

Familiarity!

- What's your favourite love song?
- I guess your answer would be different from mine!
 - different generation; different tastes in music; different experiences in life!
- Mine are songs that are associated with particular times and places, with particular people:
 - Marc Cohn songs, and an ancient Scottish lament that you can do a good slow waltz to!
- We all have different ones.
- But, I would hazard a guess, if I were to ask you to name a passage from the Bible that talked about love, I would get a fairly consistent answer: 1 Corinthians 13
 - (maybe John 3:16, or 1 John 3:16)
- Not so much a love song as a poem about love!
 - very often read at weddings, even if that's not really the kind of love Paul was talking about!
- Rather it is his description of the way any true community, and particularly the church, should function:
 - and the first, and keynote, Fruit of the Spirit

If I.... but have not love!

- What is your greatest achievement?
- First part of this "song of love" is a whole series of "if I..." statements:
 - "if I do this great thing, or that great thing!"
 - if I can speak well, predict the future, even speak clearly for God, or if I am extremely generous, give up my own life...
 - in today's terms: if I am successful, have a good job, earn myself some security, if I am respected, even loved, if I go out of my way to help others...
- If I do any of those things, without love, then it is pointless and worthless!
- Basically: make sure you are motivated by love, and not selfishness, not a desire to better yourself.

Where does that motivation come from?

- because of Christ, because of his love, because of his self-sacrifice
- during the week we looked at 1 John 4 on the theme of love...
- one of the things that came out in our discussion was how our love will be motivated by both (i) will, and (ii) feelings of love deriving from a vivid awareness of God's love for us...
- and the latter growing out of spending time, consciously remembering, reading about, discussing, what God has done for us...
- Hazel this morning telling me of something that happened to her on Thursday evening/Friday morning that made her aware of God's love and care for her in the midst of trouble - it didn't happen to me, but just hearing about it encouraged me and reminded me of God's care...

Love is...

- Having made sure his readers appreciate the importance of living by love, he goes on to describe what that love is actually like:
- Again, a whole series of similar statements: "Love is..."
 - patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude, not self-seeking, not easily angered, not a record keeper for wrongs, rejoices in the truth, protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres, never fails
- Quite a list!
- Its often said that those we live with are the ones that know us best, know what we are really like when we are not pretending to the outside world.
 - particularly true of husbands and wives, or siblings!

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Fruit of the Spirit: Love Fintry, 20/1/2008, pm

- but I suppose in a close-knit community
- I'm sure we could all think of folk we live with who do not display those qualities.
- We may even be right in thinking that!
 - but our call as Christian people is not to complain and grumble about others, but to strive with God's help to live that way ourselves...
- *Re-read vs.4-8a*

Perfection

- Whole of the last part of the chapter/song/poem is a reminder that this kind of love is not just a decent way of life, something nice to aim at, but is the "most excellent way", the best possible path to follow:
 - all other paths are somehow limited or flawed;
 - even the best of the rest is only temporary, maybe limited to this world;
 - but love is the language and lifestyle of heaven, and if that's where we're heading, we'd better get practising living that way!