

24-0609a Transcript

24-0609a - *Final Exhortation to the Corinthians, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Readers: Mike Mathis and Roger Raines

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Final Exhortation to the Corinthians

Transcript (0:03 - 46:12)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Mike Mathis

(0:03) The first scripture reading is from Ephesians, the sixth chapter, beginning with verse 10 (0:11) and going through verse 18. Ephesians 6, 10 through 18, which reads,

(0:19) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. (0:27) Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (0:37) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, (0:46) against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness (0:56) in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand (1:09) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand, therefore, having girded your waist (1:19) with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet (1:28) with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, (1:38) with which you will be able to quench all the fiery hearts of the wicked one. (1:46) And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (1:58) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, (2:05) be watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

(2:17) That completes the reading of the word. (2:19)

2nd Reader: Roger Raines

(2:24) Good morning. The second scripture reading is the first book of Corinthians, chapter 16, (2:35) verses 13 and 14. Be on the alert. Stand firm in the faith. Act like men. Be strong. (2:44) Let all that you do be done in love. This concludes this reading. (2:50)

Transcript

Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(2:56) Good morning, everybody. Both passages are important. Roger read first Corinthians 16, (3:04) 13, and 14, and that's going to be the subject matter of my lesson today.

And (3:11) part of that subject lesson, Mike read for me, because it will cover a couple of the points (3:17) that I'm about to make. The Apostle Paul was a tireless worker for the Lord. It's easily (3:27) observable by reading in the New Testament that Paul, probably more than any other man, (3:34) was successful in discharging his duty to the Lord by spreading the gospel to the whole world.

(3:43) Paul was responsible for starting the most Gentile churches that we read about in the Bible. (3:51) We can see by his writings how he personally felt for those churches. He felt like a father (3:59) to those in the congregations that he planted.

And today, we'll be looking at Paul's fatherly (4:06) relationship and advice that he gave the Corinthian church. His problem child, so to speak. (4:15) After the Corinthian church had been planted by Paul, and he spent a year and a half with them, (4:20) he then moved on to other fertile soil where he sowed the seed of the Lord.

(4:27) And it was reported to him later that the Corinthian church was in big trouble. (4:36) They started having behavioral issues. I guess they were going through their terrible twos.

(4:43) So Paul wrote them a letter addressing all of their issues. And in the letter, he revealed how (4:51) he felt towards them. In 1 Corinthians 4, 14 and 15, we read him saying, (4:59) I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

(5:06) For though you might have 10,000 guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, (5:14) in Christ, I became your father through the gospel. Paul felt responsible for them in their growing up (5:23) in the gospel of Christ, as a father feels responsible for his children to bring out good.

(5:31) It hurt him to know that they were in sin. And his desire for them was that they would be (5:39) presentable to the Lord on that great day when Christ comes back. In his second letter (5:45) to the Corinthians, he wrote them in chapter 11, verse 2, for I am jealous over you with a godly (5:54) jealousy, for I married you to one husband, that I might present you to Christ as a pure virgin.

(6:04) So that was Paul's goal, to present the believers in Corinth to Christ, spotless. So he wanted them (6:13) to grow up following the gospel and to be faithful to the end. So what were some of the issues that (6:22) Paul confronted them on? First and foremost, it was their lack of unity.

He addressed it in chapter (6:33) 1, and division was the recurring theme throughout Paul's letter. Division is one of those fiery (6:44) arrows that Satan shoots at us, that Mike talked about in Ephesians chapter 6. (6:55) Satan has a whole quiver of arrows, and he was busy shooting the Corinthian church, (7:04) and those arrows are the different tactics that he uses to attack Christ's church. So (7:11) Satan fires those at churches, and he fires at each of us individually, and he causes division (7:20) in churches and in families.

And don't we see it in our society today, the way people behave in (7:28) our politics? We are so polarized by division in this country, it's as if we're on the brink (7:37) of civil war, a war between those with morals and those with no morals. Paul encouraged them (7:47) to be of the same mind and opinion. That's how you solve the division problem, by becoming familiar (7:57) with the Word of God and putting it into practice.

That is the only way to become a mature Christian. (8:05) In chapter 2 and 3, Paul tells them, and us by the way, that only the mature can understand the (8:13) wisdom of God, and that those who are stuck in their infancy in the Lord, those who only (8:19) feed on the milk, so to speak, can't understand God's wisdom. It is those who don't apply (8:29) themselves to know God's Word that still have worldly tendencies, which are the traits (8:37) that help cause divisions within the church.

In chapter 4, Paul encourages the Corinthians (8:43) to know God's Word, but not to go beyond what is written. Paul wants us to imitate him (8:53) the way a child imitates his father. Paul said, be imitators of me as I follow Christ.

(9:01) In chapters 5 and 6, Paul addresses sexual sin within the church, and also (9:10) the church was suing each other. They have legal judgments against each other. (9:18) Sexual sin is a sin that can defile the whole church, and it is an issue that commands us (9:25) to judge right away because of the negative effect it can have on the flock.

(9:32) Though we are not to judge outsiders, God will do that, we are told to judge each other. It keeps (9:40) us in line with the gospel. Paul lists several other sins that he warns them about, and he says, (9:49) along with the sexual sin, and he warns people to not have anything to do with those who live (9:59) such a way that are unrepentant of it, or to shun the impure.

Look at the damage it has done in the (10:08) past in our very own congregation here. It caused division. In chapter 7, Paul gives instruction on (10:20) marriage and encourages the believers to be content wherever they are in their walk of life.

(10:29) Corinthians, having been polytheistic pagans, Paul instructs the Corinthians in chapter 8 (10:35) about food offered to idols, and how to treat weaker brothers who are leaving that practice. (10:45) And by weaker, Paul means those who have not yet come to the understanding of the truth in Scripture (10:50) and the liberty we have in Christ. So as not to offend or make the weaker brother stumble.

(10:58) Of course we can eat anything offered to an idol. An idol is nothing (11:03) but to the brother coming out of pagan worship, it's something. And he's trying to avoid all (11:09) aspects of that life.

So for us to just consume in front of him would be an offense to him. (11:17) And Christ wants us to have his mind, not to be offensive to anyone. So even though (11:24) you and your liberty in Christ can eat such a thing, don't do it in front of that weaker brother.

(11:30) And this can be applied to many things in our Christian walk. (11:36) In chapter 9, Paul speaks to them about his rights as an apostle. And in chapter 10, (11:42) he teaches them from Israel's history, the importance of fleeing from idolatry.

(11:50) And then in chapter 11, Paul really needed to correct them on the Lord's Supper because of (11:58) the divisions within it. Their divisions was causing them, when they came together to partake (12:06) of the Lord's Supper, to be completely divided. So Paul had to give them some very important (12:12) instructions concerning the Lord's Supper that benefit us as well.

Because he covers (12:20) things in his discussion about the Lord's Supper that none of the gospel writers cover. (12:27) Paul discusses spiritual gifts and what our roles are in the body of Christ. And in chapter 13, (12:37) he gives us the biblical definition of what agape love is.

In Greek, they break down different types (12:46) of love. You have eros love, which is the special love between husband and wife. You've got phileo, (12:54) which is brotherly love.

And then you have agape love. And agape love is godly love. (13:02) And we're actually commanded to practice agape love.

And so the importance of agape love is (13:14) it's got to be in everything that we do, and it's got to be our motive operandi. (13:21) And in chapter 14, he discusses the spiritual gifts and the orderly use of them in worship. (13:30) And Paul, being led by the Holy Spirit, gives the most exhaustive explanation of the resurrection (13:38) that there is in Scripture.

The whole of chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians is devoted to the resurrection. (13:47) Only God could have revealed such detailed information on it because it is beyond (13:55) man's understanding to speak so authoritatively on the subject. Paul really explains it well.

(14:05) In chapter 16, it begins with instructions for the congregation everywhere about the collection of (14:14) money. And then he starts to tie up all the loose ends in the letter, and he explains to them what (14:22) he's going to be doing shortly. And after all the issues that he addressed in his letter, he gives (14:29) this final instruction for the church at Corinth, and actually to Christians everywhere.

The (14:38) instructions are an exhortation, not only for them but for us. And I want us to really pay attention (14:46) to what he has to say, especially since we share in some of the same problems they had in their (14:53) congregation. Plus the times in which they lived were perilous, and our times too are changing (15:03) and are becoming perilous.

So we have to be on the ball. So what is it to exhort? To exhort is (15:14) to encourage by words or advice, to stimulate or urge to do good deeds and conduct. You can picture (15:22) that's part of the job of a father, and that's how Paul felt about his children.

So he exhorts them. (15:29) His exhortation is found in what Roger read in verses 13 and 14 of chapter 16, (15:37) which say, be on your guard, be men of courage, be strong, do everything in love. So (15:46) there's five points to this exhortation.

The first is be on your guard. The Greek word here for (15:56) be on your guard is gregario. And if you think of the word gregario, you think of our English (16:03) word gregarious.

And a gregarious person is somebody who seeks out birds of a feather. (16:10) I mean, it's a passion for that person to find others who think the way they do. So they're (16:16) on the lookout for others like them.

We know people who love politics, (16:21) so they'll seek out people who have the same political persuasion. And so that's a gregarious (16:28) person. In a way, we're kind of gregarious.

We seek out other Christians. But that isn't (16:36) what Paul wants us to do here. He wants us to be alert gregario, not be gregarious.

(16:44) So what is it to be on guard in the Christian sense? Well, it's to be alert, to be watchful, (16:54) to be vigilant, to be ready, to be on guard. And why do we gotta be on guard? Well, Jude tells

us (17:02) to contend for the faith that was once and for all entrusted to the saints. Why do you gotta (17:10) contend for the faith? Well, there's dangers all the time.

False teachings get introduced, (17:18) false teachers creep in. There's all kinds of spiritual matters that can pop up. (17:25) As Paul went through a whole litany of charges against the Corinthians.

So rather than remain (17:35) silent or shrink back, sometimes we may have to engage in an intellectual battle defending (17:43) the faith. So this is to be applied to all phases of the Christian walk of faith, (17:49) beyond your guard at church, at home, at work, when alone, or in a crowd. We have mortal enemies, (17:58) both human and spiritual.

Peter says in 1 Peter 5, 8, be self-controlled and alert. And again, (18:07) there is gregario, your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, (18:14) looking for someone to devour. Have you ever heard of roaring lion? Ruth and I took our daughters (18:21) when they were toddlers to the Cleveland Zoo.

And I was pushing them both in a stroller, (18:28) and we were right in front of the exhibition for the lions that they used to have. (18:34) And we were as open to it as this, but there was a moat. That made me feel real good.

(18:41) And the male lion was standing there and let out a roar. And let me tell you, (18:48) my daddy hairs on my arm stood up. I pivoted that stroller around, and I got out of there.

(18:56) I was alert. I heard that lion. It's like, I'm out of here.

These kids are going to be safe. (19:02) I'm not trusting the engineers who figured out how deep that moat should be. (19:08) When I heard that lion, it was frightening.

It really, it was awesome, but it was frightening (19:16) too. And that's what Satan is like, a roaring lion looking for lunch. He wants someone to devour.

(19:25) And to devour is to destroy, to separate us from God. And that's his job, his motive, (19:35) operandi. And so Peter tells us, be gregario for that.

He's looking to separate you from Christ, (19:49) like Red Forest, out of the Ephesian letter, chapter six. And that letter we know as the (19:57) full armor of God. So God doesn't leave us defenseless against the roaring lion.

(20:06) He gives us spiritual armor that we need to employ. I've given lessons on that, and I believe (20:12) Mike's given lessons on the full armor of God. And I think I've heard others present lessons on that.

(20:20) It needs to be taught often to remind us we have weapons, (20:27) defensive weapons, and the only offensive weapon is the Word of God, which is our sword. (20:34) Use it defensively, and occasionally you've got to use it offensively. (20:40) So Paul asks the Corinthians to be on guard against division, (20:46) sexual impurity, false teaching, false teachers, morally wicked people, (20:52) worshiping incorrectly, not to do harm to the weaker brother.

All of those are different arrows, (21:00) fiery arrows that Satan shoots at us. He also encouraged them to be vigilant, alert, on guard, (21:10) to employ love in everything that they do, put others above themselves, and more importantly, (21:17) to be ready for the return of Christ, to be part of

that great day. And hopefully we'll be alive (21:26) when Christ returns to be part of the resurrection.

But even if we go on like our forefathers before (21:34) us and we die our death here on earth, we can still be looking forward to that day when we're (21:41) called out of the grave. Paul covered that quite well in chapter 15, Christ's return. (21:49) And Jesus uses the same Greek word, gregario, in chapters 24 and in chapter 25 of Matthew.

(21:59) And he said, no one knows the hour in which I am coming. He said, stay alert, gregario. I will (22:09) come like a thief in the night.

And in chapter 25, stay alert, no one knows the hour in which the (22:16) blind groom comes. But we've got to be alert. Point number two, stand firm in the faith.

(22:27) The faith, that phrase, is synonymous with the gospel. It's like saying stand firm in the gospel, (22:41) stand firm in his word. That's what the faith refers to there.

Jesus said to his followers (22:50) that his sheep know his voice. Well, how do his sheep know his voice? The sheep are around him (22:58) all the time. What does that mean for us? We have to know his word.

We have to be familiar with what (23:04) our Lord says to know his voice. We got to have our nose in the book. We got to be practicing (23:13) what he tells us.

That's how we know our Savior. That's how we know his voice. (23:22) Then, when somebody else brings in a teaching that we're not familiar with, that's like where (23:28) he says later in John 10, my sheep don't recognize the voice of a stranger, and they'll flee from (23:36) him.

So, knowing his voice is knowing his word, to know what's genuine. When temptations come our (23:46) way, we learn to say no to ungodliness. That's standing firm in the faith.

That's taking a (23:55) stand against doing what's wrong. Through the word, we learn what makes God happy and do what's (24:04) right. And his advice to Timothy, or I'm sorry, to Titus in chapter 2 of that letter, (24:14) is say no to ungodliness and worldly passions.

And that's what God's grace does for us. (24:23) It teaches us that. How do we learn God's grace? Through the word.

(24:32) Peter talks about that in his second letter, and I'll get there in a second. (24:37) But Paul, at the end of his discussion on resurrection in chapter 15, he says, (24:45) therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Always give yourself fully (24:53) to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (25:00) That's standing firm in the faith, believing what we read, and being convicted, (25:08) taking a stand, and doing it. Many of this congregation wouldn't be here if we didn't (25:16) believe Christ and his word.

We could be out fishing. We could be out playing golf. (25:24) We could be sleeping in.

No. God has a plan. This is part of the plan.

(25:33) And part of that plan is to build up the flock, build up their faith, so that they too (25:40) will take a stand. Each generation is responsible for teaching the next generation. (25:48) And so sometimes when I'm up late in front of the computer, tapping out my lessons, (25:57) and I'm getting tired and thinking, man, I could be doing this, or I could be (26:03) woodworking my hobby.

I could be out making a table or something. I gotta keep reminding myself, (26:12) put the Lord first. Put his church first.

Build them up. Your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (26:23) We might not see what our words are doing, but those words are like seed being planted (26:31) in hearts.

And you don't know about our youth whether it's being planted in their heart and (26:37) starting to grow. Trust in it. Trust in the power of God's word to be fruitful.

(26:46) God will bring forth the growth. We just gotta be out there planting and watering (26:53) that standing firm. In Philippians 127, it says, (26:58) only let your way of life be worthy of the good news of Christ, that whenever I come to see you (27:04) or am absent, I may hear of your state that you stand firm in one spirit with one soul, (27:11) striving for the faith of the good news.

And the good news is the gospel. (27:17) That was Paul's hope for his children. That's our hope for our children.

(27:24) Second Thessalonians 2, 13 through 15, Paul says, but we ought to always give thanks to God for you, (27:31) brothers, loved by the Lord, because from the beginning, God chose you to be saved (27:37) through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. Gospel is the truth, (27:44) the word of God. He calls you to this through our gospel that you might share in the glory of our (27:51) Lord Jesus Christ.

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, (27:59) whether by word of mouth or by letter. Our steadfast and immovable belief in the word of God (28:08) is standing firm in the faith. The world might mock us for believing in an invisible God (28:17) and believing in a son who rose from the dead, but we believe, we stand firm on that.

(28:26) We believe the word of God is at, in history, in the face of ever-increasing pressure, (28:33) especially to believe the lie they are forcing on us and on our children, the lie of evolution. (28:42) Because the world hates Jesus, and Jesus said to those who believe in Mark 13, 13, (28:50) all men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm in the faith to the end will be saved. (29:02) Stand firm.

Point number three, be men of courage. Peter tells us in the first chapter (29:11) of his second letter that as we have our nose in the word of God, we gain knowledge. (29:19) And as our knowledge increases, our faith gets stronger.

And God supplies us with more (29:27) grace. And I've taught on this before. It's this wonderful cycle.

And as our grace is increased, (29:38) we start getting challenges to our faith. That's why he supplies more grace. The more you know, (29:44) the more he's going to test you.

God tests. Satan tempts. There's a difference.

Same word in Greek. (29:56) But in God's usage, it's, go, child of mine, go, pass the test. Here's the test.

Get ready. (30:04) Be alert. Satan says, fail the temptation.

Give in to it. (30:11) One encourages and hopes for the passing of the test. The other hopes you fail miserably (30:18) and you're back in his kingdom, a citizen of his.

Escape that kingdom. Become a citizen, (30:31) the prince of peace. So David, likewise, tells us in Psalm 22 about the suffering Messiah, (30:40) and it reveals that not only did David and the Israelites trust in God, (30:45) but our Savior did as well.

In verses four and five, he says, in our fathers, (30:52) they put their trust in you. They trusted and you delivered them. They cried out to you and were (30:58) saved in you.

They trusted and were not disappointed. And we see that Psalm is really (31:06) talking about Christ. Yes, the Israelites put their trust in God, but that is the Psalm about (31:15) the suffering Messiah.

So Jesus put his trust in God to the point of death. That's courage. (31:28) Be men of courage.

And as Christ was dying, completing that courageous act he did on the (31:35) cross, he said, it is finished. Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit. And he gave up (31:43) the ghost and died and took courage to do that and trust in God, knowing that God would exonerate (31:54) him after three days.

And the proof that Jesus lived the perfect sin-free life is proven by (32:01) the fact of his resurrection from the dead. God saw that his Son led a perfect life in the eyes (32:12) of the law, and how he was tempted in every way we are, yet was without sin. And I've said this (32:20) in the past.

Could you imagine a full-grown adult being as innocent as a little child, (32:33) sin-free? What a wonderful person that would be. Think about that. We all know our own lives.

(32:46) We all know our own laws. We all know what sins we've done. Well, can you imagine going through (32:54) life and being tempted in every way we've been and failed, yet Christ said no to ungodliness.

(33:05) He trusted himself to God. He trusted himself to God's plan and said, I'm not going to sin. (33:15) I'm going to live a perfect life so I can free everybody who fails and sins so that we can be a (33:25) family.

Jesus was illegally crucified because he had no sin. So after three days, I'm sure there (33:35) was plenty of deliberation between Satan and God. Satan's there to accuse, and everything Satan (33:43) might have thought he had Jesus on, God said, nope, my son did not sin.

All charges are dropped. (33:51) Release the prisoner. And on the third day, by the power of God, Christ rose from the dead, (33:59) proving himself to be the Son of God by the power of the resurrection.

And those of us who believe (34:08) this, those of us who believe Christ is the Son of God, those of us who believe Christ saying, (34:15) be baptized for the remission of your sins, you too will have the

promise to be raised (34:24) from the dead. Spiritually, when we come out of the water, figuratively, we died the same manner of (34:33) death as him, and we rose to newness of life. And that gives us the hope that we will also rise (34:41) just like he did from the dead on that great day, 1 Corinthians 15.

(34:50) God said, innocent, and that's what made Christ. (34:57) Justify God. He followed the law to the teeth.

It could be done by a human, (35:03) just by one. And that made him the perfect sacrifice to atone for sin once and for all. (35:14) Point number four, be strong.

What is it to be strong? Well, Paul encouraged, was it Timothy? (35:23) Exercise profits a little. Physical exercise, is that what we're talking about here? No, (35:31) God doesn't want us to go to the gym. Concerning this, be strong.

Nothing wrong with going to the (35:37) gym if you do that. Be strong in the Lord, as Mike pointed out in Ephesians chapter 6. Be strong, (35:45) Psalm 3124. David said, be strong.

Let your heart take courage, all of you who hope in Yahweh. (35:56) Psalm 2714, wait for Yahweh. Be strong.

Let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for Yahweh. (36:05) And why is that, David? David answers that for us in Psalm 1054.

Look to the Lord in His strength. (36:13) Seek His face always. So to be strong is to trust in the strength of God.

(36:20) What happens when we trust in our own faith or our own strength? We fail, right? We fizzle, (36:29) we flounder, we sin. You know what we've got to do? We've got to remember what Christ did. (36:39) Christ was strong.

When He was at His physical weakest, He was at His spiritual strongest. (36:51) After Christ was baptized, He went out, He was driven out by God to be tempted by Satan, (36:59) deliberately tempted by Satan. I'd never wish that on anybody.

But God tests those who love Him (37:10) to see what they're made of, to test their heart. The Spirit drove Christ out into the wilderness (37:19) to be face to face with a roaring, hungry lion. We don't know all the temptations (37:32) that Christ faced out there, but three are recorded for us specifically so that we can see (37:39) our Savior, how strong He was, how wise He was.

He faced each of those temptations (37:51) with the power of the sword, the Word of God. Each temptation, Jesus answered Satan from Scripture. (38:01) Do you think that's our example? Where do we need to be strong? We need to be strong (38:08) by knowing this.

And we've got to be convicted and convinced, just as Christ, to stand up, (38:19) resist the devil, James says, and he will flee from you through the Word of God. (38:27) That's our weapon of war. Sure, we have the shield of faith.

Sure, we have the helmet of salvation. (38:35) Sure, we have the belt of truth and our feet fitted with the readiness (38:39) that comes from the gospel of peace, Ephesians 6, the armor of God. But we have to follow (38:47) Christ's example.

We sing, footsteps of Jesus. Those are the footsteps of Jesus. (38:56) Do what Jesus does.

What would Jesus do? No, not what Jesus do. What did Jesus do? (39:05) Do what Jesus did. Right? That's our shining example.

(39:19) Point number five, do everything in love. Love should be our modus operandi. (39:29) Love is the reason for being a Christian.

It is a character quality we should have. (39:36) It's the first on the list of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5, 22 and 23. (39:45) Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Love (39:52) is the top of the list. Love is that godly virtue we should employ in whatever we do. (40:03) If we do something for somebody, it should be done with a loving attitude.

(40:09) God doesn't change. He was a loving God in the beginning in the garden. (40:14) He was a loving God to the patriarchs.

He was a loving God to Israel. (40:19) And he's a loving God to the Christian church today, to us. (40:27) Deuteronomy 7, 9, he told the Israelites, know therefore that Yahweh, your God himself, (40:33) is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and loving kindness with them who love him, (40:42) and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

Christ echoes this. (40:47) Those who love me will keep my commandments, and my commandments are not burdensome. (40:55) First John 4, 7 to 12, dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

(41:01) And the love we're talking about here is agape love. Everyone who loves has been born of God (41:09) and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

(41:17) This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his only begotten son into the world that we might (41:25) live through him. This is love.

Not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son (41:32) as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, (41:38) we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, (41:45) God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us.

(41:55) Final, for a biblical definition of godly love, that agape love. (42:07) The definition is found in first Corinthian letter chapter 13. (42:14) Paul tells us what that agape love is, and what the agape love is not.

(42:22) He says, and now I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men (42:27) and of angels, but have not love, I am only resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. (42:37) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith (42:44) that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give all I possess to the poor and (42:53) surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient. Love is kind.

(43:04) It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud.

It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. (43:11) It is not easily angered.

It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, (43:19) but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

(43:29) Love never fails. And now these three remain. Faith, hope, and love.

But the greatest (43:38) of these virtues is love. So godly love isn't just an affectionate, squishy feeling we have. (43:50) It's showing all those godly virtues to one another.

That's a godly love. (43:59) Since God is love, you can put God in front of each of those virtues, and it defines what our (44:06) God is like. God is patient.

God is kind. He does not envy. He does not boast.

He is not proud. (44:14) He is not rude. He is not self-seeking.

And right on down the list about love, (44:21) God is all of those things. That's why God is love. He's all of those things.

That defines (44:28) his character, and that's what he wants us to be like. We are his offspring. We are children of God.

(44:36) We should be loving. And all of those virtues should be part of our makeup. (44:43) And that command that Jesus gave, a new command I give you, love one another.

As I have loved you, (44:51) so you must agape one another. All men will know that you agape. That's the love he's talking (45:00) about.

All of those virtues Paul listed, that's what love is. The fruits of the Spirit, that's (45:08) what love is. Paul sums it up with this phrase from the Galatians in Galatians 5.6. He says, (45:17) the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

So those five points that (45:28) Paul makes in his exhortation to the Corinthians are five points that he makes to West Side Church (45:35) of Christ. Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith.

Be men of courage. Be strong. Do everything (45:47) in love.

And so that's my encouragement to us. I leave you with the invitation. If there's (45:57) any reason you need the affairs of the church, or if you'd like to put Christ on in baptism, (46:03) washing away your sins, we'll help you do that. All you need to do is respond during the invitation (46:11) song. (46:12)