

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Week 80 – 1 Corinthians 12:8-13:7**

**Day 396: 1 Corinthians 12:8-13**

**Verse 8**

ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλω δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα,

For other lists of 'gifts' in Paul, cf. 12:27-28; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11.

σοφία, ας f wisdom, insight

A catchword or slogan at Corinth (cf. 1:17,19, 20,21,22,24,30; 2:1,4,5,6,7,13; 3:19). "The background which controls the exegesis, therefore, derives from the contrast between the pretentiousness and competitive status-seeking of human wisdom (1:17-22; 2:1-5; 3:19) and the gift of divine wisdom (1:24-31; 2:6-13). Since the emphasis in 12:8 falls entirely on gift, clearly *divine wisdom* as a gift of the Spirit lies in view here." Thistleton. Thistleton argues that the phrase means an 'intelligent utterance of God's wisdom,' particularly relating to "God's plan of salvation" (cf. 2 Cor 1:12). Quoting other commentators he writes, "From 1 Cor 1-3 it is almost certain that Paul identified the wisdom from God with God's saving deed in the crucified Christ, particularly in the proclamation of the saving event." [Schatzmann] It relates primarily to 'the revelation of God in the cross.' [Schrage]"

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other  
γνώσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Another catchphrase at Corinth (cf. 1:5; 8:1,7, 10,11). Banks thinks this to be the gift of "understanding the Old Testament, Christian tradition, and the capacity to expound them correctly." Others think a word of practical application. Whatever this might be it is given for the 'common good' and therefore is not a coded message for individuals.

**Verse 9**

ἑτέρω πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλω δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι,

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

"Paul proceeds to speak of things like healing and the working of miracles, so that probably he has in mind a special faith which is associated with miraculous operations (cf 13:2 ...)" Morris. "A special endowment of faith for a special service (cf. 13:2b)." Bruce

χαρίσμα, τος n gift (from God)

ἰαμα, τος n healing

The plural implies 'various kinds of healings.'

Thistleton provides a helpful discussion of the (sometimes contentious) issues relating to the gift of healing and its relationship to faith. In particular, if faith and healing are here to be related, is it the faith of the healer or the one needing healing that is being spoken of? He makes the point that nothing can be 'claimed' by faith unless it is specifically promised and that God does not promise healing of every sickness *now*.

**Verse 10**

ἄλλω δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, ἄλλω [δὲ] προφητεία, ἄλλω [δὲ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, ἑτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν, ἄλλω δὲ ἐρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν

ἐνεργημα see v.6

Calvin thinks that Elymas being struck blind (Acts 13:11) is an example of the kind of miracles spoken of here. Theilike suggests that the *powers* mentioned here are evil powers and that the sense is 'authority over the powers.' Thistleton suggests that the phrase may not imply solely *miraculous* acts; he suggests the translation 'deeds of power.'

προφητεία, ας f prophecy, the gift of prophecy

Thistleton supplies discussion and bibliography on the subject of prophecy in the NT. Hill, he says, suggests "that the prophet is a Spirit-endowed person 'whose preaching contains admonition and comfort, the call for repentance and promise' and who also counsels, as a pastor, and 'blames and praises. That, we submit, may be legitimately called a ministry of pastoral teaching and instruction ... Christian prophets exercised a teaching ministry in the church which included pastoral preaching.'"

Having considered the various arguments, Thistleton draws some "interim conclusions prior to the note at 14:3." He says, "Prophecy is for *edification and encouragement and does not necessarily exclude teaching and doctrine* (14:3,31). It depends on revelation, and is sometimes closely related to prayer (11:4-5). The allusion to the cessation of prophecy in 13:10 refers only to the Lord's return. If we were tempted to complain that the definitions of NT prophecy by David Hill, Gillespie, Aune, Muller, or Friedrich were too broad, Grudem concludes with an even broader comment: 'Paul defines the function of prophecy very broadly in 1 Cor 14:3; its functions could include any kind of speech activity which would be helpful to the hearers.' 'The NT does not lead us to expect to find any distinctive speech forms for prophecy.'... "We have no reason to doubt the conclusion of Hill, Muller, Gillespie, and Friedrich that 'prophecy,' as a gift of the Holy Spirit, combines pastoral insight into the needs of persons, communities and situations with the ability to address these with a God-given utterance or longer discourse (whether unprompted or prepared with judgment, decision and rational reflection) leading to challenge or comfort, judgment, or consolation, but ultimately building up the addressees. On the basis of 12:10 (in isolation from 14:1-25; see under 14:3) more cannot be said with certainty. While the speaker believes that such utterances or discourses come from the Holy Spirit, mistakes can be made, and since believers, including ministers or prophets, remain humanly fallible, claims to 'prophecy' must be weighed and tested. It would go beyond the limits of exegesis to assume that the gift of 'prophecy' belongs any more *permanently* to some specific individual as an 'office' than the gifts of 'faith' or 'kinds of healings.' The epistle remains silent on this matter. Equally, it offers no evidence that 'prophecy' ceases before the return of Christ at the eschaton (see on 13:10). Finally, as J. Panagopoulos insists, prophecy is not a function to be isolated from tradition, from its OT background, and from the function of announcing and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing links it with 'trivial' messages to individuals."

διακρισις, εως f ability to discriminate

Cf. 1 Thess 5:19-21; 1 Jn 4:1-6. Drawing on the work of Jewett and Hoyle, Thistleton suggests, "The gifts of 'discernment' or *discrimination* include (a) a *critical capacity to discern the genuine transcendent activity of the Spirit* from merely human attempts to replicate it; and (b) a *pastoral discernment of the varied ways in which the Spirit of God is working*, in such a way as to distinguish various consequences and patterns." He cites Dunn regarding the three basic criteria for judging spiritual gifts, "does it exalt Jesus? (1 Cor 12:3)... Does it manifest love? (1 Cor 13:4-7)... Does it build up? (1 Cor 14)."

γένη Noun, nom/acc pl γενος, ους n  
family, race, kind, sort

Thistleton lays stress on the 'different kinds' and says that it is wrong to seek to limit 'tongues' to one specific, tightly defined phenomenon. "A *cluster of generic characteristics* mark off 'tongues' from 'prophecy': *in one context*, the contrast between *articulate* speech and *unintelligible* sounds (14:2b, 5, 7-9, 11,19); *in another context* the contrast between being addressed *to God* and being addressed *to other human persons* (14:2a; 14:15); *in yet another context* the distinction between communicative discourse in the *ordinary public domain* and something so exalted as to be associated with *angelic utterance* (13:1); *in one more context* capable of making some believers feel like exiles and strangers '*not at home*' in the community of believers (14:23a) and repellent to unbelievers (14:23b); in other situations that which *benefits the tongue-speaker* and for which he or she can give thanks (14:4a, 5a, 18). *Any generalising definition will founder on semantic contrasts which constitute counterexamples.* On the other hand, *one or more* of the above characteristics or family traits give adequate grounds for the use of 'tongues', provided that they are 'given' by the Holy Spirit and not self-induced."

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language,  
utterance

Thistleton provides a lengthy summary and critique of the various views concerning 'tongues.' Citing a parallel with Rom 8:26 he favours the view of Theissen that "'Tongues' may be viewed as 'the language of the unconscious' because it is unintelligible (unless it is 'interpreted') not only to others but also to the speaker. In 14:11 'foreign language' is unintelligible to the listener but intelligible to the speaker. But this represents a 'logical jump.' Paul prepares to urge '*the speaker*, not the listener' (my italics) 'to pray for the power to interpret,' i.e., to articulate what he or she utters, bringing it up from the levels of unconscious depths to those of cognitive consciousness... Paul does not say that the glossolalist *does* understand his or her utterances, but that he *wishes* that they would, and urges them to pray for this further gift. Usually the gift of 'tongues' is given 'to one,' and 'intelligible articulation of tongues speech' 'to one another' (12:10). But ideally 'one and the same person can possess both gifts,' as 14:27-28 probably presupposes... Theissen convincingly concludes that 'glossalalia is language of the unconscious – language capable of consciousness.'"

ἑρμηνεία, ας f interpretation, translation

#### Verse 11

πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται.

ἐνεργεω see v.6

διαιρεω divide, distribute, apportion

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

ἐκάστος, η, ον each, every

βουλομαι want, desire, wish, intend, plan

Paul's words underline the personality (not mere power) of the Spirit.

#### Verse 12

Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἓν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἓν ἐστὶν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός·

καθαπερ as, just as

σῶμα, τος n body

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος, ουσ n member, bodily part

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

For Christ as head of the body, see also Eph 5:23; Col 1:18. The picture of a body with its various members was familiar in Greek and Roman political rhetoric as an expression of order and hierarchy in society. Christ gives distinctive shape to *this* body.

#### Verse 13

καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες, εἴτε δούλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύματι ἐποτίσθημεν.

ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι is this *locative*, indicating sphere, 'in one Spirit' (NRSV, JB, RV, REB, NJB) or *instrumental*, indicating agency, 'by one Spirit' (AV, RSV, NASV, NIV)?

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

Baptism is, symbolically, the means by which a person is joined to Christ and to the body of his people. Paul here speaks of the spiritual reality corresponding to that outward sign, baptism with (rather than by) the Spirit. This is the act of the risen Christ by which Christ, by the Spirit, saves and equips his people (see Lk 3:16; Acts 1:5,8). Note that being baptised with the Spirit and belonging to Christ and to his people are co-extensive.

"Any theology that might imply that this one baptism in 13a in which believers were 'baptised by [or in] one Spirit' might mark off some postconversion experience or status enjoyed only by some Christians attacks and undermines Paul's entire argument and emphasis. Paul's constant use of ἐν, 'one,' and παντες, 'all,' constitutes a direct onslaught against categorisation or elitism within the church. As Mitchell and Martin (among others) have decisively shown, the argument picks up the categorisations which Paul attacks in 1:10-12. The 'all' and the reference to transcending the Jew-Gentile, male-female, slave-free divisions of Paul's day reflect the reference to baptism in Gal 3:27-28."

Thistleton.

"These verses are a crushing rejoinder to Pentecostalist ideas about the reception of the Spirit. The reception of the Spirit is the beginning of the Christian life (3:3-5)... The gift of the Spirit and justification are two sides of the one coin... The gift of the Spirit is what makes us ... sons of God ..." Similarly, Gal 3:26-27 concerns "a metaphor drawn from the rite of baptism to describe the entry of the believer into Christian experience." In the context of baptism or of Christian experience "there is no talk of a subsequent coming of the Spirit." Dunn

εἴτε if, whether  
Ἕλληνας, ἴσως m a Greek, non-Jew  
ἐλεύθερος, α, ον free, free person  
ποτιζῶ give to drink, water

### **Day 397: 1 Corinthians 12:14-20**

#### **Verse 14**

καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν μέλος ἀλλὰ πολλά.

μέλος see v.12

"Diversity is not an accidental attribute of the body. It is of its very essence." Morris  
"Unless the many perform their assigned functions, however diverse, the one body would not exist as a single entity but as a chaotic array of conflicting forces, without focus or coherence." Thistleton

#### **Verse 15**

ἐὰν εἴπῃ ὁ πούς, ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ χεῖρ, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος·

ἐὰν if, even if, though

πούς, ποδος m foot

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

παρα with acc. here in sense of by, by that token

Some at Corinth who lacked the more spectacular gifts of others may have been so discouraged that they began to ask whether they had any place or function in the church.

#### **Verse 16**

καὶ ἐὰν εἴπῃ τὸ οὖς, ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὀφθαλμός, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρά τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος·

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

#### **Verse 17**

εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἡ ἀκοή; εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἡ ὄσφρησις;

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

ἀκοή, ης f report, news, hearing

ὄσφρησις, εως f sense of smell

#### **Verse 18**

νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἐν ἑκάστων αὐτῶν, ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν.

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)  
now

ἔθετο Verb, 2 aor midd indic, 3 s τιθημι  
midd put place, set, determine

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

ἐν ἑκάστος places emphasis on each one – 'each and every one'

θελῶ wish, will

Each member is deliberately and thoughtfully set in place by God to serve its particular function. Gifts are gifts, gifts from God. "Christians must give up anxiously comparing themselves with each other... It leads to jealousy [cf. 1:10-12; 3:1-4] and discouragement... They complain that they are not like so-and-so... They develop an inferiority complex and lose all joy of salvation. The foot grumbles because it walks in the dust and carries the whole weight of the body... Others would like to be the eye which oversees or [especially!] the mouth which speaks... God knows why he has made each one of us as we are; he knows what use each one of us can be." Deluz

#### **Verse 19**

εἰ δὲ ἦν τὰ πάντα ἐν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα;

#### **Verse 20**

νῦν δὲ πολλὰ μὲν μέλη, ἐν δὲ σῶμα.

"This emphatic reiteration of the theme of unity in diversity concludes this part of the discourse." Morris

### **Day 398: 1 Corinthians 12:21-26**

#### **Verse 21**

οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ, Χρείαν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς ποσίν, Χρείαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω·

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

χρεία, ας f need, want

ἢ or

παλιν again, once more

κεφαλῆ, ης f head

ποσίν Noun, dat pl πους, ποδος m foot

Those more gifted and seemingly more useful cannot dispense with those they view as having a lesser position than themselves. "The sin of 'autonomy,' *self-sufficiency*, or 'the right to do what I like' (6:12) is precisely the 'fleshly' attitude within the church (3:1-4), which Paul finds alien to Christlike existence 'for others,' but reflects much more secular culture (whether inside or outside the church) at the beginning of the twenty-first century." Thistleton

**Verse 22**

ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη  
τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν  
ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν,

μαλλον adv more; rather

πολλῶ μᾶλλον 'it is much more the case  
that', 'far rather.'

δοκεω intrans be recognised, seem

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, οὐς n  
member, bodily part

ἀσθενέστερος, α, ον weaker; comparative  
from ἀσθενής

In light of 1:27 and 4:10 Thistleton argues that the reference is to social status and perhaps (following Glad) disposition of character. He offers the translation 'less endowed with power.' "They were insufficiently impressive to count for much, either socially or spiritually, within the church, or in terms of what 'contacts' or ability they might show for mission or for speaking with wisdom and knowledge to outsiders. Probably they never did effective mighty works of healing, seldom or never prophesied, and perhaps never spoke in tongues. In v.23 they are spoken of as *less attractive* and less '*presentable*' (εὐσχημοσύνην)." Thistleton

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι)

ἀναγκαιος, α, ον necessary, essential

It is the 'weak' who are especially the objects of God's saving activity (1:27).

**Verse 23**

καὶ ἃ δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ  
σώματος, τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν  
περιτίθεμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν  
εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέραν ἔχει,

δοκεω think, suppose; intrans seem

ἀτιμότερος, α, ον less honoured;

comparitive from ἀτιμος

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

περισσοτερος, α, ον more, much more

περιτιθημι put around, clothe in, treat  
with honour

Thistleton suggests the translation 'invest.'

ἀσχημων, ον unrepresentable

"The semantic contrast between ἀσχημονα (σχημα, form, with alpha privative) and εὐσχημοσύνην (σχημα, form, with εὐ, well) embodies two semantic oppositions (i) between *ugly* and *beautiful* or *adorned*; and (ii) between *private parts* of the body and *publicly 'presentable'* limbs and organs. The only way to preserve the wordplay in English seems to be to explicate both double aspects: 'our unrepresentable private parts have greater adornment to make them presentable.'" Thistleton

εὐσχημοσυνη, ης f modesty, propriety

Paul would seem to be illustrating his point from the way in which we clothe our bodies.

**Verse 24**

τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχει.  
ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα, τῷ  
ὑστερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δούς τιμὴν,

εὐσχημων, ον gen ονος respected,  
presentable

χρεια see v.21

συνεκέρασεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

συγκεραυννυμι put together, arrange

Used of a painter mixing colours or of a musician composing harmonies.

ὑστερεω lack, be inferior to; pass be  
lacking; midd be in want

δούς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διδωμι  
give

τιμη, ης f honour, respect

**Verse 25**

ἵνα μὴ ἦ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι, ἀλλὰ τὸ  
αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη.

ἦ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἶμι

σχισμα, τος n division, opposing group

Cf. 1:10.

ἀλληλων, οις, οὐς reciprocal pronoun one  
another

μεριμναω be anxious/concerned about

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, οὐς n  
member, bodily part

**Verse 26**

καὶ εἴτε πάσχει ἐν μέλος, συμπάσχει  
πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται [ἐν] μέλος,  
συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη.

εἴτε if, whether

πασχω suffer, experience

συμπασχω suffer together, share the  
same suffering

δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

"If the ear and fingers of a musician are 'praised,' or the hands and feet of an athlete are 'praised,' a person receives 'congratulations' for his or her coordination *as a whole*. The whole person is described as a good musician or as a good athlete, and indeed some intrusive bodily distraction could wreck the performance." Thistleton

συγχαίρω rejoice with, rejoice together

### Day 399: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

#### Verse 27

Ἑμεῖς δὲ ἔστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους.

μερος, ους n part, in part, partly

ἐκ μέρους 'part by part.'

#### Verse 28

καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν.

ἔθετο see v.18

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

"On 'apostles' see the extended discussion under 1:1. In this context Dunn helpfully notes that Paul alludes to a 'limited circle of individuals (though much wider than 'the twelve') who are 'apostles of Christ rather than delegates of a church ... commissioned personally by the risen Christ ... missionaries and church founders ... Theirs was a distinctively and decisively eschatological role (Rom 11:13ff; 15:15-16; 1 Cor 4:9; 15:8; Eph 3:5).' *'Eschatological apostles'* (Dunn's italics) had no successors, and Paul uses the term in this sense in 12:28." Thistleton

δευτερος, α, ον second; (το) δ. in the second place, secondly

On prophets, see notes on 12:10; 14:3.

τρίτος, η, ον third; τρίτον or το τ. adv. the third time, in the third place, third

FF Bruce argues that first ... second ... third "mark these out as exercising, in Paul's estimation, the three most important ministries. In Eph 4:11 these are also enumerated, together with evangelists, in the order (a) apostles, (b) prophets, (c) evangelists, (d) pastors and teachers, as given by the ascended Lord to equip his people '... for building up the body of Christ.'"

Chrysostom asserts, "Because they thought highly of themselves in respect of the tongue, he [Paul] sets it last everywhere. For the terms 'first' and 'secondly' are not used by him at random, but in order by enumeration to point out the more honourable and inferior."

διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

"Presumably they [teachers] were mature Christians who instructed others in the meaning and moral implications of the Christian faith (cf. Gal. 6:6; possibly (as some think) they expounded the Christian meaning of the OT." Barrett

ἔπειτα then, afterwards

On δυνάμεις and χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων see 12:9

χαρισμα see v.9

ἰαμα see v.9

ἀντιλήψις, εως f ability to help, helper

The general function of assisting those in need – see Acts 20:35. Some suggest it covers the work of deacons. Thistleton suggests probably 'kinds of administrative support.'

κυβερνήσις, εως f ability to lead

A word originally denoting the steering of a ship. It could refer to the work of elders. Thistleton thinks it refers to leadership, or ability to formulate strategy.

"The expressions are the reminder of the immense amount about the life of the apostolic Church of which we are ignorant." Morris

γένη see v.10

#### Verse 29

μη πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μη πάντες προφήται; μη πάντες διδασκαλοι; μη πάντες δυνάμεις;

The questions are introduced with μη indicating the expectation of a negative answer.

#### Verse 30

μη πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μη πάντες γλωσσῶν λαλοῦσιν; μη πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν;

λάλω speak, talk

διερμηνεύω interpret, explain, translate

**Verse 31**

ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. Καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι.

"Although commentators traditionally link either the whole of v.31 or at least v.31b with ch 13 rather than with ch 12, I have become convinced that to do this is to deprive the verse of its integral rhetorical and logical force with the argument which Paul has steadily built up from 12:19-30 and prepared for in 12:12-18. We have seen that there was a *zealous concern*, even a *striving*, for the gifts of the Spirit that were deemed to be 'greatest' in the sense of their supposedly constituting a mark of *high social and/or spiritual status*. Once again Paul uses redefinition... Paul rejects their view of 'high status' gifts utterly. But, he argues, tongue-in-cheek (Smit, with 'sharp irony'), *do not stop being 'zealously concerned about the "greatest" gifts,' provided that you follow me in transposing and subverting your understanding of what counts as 'the greatest.'* The 'greatest' are not those that minister to status or to self, but those which *serve* the good of others and *build* the community. 'I now show you' that what is 'an even greater way still' is the way of *love*." Thistleton

ζηλωω be jealous of, be very concerned about

The verb here is very strong, speaking of a driving passion. This form may be either indicative or imperative. Here it is clearly imperative.

μείζων, ὄν and μείζοτερος, α, ὄν (comp of μέγας) greater, greatest  
ἔτι still, yet, moreover  
ὑπερβολή, ης f surpassing, beyond measure

Thistleton prefers to translate, 'an even greater way still' to make this a comparative with respect to μείζονα.

ὁδός, οὐ f way, path, road, journey

The love that Paul describes in the following verses is to determine the path for our actions, rather than pursuit of more showy gifts.

δείκνυμι show, point out, reveal

**Day 400: 1 Corinthians 13:1-7****Verse 1**

Ἐὰν ταῖς γλωσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον.

It is often commented that the noun ἀγάπη is rare in Greek literature outside of the NT – though the verb is more frequently used. Nygren and Moffatt argue that Paul is concerned to disengage 'love' in his own theology from Greek and other pagan ideas. Nygren writes, "Agape comes to us as quite a new creation of Christianity ... Without it nothing that is Christian would be Christian." Or, in the words of Jonathan Edwards, "All the virtue that is saving and that distinguishes true Christians from others is summed up in Christian love."

This love is "the power of the new age" breaking into the present, "the only vital force which has a future." Stauffer It is the love which God displayed in Christ and particularly his dying love. "Moltmann and Jungel rightly relate this to the *self-giving grace of the cruciform, Christomorphic God*." Thistleton. It is love which is not dependent upon the worthiness of its object but springs from the character of the lover: love which "seeks nothing for itself but only the good of the loved one." Morris

ἔαν if, even if, though

λαλεω speak, talk

Paul begins with "values that are significant to the community at Corinth." Conzelmann. It may have been that some at Corinth considered tongues to be a 'language of heaven' or Paul could merely be using a hypothetical superlative, 'even if these tongues were to be angelic language itself ...'

γένονα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γινομαι

χαλκός, οὐ m copper, bronze, gong

A resounding bronze vessel.

ἤχεω be noisy, sound producing

ἢ or

κύμβαλον, οὐ n cymbal

ἀλαλάζω wail loudly; clang

"The man who is taken up with saying rather than doing has become nothing more than sound." Morris

**Verse 2**

καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν, καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι.

προφητεία, ας f prophecy, the gift of prophecy

εἰδῶ Verb, perf act subj, 1 s οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

'Depths too profound for human discovery'  
Thistleton

γνῶσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

"In 1 Cor 13 there is a definite opposition, a contrast, between two different 'ways,' two different kinds of fellowship with God: on the one side, the Gnostic-mystical 'vision of God' typical of Hellenism; and on the other, the primitive-Christian and Pauline way of Agape ... 'Gnosis puffs up, Agape builds up.'  
Nygren

ὥστε so that, with the result that  
ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

See Mark 11:22f. The 'faith' spoken of here is not saving faith. "An especially robust, infectious, bold, trustful faith may well be a special gift that performs a special task within a community faced with seemingly insuperable problems." Thistleton

μεθιστημι remove, mislead, bring

"The Corinthians clearly thought that the possessors of certain gifts were extremely important persons. Paul stoutly maintains that if they have even the highest of gifts, and that in full amount, but lack love, not only are they unimportant, but they are actually *nothing*."  
Morris

**Verse 3**

κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου, καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.

κἂν (καὶ ἐὰν) even if, and if  
ψωμιζω feed, give food to, give away

"The verb is in the aorist tense, pointing to a once-for-all action of a man who, in one grand sweeping gesture, sells all that he has and gives it away." Morris

ὑπαρχω be at one's disposal (τα ὑ. possessions).

παραδιδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

Could mean sell oneself into slavery (and so feed the poor with the proceeds).

σωμα, τος n body

καυχασμαι boast, boast about

Textual variants read either, καυχησωμαι (so that I might boast), or variants of καυθησωμαι (so that I might be burnt). The evidence is finely balanced and it is difficult to determine which is the original reading. The UBS text and Thistleton favour καυχησωμαι.

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;  
οὐδεν not at all

ὠφελεω gain, profit, achieve, benefit

'It counts for nothing'. "These wondrous gifts and triumphant victories all amount to 'nothing,' unless 'love' directs them, with its Christlike concern and regard for 'the other.'  
Thistleton

**Verse 4**

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, [ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται,

μακροθυμεω be patient, wait patiently

Note the way in which Paul uses verbs to describe the *activity* of love rather than adjectives to describe its character.

χρηστευομαι be kind

ζηλωω be jealous of

'Burn with envy.'

περπερευομαι be conceited, brag

φυσιωω pass be conceited/arrogant

'Be puffed up, inflated.'

**Verse 5**

οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἐαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,

ἀσχημονεω behave improperly

"The adjective ἀσχημων occurs in the NT only at 12:23, where Paul alludes to 'unpresentable' parts of the body, i.e., those which good taste and public respect expect to be clothed. In all three contexts the contrast defines the opposition between one side *courtesy, good taste, good public 'manners'*, and 'propriety', and on the other side thoughtless pursuit of the immediate wishes of the self regardless of the conventions and courtesies of interpersonal life. Thus *Agape* is not ill-mannered' (Spicq). Love does not act in ways which are 'contrary to the requirements of propriety and good order, committed by some ill-mannered members' (Hering)."  
Thistleton

ζητεω seek, search for, look for

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

'not preoccupied with the issues of self' cf. Rom 15:3; 1 Cor 10:24; Phil 2:4,21.

παροξυνομαι be irritable, be greatly upset

'provoked to anger.' "not touchy" Phillips, Barrett.

λογιζομαι reckon, count, credit, suppose

Either, 'does not keep a record of wrongs', or, 'does not think evil' — i.e. always imputes best motives. Bruce thinks the reference is to determination to pay someone back in their own coin.

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

### Verse 6

οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ·

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin, injustice

συγχαίρω rejoice with, rejoice together

'joyfully celebrate'

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ᾧ. truly

"Genuine love, as I argue as my main thesis in *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self*, alone decentres the power of 'interests' of the self and of its peer group, and in recentering them in the Other (primarily in God, but also in the other person) disengages from self-interest. Only now can truth emerge as disengaged from a power agenda. True disinterested integrity is free to seek truth, without anxiety about what it helps or hinders in one's personal agenda. Love, Paul says, has discovered *integrity*: As Nygren constantly declares, because it is disinterested and creative of value. It delights in truth... As Karl Rahner observes, the person who has placed everything in the hands of God has no need to fear, or to hide from, the truth. For God already knows it and has accepted the believer as he or she is." Thistleton

### Verse 7

πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.

'There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance.' REB "Love never tires of support, never loses faith, never exhausts hope, never gives up."

Thistleton

στεγῶ endure, put up with

πιστεῦω have faith, have confidence in

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect

"a refusal to take failure as finite" Morris

ὑπομένω endure, remain behind

"Like Christ on the cross, love endures scorn, failure, ingratitude ... At the end shines out the light of Easter. For *love never ends*." Deluz