

Love is Patient and Kind --- 1 Corinthians 13

August 2, 2020

1If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Introduction

Your opinion of God and His demonstration of love to you through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ who saved your eternal soul from eternal judgment for what you deserve, will manifest itself in how you show love towards God and towards His church. If your love for God and His church is small, it is indicative that your opinion of your sin is shallow; and therefore, His forgiveness is but of little consequence. However, as you grow in your understanding of how vast the offense of your sin is and what Christ has done for you, your love for Christ and His church will grow.

Consider for a moment the great love that a prostitute had for Jesus because she had been forgiven much. Her sin was great, and therefore her love for Christ was great. In Luke 7:36-47 it says, *“Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Christ to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee’s*

house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

³⁹“Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.’ ⁴⁰And Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he replied, ‘Say it, Teacher.’ ⁴¹‘A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?’ ⁴³Simon answered and said, ‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’ And He said to him, ‘You have judged correctly.’

⁴⁴“Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. ⁴⁷For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.’ ”

As I said, the demonstration of your love for God and for His church is in direct proportion to your understanding of your sin nature and your rebellion against Him and what He has done for you. If you think that you are basically a good person, and Christ's death for you helped you a little, then your love and thanksgiving to Christ will be small.

However if you understand that all the ingredients and tendencies are in you which were in the person of King David, able to murder and commit selfish, sexual sin, and exalt your self instead of recognizing that all you have is a gift from God, then you know that you deserve the eternal justice of hell and you will daily give thanks to the One who took the wrath of God for you. You will in turn love Him deeply and love those who are in His household.

. . . her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.

Review

Last week we began to study Paul's description of love that should permeate the Church, the household of God in 1 Corinthians 13. We considered that the

Corinthian Christians were not demonstrating love for one another. They were selfish and were concerned only about their individual concerns. Their problem was not one of lack of giftedness, but rather it was a lack of love.

According to 1 Corinthians 1:4, Paul said of the Corinthians, “. . . *that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge . . . so that you are not lacking in any gift . . .*” So their problem was not that they lacked spiritual ability. Because of their self-focus, they did not demonstrate love for one another.

Many times our evaluation of people is not God’s evaluation. If someone came and did not manifest love but had great oratory abilities, or incredible prophetic abilities, or even supernatural abilities and gave great wealth to the Church, we would exalt him as a great and godly person. We would tend to down play the lack of love. But, Paul says that person is nothing. Love, not giftedness, is the supreme test of godliness.

We considered last week that there were divisions in the Corinthian church. Members were not caring for one another. Some ate meat sacrificed to idols not caring how that would affect new believers coming out of idol worship. Selfishness was rampant at their gatherings for the Lord's Supper. Some were even getting drunk at the Lord's Supper. In chapter 12, Paul addressed their selfish use of spiritual gifts. Many were only concerned about drawing attention to self instead of edifying others. They were not demonstrating love for others.

Jesus said that one way that the Church glorifies Him is by their love for one another. Demonstrating love for each other was not given as a suggestion. Jesus commanded His church to show love for one another.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

However, the Corinthians were characterized by self-focus and self-centeredness. When it came to spiritual gifts, they were clamoring for the showy, up-front gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:31 validates this, “*But you earnestly desire the greater gifts.*” Essentially Paul says, “All are not apostles, are they? All do not have the ability to perform miracles, right? But you are jealous for these showy gifts.” Then he writes, “*And I show you a still more excellent way.*”

This sets the backdrop to our study of chapter 13. Chapter 13 teaches that if you were to have all the gifts in the highest perfection, but did not have love, you

would produce nothing, be nothing, and gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13 provides us with tangible ways that we can demonstrate love for one another. We saw that the love referred to in this chapter is above all sacrificial. It is the sacrifice of self for the sake of others—even for others who may care nothing at all for us and who may even hate us. It is not a feeling but a determined act of will, which always results in determined acts of self-giving.

One lexicon describes agape like this, “Love is the willing, joyful desire to put the welfare of others above our own. It leaves no place for pride, vanity, arrogance, self-seeking, or self-glory.”

We saw that love, agape, characterizes God. God demonstrates His love throughout the Bible by His actions. It was not intrinsic good within man that summoned love from God.

1 John 4:7-12 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

1 John 4:20,21 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

We considered that it is tragic that in many churches today, as in the Corinthian church, the love that is basic to Christian character does not reflect in the members or the ministry of a church. In Corinth, spiritual gifts were present, right doctrine was present, but love was absent. It seems that it is easier to be doctrinally orthodox than to be loving.

I mentioned to you one of the seven churches in Revelation 2:2-4 that Jesus addresses and says, “*I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call*

themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; (this church knew doctrine and weeded out sinful people which is good) 3and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4But I have this against you, that you have left your first love [first love for the Lord and for one another].”

We rightly stress the accurate teaching of the Word of God, but it cannot be at the expense of not demonstrating love towards one another. The test of a healthy church is not how many people there are or the power of its pulpit ministry, the test is how do they love one another. How are they exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit—the first being love? This is the church that God desires and that is pleasing to Him.

I told you that this chapter is an oasis in a desert of problems. Paul has addressed multiple problems that existed in the church at Corinth (wrong attitudes, wrong behavior, wrong use of the gifts), but now he turns his attention to a more positive note. It is like a breath of fresh air. Where as we are commanded to love in many other texts, here, love is spelled out for us. This chapter is broken down into 3 sections: first, The Necessity of Love in verses 1-3; second, The Character of Love in verses 4-7; and third, The Superiority of Love in verses 8-13.

Whatever the Church may face in America over the next decade, this teaching on the centrality of love in the Church along with making disciples through the Gospel will sustain the Church through hardship. Christ calls you and me to demonstrate love to one another.

The Necessity of Love

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love,
I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge;
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned,
but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

You Produce Nothing of Value

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love,
I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

1 Corinthians 13:1

Without love, you produce nothing of value, you are of no value in the Church,

and you gain nothing of value. We left off last week by considering the first verse of chapter 13 where Paul clearly claims the truth that without love you produce nothing of value. 1 Corinthians 13:1, “If I speak in the languages of men and of angels, but do not have agape, I have become a noisy brass gong or a clanging symbol.”

We saw that the way this is written makes clear that in the first three verses, Paul is speaking in hypothetical or exaggerated language. In each case, Paul begins with the actual and moves to the hypothetical: tongues of men (actual) → tongues of angels (hypothetical); prophecy (actual) → knowing all mysteries, having all knowledge (exaggerated); removing mountains and giving his life to be burned are hypothetical and exaggerations.

Paul makes clear in chapter 14, that the Corinthians were not taking turns using the gift of tongues, and did not care if the tongues were being interpreted. They were acting outside of love.

I have become a noisy brass gong or a clanging symbol – This is a gong which has no meaning to its sound. It is just a piece of clattering brass making a senseless noise. It is not the old iron triangles calling people to eat. It is just a gong with no meaning. This is seen widely today in the Charismatic movement. The misunderstanding of tongues in Scripture promotes this senseless noise.

A clanging symbol – The pronouncing of this word in the Greek, ἀλαλάζον, sounds like its meaning = lalala. Gongs and cymbals were used in pagan worship during the time of Paul much like Tibetan gongs today. Paul is comparing the uselessness of tongues without love with the noise made in heathen worship. If you use any gift to achieve selfish, self-exalting ends, then no matter how gifted you may be, you are not acting in love. If the issue is me, me, me and not others, then you are just making a lot of noise.

So we see in verse 1, Paul’s main emphasis is that gifts without love produce nothing of value to the Church. Love has one goal in mind, and that is how I can benefit others. Second, Paul shows that the one who exercises gifts without love is of no value, or is worthless to the Church.

You Are of No Value to the Church

*And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge;
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

1 Corinthians 13:2

Again, Paul is using exaggerated language. Paul obviously was not omniscient.

He did not know all mysteries nor all knowledge. He says only a few verses later that we know in part and prophecy in part. Paul is saying that if he knew all the mysteries of God and was like God having all knowledge, but lacked love, then he would be nothing; he would be of no value. If that is true of the person having all knowledge, how much more is it when applied to us who have limited knowledge.

The godly use of knowledge causes love to abound, but the prideful use of knowledge stifles love. Knowledge by itself makes one arrogant. But when it is used to build someone else up, it edifies.

Philippians 1:9 *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment*

1 Corinthians 8:1 . . . *we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.*

One seasoned pastor wrote this, “That sort of knowledge without love is worse than mere ignorance. It produces spiritual snobbery, pride, and arrogance. It is Pharisaic and ugly. Spiritual knowledge is good, beautiful, and fruitful in the Lord’s work when it is held in humility and ministered in love. But it is ugly and unproductive when love is missing.”

And if I have all faith, But have not love – This is not saving faith, but faith that works miracles, “*So as to remove mountains . . .*” Again, if someone came who could wow us with prophetic ability or amaze us with miraculous powers so as to remove mountains, we would not hesitate for a moment to exalt him to the highest place of honor. But Paul’s response would be to question his motive. Does he have a humble, sacrificial attitude towards others? Is he edifying others or just drawing attention to himself?

Paul first shows that spiritual gifts without love produce nothing of value. Next, he states that whoever exercises gifts without love is of no value to the church, but is self-seeking. And last, he shows that nothing of value is gained by the one who exercises gifts without love.

You Gain No Value

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:3

This has to do with the gift of giving which we have not yet studied. Romans 12:6-8 reads, “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,

each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality”

The person who has the gift of giving manifests a Holy Spirit energized ability to give generously, liberally, with large-heartedness, without any selfishness, and without any haughtiness or condescension. It is amazing to watch people who have this gift. They will give you the shirt off their back. The Lord keeps giving to them and then they just shovel it out to others. One who has the gift of giving gives cheerfully, and bountifully. They do not give grudgingly or because they have to.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. ⁷Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

In this verse, Paul describes the ultimate giver. Here is an example of sacrificial giving, someone who sells everything to give; someone who gives his own life. Although this giving may be sacrificial, if the motive is to draw attention to self and not because of love for Christ or love for others, then the giving is nothing in the sight of God.

Giving for any other reason than love for Christ and love for others (like exalting self) does not benefit the giver. Jesus warned against this kind of giving in Matthew 6:1-2, *"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ²When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full."* We give out of thanksgiving to Christ—not to be seen by men.

Agape is always self-sacrifice, but self-sacrifice is not always agape. Reread that statement because it is so important: *Agape is always self-sacrifice, but self-sacrifice is not always agape.* Paul refers to dying a painful death for the sake of another; but if the motive is not love, it is of no value. Jesus said, *"No greater love is this that one lay down his life for another."* But Paul says that if you die for others because you want to exalt self, then your dying is of no profit.

You Profit Nothing

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:3

John MacArthur writes this concerning this verse, “The power behind what we say and what we do is our motive. If our motive is self-interest, praise, promotion, or advantage of any sort, our influence for the Lord will be undercut to that extent—no matter how orthodox, persuasive, and relevant our words are or how helpful our service seems superficially to be. Without the motivation of love, in God’s sight we are only causing a lot of commotion.”

The end result in each case is that apart from a motive of love, anything we do is void. Verse 1—I produce nothing of value. Verse 2—I am of no value. Verse 3—I gain nothing of value

Paul’s point is not that the gifts are of no value, but the person and the result of exercising them apart from love is worthless. So, Paul first communicates the Necessity of Love. Next, he shows the The Character of Love.

The Character of Love

*Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous;
love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly (is not rude);
it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,
does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

In our English translations, “love” in verse 4 is followed by adjectives. In the Greek, they are all verbs. For example, the first description states that love suffers long or does not retaliate. Love does not so much feel patient as much as it practices patience. Paul does not focus on what love is, but on what love does.

Paul highlights the action of love and not the feeling of love. His primary purpose here is not simply to instruct the Corinthians, but rather to change their living habits and to change their actions. He desires for them to act like Christ. You could replace the word “love” with the word “Jesus” and you would have an accurate picture of Jesus. One writer wrote, “Paul is painting a picture of love and Jesus is sitting for the portrait.”

Patience – Websters 1828 dictionary defines patience this way: “the suffering of afflictions, pain, toil, calamity, provocation or other evil, with a calm, unruffled temper; endurance without murmuring or fretfulness. Patience may spring from constitutional fortitude, or from christian submission to the divine will.

The classic dictionary further defines love as “a calm temper which bears evils

without murmuring or discontent; the act or quality of waiting long for justice or expected good without discontent; and the quality of bearing offenses and injuries without anger or revenge.”

In the Greek culture in which this was written, self-sacrificing love and non-retaliating patience was seen as a weakness and thus unworthy of a noble man or woman. Aristotle taught that vengeance was a virtue. The world has always tended to make heroes of those who stand up for their rights above all else.

The word used here means to practice patience, wait patiently; slow to anger, slow to take offense, takes injuries without retaliation. It is the opposite of being quick-tempered. Where as outbursts of anger is a deed of the flesh, patience is a fruit of the Spirit. In fact, literally, it means “long tempered.” Because love demonstrates itself through patience, it is not surprising that, like love, we are commanded to be patient.

1Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

Colossians 3:12-13 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

For an example of patience let's consult Matthew 18:21-33. “*Then Peter came and said to Him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' 22Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him (this was an astronomical amount of money. It would be like our referring to “zillions of dollars”). 25But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, “Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.” (there was no way for this servant to repay his debt) 27And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. (The relief and gratitude of this action should have been overwhelming)*

28“But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii (this sum could easily be repaid); and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ (Instead of thanksgiving, this

wicked servant has only one thing on his mind, the debt that others owed him. . . . he began to choke him) *29So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.'* *30But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.* *31So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.* *32Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I for-gave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.* *33Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' "*

The point is axiomatic. If you have been forgiven so much, should you not be forgiving towards others? If God is patient with you, you should be patient towards others. I believe many times we are not patient with one another because we do not begin to understand the patience God has shown to us. We do not fathom the great debt which we owed God so that it is a of little consequence that we are impatient with others. My friend, you have no grounds to be impatient. You have been forgiven much. Be slow to anger. Be quick to be patient.

Read concerning Paul's evaluation of himself in 1 Timothy 1:15-16. *"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."*

Galatians 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness*

This one demonstration of love, namely patience, would solve a thousand smaller issues. Gossip would be done away with because we would not talk about someone who may have injured us. We would suffer long. Strife, quarreling, contention would not be an issue for we would not retaliate against someone who may have sinned against us.

Christians are to be characterized by being patient with one another. The next characteristic of love is kindness.

The Character of Kindness

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous;

1 Corinthians 13:4

Again, Webster's 1828 defines kindness this way: "good will; benevolence; that temper or disposition which delights in contributing to the happiness of others, which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes, supplying their wants or alleviating their distresses. Kindness ever accompanies love."

I will never forget the statement made to me by a fellow believer concerning someone with whom he was not getting along, he said, "Well, I will love him, but I don't like him." This was used to support why he did not treat him kindly or interact with him. What he did not realize is that he was not showing love. Love treats others kindly no matter how you have been treated.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-47, "*You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'* ⁴⁴*But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"*

1 Peter 3:8-9 To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead.

Patience is slow to retaliate. Kindness is quick to help even those who have sinned against us wrongly. What an incredibly high standard. Christ is our example.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

The difference between God and us is that God could totally annihilate His enemies if He wanted to. He could just mow them down, but He does not. How much more should we be like Him and aim to be kind as He is kind?

There is a story about a man named Holy Joe who was a strong Christian who joined the Marines. He was nicknamed Holy Joe because he would kneel and pray each night before bed. The first evening in the barracks he was found on

his knees praying before the lights were out. The other soldiers gave him “showers of blessings” by throwing all of their heavy, smelly combat boots at him. Holy Joe stayed up late and shined all their boots and had them neatly ready for each soldier. That is showing kindness to those who even mistreat you.

The Corinthians were definitely not kind to one another. 1 Corinthians 6:6-8, “. . . brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? ⁷Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.”

Micah boils down God’s desire for our lives in very simple terms in Micah 6:8. “He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”

Conclusion

I am going to end with a favorite Old Testament story of mine. I have shared it before yet need to share it again because it provides a perfect example of how we are to be patience and kindness. I am reading from 2 Kings 6:15-24.

Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” ¹⁶So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” ¹⁷Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” And the LORD opened the servant’s eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. ¹⁸When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, “Strike this people with blindness, I pray.” So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. ¹⁹Then Elisha said to them, “This is not the way, nor is this the city; follow me and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.” And he brought them to Samaria.

²⁰When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, “O LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.” So the LORD opened their eyes and they saw; and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. ²¹Then the king of Israel when he saw them, said to Elisha, “My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?” ²²He answered, “You shall not kill them. Would you kill those you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.”

23So he prepared a great feast for them; and when they had eaten and drunk he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the marauding bands of Arameans did not come again into the land of Israel. 24Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went up and besieged Samaria.

May we too seek God's enabling grace to be patient and kind just as He has been immeasurably so to us.