

“Ministry Diversity and the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly” Issues of
Diversity
Understanding Spiritual Gifting

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 Title: The Greatest of These is Love
 Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
 The Big Idea: In the absence of Christ/love nothing else matters. In the presence of Christ/love nothing else matters. Chapter 13 provides for us what life in Christ looks like. **This is the Church of Jesus Christ.** The ultimate reason as to why churches fail in their community and in the world at large is because the family of God as it is present in local churches do not love one another. Is this not one of the saddest commentaries we can make?

Why am I teaching this?

If you could only do one thing what would it be? What could be so important as to take your last ounce of energy, your last financial wherewithal, and your last moments of life?

When you say your final good-bye to another individual the last words out of your mouth will be “I love you.”

ILLUSTRATION:

My nephew’s wedding was the first time in years that the entire family got together. Before I left the reception I went to each of my siblings and their wives and told them that I loved them. I wanted to make sure that my love for them was not assumed.

Our text tells us that the greatest of these is love. Why is this true?

Introduction:

Have you ever stood in the presence of greatness? Have you ever saw something that produced awe within? Have you ever met some individual, experienced an event or seen an object that simply took your breath away? For me it has been the birth of my children, the celestial bodies, the Grand Canyon, the great Sequoia trees and the power of lightning. Such power leaves me breathless. God is like that. God’s person can take your breath away.

Friend we can talk about these marvels all day and not develop a sense of awe until we are in their presence. The tragedy of our times is that we hear much of God and speak often about Him but seldom affirm His activity in our midst. Job found himself in such a situation when dialoging with God. Job heard

much of Him but never saw Him. When Job saw God it transformed his perspective.

⁵ “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

⁶ Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5, 6).

Was not this the same response seen when Isaiah saw the Lord?

¹ “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. . . ⁵ Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts” (Isa. 6:1, 5).

The same was true with Thomas the doubter. He needed tangible proof (John 20:24-29). We can criticize Thomas for his desire to know, but do we not all have that same craving?

²⁴ “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. ²⁶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. ²⁷ Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. ²⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John, 20:24-29).

Friend, it is imperative that we *see* the Lord. The solution to every problem is a vision of the Son of God. We must be looking unto Jesus both the author and the finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). The Psalmist invites us to *taste and see* that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8).

One of the great chapters in the Bible is 1 Corinthians 13. This is where we will taste and see that God is good. Everything boils down to this one action.

“Paul begins by declaring that a man may possess any spiritual gift, but if it is unaccompanied by love it is useless.” (Barclay, 1 Corinthians, 117)

Why am I teaching this?

First Corinthians is nothing less than an unveiling in words the person of Jesus Christ. If one were to simply replace “love” with Christ or grace, it would be equally true. We cannot forget the underlying problem in the Corinthian Fellowship. People were being divisive, factious, and bitter (1:10-13; 11:17-22).

The pettiness that exists in ours and all fellowships is disheartening. Love

would not tolerate gossip, fault finding, or negativity. Love does not judge others for their poor performance or failure to conform. Love embraces, encouraged, edifies, and sustains. Why does love do this? Because this is what Christ did, does, and will do.

Honest confrontation.

Am I willing to admit just how unloving I am? Friend, I have an evil in me that hates God and hates you. Am I willing to admit this and then flee to Jesus for His love to flow in me and through me to those around me? This chapter shows me who Christ is and what He has done and who I am in Him.

The chapter has three distinct movements. Verses 1 through 3 give the necessity of love. Without love no action is of profit. Verses 4 through 7 give the quality of love and verses 8 through 13 give the priority of love.

If the gifting of God is for the common good of the body, then love is the umbrella under which all gifting exists.

I. The Necessity of Love (vv. 1-3)

In the absence of love nothing else matters. In the presence of love nothing else matters. Each of the initial statements concludes with a summary. You have a conditional construction, “If this happens, then this is the result or consequence.”

A. If I speak with tongues of men and of angels (v. 1)

Paul’s initial statement attacks the heart of the problem. The Corinthian fellowship was fighting over the priority of tongues and how it was to be used. The problem existed because there was a lack of love present. It was this lack of love that caused the problem to exist in the first place. In the absence of love, no spiritual gift will be properly exercised. If love is not present, then I will have no influence.

“Paul is not saying that love is better than gifts, drawing a comparison between love and gifts. Rather, he is showing that love is the only way to make gifts effectual. The contrast is between gifts with love and gifts without love.” (James L. Boyer, For a World Like Ours: Studies in 1 Corinthians, 120).

B. If I have the gift of prophecy, know all mysteries and have the gift of knowledge (v. 2).

What is of interest is the prominence that tongues and prophecy will have when Paul addresses the problem head on in chapter 14. Neither one of the gifts are of any value in the absence of love. In the absence of love I am nothing; I have no presence. Even my faith rings hollow in the absence of

biblical love.

- C. If I give all my possessions to feed the poor and surrender my body to be burned (v. 3)

Even when I lay everything I have and am down I will have gained nothing, unless it is motivated by love.

“It is not cynical to remember that many a deed which looks sacrificial has been the product of pride and not of devotion.” (Barclay, 1 Corinthians, 119)

Today’s church has underestimated these qualities of biblical love. Love as we know it is a mere shadow of what it should be.

“Love in this passage, and in the New Testament, never means romantic or sexual love. The Greeks have a word for that, but that word never appears in the New Testament. Scriptural love does not mean a tingling sensation running up and down the spine in the presence of the one who is loved. It is not emotional but volitional. It is concerned not with how we feel but how we act.” (James L. Boyer, For a World Like Ours: Studies in 1 Corinthians, 120, 121).

Herein is the danger to biblical love.

We have allowed the world to shape our understanding of love. We have fused biblical love with emotional love and physical love. **You can love biblically without ever loving emotionally or physically. And you can love emotionally and physically without ever loving biblically.** Listen carefully to this statement: biblical love has nothing to do with its circumstances or feelings. Biblical love is based solely on one’s choice to love and then expresses itself in service to the object loved. You cannot say I love you without saying I serve you.

The Greek word *agape* (love) seems to have been virtually a Christian invention—a new word for a new thing (apart from about twenty occurrences in the Greek version of the Old Testament, it is almost non-existent before the New Testament). *Agape* draws its meaning directly from the revelation of God in Christ. It is not a form of natural affection, however, intense, but a supernatural fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is a matter of will rather than feeling (for Christians must love even those they dislike—Matt. 5:44-48). It is the basic element in Christlikeness. *Your Father Loves You* by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, page for March 10 http://www.bible.org/illus.asp?topic_id=912

Biblical love cannot help but put others first. Biblical love is compelling. Those who love, serve. Those who love, obey. Serving and obeying are not burdens to be born. Love is the parent of many offspring. If love does not birth the child, then serving and obeying become cruel masters.

For Others

Lord, let me live from day to day
 In such a self-forgetful way,
 That, even when I kneel to pray,
 My prayer shall be for others.

Help me, in all the work I do,
 Ever to be sincere and true,
 And know that all I'd do for Thee,
 Must needs be done for Others.

Let "self" be crucified and slain,
 And buried deep, nor rise again;
 And may all efforts be in vain,
 Unless they be for Others.

And when my work on earth is done,
 And my new work in heaven begun
 May I forget the crown I've won,
 While thinking still of Others.

Yes, Others, Lord, yes, Others.
 Let this motto be;
 Help me to live for Others,
 That I may live with Thee.

Anonymous

Any service in the absence of love is bondage forming. Legalism is a form of loveless duty.

What will seduce you away from biblical love?

Everything about the world, our flesh, and the devil is seeking to pull you away from a biblical pattern of love.

- The world says "you can have it your way."
- The flesh says "you deserve better than what you have."
- The devil says "super size your sensory experience."

All of these ideas are lies and when sown reap the whirlwind of dissatisfaction.

Loving biblically is not natural, it is supernatural. Perhaps the most telling aspect of love is its ability to identify. Love is the consummate Christian virtue. This is clearly seen in John 13:34, 35 and 1 John where without love for one's brother and sister in Christ the validity/genuineness of one's Christian

faith/profession is challenged.

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

No where else is such a statement made concerning the believer. It is our love for each other that sets us apart. Matthew 7:15 and following tells us that we will know others by their fruit. Remember, love is the parent of many children. Love’s offspring looks like mercy, kindness, tenderness, gentleness, etc. It is God’s love in us that He is working through us to those around us. **Without God’s love we have nothing to offer anyone.**

Often I speak of believer’s needing humility, teach-ability, and charity. We are to have humility because we might be wrong, teach-ability because we do not know everything, and charity because love is always a proper response to any situation.

As relationships exist on the horizontal level are they characterized by humility, teach-ability, and charity or am I conceited, inflexible, and difficult?

The end of God’s activity in and through His people is an unconditional love. Love’s power is seen in Ephesians 4:16, “From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” and 1 Corinthians 7:1, “Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

TRANSITION:

Love is not optional or secondary. Love is essential and primary. Love is necessary to the entire Christian life. It is its core. The second aspect if the quality of love found in verses 4-7.

II. The Quality of Love (vv. 4-7)

First Corinthians 13:4-8a goes on to show us what love looks like relationally.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; 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.

Being non-loving is inexcusable. Love is not dismissed because of emotional stress, personal rejection, or physical fatigue. No matter how large, progressive, financially lucrative, or “powerful” we might become individually

and corporately, in the absence of love it does not matter. What matters is how loving we were/are to those who come inside of our circle of influence. Expressing love is not controlled by how well things are going. In fact, love's strength is best seen when confronted by the crucible of affliction, misunderstanding, and personal insult.

What is our present danger?

Today's world is marked by a selfish love. Taking marks selfish love. It is a robbing of the individual. It is not a victimless crime. It inflicts and harms. Yet God's love stands in such sharp contrast to fallen love that its audience stands dumbfounded against its magnitude.

Within the creature there is a crying out for love. It is unfortunate but humanity's horde will seek its fulfillment in all of the wrong places. Places that cannot satisfy only stimulate, addict and kill. God's love gives life, pleasure, peace and satisfaction.

What is the biblical ideal?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 gives us a description of God's love and His character. Why is love these things? Because what love is, is a reflection of who Christ is. In the letters of John we read, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16).

LOVE IS. . . .

Love is patient. . .

Love waits.

Love is kind. . .

Love cares.

Love does not envy. . .

Love doesn't want what it can't have.

Love doesn't boast. . .

Love doesn't brag.

Love is not proud. . .

Love is humble.

Love is not rude. . .

Love knows when to talk and when to listen.

Love is not self-seeking. . .

Love cares about others first.

Love is not easily angered. . .

Love knows fighting won't solve anything.

Love has no record of wrongs. . .

Love doesn't hold grudges.

Love always trusts. . .

Love is trustworthy.

Love always hopes. . .

Love never gives up.

Love never fails. . .

Love is dependable.

What is this a picture of? This is a picture of who God is and how He extends to us Himself. God's love is unfathomable. To seek to sound its depths leaves the seeker breathless.

True love never gives up. It always has the confidence of what God can do and thus never throws in the towel.

ILLUSTRATION:

The story is of Arthur Hinkley, a teenager at the time, who lifted a 3,000-pound tractor with his bare hands. He wasn't a weight lifter, but his friend, Lloyd Bachelder, 18, was pinned under a tractor on a farm near Rome, Maine. Hearing Lloyd scream, Arthur somehow lifted the tractor enough for Lloyd to wriggle out. http://www.bible.org/illus.asp?topic_id=912 Calvin Miller, "Rethinking Suburban Evangelism," Leadership, 1988, p. 68

TRANSITION:

Our third area noted in chapter 13 concerning love is its priority.

III. The Priority of Love (vv. 8-13)

This section of the chapter addresses the idea as to whether or not some gifts are temporary and/or permanent. I will give an entire study to this idea, but the theme we are addressing is summarized and captured in verse 13.

Love takes precedence over everything else.

ILLUSTRATION:

A young man said to his father at breakfast one morning, "Dad, I'm going to get married." "How do you know you're ready to get married?" asked the father. "Are you in love?" "I sure am," said the son. "How do you know you're in love?" asked the father. "Last night as I was kissing my girlfriend good-night, her dog bit me and I didn't feel the pain until I got home." Source unknown http://www.bible.org/illus.asp?topic_id=912

I have taken the time to read Colossians 3:14 in several different translations. Please pause and read each verse.

Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity (New American Standard 95).

And more than all, have love; the only way in which you may be completely joined together (Bible in Basic English).

And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony (New Living Translation).

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony (Revised Standard Version).

APPLICATION: Where do we go from here?

“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her” (Gen. 29:20).

What an enduring story. It seems almost mythical. Like a fairy tale where everyone lives happily ever after. Jacob toiled for seven back breaking years, but they were as nothing because of his intense love for his wife to be Rachel.

Apart from the work of the cross nowhere else in the biblical revelation do we have such a graphic depiction as 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

¹ “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. ² 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. ³ 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 Cor. 13:1-3).

Love caused the labor of his hand to be light. When love is a part of the equation nothing else really matters. Love allows endurance to prevail.

No one falls into love and no one falls out of love. Love is a choice. You choose to love. You can choose to love or not to love, but no one trips into love or out of love as if it were an accident. What one feels emotionally is not love. The feeling can motivate the choice of love, but the feeling itself is not love. Love is a choice made because of the feeling, but the feeling has no necessary connection to love. You can choose to love for various reasons and you can choose to love in the absence of any feeling.

Marriage is perhaps the most intimate of all earthly relationships. In marriage two people choose to love. In the process of choosing to love there are many reasons as to why one might choose to love, but the reasons are not necessary to loving. In the absence of any reasons love can still exist.

The only reason as to why God loved us did not exist in us but in God. God chose to love us because through us He would receive the glory. Everything we ascribe to love is not present as it relates to God. He loves us because of who He is not because of who we are.

To love a spouse in the same manner in which Christ loves His Church is to love without condition. There is nothing in the object that solicits the choice of love. The motive for loving rests solely in the one loving not in the object loved.

Yet it is the choice of love that causes time to cease and cost to be irrelevant. Sacrifice is love's language. Love exists in the arena of surrender. Jacob loved Rachel. May God work in us love's language for marriage, the home, the Church, and life.

In all reality what we have just seen is a picture of Jesus. Jesus is patient and kind. Jesus never envies. He does not boast neither is He proud. His love is not easily angered neither does He keep any records of our wrongs. He always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. He never fails. Friend, **if you wish to understand God's love, then understand God's Son.**

As we endeavor to understand what God would have us to do, let us not stop loving those entrusted to us and with those whom we have daily interaction.

It is my desire that as a fellowship we would be a people marked by biblical love. **It is impossible to love too much. Never think that in all of your loving you have gone too far. Friends, we have never gone far enough.**

As a people, we have an ambition to be noted as a loving church in the Waukesha community. How do we go about doing this? Where does it begin? **First**, it begins within the context of our fellowship. We will never be known as a loving church by our community, if we do not love the fellowship of His people. **Second**, at every turn and in every way we are to be reflecting Christ on the canvas of our life. We should be quick to invite people to our fellowship. Let them come in contact with others who are deeply in love with Christ.

- When we love in a Christ like manner,
- We will become burden bearers.
- We will become load lifters.
- We will become a soother of sorrow.
- We will heal wounds.
- We will bring hope.
- We will promote wholeness.
- Our presence cheers, encourages, and strengthens.
- People will not only like you, but they will want to be with you.

We are to make these affirmations, not assignments. We are not trying to do these things. They are being done. They are expressions of His love working in us and through us to those around us.

What happens when I do not feel lovely or like loving? Friend, God loves you unconditionally. We love Him and others, because He first loved us.

1. How can I increase my love for God?

The only way is to study His Word and learn of Him. We cannot love what we do not know.

2. What should I do if I find myself unloving toward another individual?

Act upon what I know to be true and not on how I “feel.”

3. Is it possible for me to do all that John says about a believer?

No. “I can’t, but Jesus can” must become a new way of thinking.

Remember the larger context that surrounds our present chapter. The context is that of spiritual gifting for the purpose of revealing Christ for the benefit of His people.

ILLUSTRATION:

In 1976 Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme exploded on to every front page in America. She had pushed her way through a crowd and had tried to kill the President of the United States. She was 17 years old. Investigators found her proud that she was a follower of Charles Manson. The world knows Manson as a crazed killer who worked through his small, dedicated band of fanatical “disciples.”

News magazines began to dig into the background of this tragic young woman. Their reports found that Squeaky had felt like a misfit in her town, and so she wandered across the country until she reached California. There Manson met her and promised to take care of her. She went with him and was willing to kill and die for him. Reporters wanted to know, “Why would you give your life to a man like Manson?” I read her explanation in a magazine, and I have never been able to forget it. Squeaky explained that she had made a choice early in her teenage years. Here it is: “Whoever loves me first can have my life.” Someone probably had loved Squeaky, but she was ready to give her life to whomever made her feel loved first. Ron Hutchcraft, *Five Needs Your Child Must Have Met at Home*, Zondervan, 1995 http://www.bible.org/illus.asp?topic_id=912

As a believer who will you love today? As an unbeliever, God loves you and we desire that His love for you will come through us to you.

The Gospel presented

For the truth of Scripture to change your life through renewing your mind you must be in a right relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son. This relationship is impossible apart from the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This relationship is built around four key ideas. They can be summed up in four words: God, man, Christ, and response.

GOD

There is a real and personal God who is both Creator and Judge before whom you will stand and give an account as both creature and criminal.

MAN – RECOGNIZE

You have rebelled against God. We've all participated in this sinful rebellion. As a result, we have alienated ourselves from God and have exposed ourselves to His righteous wrath, which will banish us eternally to hell if we do not accept the work of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

CHRIST – REALIZE

But God sent Jesus *Christ*, fully God and fully man, to die the death that we deserved for our sins – the righteous for the unrighteous – so that God might both punish our sin in Christ and forgive it in us.

RESPONSE – RECEIVE

The only saving *response* to this Good News is to believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Acts 16:30, 31).

Have you turned to Jesus Christ as your only hope of eternal life? Today this can happen to you.

Additional Material Not In Sermon

A. His Love Defined

God gives of Himself and His gifts. God does not have to will to be these things this is simply what God is. Love is that element in God that moves Him to give Himself and His gifts spontaneously, voluntarily, righteously, and eternally, for the good of personal beings, regardless of their merit or response.

B. His Love Described

There are *five ways* in which God's love is described.

1. His love is voluntary.

His love is not coerced. It is not forced. He does not have to love. It is of His own free will. He is under no compulsion and does not wait for a response from the object loved (1 John 4:10 ["we love Him, because He first loved us"]; John 15:15 ["you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"]). God has simply willed to love. This same truth is found in Romans 9:10-13 where God clearly shows His selection of Jacob over Esau was a self contained and independent choice. Paul continues to echo this thought in Ephesians 1:4 ("He picked us in Him before the foundation of the world").

2. His love is unmerited (Romans 9:10-13).

His love is undeserved. You and I cannot earn it. God's electing love of Jacob over Esau was not based on their individual merit. The same is also true as it relates to the entire nation of Israel (Deut. 7). It is not sentimental, does not condone sin, and does not do wrong for the sake of the loved one (Pss. 11:7; 33:5). God's love is not arbitrary. God's love is not sentimental or emotion driven. God's not going to buckle under pressure to do wrong because of His great love for you.

3. His love is great (Eph. 2:4).

When our sin abounded His love did much more abound. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes us as dead as walking after the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the world and according to the spirit that is now working in the children of disobedience. Yet despite all this, God exhibited to us a *great* love.

4. His love is unstoppable (Rom. 8:35, 39 [“what can separate us”).

His love cannot be cancelled. It is non-refundable. God’s love is changeless, it is constant and irrevocable. Once God sets His love upon you, you cannot escape.

5. His love is unfathomable (Eph. 3:16-19).

God’s love is beyond human comprehension. Paul prays for the Ephesian believers to know a love that surpasses knowledge. Notice the adjectives used by Paul in his attempt to capture the fullness of God’s love (“wide, long, high, and deep”).

6. His love is sacrificial and selfless (Eph. 5:2, 3f).

Christ gave of Himself. The sins described in verses three and following are selfish sins. These sins take and steal. God’s love is just the opposite.

APPLICATION: (What does this look like?)

Consider the magnitude of what we have just looked at. Application is what will produce personal growth in one’s life. Without application life cannot be imparted. It is imperative that the Spirit of God allow this truth to wash over our souls.

- A. Because God loves you, you are to walk in His love (Eph. 5:1,2; John 13:14; 15:12; 1 John 4:11).
- B. Because God loves you, you are to have a brotherly affection for fellow believers (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 3:8; 2:17).
- C. Because God loves you, you are to have only one debt and that is to love one another (Rom. 13:8).
- D. Because God loves you, you are to have a love that is sincere (“without hypocrisy” [Rom. 12:9]).
- E. Because God loves you, you are to have a love that is patient (Eph. 4:2).
- F. Because God loves you, you are to have a love that builds others up (Eph. 4:16).
- G. Because God loves you, you are to have a tongue that is loving (Eph. 4:15).

Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would understand the enormity of God’s love (Eph. 3:15-21). He knew that only as we lay hold of His love could we be filled with His person. It is only as we comprehend His love that we will walk away understanding that nothing can separate us from it.

Jesus said, “if you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15, 23; 15:10). Paul said it this way, “and he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

All your acts of obedience will be the result of the overflow. God is to be the supreme object of our love (Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30-33; Luke 10:27). All of my obedience is the result of the overflow. As I see His greatness nothing else matters.

Perhaps today you still cannot see the enormity of God’s love for you. My family and I have driven through Chicago often. In our quest to get through the city on Hwy. 94 we can often through the smog see the Sear’s Tower. The Sear’s Tower is one of the highest buildings in the world. Yet from our vantage point it appears as nothing. Why, because of distance. But I can assure you that if we were to stand at its base we would be overwhelmed by its size. That is how we are with God. To us God appears puny and impotent. Why, because of distance. We are so far removed from Him that we stand unimpressed by who He is. But if we would only draw near to Him through an accurate understanding of Scripture we would see and thus be overwhelmed by His size.