

CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

A Study of 1 Corinthians 13 based on the sermons of Jonathan Edwards

Sermon 4 (first half)

“Love is long-suffering...”

1 Corinthians 13:4a

Introduction

“The Apostle in the foregoing verses, which have been already insisted on, sets forth how great and essential a thing charity or a spirit of Christian love is in Christianity; how it is more necessary and excellent than any of those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which the Corinthians had among them, and how it exceeded all external performances or sufferings; and that it was the greatest and most essential thing, and indeed the sum of all that is essential, distinguishing and saving in Christianity, and was, as it were, the very life and soul of all religion...He now proceeds, as his subject naturally led him, to show the excellent nature of charity by describing the several amiable (lovely) exercises and _____ of it in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7...the first, suffering long, has respect to ill received from others...” (93)

Doctrine-“A Christian spirit disposes persons _____ to bear ill that is received from others...”

“Meekness is a great part of the Christian spirit...meekness, as it respects injuries received from men, is called _____ - _____ in Scripture, and is often mentioned as an exercise of the Christian spirit.” (94)

Edwards starts by pointing out various ways that men can injure one another. Men can injure others by “being fraudulent and deceitful with them...taking advantage of their ignorance, oppressing them...not fulfilling their promises...by reproaching them, or speaking evil of them behind their backs (no injury is as _____ as this)...uncharitably judging one another, putting injurious constructions on one another’s words and actions...A great deal is done in injuring others in words. Men commonly make us of their tongues as their weapons...sometimes men injure others ...by behaving themselves very injuriously and tyrannically...by denying respect and honor which is due to them in their places...It is a _____ thing for neighbors to hate one another.” (94-96)

Edwards now turns his attention to how Christians should practice long-suffering in the midst of such injuries. He writes, “Injuries offered should be borne without doing anything to _____ them. When persons are going about to revenge an injury, then they no longer bear it...So if men after they are offended and injured speak reproachfully to their neighbor, or of him to others, with a design to make others think worse of him, to the end that they may gratify that bitter spirit which they feel in themselves for the injury their neighbor has done them, that is revenge. He, therefore, who exercises Christian long-suffering towards his neighbor bears injuries from him without revenging or retaliating, either with revengeful deeds or bitter words...He receives all with a calm, undisturbed countenance, still manifesting the quietness and goodness in his behavior towards him, both to his face and behind his back.” (97)

“In him who exercises the Christian spirit as he ought there will be no passionate, rash and hasty expression; there will not be a bitter exasperated countenance...He may reprove his neighbor; but if he does, it will be with _____ and without bitterness, which still shows the design to be only to exasperate.” (98)

“He may show a dislike of what is done, but it will not be with an appearance of high _____; but as a man would reprove another that has fallen into sin against God, rather than against him; and as lamenting his calamity more than resenting his injury, and as seeking his good rather than his hurt; more to deliver him from the calamity into which he has fallen than to be even with him for the injury he has brought on him.” (98)

“We should not cease to love our neighbor because he does us injury; we may _____ him, but not hate him for it.” (98)

“Injuries which are suffered disturb the calm of the mind and put into a rustle and tumult, then it ceases to bear those injuries...The mind of Christians ought still to have their _____ and serenity maintained, whatever injures they suffer. Their souls should be serene, and not like the unstable surface of the water, which is disturbed by every wind that blows.” (99)

“In many cases when we are injured, we should be willing to suffer considerably in our own interest for the sake of _____ rather than do what we have opportunity to do to defend ourselves.” (99)

Reminding us that long-suffering means “suffering long” he writes, “And we should not only thus bear a few injuries but a great many, and though our neighbor continues his injurious treatment to us a _____ time.” (100)

“Though we may defend ourselves at last when we have a kind of _____ for it, though not out of any revenge to him who injures, but only in our own lawful self-defense; yet even this, in many cases, is to be forbore (withheld) for peace, and out of a charitable spirit to our neighbor, and loathsome to hurt him.” (100)

Love to God will lead men to be long-suffering for five reasons. *First*, because we love God we will want to _____ His loveliness. “Love to God disposes men to imitate God; and therefore disposes them to such long-suffering as He manifests. Long-suffering is often spoken of as one of the attributes of God ...The long-suffering of God is very wonderful. He bears innumerable injuries from men, and those which are very great. If we consider the wickedness there is in the world, and then consider how God continues the world, does not destroy it, but is continually blessing it with innumerable streams of good...” (101)

Second, love to God fills us with thankfulness which leads to _____. “Love to God will dispose persons thus to express their gratitude for his long suffering exercised toward us. Love disposes to imitation, and love also works by gratitude; and they who love God will be thankful to Him for the abundant long-suffering, which He has exercised toward them in particular. They who love God as they ought will have such a sense of God’s wonderful long-suffering towards them under so many injuries as they have offered Him that it will love to them but a small thing for them to bear with the injuries that have been offered them by their neighbor...and then gratitude for God’s long-suffering will also dispose to obedience to God in this particular when He commands us to forbear one another.” (102)

Third, love to God leads to _____ which bring with it long-suffering. “Humility is a main root of a meek and long-suffering spirit, because it makes him less disposed to an high resentment of injuries; for he that is little and unworthy in his own eyes will not think so much of the heinousness of injuries offered to him, as he that has an exalted opinion of himself, for it is a greater and higher crime to offend one that is great and high than one that is mean and vile. It is pride which is very much the foundation of high and bitter resentment and revengeful spirit.” (103)

Fourth, love to God _____ to His sovereignty even in the injuries of others. “Love to God disposes men to have respect to the hand of God in the injuries they suffer and not only to the hand of men, and meekly to submit to His will therein. Love to God disposes men to eye the hand of God, to own Him as the Governor of the world, and to acknowledge His disposal in everything...And as they are God’s disposals, love to God disposes him meekly to receive them and quietly to submit to them, to own that the greatest injuries which are ever received from men are justly ordered of God, and no more than he deserves...” (103)

Fifth, love to God minimizes the _____ of the injuries we receive from others. “It sets men above the reach of the injuries of men. None can hurt those who are true lovers of God...the more men love God, the more they will place all their happiness in God; they will look on God as their all, and this happiness and portion is what men cannot touch. The more they love God, the less their set their heart on their worldly interests, which is all that their enemies can touch.” (104)

“Long-suffering and forbearing one another are the fruit of love...Love will bear with a multitude of faults and covers all sins...love is of a nature directly _____ to bitter resentment and revenge, for revenge has ill will. But this is the reverse of love; and no wonder that love tends to keep out its contrary; no wonder that one contrary tends to destroy another.” (104)