

The Greatest of These! 03

A Discourse by Darrio Taylor on 1 Corinthians 13: 06/ 2015

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,” 2 Timothy 2:24

I invite you to kneel and pray with me as we open the Scriptures.

Gracious Heavenly Father; Thank You for this beautiful day You have given to us. We thank Thee that the Sun of righteousness has arisen with healing in His wings; and we pray that the glory of God will be able to come into our hearts and minds and fill our soul temple. We also pray that in cooperation with Your Word and with Your Spirit that You would help us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, that indeed we would be Your sons and Your daughters. That we may be preparing for the Seal of God, to settle into the truth both intellectually and spiritually. We pray that what we continue to study in 1 Corinthians 13 would indeed be as that secret ingredient, a vital component that we may be lacking in our Christian experience; that we may tie these things together and develop balanced, complete and symmetrical characters after the similitude of Christ, so we pray for Thy blessing; in Jesus’ name—Amen.

We are instructed to read this chapter every day:

1 Corinthians 13:1 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” (KJV)

We are going to continue our study with verse 4:

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

When we look at the word ‘Charity’ we know it means Agape or heavenly love; this is self-sacrificing love, the love that leads us to die to the world, the flesh, and the devil in order to be obedient to God’s commandments. The commands are summed up as love to God and love to our neighbor—the fulfilling of the law. In this verse it really begins to describe what Charity is; not just talking about it generally, but now indeed allowing us to see if we really possess Charity in our vessels and lamps.

The Bible tells us with Charity, we are going to be long-suffering and kind; we're not going to be envious or jealous; we will not vaunt ourselves or boast and lift ourselves up, and we're not going to be puffed up. We are going to study these five characteristics here as they apply to Charity.

The Bible tells us "By their fruits ye shall know them." We have a responsibility to judge by the fruits—but not the motives, or to judge whether people are saved or lost. 1 Corinthians 13 is very consistent with that, because when you get to the top of Peter's ladder, Charity is the crowning virtue of the fruit of the Spirit; it is the fullness of the divine nature. The Bible tells us plainly that if we have this, then we are going to behave in a certain way. If our behavior, actions and words are not longsuffering and kind, and we are envious, boasting and being puffed up, obviously we are lacking Charity. We are nothing without it.

Numbers 14:17 "And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. 19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. 20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: 21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."

Verse 17 is describing the power of the Lord—and 18-21 defines this power, saying God is longsuffering, merciful, and forgiving, this is describing His character; the power of God is manifested in His character—who He is. This is connected to His glory as well because the Bible says in verse 21 that the whole earth will be filled with His glory. When we think of the earth being filled with His glory or lightened with His glory, we think of the fourth angel as in Revelation 18; and we know that He is coming back in power and great glory.

When we look at the longsuffering of God, this is His power; His greatness and His glory. Longsuffering is connected with God's power and also His glory.

2 Peter 3:15 "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; . . ."

God's longsuffering is salvation; none of us can be saved without experiencing God's longsuffering; if He was not longsuffering with us, we would not have salvation. Charity, which is the character of God, also suffers long; this is His glory and His power. This means if we have Charity in us, then we are going to be longsuffering with everyone as well.

How do we see the longsuffering of God being salvation?

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

We understand if we do not believe, repent, confess and forsake our sins, we know we are going to be lost; God is not going to hear our prayers. The patience of God has a reason, does it not? His object is to save you and me. The longsuffering of God becomes salvation to us as we allow it to bring us to repentance. It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance; not so much the reward and promise of heaven to come; nor is it the fear, torments and anguish of hell fire that is going to call us to turn from our wicked ways and live; we have to see God's longsuffering. We have to see the greatness of His power and glory and character and let that win and move us and woo us to repentance. This is Charity.

If it was not for the longsuffering of God, none of us would be able to come to Christ; none of us would be able to be led to repentance that we might be on our way on the road to salvation. This of course is God's glory, power, greatness, His character.

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

In the days of Noah the longsuffering of God waited. When we think of waiting, we think of patience, and also probationary time; waiting is connected to a period of time. The longsuffering of God which waited in the days of Noah in order to save the righteous, the faithful and obedient, is connected with a period of time. How long did the longsuffering of God wait in the time of Noah? God waited 120 years, according to Genesis 6:3; that is an example of God's longsuffering.

Do we have other periods in the Bible where God was longsuffering, trying to get people to come to repentance; to accept the Gospel of their salvation? We think of the 490 years of Daniel 9:24, 25, which was a probationary time period. 1844 until now; that is not a specific time prophecy per se, but it is a probationary period. Sodom and Gomorrah; we don't have a specific time about how longsuffering He was with them, but before any nation is destroyed there is always a period of probationary time.

We see the 2520; the 1260 years, 1290 years, the 1335 years, the 70 years. So what have we discovered with these various time prophecies and what we can learn when you look at them is you are seeing the longsuffering of God and that is salvation. In the time prophecies He was doing a work to try to bring a people to repentance; after that probationary period if they did not repent and accept the gospel, then judgment would fall upon them; punishment and destruction. We see this clearly even in the image of Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdoms of Bible Prophecy.

So Charity suffereth long; the longsuffering of God is His glory, His greatness, His character. It is salvation because He wants to bring us to repentance and the longsuffering of God waits for us. So even when we are studying these time prophecies, we look at the events and we see the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the battle between truth and error, but we also see God's longsuffering because this is salvation; He's trying to bring a people to repentance. This is Charity and we ought to have this for each other. Charity does not just give up on people; charity continues to strive, just like God in the time prophecies which are a revelation of God's Charity.

Charity suffereth long and is kind;

Titus 3:1 "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. 3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. [this describes our condition] 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;"

So if it wasn't for the kindness of God; if it wasn't for God sending His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life, and receiving the washing, regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed on us abundantly by Christ, how would we be? Would we be

kind? No, we would be foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts, living in malice, hateful and hating one another.

Charity is kind, charity is not going to be hateful; not have malice, not manifesting or practicing deception, not going to be foolish, not going to be disobedient. The only way we can be kind is to accept the life of Christ and His sacrifice; but we have to be washed, regenerated or born again and renewed in the Holy Ghost. How do you know you have received the kindness of God our Savior Jesus Christ and you have experience this and accepted His kindness?

Ephesians 4:30 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

You manifest kindness, when you are tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. If you have wronged me or I have offended you, how do I have the right to hold a grudge against you or to be bitter against you, when I consider what I have done to Jesus?

I am the one that caused the death of the Son of God; I am the one that put those holes in His hands and feet; my sins did that. If He can forgive me for that, why can't I forgive you for what you have done to me? This is an expression of kindness; we're not bitter; we're not holding any grudges. Anger and wrath and clamor and evil speaking are to be put away if I have Charity, which is going to be kind.

When we are forgiving one another, we have to let each other know that we've forgiven them. Sometimes we don't want to let people know we have forgiven them; we say, "I'll just keep my distance, they're over there and I'm over here and I'm not going to let them know; God knows; I've already prayed to God and in my heart I've already forgiven them, so I don't have to go and open my mouth and say I've forgiven them." We have to let them know we've forgiven them; just like Jesus, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." We have to let people know; those that have offended us, those we have had grudges against or held things in our heart against them. We may have been bitter; but we have to let them know.

Kindness is manifested in forgiving one another and being tenderhearted; we can't have stony hearts we have to have those stony hearts removed. God has to give us a heart of flesh; He has to put it in our hearts to forgive. This is how we show kindness because of course Jesus says we are forgiven as we forgive; if we don't forgive others their trespasses then He is not going to forgive us for the things we have done to Him. You are forgiven as you forgive; so we need to think about how we forgive because the measure of forgiveness we give to others, that's the measure God is giving to you.

When you are forgiving someone, often you can't forget what was done to you, but though I cannot forget, I am to live and behave as though it never happened. It happened to me but I am to treat the person as if they had never done it. That is what God does for us; He talks about blotting out our sins and He says that He will remember them no more. God is so good! We would be mortified to be in heaven and know that God remembered all our sins; but He says He will not and we won't remember them either. So if He is forgiving us in this fashion, what about our fellow man; our brothers and sisters in Christ; our family members; shouldn't we also give them that same forgiveness where we also 'remember it no more'? This is Charity.

Proverbs 31:26 "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

Notice it is a law to be kind; the law of kindness is in her mouth; which means it is also in the heart because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Kindness is to come from our mouth, our words, and our expressions as well; this is a demonstration that somebody has the law written in

their heart and mind. If the law of kindness is not in your heart and mind then it is not going to come out of your mouth. You won't open your mouth in wisdom; you might open your mouth in foolishness or nonsense; you might open your mouth in evil speaking, bitterness malice and clamoring, but it will not be in wisdom, humility, meekness, and with kindness.

Proverbs 31 is about that virtuous woman which is a type of the true church. She opens her mouth with wisdom which shows she is a wise woman, a wise virgin. She has the law of kindness; her religion is practical; not just in words, but in what she does and how she treats others.

Isaiah 54:7 "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. 9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee."

So not only is kindness a law, but it is also connected with the covenant; verse 10 equates God's kindness with the covenant of peace. What is God's covenant of peace? He says He wants to write the law in our mind and in our hearts, and one of the ways you can know if the Sabbath truth and all the Ten Commandments are written in your mind is there will be kindness in your mouth. The covenant of peace and kindness go together; they can't be separated. If we have experienced the covenant of peace, if we have the law in our hearts and our minds, we are going to be kind. We have forgiven one another their trespasses and sins against us, and we are treating them as though they never did it to us. How can that be? It is the same way that God is and if we are going to reflect His character, this is the charity that we are going to have.

Isaiah 59:20 "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

When somebody receives God's covenant, He puts the law in their mind and heart. They have turned from transgression and God has given them His Spirit and that is His character. It's His glory, that's who He is—it's the spirit of charity, self-sacrificing love.

He says, "I put My spirit on you and I put My words in your mouth." We can say that God's Word is the Bible; God's Word is the Spirit of Prophecy; but God's Words of kindness and longsuffering; His words of patience and charity are going to be coming out of our mouths if that law of kindness is in our hearts.

Charity is longsuffering; charity is kind, and charity envieth not.

Envy means to be jealous; to covet or to be competitive. Charity is not competitive; she is not trying to push herself to the front, not trying to elbow and crowd her way in; that is not how charity behaves. She is not trying to be noticed or get attention. Charity doesn't have low self-esteem issues or suffer with needing to be the center of attention. Charity doesn't seek the spotlight, it can share the spotlight.

Envy is something very serious; charity doesn't envy; it is not jealous of other people's successes, accomplishments, or possessions.

James 3:13 "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

How do we recognize the wise virgins among us? In this text is the wise person shown by what he knows or what he is able to explain; what he is able to teach? It says, "Let him show out of a good conversation His works with meekness of wisdom." Conversation here means lifestyle and actions; not just talking and saying, but behavior and conduct.

The wise man is very meek, he's not a show it all, he's not trying to brag or be boastful, he is not saying, "Look at me; here I am; look at what I know and understand; I am an intellectual giant." That is not how the Bible describes the wise man.

14 "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, [envy is a heart problem here—spiritual heart disease] glory not, and lie not against the truth."

We can lie against the pure unadulterated truth of our holy profession by having bitter envy and strife in our hearts; and in this we are not supposed to glory. There are people that are proud and happy, but we are not to glory in this, because this is not giving glory to God when we profess to have the truth but show bitter envy and strife.

15 "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."

So now we are classifying heavenly wisdom, which will be demonstrated in our conversation and character; but here we find this other 'wisdom' that is going to produce strife and envy in the heart and we are lying against the truth. So we could have the truth, and profess the truth, but actually be lying against the truth through bitter envy and strife in our hearts. This doesn't bring glory to the truth or to God.

16 "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Ye shall know them by their fruits. This is important; if there is strife and envy, there is going to be confusion and every evil work. Babylon means confusion; are we in danger of being a sister to Babylon; in danger of making a perfect Babylon as the Spirit of Prophecy says. How does that happen? If there is envy and strife then there is confusion and every evil work. Not some evil work, not most—but *every* evil work has its origin in strife and envy. What is the most evil work? What about crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the most evil work.

Mark 15:7 "And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. 11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him."

So even though they could not convict Him of sin, He did no evil; there was no fault found in Him; they wanted Him to be crucified. They say, "Give us Barabbas; we have no king but Caesar. This man is not our king." What was the motive for the chief priest delivering Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor? It was for envy! This is very serious; where strife and envy are there is confusion and every evil work. Envy caused Christ to be crucified; it was envy that caused church and state to come together; those powers that were against each other—Herod and Pilate couldn't stand each other, they were at enmity—but

they became friends over the trial of Christ—when it came to crucifying Christ, the way, the truth and the life. So it will be today.

Jealousy is what led Jesus to be crucified, and we know they were being moved by the Spirit of Satan because envy didn't only manifest itself here at the trial of Christ; envy first began in heaven. The Spirit of Prophecy is clear that Satan was envious—he was jealous of Jesus Christ. What was it about Jesus he was jealous about? He was not jealous so much because of Jesus' character of meekness, longsuffering, kindness and patience, but Satan envied His position, His authority—he coveted position.

There is a principle here in Ezekiel 8;

Ezekiel 8:5 “Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.”

In the north we find the image of Jealousy. Why is Jealousy in the North, not south or west or any direction? It is because the North is associated with the Throne of God. In Isaiah 14:12-14, Satan boasts:

Isaiah 14:13 “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:”

North represents where God sits, it is His authority and power, His civil and religious authority. God is King of the government of heaven and He is King over the congregation or church in heaven as well. That was what Satan wanted; to usurp the authority of God and to seek to control both church and state. He wanted to introduce a new world order, to reform the government of God. He wanted to sweep away the law of God; he claimed to be a freedom fighter—to be a revolutionary, and said, “We need to reform the government of God”.

Satan became the first politician; he began to campaign against God; he began to malign God and smear and assassinate His character. He began to go around with mysterious secrecy and he was whispering in the ears of the angels, infecting heaven with his dissatisfaction and how he was disgruntled, how he was treated unfairly and how a change was needed.

When you see the beginning of the Great Controversy with the contest over church and state, that lets us know that this is the same thing going on today; God is declaring the end of the conflict from the beginning of the conflict. What started the war in heaven, has been going on for 6,000 years on this earth, and in these last days Satan is trying to take over both church and state; a new world order; new world religion; new economic order—the Sunday Law crisis. The image of jealousy is in the North because that is where jealousy began.

Ezekiel 8:6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

We know that from here on out we are going to see greater abominations. The second abomination we see the seventy elders are in the dark, they have their censers and incense, they are worshipping the idols of Israel, the images of the Beast in the dark.

12 “Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.”

Then in the third abomination the women are weeping for Tammuz who is there in the North—spiritualism; Tammuz is a false Christ. Then the last abomination that maketh desolate is when the twenty-five men turn their back on the Temple with their faces towards the East and they worship the sun towards the East. This is the type of the Mark of the Beast crisis in the last days; then God no longer hears their prayers any more. He begins to seal His people with the Seal of God in their forehead, protecting them from the plagues that are about to fall on the rejecters of the grace of God.

The foundation for all the abominations was the first one, which was Jealousy and envy; then comes every other abomination. Where strife and envy are, there is confusion and every evil work. That is what you see in Ezekiel 8; every evil work is represented there, and it all starts with jealousy.

What is to guard us and give us victory so we are not envious, we are not jealous? Charity envieth not; if you have charity in your heart, you are not going to envy. You are not going to crucify Jesus. You are not going to participate in these abominations that lead to spiritualism and Sunday sacredness. Who would have thought that just a little envy, just a little Jealousy, could lead you to turn your back on the Temple and worship the sun towards the East? Strife and envy bring confusion—Babylon—the spirit of Babylon and every evil work. What protects us and guards us from that is having charity—self-sacrificing love, not love-sick sentimentalism that excuses sin and covers up transgression—No; but self-sacrificing love that says “Sin must be crucified, with the flesh, the affections and the lusts, that we may obey God.”

Charity suffers long; Charity is Kind; Charity envieth not; Charity also vaunteth not itself. What does it mean to vaunt one’s self? It means to boast. If you have envy, then obviously, you’re going to be boasting or lifting up your self. Comparing yourselves among yourselves; those who do that are not wise according to the Bible.

Would you like to guard yourself from being impatient; being intemperate; being unkind; being envious and jealous and lifting up yourself? All the sins that go along with selfishness and covetousness—the cure, the remedy, the antidote is to read 1 Corinthians 13 every day. In order for us to understand the aggravating character of sin and to hate it as the vile thing that it is; we have to contemplate more of Christ’s self-sacrifice, we have to. You remove self-sacrifice and you don’t want to behold that, we’re not going to be longsuffering or kind, we’re going to be envious, and envy leads us to lift up ourselves, self-exaltation, that’s ‘gadal’, that’s the ‘Daily’; and that leads to every other abomination. Envy leads us to idolatry, false worship; that is what it did to Lucifer and that is what it does today.

Psalm 94:1 “O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. 2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. 3 LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? 4 How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?”

It is the wicked who are the workers of iniquity; they boast themselves—self-exaltation—if we are guilty of doing this then we are a worker of iniquity. No wonder Jesus said to those in Matthew 7 that prophesied in His name, cast out devils in His name, did many wonderful works in His name, “I don’t know you, ye workers of iniquity, you did all those things for self-exaltation. You did all those things for your own glory.” Workers of iniquity, they boast themselves, they speak hard things, the Bible says.

Psalm 97:7 “Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.”

What causes the workers of iniquity to boast and exalt themselves? We know they don’t have charity, self-sacrificing love, but here they are boasting about their graven images and idols; and because they worship their idols, this causes them to exalt themselves, to boast themselves. In the Bible it says that when the Children of Israel would worship idols, they would worship the things their hands and fingers

have made. (Isaiah 2:8, 9) So you are worshipping an idol, something that your hands have made, you are really worshipping yourself because this is what YOU have made, what YOU have done—"Is this not great Babylon which I have made, that I built for my glory?" this is why they boast themselves; why they boast and lift themselves up is because there is idolatry going on. The greatest idol that we can worship is ourselves.

What are some other idols that cause people to lift up and exalt themselves? Jesus told us:

Luke 16:15 "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

Think about it; that which is most talked about, most esteemed, very popular among men—in many cases to God it is an abomination, it is idolatry. Some of the idols today are music and entertainment; sports; money; material possessions; worldly fashion; and our bellies or appetites. It is the idols that cause the nations to boast, to brag and lift themselves up.

"In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. ***It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone.*** . .

Just as in the Old Testament they made idols of wood and stone, gold, silver and brass, that can't see, can't talk, can't walk or hear, and they that make them are like unto them, so are those that trust in them, that is how we construct our false doctrines and theories, they are our idols as well. And because of those false doctrines and theories, it leads teachers and ministers to lift themselves up, to boast.

"By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions--is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia." GC 583.1

So philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists, many colleges and universities, even theological institutions, their god is Baal. This is how one is led to boast, to exalt and lift up themselves. The spirit of boasting, what spirit is behind that? Well, obviously Satan.

James 3:5 "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

The tongue is very destructive, it is like a fire, it can destroy nature; it defiles the whole body, not only our body but the body of Christ, the body of believers. But even though it is a world of iniquity, it is an unruly poison and the Bible says no man can tame their tongue; if we can control and tame the tongue, we would be perfect. It is not a big member, it is just a little member but it boasts great things.

Interesting; tongue, little member, boasting great things, there is something in the Bible that is also little and boasts great things. The tongue boasts and exalts; this is what Lucifer said, "I will exalt myself; I will ascend into the heavens; I am going to lift myself up." This is what the Papacy does as well.

Daniel 7:8 "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."

20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout [proud and hard-hearted] than his fellows."

The little horn is little but he boasts and speaks great things against God—blasphemies. It is interesting there were ten horns on the beast, but when the little horn came crowding his way in, elbowing his way, making room for himself—he had to remove three horns and the other seven, the reason they weren't removed is because they conformed to him. He was able to subdue and control them. That is the spirit of boasting and self-exaltation; not only are you going to elbow, crowd and push your way to the front, but you will even remove and knock others out of your way, so that you can get to the place you want to be. Then for those around you, well, "You are either with me or you are against me—you are going to conform or you are going to die."

This is the character of the papacy and oftentimes this is the spirit that we have. God wants to give us charity so that we don't lift up ourselves. This is guarding us from the mystery of iniquity.

Proverbs 25:14 "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain."

If someone is boasting themselves and lifting themselves up, claiming to be something when really they are nothing, they're proud and lifting up a false gift—they think it is from God but it is really a false gift—they are like clouds without rain. If one is bragging and lifting up themselves that is one sure way you can know that they don't have the rain; no former rain and latter rain. There are those in the Bible that did this:

Jude 1:11 "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. 12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, [no former or latter rain] carried about of winds; [tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine] trees whose fruit withereth, [they had fruit but it withered away] without fruit, twice dead, [they experience the second death in the lake of fire] plucked up by the roots; [they weren't rooted and grounded in love]

The gainsaying of Cain, Korah, Balaam these were boasters; proud leaders, they lifted up themselves against God and they often led the people of God into apostasy and rebellion. They have no fruit—they shall know them by their fruits; and no rain either. What is the foundation of all this?

2 Timothy 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

What is it that leads to boasting and covetousness, and blaspheming and disobeying your parents, unthankful, unholy, all these sins—the lovers of self! Is that the love we are supposed to have? Love for self? We are supposed to have self-sacrificing love, we are not going to be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; we're not going to be proud or boasting; we are not going to be covetous. The reason these sins exist is because we are not beholding Calvary. When we behold the cross, that removes pride—when we behold Calvary, is there anything we can be proud of? Can we be proud that we

crucified Jesus? Are we going to be happy that we murdered the Son of God? Are we going to participate in sinful pleasures while beholding Calvary? No; you would not do it.

The problem is there is no Charity, and the absence of charity brings love of self in place of self-sacrificing love and that causes us to be vaunting ourselves, being envious, no patience, no longsuffering, no kindness.

The last part of 1 Corinthians 13:4 says that Charity does not puff up. Envy leads to vaunting or lifting up; then lifting up leads to being puffed up. The Bible just told us about those that are heady and high minded. What happens when one is heady or has a big head? If you had a very big head and were trying to walk, you would be unsteady and eventually you will fall. If we have that big head, we are heady and high-minded and our head is swelled up, somehow, somewhere we are going to fall.

Colossians 2:18 "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,"

What causes us to be puffed up? It is because we have a fleshly mind, a carnal heart and mind; one that is puffed up has a carnal mind. It says to let no man beguile you, don't be deceived in your reward in voluntary humility and worship of angels. Are we to worship angels? We are supposed to worship God—are we in danger of worshipping angels? We are told that Satan transforms himself as an angel of light. Don't be beguiled or deceived in worshipping angels—those that do this have a carnal mind that gets puffed up.

Revelation 19:10 "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

So here is Gabriel, the angel of prophecy, the angel that Jesus sent to show John these things, and John was tempted to actually worship the angel that was giving him the Revelation; showing him the things written in the book of prophecy. But Gabriel said, "Listen, don't worship me. I'm not God; I am just a fellow-servant. I am your brother—I am with your brethren the prophets, don't worship me, worship God."

Revelation 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

Again Gabriel had to tell him, "Look I know you are seeing all these wonderful and advanced truths; things in visions and most sublime and grand truths, but John, don't worship me; I am just a servant; just your brother." Could it be that we can end up wanting to worship at the feet of the angel, not a literal angel, but a messenger, minister or Bible teacher that brings us these truths; who is showing us and teaching us the Book of Revelation? Teaching us the Seven churches, Seven seals, Seven trumpets, Seven thunders, Seven last plagues—and we be led to worship them; to revere them?

I am so glad that Gabriel was a faithful messenger; if he wasn't faithful, he could have took that worship to himself. This is something that happens just before Christ comes; it is a warning to us—don't worship the messengers that bring you the message. Don't worship the ministers that teach you the gospel. Don't do this; we are to worship God; it is committing idolatry and we have to be careful of it.

How does the fleshly mind get puffed up? Charity is not puffed up, but the carnal mind has a way of swelling.

1 Corinthians 5:1 "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

It is boldness in sin that causes those with a carnal mind to get puffed up. When we transgress and sin, whether it is literal fornication or spiritual fornication, this is what causes the fleshly mind to get puffed up. When we commit sin, or sanction sin, or support sin, or participate or consent in sin, and not put it away or do something about it—the mind gets puffed up. When it talks about being puffed up, in the Strong's, it simply means to inflate. You inflate a balloon by blowing hot air into it—you use hot air to blow up the balloon. This is how the carnal mind gets swelled up. What is the air or the hot breath that is used to puff up the mind?

Ephesians 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

What is the hot air or breath that Satan uses to puff-up the fleshly mind? The spirit that works in the children of disobedience; no wonder he is called the prince of the power of the air; the air is that spirit. He works in the children of disobedience as they participate in the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Every time we partake of those fleshly desires of the mind and body, we are allowing the prince of the power of the air to blow us up and puff up the mind.

Satan does it one way, he works through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. How else does he do it?

Ephesians 4:14 "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

So if Satan does not deceive us through our fleshly lusts, and our fleshly desires, if he can't puff us up that way, he puffs us up with every wind of doctrine. What is the remedy, the antidote, for having a puffed up mind? Charity suffereth long, charity is kind, charity envies not, charity does not vaunt itself, neither is it puffed up.

Heavenly Father; we thank You for describing to us what Charity is; and what it is not. We can see very clearly whether or not we measure up to Your great standard of self-sacrificing love. I thank You for what You have revealed to us and taught us, and we ask and plead that we would be able to have Charity, because we are not safe from having a puffed up mind. We are not safe from elevating and lifting up ourselves, or from being envious, jealous and competitive. We need to be kind and long suffering, we need charity. Help us to behold more the cross of Calvary, help it to become our science and our song, that we might be crucified with Him as well as the flesh, the affections and the lusts. That we are not puffed up or lifted up; that we are not envious whereby other abominations and sins come; but that indeed we could be kind and longsuffering and reveal and manifest Your power, Your glory, Your greatness, in our character to others. In Jesus' name we pray; Amen!