

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church
Charity and Its Fruits Class
Week 12 – August 29, 2021, “Heaven, A World of Love”

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 *Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.*

Observation 1: *That it is mentioned as one great excellency of charity, that it shall remain when all other fruits of the Spirit have failed.*

Observation 2: *That this will come to pass in the perfect state of the church, when that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect is come*

Main Doctrine: Heaven is a world of charity or love

The apostle speaks, in the text, of a state of the church when it is perfect in heaven, and therefore a state in which the Holy Spirit shall be more perfectly and abundantly given to the church than it is now on earth. But the way in which it shall be given when it is so abundantly poured forth, will be in that great fruit of the Spirit, holy and divine love, in the hearts of all the blessed inhabitants of that world. (325)

1. The cause and fountain of love in heaven

Heaven is the palace or presence-chamber of the high and holy One, whose name is love, and who is both the cause and source of all holy love. (326)

2. The objects of love that it contains

2.1. There are none but lovely objects in heaven

Rev 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

2.2. They shall be perfectly lovely

There are spots on the sun; and so there are many men that are most amiable and worthy to be loved, who yet are not without some things that are disagreeable and unlovely. Often there is in good men some defect of temper, or character, or conduct, that mars the excellence of what otherwise would seem most amiable; and even the very best of men, are, on earth, imperfect. But it is not so in heaven. (329)

2.3. In heaven shall be all those objects that the saints have set their hearts upon, and which they have loved above all things while in this world

Every gem which death rudely tears away from us here is a glorious jewel forever shining there; every Christian friend that goes before us from this world, is a ransomed spirit waiting to welcome us in heaven. There will be the infant of days that we have lost below, through grace to be found above; there the Christian father, and mother, and wife, and child, and friend, with whom we shall renew the holy fellowship of the saints, which was interrupted by death here, but shall be commenced again in the

upper sanctuary, and then shall never end. There we shall have company with the patriarchs and fathers and saints of the Old and New Testaments, and those of whom the world was not worthy, with whom on earth we were only conversant by faith. And there, above all, we shall enjoy and dwell with God the Father, whom we have loved with all our hearts on earth; and with Jesus Christ, our beloved Savior, who has always been to us the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely; and with the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier, and Guide, and Comforter; and shall be filled with all the fullness of the Godhead forever! (331-332)

3. The subjects of that love

4. Its principle, or the love itself

4.1. In its nature, this love is altogether holy and divine

4.2. And in degree it is perfect

That which was in the heart on earth as but a grain of mustard-seed, shall be as a great tree in heaven. The soul that in this world had only a little spark of divine love in it, in heaven shall be, as it were, turned into a bright and ardent flame, like the sun in its fullest brightness, when it has no spot upon it. (335)

5. The excellent circumstances in which it is there exercised and expressed and enjoyed

5.1. Love in heaven is always mutual

And with the same ardor and fervency will the saints love the Lord Jesus Christ; and their love will be accepted; and they shall know that he has loved them with a faithful, yea, even with a dying love. They shall then be more sensible than now they are, what great love it manifested in Christ that he should lay down his life for them; and then will Christ open to their view the great fountain of love in his heart for them, beyond all that they ever saw before. Hereby the love of the saints to God and Christ is seen to be reciprocated, and that declaration fulfilled, "I love them that love me;" and though the love of God to them cannot properly be called the return of love, because he loved them first, yet the sight of his love will, on that very account, the more fill them with joy and admiration, and love to him. (338-339)

5.2. The joy of heavenly love shall never be interrupted or damped by jealousy

5.3. There shall be nothing within themselves to clog or hinder the saints in heaven in the exercises and expressions of love

5.4. In heaven love will be expressed with perfect decency and wisdom

5.5. There shall be nothing external in heaven to keep its inhabitants at a distance from each other, or to hinder their most perfect enjoyment of each other's love

5.6. In Heaven all shall be united together in very near and dear relations

5.7. In heaven all shall have property and ownership in each other

5.8. In heaven they shall enjoy each other's love in perfect and uninterrupted prosperity

What often on earth alloys the pleasure and sweetness of worldly pleasure, is, that though persons live in love, yet they live in poverty, or meet with great difficulties and sore afflictions, whereby they are grieved

for themselves and for one another. For, though in such cases love and friendship in some respects lighten the burden to be borne, yet in other respects they rather add to its weight, because those that love each other become, by their very love, sharers in each other's afflictions, so that each has not only his own trials to bear, but those also of his afflicted friends. But there shall be no adversity in heaven, to give occasion for a pitiful grief of spirit, or to molest or disturb those who are heavenly friends in the enjoyment of each other's friendship. But they shall enjoy one another's love in the greatest prosperity, and in glorious riches and comfort, and in the highest honor and dignity, reigning together in the heavenly kingdom — inheriting all things, sitting on thrones, all wearing crowns of life, and being made kings and priests unto God forever. (345)

5.9. In heaven all things shall conspire to promote their love, and give advantage for mutual enjoyment

5.10. The inhabitants of heaven shall know that they shall for ever be continued in the perfect enjoyment of each other's love

6. The happy effects and fruits of all this love, as exercised and enjoyed in these circumstances

6.1. The most excellent and perfect behavior of all the inhabitants of heaven toward God and each other

6.2. Perfect tranquility and joy in heaven

There are many principles contrary to love, that make this world like a tempestuous sea. Selfishness, and envy, and revenge, and jealousy, and kindred passions keep life on earth in a constant tumult, and make it a scene of confusion and uproar, where no quiet rest is to be enjoyed except in renouncing this world and looking to another. But oh! what rest is there in that world which the God of peace and love fills with his own gracious presence, and in which the Lamb of God lives and reigns, filling it with the brightest and sweetest beams of his love; where there is nothing to disturb or offend, and no being or object to be seen that is not surrounded with perfect amiableness and sweetness...(350)

Application

1. If heaven be such a world as has been described, then we may see a reason why contention and strife tend to darken our evidence of fitness for its possession.

2. How happy those are who are entitled to heaven.

Rev 22:14 *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.* How shall they be know?

- a. *First, They are those that have had the principle or seed of the same love that reigns in heaven implanted in their hearts, in this world, in the work of regeneration.*
- b. *Second, They are those who have freely chosen the happiness that flows from the exercise and enjoyment of such love as is in heaven, above all other conceivable happiness*

- c. Third, *They are those who, from the love that is in them, are, in heart and life, in principle and practice, struggling after holiness*

3. What has been said on this subject may well awaken and alarm the impenitent

- a. First, by putting them in mind of their misery, in that they have no portion or right in this world of love
- b. Secondly, By shewing them that they are in danger of hell, which is a world of hatred

Everything in hell is hateful. There is not one solitary object there that is not odious and detestable, horrid and hateful. There is no person or thing to be seen there, that is amiable or lovely; nothing that is pure, or holy, or pleasant, but everything abominable and odious. There are no beings there but devils, and damned spirits that are like devils. Hell is, as it were, a vast den of poisonous hissing serpents; the old serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and with him all his hateful brood.

In that dark world there are none but those whom God hates with a perfect and everlasting hatred. He exercises no love, and extends no mercy to any one object there, but pours out upon them horrors without mixture. All things in the wide universe that are hateful shall be gathered together in hell, as in a vast receptacle provided on purpose, that the universe which God has made may be cleansed of its filthiness, by casting it all into this great sink of wickedness and woe. It is a world prepared on purpose for the expression of God's wrath. He has made hell for this; and he has no other use for it but there to testify forever his hatred of sin and sinners, where there is no token of love or mercy. (359)

4. Let the consideration of what has been said of heaven stir up all earnestly to seek after it

- a. First, let not your heart go after the things of this world, as your chief good.
- b. Second, you must, in your meditations and holy exercises, be much engaged in conversing with heavenly persons, and objects and enjoyments.
- c. Third, Be content to pass through all difficulties in the way to heaven.
- d. Fourth, In all your way let your eye be fixed on Jesus, who has gone to heaven as your forerunner.
- e. Fifth, If you would be in the way to the world of love, see that you live a life of love – of love to God, and love to men.

Discussion:

1. Discuss in broad terms the eloquent description of heavenly love set out in the sermon and its impact on you personally
2. How does the coming of “the perfect,” i.e., consummate heavenly love, properly inform life in the present?
3. Discuss in this regard where there is need in your life to repent of worldly striving and contention seeing that “the principle or seed of the love that reigns in heaven” has been “implanted in [your] hearts” at your conversion.
4. Discuss how we might together as a church body spur one another on to earnestly seek after heaven and cultivate ‘heavenly-mindedness’ in our lives together.