**Love: Say Yes to the Mess**

**I Corinthians 13:1-13**

**The Situation: Church Fight in Corinth**

1. **Without Love, All That’s Said and Done is None (1-3)**

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels,

but have not love,

I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and

 can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and

 if I have a faith that can move mountains,

but have not love,

I am nothing.

3 If I give all I possess to the poor

and surrender my body to the flames,

but have not love,

I gain nothing.

Have you ever seen someone do a good deed without love? How did it feel?

Have you ever done the right thing for the wrong reason?

1. **Love Cares and Shares instead of Caring about my Share (4-7)**

4 Love is patient, love is kind.

 It does not envy,

 it does not boast,

 it is not proud.

 5 It is not rude,

 it is not self-seeking,

 it is not easily angered,

 it keeps no record of wrongs.

 6 Love does not delight in evil

but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Take a moment and look at the eight negative terms. Do you ever slip into any of them?

Now look at the positive words. How are you doing at practicing them?

**3. Love: What You Want to Be When You Grow Up**

**Temporary/Permanent (verses 8-10)**

8 Love never fails.

But where there are prophecies, they will cease;

 where there are tongues, they will be stilled;

 where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

9 For we know in part and

 we prophesy in part,

10 but when perfection comes,

the imperfect disappears.

**Childish/Mature (verse 11)**

11 When I was a child,

I talked like a child,

I thought like a child,

I reasoned like a child.

 When I became an adult,

I put childish ways behind me.

**Blurry/Clear (verse 12)**

12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror;

then we shall see face to face.

 Now I know in part;

then I shall know fully,

even as I am fully known.

 13 And now these three remain:

faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

What does it mean in practical terms to mature, to put away childish things and be an adult?

Think back over the last decade – in what ways or in what areas of your life have you grown up and where do you still need to do a little maturing?

What mess are you facing now and how can you apply unconditional love in this situation?