

Faith, Hope and Love – Part Two

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have 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 do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, [b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonour others, 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.

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 completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a 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.

Theological virtues – in theology and Christian philosophy, are the character qualities associated with salvation, resulting from the grace of God, which enlightens the human mind.

In the Bible

The three theological virtues are:

Faith – belief in God, and in the truth of His revelation as well as obedience to Him (cf. Rom 1:5:16:26)

Hope – expectation of and desire of receiving; refraining from despair and capability of not giving up. The belief that God will and forever be eternally present in every human's life and never giving up on His love.

Charity – a supernatural virtue that helps us love God and our neighbours, more than ourselves.

These virtues are bestowed upon human beings during baptism. They help individuals grow in their relationship with God with each act they commit that exhibits one of these virtues.

They are referenced and qualified in the Bible at 1 Corinthians 13:13: “Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”

In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle St Paul sets out to address the question of whether Christians were obligated to follow Mosaic Law, as was being taught by the Judaizers. In Chapter 5, St Paul teaches the Galatian Christians to be Christlike; one way of doing so is to grow in the Fruit of the Spirit. These are the qualities, characteristics, or virtues that a Christian should desire to develop in order to become closer to God. The passage written by Paul about the Fruit of the Spirit is found in Galatians 5:22-23:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law “.

St Paul uses the Greek word Karpos for fruit, which means “fruit (as plucked)”, implying that these things are not given but taken from the vine of God.

Love: Greek - Agape: A Divine Love. A strong, ardent, tender, compassionate, devotion to the well-being of another.

Joy: Greek - Chara: the emotional excitement, gladness, delight over blessings received or expected for oneself or another.)

Peace: Greek - Eirene: The State of quietness, rest, repose, harmony, order, and security during turmoil, strife, and temptations.)

Forbearance: Greek - Makrothumia: Patient endurance; to bear long with the frailties, offenses, injuries, and provocations of others, without murmuring, repining, or resenting.)

Kindness: Greek - Chrestotes: a disposition to be gentle, soft spoken, kind, even tempered, cultured, and refined in character and conduct.)

Goodness: Greek - Agathosune: the state of being good, kind, virtuous, benevolent, generous, and God-like in life and conduct.)

Faithfulness: Greek - Pistis: the living, divinely implanted. acquired, and created principle of inward and wholehearted confidence, assurance, trust, and reliance in God and all he says.)

Gentleness: Greek - Praotes: the disposition to be gentle, kind, indulgent, even-balanced in tempers and passions, and patient in suffering injuries without feeling a spirit of revenge.)

Temperance: Greek - Encarta: Self-Control; a moderation in the indulgence of the appetites and passions.

St Paul states at the end of this passage there is none, who possess these fruits, that the law can condemn. This is referring to the Law of Moses which condemns the sinner.

Faith

Jesus says much about faith. He implies that it is influential for supernatural healing. This is shown in the Gospel with several stories, such as the story of the centurion, who had such great faith in Jesus that his servant was healed. He also tells us that with faith anything is possible, and that faith will give Christians the power to do mighty things. He also said that faith in Him will save their souls and bring them salvation. This is shown with a story of sinful woman being saved from her sins because of her Faith, according to the Apostle Paul, is one of the three great things that will never fade, along with hope and love. Christians believe it is important to have faith in God. This involves the belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christians have faith, along with other religions, in God as the creator of the universe and that every truth comes from him. They rely on him for all needs and they thank him for all blessings. Based on this faith they believe that Jesus is the Son of God and is one with God. It is believed that faith to a Christian is a self-feeding cycle. It fuels itself by continual practice and sharing of the faith.

Love

Love is one of the most important qualities a Christian should possess. In the Gospels Jesus teaches to love all. In Matthew 5, Jesus tells us to love our enemies, and to bless those who would curse us. Jesus also teaches us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Two of the most important things that Jesus taught us about love was to love others as he loved us. Jesus also said that no man has a greater love than when he is willing to lay down his life for his friends. Paul agreed with Christ that love is without a doubt the most important of all things along with faith and hope. in Paul's book, 1 Corinthians 13: 4-13 he describes the qualities of love.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now, we see only a 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. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

There are nine parts to Divine Love. The first is Patience, Love Passive: that is in no hurry, that suffers long, that bears, believes and hopes and endures all things. there is Kindness, Love in Action: it never acts rashly or insolently; not inconsistent, puffed up or proud. Also, we find Generosity, love in competition: which is not envious or jealous. Humility, Love in Hiding: no parade; no airs; works then retires Love has Courtesy, Love in Society: does not behave unseemly; always polite; at home with all classes; never rude or discourteous. Unselfishness, love in essence: never selfish, sour, or bitter; seeks only good of others; does not retaliate or seek revenge. Love has a Good Temper, Love in disposition: never irritated; never resentful. Love is Righteousness, love in conduct: hates sin; never glad when others go wrong; always gladdened by goodness to others; always slow to expose; always eager to believe the best; always hopeful, always enduring. Finally love has Sincerity, Love in profession: never boastful and conceited; not a hypocrite; always honest; leaves no impression but what is strictly true; never self-assertive; does not blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs; always just, joyful, and truthful; knows how to be silent; full of trust, always present.

Catholic theology

In Catholic theology, it is held that these virtues differ from the cardinal virtues in that they cannot be obtained by human effort. A person can only receive them by their being “infused”—through Divine grace—into the person.

The theological virtues are so named because the object of these virtues is the divine being (theos). Other virtues have vice at their extremes and are only virtues when they are maintained between these extremes. In the case of the Theological Virtues, they do not contribute to vice at the positive extreme; that is, there is no vice in having an unlimited amount of faith, hope, or love, when God is the object of that virtue.

More than one vice can be the opposite of each theological virtue:

Lack of faith may give place to incredulity (as in atheism and agnosticism), blasphemy or apostasy.

Lack of hope may give place to despair or cynicism.

Lack of love may give place to hatred, wrath or indifference.

Symbolism: Theological Virtues are often depicted in art as young women. The symbols most often associated with them are:

Faith – cross, pointing upward, staff and chalice, lamp, candle

Hope – anchor, harp, flaming brand, palm

Love – flaming heart, with children, gathering fruit