

1Cor. 13:8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. **9** For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; **10** but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. **11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. **12** For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. **13** And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

I don't want to take much time to go back to two Sundays ago, but that day we looked at the beginning of this famous chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, the so-called *Love Chapter*. Paul was talking about this in the context of Spiritual Gifts, abilities given to us by God to strengthen each other and the Church. But something very special remains for us in these words that wrap things up today. But first we must deal with this: (Sophie, the sweet rabbit). Sophie, our sweet Bishon mix girl caused some pain the other night. Monday was a terrible day for Jill, as her tooth was killing her and she ended up having an emergency root canal. After Bible Study she needed me to drive her to Ravenna but first we had to stop at Rite-Aid for pain medicine. We went through the drive through. Now, normally I go in. But we were together, and as a good family unit, we had to have our little dogs with us. Thus an unfortunate event began...

We pulled up behind another car that was waiting to get their Rx. There was no problem. But, our smart dogs, the older one in particular *knew* that at the drive up window, there would be the treat of a fine dog biscuit. So, Sophie the sweet rabbit, knowing that treats were just ahead decided she had to jump into my lap, where our other little doggie was already waiting. Well, there was to be a treat, and she was not going to miss out. So she jumped over, and landed right on my horn. BEEEEEEPPP. Well, the driver ahead of me shouted out a brief 3 or 4-word message for me that was about as rough of a thing as a person can say to another person. It hurt. My window was down. I said "I'm sorry! It was my dog!" An obscene gesture was made to me, matching the message, and the car floored it and screamed away from the drive up window. I felt very badly because I would never the beep the horn at anyone in such a situation. But the damage was done. Someone out there had determined that I was a vile person, all because of my Sweet Rabbit.

I pulled up to the window and the lady inside said "Oh, I'm sorry about that." I said "I'm sorry, it was not me, my dog landed on the horn." But then the

person inside added something to the story. The person ahead of me was not able to get their Rx because their bank card had been denied. So it was not a very good night for that driver. And then the horn beeps, and the angry exchange happens, and I am trying to explain and the other car screams off! It all could have been worse, as often happens these days. I could have gone into ROAD RAGE MODE and screamed onto Maple street to follow them, blowing my horn even more and yelling at the top of my lungs! I did not. I wish I could have known what the bill was for their medicine and paid it for them. All because my Sweet Rabbit had to get her treat from the window.

I stopped to think about something back in 2007. In a movie theatre movie that we have watched during our lives, going back to the 1920's, movie projectors used to play the movies at 24 frames per second. This means that in a normal 2-hour movie, we would actually watch 172,800 frames of movie film go through the machine. Now, how much of the movie do we see in 5 seconds? We only see 120 total frames. I did the math on this. 5 seconds of movie gives us what percentage of the total movie? Actually, we see less than .07% of the movie. How often do we let things that take 5 seconds end up leading to us making conclusions about other people? We watch a literal spec of the movie, a literal frog hair of the movie, and then we make judgments.

The other night my dog blew the horn. That made me a heartless idiot who needed to be cussed out. I could have reacted that the other person was the true heartless idiot. We both would have been very wrong. And all because a Sweet Rabbit wanted a treat!

Paul says such a great thing here in 1 Corinthians. First he says *Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.* ⁹ *For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;* ¹⁰ *but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.* ¹¹ *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.* ¹² *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

Paul says that now, in our dealings with each other, we never see enough of the movie. We see an "Augenblick" which is German for an "eye blink." I learned

this lesson in a big way in 2003 and then again in 2007 on Christmas Eve. Jill and I had been sent to serve Mt. Tabor UMC in East Canton, hometown of one Clark Kandel. I followed a troubled pastor who had served only 2 years. The church had collapsed with their attendance going from 160 per week to 60. We arrived and I began to hear terrible stories about this other pastor. I really didn't want to hear it, but just to do my job. So I did. The saddest thing happened on Christmas Eve of 2007. This same pastor who had actually been arrested and removed from his church in Madison, had died at the age of 40. I went to his funeral to be supportive. That day changed me forever.

All I had heard was bad about this pastor. It was not clear to me that he was sick, and that he had been sick his whole life. He wanted nothing more than to serve God as a pastor. But he had serious diseases, sickness that kept him away from other people, away from visiting others in the hospital. If your immune system is shot, you just stay away from hospital rooms where everyone is sick! I went to funeral for a 40-year old small, sickly man who had a wife and two daughters who loved him. And I encountered 300 people who loved this man, who had *known him all his life*. They did not just base things on 5 seconds of experience. He was profoundly loved by his family. His two brothers were there, who looked just like him, except that they were 5 inches taller and 40 lbs heavier, and they were healthy. I was so happy that day to see 300 people there to remember and mourn the life of a little pastor who had been quite sick all of his life. Because he was actually precious, and he was loved.

Too often we think we have all knowledge, but we see only a little. We are told that in the future we will see things completely, we will see each other as God sees us, and God sees the whole movie for each of us. When will we realize that we often only see 5 seconds out of a possible 7,200 seconds? Is that enough to really judge? Again, may God give us hearts to love, hearts not quick to judge and write off others, hearts that want to know more of the story than just 5 seconds. Especially these days, in a Facebook world where people are quick to say horrendous and hurtful things to other people they have never actually met, we need to slow it down. See more of the movie. Get more of the story. Let's look forward to that day when we will get to see completely, in God's good time. The greatest of these is love. AMEN.

