Christians have been given everything in Christ.

And there is great encouragement in that. But Paul was writing it to the Corinthians. And to them it was unbelievably pointed. He was telling them.

[19:10] That they were nothing special. They are just like all other Christians. Who have received all things in Christ. So they can't be particularly special as they'd like to be.

So that was the first instance of positive and encouraging words. Actually being a bit of a poke in the eye. Well if that was a poke in the eye. Verses 4 to 7. Are an almighty slap in the face.

For every last phrase here. Whilst beautiful. Is also a description of what the Corinthians are not. Verse 4.

Love is patient. But you Corinthians couldn't even wait for your brothers. As you met for the fellowship meal. For communion. In chapter 11. Love is kind.

But you Corinthians aren't. You're happy to let your sisters go hungry again. Chapter 11. Love does not envy or boast. It's not arrogant.

[20:11] But you Corinthians are. And do. Constantly vying for the highest place. Jealous of others excelling. And boasting and arrogant. Despite a brother making a mess.

And destroying himself in sin. In chapter 5. Love isn't rude. Or perhaps more helpfully. Love doesn't act in ways that are unbecoming. And yet the Corinthians are riddled with behaviors.

That are ungodly. Verse 5. Love doesn't insist on its own way. But you Corinthians do. Who cares if my eating temple food corrupts a brother and ruins his soul.

I'm free to do it. So I'm going to eat the food. Chapters 8 to 10. Love isn't irritable. Or perhaps more helpfully.

Love isn't easily provoked. And it isn't resentful. Or perhaps more familiarly for us. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs. But you Corinthians do.

[21:12] Taking one another to court. Instead of forgiving. Verse 6. Love doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing or unrighteousness. But rejoices in the truth.

And yet this is the church. You have been given to sexual immorality. And prostitutes. And idol worship. And just about every kind of unrighteousness. Do you see what Paul is doing?

Yes. It's done with beautifully crafted words. But nonetheless. This is an almighty rebuke. Friends.

Corinth was a church riddled with all kinds of problems. And we know and we've seen. That they all stem from the one problem. They treat one another as rivals.

Not relatives. They don't love one another. And they treat this world as ultimate. Wanting it all now.

And that's a festering sickness.

[22 : 09] That will destroy any church. Well what about us? Let me read Paul's words. Inserting our church into them.

And think about whether that prompts. A wince and a shudder. Or whether it prompts. A heart of thankfulness. For what the Lord is making us. The Tron church is patient.

And kind. The Tron church does not envy or boast. They aren't arrogant. Or rude. The Tron church doesn't insist on its own way.

Tron church isn't easily provoked. They don't keep a record of wrongs. They don't rejoice at wrongdoing. But rejoice in the truth.

Well friends. We ought to rejoice. And give thanks for every instance. Where that is true. And I can think of many examples.

[23 : 07] Where I've been treated like that. Where I've experienced real love. And seen love modeled. By this church family. But I imagine as we listen to that. It won't take long for us to recall.

Times where we haven't done those things. Where we've neglected them. Or times where we've been hurt by others. Well we bring all these things to the Lord Jesus.

And by his help. We long to grow in love. More today than yesterday. And more today. More tomorrow than today. But Paul was using examples here.

Specific to Corinth. And perhaps. As a church. We need to weigh. If he'd use the same examples of us. Maybe some would be the same. As we've considered. Or would he say to us.

Something like. Love is quick to deal with problems. Between us. Quickly. Quick to speak directly. To those. We have an issue with. Quick.

[24 : 05] To forgive. Or would he say to us. Love. Both rejoices. With those who are rejoicing. But also recognizes. That our gifts of wealth. Of marriage.

Of children. May be the very things. Our dear brothers and sisters. Are desperately struggling. To be without. Would he say to us.

Love lets no member. Drift away unnoticed. And uncared for. Paul's using these words. To diagnose. And expose. Well here's the question.

For those longing. To be spiritually mature. How's your love. That's the measure. But Paul doesn't. Paul does more than poke. The Corinthians here. He. He doesn't leave. Our shutters. Shuddering on. Because secondly. In these verses. We see love. Personified. Paul is using.

[25 : 05] Language here. That. Anthropomorphizes. Love. That means. He's attributing. Human traits to it. Do you see. That in verses four to six. The language he use.

He uses. Is used as if love. Were a person. He gives love a face. Because love isn't. A fuzzy and warm feeling.

Love. Is a series of choices. Thousands of choices. Day after day. To lay oneself. Down. For the flourishing. And prospering. Of another. Love says.

Not I. But them. I've already. Mentioned. How widely. Adored. This passage is. And whilst it is.

A very strong rebuke. I think the reason. It's so adored. Is because. These verses. Don't simply. Articulate. A description. Of love. It can be tempting.

[26 : 00] To ridicule. Using this. As a reading. For a wedding. Or other such occasions. Because. In context. It's a rebuke. But the reason. I think. That this passage. Draws such admiration.

Is because. It's a description. Of the beauty. Of Jesus. Jesus. Is the face. Of love. He's the embodiment. Of it. The personification. Of it.

It's right. To find. These verses. Attractive. Because. Jesus. Is patient. Patient. Beyond. Our understanding. Patient.

With us. Because. Jesus. Is kind. Kind. Beyond. Measure. And reason. Kind. To us. Because.

Jesus. Turned. Down. The highest. Place. That Satan. Tempted him. With. The highest. Place. In this world. He turned it. Down. Forgoing. Boosting. Jesus.

[26 : 56] Didn't. Insist. In his own way. Did he? Instead. He said. Not my will. But yours be done. And Jesus. Doesn't keep a record. Of our wrongs.

Does he? Quite the opposite. Because of him. As far as east. Is from the west. So far. Does he remove. Our transgressions. From us. Love.

Is cross-shaped. And Jesus. Is love. And so. Whatever lack. We're conscious of. We can find it. In him. Paul.

Simultaneously. Rebukes. The Corinthians. And points them again. To the place. Where grace is found. This is Paul. Preaching. Christ. Crucified.

As he's been doing. Throughout the whole letter. The Corinthians. Obsessed. Over what makes. One truly spiritual. Paul's answer. Is the truly spiritual. Are those. Who are like Jesus.
[27 : 52] Those. Who cling. To the word. Of the cross. And live. And embody. The way. Of the cross. And so.

Look back again. At verses one to three. Do you notice. That Paul speaks. As if. He was talking about himself. If I speak. If I have. If I give.
And it's possible. That this is yet another example. Of Paul saying. Imitate me. As I imitate. Jesus. For this love.

That is described. Is the way of the cross. Isn't it? It's Paul's very pattern. Of ministry. Listen to James Philip. On this. He says. We err greatly.

When we. Sometimes speak. As if love. Were an easy thing. The fallacy. Is to confuse it. With the occasional generosity. That we all feel. In particular circumstances.

[28 : 49] Towards people. To whom we may feel. Well disposed. No. Love. Is something. Planted. By the finger of God. In a renewed heart. It is only.

Crucified people. Who can love. The Lord Jesus. Is love. Embodied. And because that is true. We are granted. Both the power of the cross.

That saves us. And the pattern of the cross. That shapes us. We can truly love. Because we know. True love. And so as we cling.

To the word of the cross. Which for feeling. Needful human beings. Is all that we have. As we cling to that. We are also called. And through God's grace. And gifting.

We are also capable. Of claiming the way of the cross. As our own. Which is why it is possible. For a church like this. To model and exemplify love.

[29 : 49] And with it. We are enabled. To verse 7. To bear all things. For one another. To not give up on each other. But bearing.

With one another. And we are enabled together. To believe all things. And hope all things. And endure all things. So.

What does love look like. In a church. It looks like. It looks like. It looks like the cross. In all of our relationships. It looks like.

Each one of us. Laying ourselves down. For the sake of the rest of the body. It looks like. Crucifying our envy. Our pride.

And our ambition. Or to put it another way. What love is. Is shown by what love does. And the great.
[30 : 46] Show of love. Is the cross. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well finally. Paul says. That.

The Corinthians. Were mistaking the journey. For the destination. Verses 8 to 13. Paul says. That the Corinthians. Were mistaking the journey. For the destination.

God's people. Are given. All manner of gifts. For the building up. Of the church. These gifts. Will pass away. But love.

Christ likeness. That's the goal. Look at verse 8. Paul says. Love. Never ends. But.

All the various gifts. God grants. To his people. They will pass away. Whether it be. Prophecies. Or tongues. They'll cease. And I think. What Paul is saying. Is that the Corinthians.

[31 : 39] Have fallen in love. With the flight. And not the holiday. I remember being told. As a. As a child. That we were going on holiday. And we were. Going to be flying there.

And as young children do. My brother and I. Were literally. Bouncing in excitement. Wow. A plane. Flying. What an experience. But doesn't that wear off.

Quickly. Most people tolerate. Flights. Because they serve a purpose. At first. There can be great excitement. But a size. From a select few.

Most of us. Put up with a long wait. In airports. Being loaded. Like cattle. Into a long tube. That flies. And we do that. Because nothing. Quite compares. To the feeling.

Of the airplane door. Opening. And you're reminded again. That the sun. Does exist. And the warm. Fits you. And you know. That for the next week. You can relax.

[32 : 34] The holiday. Is the goal. Not the flight. But the Corinthians. Treat the gifts. That God gives them. Like a child. Preparing for their first flight.

In fact. Look. At verse. Verse 11. Childish. Is the very words. Used by Paul. For what the Corinthians. Were doing. I discovered.

Through my nieces. And nephews. That getting a young child. A thoughtful present. Can be a somewhat. Mixed experience. Very often. They open the presents. And they're more interested. In

the packaging.

Well here. Paul is showing. That the Corinthian. Preoccupation. With prophecy. And tongues. And all the various ways. That God gifts his people. For the church. That was not a sign. Of spiritual maturity. But of spiritual childishness. It's so easy. For us. To long. For the gifts of God. To long. For what we have not. And are not.

[33 : 30] In order to be. Somewhat more spiritual. But brothers and sisters. We are not. Lacking. As a body together. We have. And are. All that we need.

And so look at what Paul says. He says. Verse 10. A day is coming. When the perfects. Will come. And the partial. Will pass away. The perfect.

Is Jesus return. The partial. Are all the different ways. That we are gifted. At Jesus return. We won't need. Gifts anymore. We won't need.

Those who can preach to us. Those who can draw out. The truth. Of the Bible. Because at Jesus return. We will see. That reality. Will be transformed.

Fully and finally. Forever. So that we actually. Love perfectly. Because love is the goal. That day is the goal.

[34 : 27] And the ways we are gifted. Here and now. Are simply things. That will help us get there. Verse 12. For now we see in a mirror dimly. But then.

Face to face. For now we know in part. Then we shall fully know. Turn back again. To chapter 1. Verse 7. Paul tells the Corinthians.

That they were not lacking. In any gift. We saw that last week. But look at what their gifts are for. They don't lack any gift.

As they wait. As you wait. For the revealing. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. First. We know. And love Jesus. Now. By faith.

It's really. And truly him. Who we trust. And adore. But a day is coming. When we'll know him. And love him. By sight. For now.

[35 : 27] We know him. In a. In an indirect way. That's. That's what the word dimly. Literally. Means here. One theologian. Talks of. Revelation. In the old covenant. As a.

As a sketch. Drawing of the reality. But in the new covenant. What we have now. We have greater revelation. And what we. Have is more like a full color. Drawing or painting.

We can see it more vividly. But they're both still drawings. And paintings. A day is coming. When we will see. And know the real thing.

Fully. For now. We see Christ in a mirror. Indirectly. But a day is coming. When we will see him.

Fully. And directly. Not a painting. A drawing.

But him. We'll see. A new Jesus. Face to face. And we'll see. A new love itself. Face to face. In all of its perfection. On that day.

[36 : 22] We won't see prophecy. Or tongues. Or any other gift. In the myriad ways. That we are gifted. As a church. Because these things.

Are here. To help us grasp. In the here and now. Something of the glory. Of Christ. But that. On that day. We'll have it. We'll see it. All our various gifts.

That we pour out. In service of one another. These are given. To help us. Toward that last day. So that. We're always growing in love. For that day. Will be the day. We're made perfect.

And perfection. Will. Verse 13. Verse 13. Be love shaped. Notice what. Paul says there. He says. Faith. Hope and love abides.

But notice what he says last. The greatest of these. Is love. Why is that? Well I think it's because. At the last day. Faith. Will become sight.

[37 : 21] Hope. Will become reality. It won't. Any longer be something. That we're longing for. And looking forward to. You will have it. But what will love be? Love will still be love.

For love is of God. And God is infinite. And eternal. The Corinthians. Wanted to experience. Heaven. Here and now. But they thought.

They sought it. In the wrong places. Mistaking. The things that will help us. Get there. The gifts. For the place itself. Paul is telling us. That we can have a taste of it.

Here and now. Every time. We exercise. Sacrificial love. Giving out our substance.

Freely. Lavishly. Unreservedly. To invest in our brothers and sisters. Every time we help someone. Even when it's inconvenient. Every time we.

[38 : 19] Have people around our dinner table. Even though. It means foregoing something nice for ourselves. Every time we take. Time of a busy week. To help someone who's struggling.

That is a fortieth of heaven itself. Every act. Of choosing. Not I. But them. Is a fortieth. Of heaven. Friends. A truly spiritual church. Pours itself out. To see one another. Growing. In Christ like love. Love. That's. What maturity looks like. Because on the day.

That we are made mature. That's. What we'll look like. Perfectly. Let's pray. Love.

Love. Divine. All love's excelling. Joy of heaven. To earth come down. Oh. Gracious father. How we thank you. For the Lord Jesus.

[39 : 24] Help us. To see new beauties. In Christ's love. Help us. To comprehend. The delights. Of sacrifice. help us from this day forth that every fond ambition might perish and we would be a people marked forever forevermore by the love of Christ for us and at work within us and we pray in Jesus name Amen