



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 13: 1-7

1 Corinthians

"True Love"

TRANSCRIPT

We are continuing our study in 1 Corinthians and we've come to chapter 13 this morning, and we're going to look at verses 1 through 7 of 1 Corinthians 13, a wonderful chapter. If we're familiar with one chapter in the book of 1 Corinthians, I suspect it's this one.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of , but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." May the Lord bless this reading of His word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

Father, what a privilege to be here this morning. The weather is not particularly nice and pleasant, but it's pleasant to be here, pleasant to be with Your people, certainly pleasant to be gathered around Your word, to read it and think about it, consider the meaning of the text and how it applies to us. And so Father, I pray that as we do that, as we sing another hymn of praise, as we do what we're doing now, as we pray to You, as we worship and learn, I'd pray that You'd bless us and make this a very profitable time for us. We take on a very significant text of Scripture. Of course, every passage in the Bible is infinitely significant. This has direct, very obvious, palpable application to us.

This text on love. And so I pray Lord that You would teach us, build us up in the faith. Do what you did to Lydia when she heard Paul preaching there by the riverside in Philippi. Opened her heart to receive the things that were spoken by the apostle. May we have our hearts open to receive the things that the apostle wrote to those ancient Corinthians, but that apply very much to us equally to us today in the modern times. May the spirit of God minister to us and apply these great principles of truth to us. So Lord, may this not be simply a time of listening, of hearing a sermon, but taking no real note of it. May You impress upon us the importance of this subject that the apostle Paul brings to us this morning. So we commit it all to You. We pray for the Spirit's ministry this morning. That it will be effective in the lives of each and every one of us. Convict us where we need to be convicted, encourage us where we need to be encouraged. Build us up in the faith. Bless this hour. We pray that for tonight's meeting. We pray You'd bless us. We pray that You'd bless the meetings during the week, whenever Your people are being instructed in the faith. We pray that You would open their hearts to receive it. We pray that the Spirit of God would minister to us through Your word and bless us.

So, Father, thank You for this time. Bless us spiritually, but Lord we pray also for ourselves materially. We pray for our physical needs. Go down the lists of prayer requests in our bulletin, and not every request is there. You know all of the needs of every person and You know them far better than we do, but we think of those whose requests have been made known to us. We pray for them. We pray You'd bless them, those who are recovering from surgery. We pray that You'd encourage them, and heal them, and restore them to health very soon, those that are without employment and are seeking it, we pray that You would benefit them with that, bless them with that, open doors of opportunity, give them patience in the meantime, help them to rest in You and trust You. And I pray that, Lord, for those who are simply discouraged in life. We all go through that. Life can be very hard, very discouraging. Encourage them in the midst of that. May the Spirit of God minister to them. He is our comforter. He is the one who gives encouragement. I pray that He would do that and stir their souls to rest in You and know that You are in complete control at every moment. It's hard to remember that sometimes, Father, but You are. As we consider who You are. Just in the daily things of life, the way You take care of Your people daily. And then we think of how You have settled our fate once and for all, our future is secure because of what Your Son has done for us, and that we who deserve Your eternal wrath have been plucked from that like a

brand from the burning. And have been given eternal life, a glorious future. And in the meantime, You're providing for us. Father, that should stir within us hearts of gratitude and hearts that are full of love for You, and that then are responsive in love to those around us. That should be what takes place in us every day, and that's what we're encouraged to have from our texts. So, Father, bless us with that. Help us to put aside all of the details and the concerns of life that are certainly valid, but right now Lord, help us to clear our minds of those things and just think about Your truth and Your word, and bless us and build us up in the faith. [End of Prayer] We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] Some of you will remember from high school math, the formula "A-squared plus B-squared equals C-square." Meaning, in a right-sided triangle, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. You remember that. Neither did I. But, it's the Pythagorean theorem. I read an article recently on the history of that. It was kind of interesting. Not terribly interesting, but kind of interesting. Pythagoras lived in the 6th century BC. He had a group of followers, a cult of mathematicians that reveled in number theory. It was the theories that fascinated them. They found mathematical harmonies everywhere in nature, and according to the article, considered material objects a corruption of pure eternal mathematical forms. It was the idea of math, not the function of it, that fascinated them.

Now, most people, I think, are not like that. Most people who understand math and the Pythagorean theorem aren't like that. They find its value in its application, not in some abstract beauty. From the time of the pyramids to the present, people have used math in things from designing buildings and inventing bombs to balancing checkbooks. That's the value, that's the beauty of math. Love is like math in that way, and I never thought that I'd ever put love and math together, but there's a similarity. There are people who write poetry about love, who sing about love, who are in love with love, but don't know how to live love. It's all theory.

Not the apostle Paul. He understood love. One of the best-known passages of the Bible, in fact, all of literature, is 1 Corinthians 13, Paul's masterpiece on love. It's been called the "Hymn of Love," and we can read it like a hymn. We can study it by itself. We can learn a lot by simply reading 1 Corinthians 13 and considering the things that he said about love.

But it was intended for a larger context. Paul wasn't writing about some abstract

idea or some feeling. He was being very specific. This has to do with issues in Corinth, and a church that felt good about itself, about its maturity, about its spirituality, about its giftedness. And as we have seen and as we will see, it was a very gifted church. It was blessed with spiritual gifts, but there were problems.

So Paul put this passage on love between chapters 12 and 14, where he is explaining the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts. In chapter 12, he ranks the gifts, lists them according to their importance, and tells the Corinthians to desire the greater gifts: the gifts of prophecy and teaching. In chapter 14 he again tells them: desire earnestly spiritual gifts.

But in between is chapter 13, in which Paul tells the Corinthians what he calls "a more excellent way." It is the way of love. And here, he gives the Corinthians perspective or clarity on gifts, and ministry, and the Christian life. More important than any gift of the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit. Love is not a substitute for the gifts. Paul doesn't mean that. It is a way of life. And it makes the use of gifts a blessing. It gives meaning and depth to spiritual gifts. Without it, without love, they are worthless.

So, this chapter is not some general thoughts on love and affection. It's not theory on love. It is about love in a specific instruction about love. It is about the church. It is about Christian love. It never fails, he writes. This is true love.

Paul begins by emphasizing its importance. He does that by comparing it with some great abilities and deeds in order to show that without love, they are a waste. We can speak with the tongues of men, he says, which is a reference to the spiritual gift of tongues, that supernatural gift to speak foreign languages. We can do that. We can do even better, he says; I think he's speaking hypothetically here, but he says we can speak the language of angels. We can speak heavenly languages. But without love, we're nothing.

Well, that's just as true of eloquence. Take it out of the realm of spiritual gifts. Just look at a person's natural ability. Being able to give speeches and sermons that are so persuasive that they can excite people's emotions and even move nations and armies to march. That's a great gift. That's a great ability. But without love, such activity is just noise, like the sound of a gong or cymbals. It produces a crash and a clang, but no melody. It's the product of self-importance. Love is the opposite of that. The love Paul speaks of is *agape*, a word that's, well, to modern Christians, a very familiar term. It's very much in our own parlance today. But it wasn't so in the 1st century. It wasn't

invented by the church. That's been a theory and a thought in the past that this word, *agape*, was invented by the apostles, it's a product of the church. That's not the case. It was in use long before the 1st century. It was used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It was used 20 times, according to one count. But Christians did adopt it, and it is used 116 times in the New Testament. So it has become a very Christian word. In fact, Paul really gave it its decisive meaning, its Christian meaning.

Leon Morris, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians defines *agape* as "love lavished on others without a thought whether they are worthy or not." That's a good definition. Love is spontaneous. It is unmotivated. It is free. It is unconditional. Now, when I say it is unmotivated, I don't mean that in an absolute sense, 'cause that's not completely correct. At least our love for God and others motivate our love for one another. So, there is a sense of motivation. Love is really an expression, our love for others is an expression of our love for the Lord. It is what really motivates us to love. The Lord has given us the greatest expression of love. And as we consider His love for us, it does affect us. And of course, the greatest expression of love, the highest example of love, is the work of Christ. It's the work of Christ on the cross.

But Paul says that, in effect, in Romans chapter 5 and verse 8. He says God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God didn't love us or choose us and send His Son to die for us because we were so lovable. We were not. We were ungodly. That's what He says elsewhere. Here, He says we're sinners. We're rebels. That's when God loved us. That's when God sent His Son to die for us. And yet, when we were enemies, and He did that, He did the greatest thing for us. He does it in many ways all around us. We see His love. We see His love and His providential care for His creation. We see it in the way He provides physical life for everyone, the rain and the sunshine shine and fall on the wicked and the just alike.

But, not only did He do that for us, not only did He give us physical life and all the provisions of life, and did that for so many, He gave His own Son for us, to die for us, to redeem and save us. When we were His enemies, when we were sinners. Well, that is great love. That is the great expression of love. There's no higher standard than that. And so, we see that, and it moves us. It should. I don't think we can understand that. I don't think we can understand the cross of Christ and the eternal love of God that moved Him to choose us and to redeem us at such great cost without being affected by it. That's

the motivation for a selfless love, *agape* love. What Paul says is necessary for anything we do to be of any real value.

So, it is as I say, spontaneous, and it's unmotivated in the sense that it doesn't seek something from another as the pretext or reason for acting. But certainly, what does motivate it is what God's done for us. It's essential. Now, here we have one verse, and he's said all of that. And I think as you consider it, what is just said in verse 1, we realize what a significant text this is, what an important chapter this is, what vital instruction Paul is giving us. We go back to chapter 3 where Paul tells us that every man's work is going to be tested. It's going to be put through the fire to see what has been built on the foundation of Christ. Is it gold, silver, and precious stones? Or is it wood, hay, and stubble? Some men are going to pass through the fire and their life is going to amount to ashes. And that is true of everyone whose life is not infused with love. So we see the importance of this. It is a very important text of Scripture that we're considering.

He continues his comparisons in verses 2 and 3. "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not love, I am nothing." Notice, Paul doesn't say, "if I have knowledge," or "if I have a lot of knowledge." But, "if I have all knowledge." If I know everything. If I can foretell the future and explain the unknown, if I can explain the beginning of the universe, if I can explain man's origin and man's destiny, but I do all of that without love, I am nothing. That's amazing.

That's amazing to me because there are few things that we value more today than knowledge. In fact, that's true for man throughout history. Knowledge is power. Yet, knowledge without love is loss. And Paul even magnifies power itself with faith that can move mountains. As spectacular as that is, as great a work as that is, it is all loss without love.

Now, Paul doesn't mean that there is no profit at all, that there's no profit for those who learn. We can be blessed by someone who has knowledge, and explains things for us. If a man is in this pulpit, and he's teaching you the Word of God, and he's teaching you accurately, you're learning something. You're being benefited by that. The truth is the truth, and the truth will have a good effect upon you. It will have an influence on you, and that's good. But that's not his point here. He's saying there's no benefit to that man in the pulpit if he's doing that, and doing great things and true things, prophesying, teaching, whatever, if he does these things without love. Paul says, regardless of what he

does. He could have all kinds of knowledge; he can have all knowledge. But, without love, he's nothing.

A person might get a lot of accolades, he might get a professorship. No doubt, someone with a lot of knowledge will get that. But, in the end, at the judgment, when it all really ultimately matters, there will be no reward for those great feats of knowledge without love. Same is true of acts of sacrifice, whether I give away all of my possessions to feed the poor or I give my body to be burned. If I do it without love, it profits me nothing. Well, these are even more astonishing than the other examples. Philanthropy to the point of self-improvement and surrender to the point of self-immolation seems to be the ultimate acts of selfless dedication.

But the fact is: charitable acts and even martyrdom can be caused by lower motives. Andrew Carnegie made a fabulous fortune, and I know you hear his name pronounced Car-nay-gee now, and I guess it's a correction of the old pronunciation, but I'm stuck with the old pronunciation. Now, the story of Carnegie is an interesting story. It's one of rags to riches. He emigrated from Scotland as a child. He went from being a factory worker to a steel tycoon. He wrote an article titled "The Gospel of Wealth" which was later expanded into a book. But in the article, he said the rich should give away their riches. He ended the article saying, "The man who dies rich dies disgraced." He practiced what he preached. He distributed his wealth. He used it to build libraries and establish a foundation. They were known as Carnegie Libraries, and the Carnegie Foundation. There is the Carnegie Institute, the Carnegie-Mellon University, and Carnegie Hall. A lot of buildings and organizations with his name on them. He died very rich, by the way.

Who knows his motive? I'm not to judge his motive. It may have been pure, but a person can be charitable in order to publicize his name. A person can go to the stake and become a martyr for self-glory. Some of us remember the Buddhist monks who burned themselves in Saigon in the early 1960s. I still have a vivid image of that in my mind. And now, across the Middle-East are those who make themselves human bombs. That's fanaticism. There's no love in it. It is destructive. People can sacrifice their lives, and their fortunes for self and misguided reasons. Now, having said that, it's better that people feed the poor than be stingy and let them starve. But Paul is saying: before God, at the judgment, acts of charity and self-sacrifice count for zero without love.

The Corinthians spoke in tongues. They had knowledge. They even did

miracles. Maybe some of the wealthy ones used their money to help the poor people.

They thought they were spiritual, but Paul tells them, without love, they were nothing.

Love is indispensable. It gives worth to all that a Christian does and has to his gifts, his ministry to his life, her life. Love is essential.

So what is it? Paul answers that in the next four verses where he moves from emphasizing the necessity of love to explaining the nature of love. But he finds it easier to describe it than to define it. His explanation is more about what love does than what love is. There's nothing sentimental about it. Paul doesn't say, "Love is ecstasy. Love is happiness. Love is feeling." Nothing like that. It may result in all of that, and there's nothing wrong with the feelings that accompany love. That's very nice. That's inevitable, I think, to some extent. But basically what he tells us here is: love behaves. Love sacrifices. He does that by describing it both positively and negatively. He begins with two positive characteristics. "Love is patient, love is kind." Those who exhibit love do so by waiting. They don't rush or push people. They are patient. That's a gift of the Spirit. But love is patient. Patience endures a wrong suffered without retaliation. Kindness pays back a hurt with goodness. That's positively. But negatively, Paul says love is not jealous, doesn't envy. That may be directed to those Corinthians who didn't have the gift of tongues, or didn't have the gift of prophecy, and they envied those who did. In fact, maybe they weren't using the gift that they had because they considered it small, insignificant. They wanted to be like those people who had those more public, impressive gifts. There's envy there. There's jealousy there. Paul may be addressing that there.

But then, the next description, if that's the case, would be for those with the gifts. "Love doesn't brag and is not arrogant." It's not proud. A person's not proud if he or she is not proud, because of what we said a moment ago, what we said about the cross, what we said about grace, because he or she understands grace, understands that whatever gift he or she has, whether it's a physical gift, a material gift, or a spiritual gift. Whatever he or she has is no ground for boasting. Because all of it, all that we have, all that we do, all of our accomplishments are a gift from God. They all needed to remember that. We need to remember that. We need to remember that, first of all, we are all part of a body. We're all part of the Body of Christ. All of our gifts are part of that and for one another. They're all inseparable, indispensable. They are for a good purpose, a common good. And then remember that, again, as I said, they are all a gift. They're not earned. Gifts

Paul made that point to them way back now in chapter 4 and verse 7. We've been dealing with this issue of pride all through the studies of 1 Corinthians. That seems to be the heart of the problem with these people. But there in chapter 4, he reminds them with a rhetorical question. He says, "What do you have that you've not received?" And if you've received it, why do you act as though you had not received it? What do you have that you did not receive? Well, nothing. Meaning, everything we have, we have received. When a person understands that, understands that everything that we have, whether it's our wealth, or health, our gifts, it is all a work of God, a gift of God. Even our accomplishments. That's not to take away the hard work that people do, because we will not have accomplishments and success if we don't work diligently hard at it. Nothing that Paul says here precludes hard work. No one worked harder than the apostle Paul to spread the gospel and to serve the Lord. But even that's a gift of God. That's what he's saying. And it's a gift of God. It's the work of God that guarantees our success in it. But there's no ground for boasting at anything. It's all God's gift to us.

In verse 5, he says that "love does not act unbecomingly." This has a wide range of meaning from not being indecent to not being rude. So, it can have the idea of simply treating people with respect. Not treating them with disrespect. Love does not do that. It shows everyone common courtesy, regardless of their station or their status in life. There's an insight observation to the effect that you can spot a gentleman not by the way he addresses his king, but by the way he addresses his servants. And that's true. A person might address a king or a boss with courtesy out of self-interest. He wants to keep his head. He wants to keep his job. But he's considered to his employees, due to character, which leads to the next characteristic of love. It does not seek its own. It's not wrong to look out for one's own best interests. In fact, that's only wise. It's foolish to be unconcerned about one's health and welfare and safety. But love doesn't put self first at the expense of others.

A lot of the problems in the Corinthian church are traced to that very problem. Some of them were abusing their freedom by eating idol food, without regard to the weaker brethren at all. Not being concerned about them, and abusing their Christian liberties. Many of them are hosting the Lord's supper in their home without any sensitivity for others. As a result, they consumed everything before the poorer members arrived.

A little later in chapter 14, Paul will correct some of the others in the church for, in the meeting of the church, interrupting speakers so that they could give their revelations. Evidently, they felt that they were very important, more important than what was being done. Rather than observe some protocol and some order in the meeting, they would interrupt, and Paul rebukes that.

All of that is self-seeking. All of that is putting self first. It is not love. Putting it positively, CK Barrett, in his commentary says, "Love is prepared to give up for the sake of others, even what it is entitled to." That is so contrary to our nature. How often do we hear, or how often do we ourselves say or think, "I have my rights." I'm going to stand up for my rights. Love doesn't always do that. Sometimes it's proper to do that, no doubt. But as Barrett says, love's prepared to give up for the sake of others, even what it is entitled to, if it's for the others' benefit or good.

Next, Paul says, "Love is not provoked and does not take into account a wrong suffered." Those who love are not touchy. They don't lose their temper over little things. They're not easily provoked. The proverbs speak of being slow to anger. That's true of love. It doesn't mean a neighbor won't get on our nerves at time. That happens, but love prevents a person from being provoked and responding in an impulsive, regrettable way. And, when it's more serious than that, when there's real injury physically, financially. Paul says we don't keep record of it. We don't take it into account.

King James Version has, "Thinketh no evil." Now, that's a good thing to do. To not think evil. But, the word "think here" is an accounting term. It really has the idea of impute. So, love doesn't impute evil to people. If there's no evidence for it. In other words, it's not malicious. It doesn't spread gossip. It doesn't spread rumors. It doesn't impute evil to people, nor does it put that evil to our own account in the sense of counting up offenses. That's what we tend to do, isn't it? When we're offended by someone, we tend to hold onto that. We tend to file it away and remember that. Love doesn't do that. It doesn't keep a list of grievances. That only leads to a cycle of mutual accusations and recriminations. Now, having said this, it doesn't mean that we ignore evil. We take no account of it at all. We can't do that. There are legitimate legal ways to do that, to punish evil and prevent it, and really, helping enforce the law is an act of love for a victim and for all society. And when we see it in the church, when we see it in other people, and we see that there is a harmful tendency among these people, we need to take account of that for the good of others, for the welfare of the assembly, for the welfare of society.

But Paul's point here is: we don't hold on to personal grievances. Love doesn't keep score and brood over personal hurts. That leads to the next characteristics of love given in verse 6. "Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth." The Corinthians had taken pleasure in wrongdoing when they tolerated that young man who was living in an immoral relationship, which Paul deals with back in chapter 5. That may be something of what Paul is thinking of here, but we sometimes do this when we gloat over to another person's failure. It's used by others, by opponents, I should say, to advance oneself, to take pleasure in a person's fall.

Paul says, "Do not rejoice in unrighteousness." There was, I think, in the Corinthians' church, this competitive spirit. And evidently when there was a fall within the church, others gloated a bit in that. It was seen as an opportunity to exalt themselves. We see that in our own day. We see it very commonly in politics. That's the way the system often works. Men have a moral failure and their political opponents capitalize upon that and use it to their advantage to advance themselves and remove a person who is their opponent, poetically, or their rival. We expect that in politics; we expect that in the world. Doesn't excuse it, but we expect that there. The problem is it can happen in the church as well, and shouldn't. Proverbs warn against that. The Lord sees it when we rejoice in the fall of an enemy, and turns His wrath away from him. That's what Solomon writes in Proverbs 24 verses 17 and 18. The Lord is cognizant of those things. He is not pleased when we rejoice in the fall of an enemy. Love isn't happy with another's failure. It's grieved by it. It rejoices in truth. It is honest. Love doesn't have an affinity with spin. It doesn't twist the facts to protect or promote self.

Paul concludes this portion of the chapter, his description here in verse 7: "Love," he says, "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Now, obviously, all doesn't mean all without exception. We don't hope for everything good and bad. We don't hope for tragedy. We don't believe everything, even slander. Paul isn't suggesting that love is gullible; love is wise. It isn't naïve. It is kind. It is generous. It gives people the benefit of the doubt. It believes and it hopes all things. That, I think, is what Paul is saying here. The all here is all good things, and Paul is saying in this last sentence, that love can face anything, any challenge, any difficulty, and suffer all kinds of challenges. Can suffer everything. That's love. When we think of love, we often think of falling in love. We think of the stuff of those dreamy songs are about. We think of feelings of happiness. But what Paul says is: love bears a lot of pain. It's not always

easy. It's not always pleasant. It behaves well, and it sacrifices a lot.

In fact, you'll notice that this description of love is composed all of verbs. It doesn't say love is. He says love does. Love is active. Love is active. Love is obedient. And that's consistent with the Lord's teaching in John chapter 14 and verse 15. He says, "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments."

But that's difficult, isn't it? We don't keep His commandments. We don't keep them consistently. In fact, this whole passage of 1 Corinthians 13 is more than a little disheartening if you're really thinking about the things that Paul wrote here. You have to wonder: who can live like this? The more I keep talking, the more I keep wondering about that. Who can measure up to this standard that Paul has set for us? The answer to that is no one, of course. This is really the love of God and His character that is revealed in this passage. It is certainly the opposite of the natural man. This is not natural to people. But then, the Christian life is not a natural life. It's not the life of the natural man. It is a supernatural life. It is all of the Lord. It's the life that God lives out in us. The Christian life is the work of the Spirit of God within us. And as we study Scripture and as we live by faith, we are changed. The Spirit of God applies the Word of God to us to transform us increasingly into the image of God. It's like nourishment that we take physically. As we take it, we made strong. We grow. And as we study the word of God, we're changed.

It happens imperceptibly in physical things. It happens imperceptibly in spiritual things. But as we study God's word, as we walk by faith, God transforms us. He changes us. He's changing you now, as you attend to the Word of God, as you listen, as you think about this.

And there are examples of people who have lived this life. Not perfectly of course, but have lived exceptional lives, ways that live up to so much that Paul describes here. A few years ago, I was in London and I visited, like I guess most people do, Westminster Abbey. It's a very interesting place and it's filled with stations and things to see. There's so much, you can lose sight of what you just saw or what plaque you saw, or what grave you saw. I was really interested in only one thing, and when I made it to the Nave, I found it.

It was the grave of David Livingstone. Like Carnegie, he was a Scot, and born into poverty. But instead of becoming an industrialist and making money, Livingstone became a doctor and won souls. He became the most famous missionary of the 19th

century. He gave his life to opening up Africa to the gospel and ending the slave trade. When he died, his African friends removed his heart, then preserved his body and carried it 1,000 miles over land to Zanzibar. They attached a note to it that said, "You can have his body, but his heart belongs to Africa." And they buried it by a tree near the place where he died. He was a man whose life matched his message. He loved the people of Africa. They truly had his heart.

Near his grave are the remains of Charles Darwin, who was very much different from David Livingston, and Sir Isaac Newton, who's also very different from David Livingston. Throughout the Abbey, there are rulers and poets, Queen Elizabeth I, Alfred, Lord Tennyson and others. They are there because of their great deeds in the eyes of the English. But there are no greater deeds than those of love, than the love of a man like Livingston, who sacrificed for others and sacrificed especially for Christ. And the day will come when the graves will all be opened, and all will go to their eternal reward, and it's the Livingstons of the world, the believers, who will go to a glorious reward.

Are you one of them? Have you believed in Jesus Christ? If not, we invite you to trust in Him, who died for sinners, who offered Himself up in the greatest act of love. He took our side. he took our place. He bore our sins in the judgment of God, the place we deserve to be. And now, all who believe in Him are saved forever at the moment of faith. That's all that's asked of us. We're not asked to burn up our bodies in His service. We're not asked to give away all of our wealth in His service. What the Lord instructs us to do is believe. Trust in Him. He's done it all. We simply receive it. So, I invite you to do that. Trust in Him, and we who have? Well, we have a new life. We're new creatures in Christ, so let us live that life. Let us live by the power of God, by His grace, let us live the love of 1 Corinthians 13. We can do that by His grace. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, give You thanks for this great passage of Scripture. It is a kind of hymn, to love. It's even something of a poetic expression of love. It's a beautiful text of Scripture, but it is also a discouraging text when we consider that we can't measure up to this. Not in our own strength, not in our own ability. But we can in Your strength, and You do give us the ability to be the kind of people that You instruct us to be here in this text. So we pray for that. Give us a desire to be men and women who love –