

**“Now Abideth Love”**  
**By Brother Parrish Lee**  
**Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

You may be seated, Saints.

Giving glory, giving glory to that same great God that we sing about, and that we lift up our hands to, that we cry out, and we expect an answer back. Giving honor to that glory, to that God, the magnificent One, the omniscient One, the omnipotent One, the loving One, giving honor to that God. We want to take a moment to give glory to Him. Giving honor and glory to all of those who have gone before us, those in the Word, and those down through the ages who will never be known until we get to Heaven, and those who kept the torch in this ministry, from our founding pastor, and our pastor, who, incidentally, is going to be here next week. Next week, our pastor is going to be here, and, actually, he's been trying to free up his calendar, and this is where it worked to, so, those of you who are in departments or leadership expect to be called for a meeting, and, hopefully you can make it. But, giving honor to him, and his family, on whose shoulders the ministry now dwells. And, giving honor to all of y'all, who come and present yourselves before the Lord. May the Lord see your petition and answer according to His several ability and will.

We've had a wonderful time, a wonderful time, this month. At least, I've had a wonderful time, and I think one of the highlights had to be when Pastor Thomas visited. And, he and his wife, they came for a really sad occasion. The brother of Marita and Lupita and several family members, he passed away, and he (Pastor Thomas) came to do the funeral, they had asked him to do the funeral. He was in Florida, at the time, but Pastor Thomas was able to come up and do the funeral and minister to the family, but what a wonderful message, amen? What a wonderful message. He started off talking about politics, and then he got right into our living room. Amen, amen. And this month has been just a really great month. And the Scripture theme for the month is going to be the same as the Scripture theme for today; that is going to be our thought for today.

**1 Corinthians 13:13**     *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

If we could bow our heads for just a moment: Lord, God, Almighty One, and merciful, and compassionate, and graceful one, loving God. We just come before You and we thank You for all Your good and perfect gifts. You alone are worthy of the praise that we give. You alone have done things that are too innumerable to count. And, You alone give a grace and a mercy so great that we feel it all the way down in our soul. Thank You for what You've done for us, even today, even today. And we offer up praise and worship to You. And, Lord, we ask, even now, as we are about to go over Your Word, a message, and we ask, we ask, that You completely have Your way in the message. Because, we come to You for nutrition and food, and we ask that You feed us, according to Your Word, as it said, it will not return unto You void, but would surely do that to which You sent it, and accomplish. So that is our petition that we put before you today, as we come and claim in Jesus' name, and everyone said, amen. Amen.

So, our thought for today—our thought for the month is the same as our thought for today. Our Scripture theme, from the Book of First Corinthians chapter thirteen and thirteen. And it's important, it's important to have this one, because we really want to highlight some points.

**1 Corinthians 13:13** *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three [these three abide]; but the greatest of these is charity.*

Our message today is simply titled, "Now Abideth Love." We're going to do this in three parts. We'll see how quickly we get through it.

The first part is: Your Steps Are Ordered.

The second part is: Never Again.

And, the third part is: Lord, Increase Our Faith.

## **Part 1: Your Steps Are Ordered**

First Corinthians two, verse nine, that's our first Scripture. Now, I want to set a little bit of a stage, here, by saying, did you know that everything you could be seeking, everything God has for you is already prepared. Did you know it's not, "Well, I got to do it this way, I got to go this way," no, God has prepared what He has for you, already. It's already waiting for us. The Bible says:

**1 Corinthians 2:9** *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

The things that He's already prepared. We don't even know about them, but He's got them already prepared for us. The things that He wants us to have, if you love Him, He's got some stuff prepared for you. Many of us get to the place where we have to work, and we work with the mindset that, "If I do it this way, and if I go around that way, I can get something special, or, if I do this, you know, then I can get that," and the truth of the matter is, God is just wanting us to come to Him. He's just wanting us to come to Him; He'll tell us what He has for us to do, because the blessings are already prepared. And, and, and, He has ordered how we get to His blessings, His gifts. He has ordered a way, a path that we get the things that God has for us. Yes, the Lord has ordered your steps for our blessing. He has ordered steps for our blessing:

**Psalms 37:23** *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD [The steps of a good man, and good woman, are ordered by the Lord.]: and he delighteth in his way.*

I always thought this was a neat scripture; I've heard it quoted a lot, "Yeah, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, that means that, everywhere I go, if I'm a good man, God has ordered, where I go, yeah!" No, no, no, no, no, no, no. When you seek God, when you follow God, when you ask God, He shows you the steps that He wants you to go in to get to where He wants you to be. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Now, in this path that He has set for us, in this path, sometimes the steps go really fast, He wants you to move fast. Sometimes it's a bit of a curve, but, it's the steps that God is calling you to go. Sometimes the steps are a little jagged, and, sometimes the steps are small steps, because He has a certain reason. "I'm ordering your steps a certain way, because I've got a way for you to get there." Sometimes, if you get there too fast, you can pass right on by your blessing. And, sometimes, if you go straight ahead, you're going to run into something, when He's trying to dodge you

from getting something that you ain't supposed to get. So, He orders your steps. And, sometimes those steps are actual steps. Sometimes those steps are actual steps. When I was—well, not all that much younger—but, when I was younger, I loved to play sports. Football, loved it! Basketball, I would play basketball until all the taste was out of my mouth. I'd run, run into the house, snatch something to eat, run back out, and play—I don't know if anybody else was like that; I loved to play sports. Baseball, loved to play, but, one of my favorite ones was track; loved to run track. The race; loved that race. But, you know, in all that time of playing, all that love that I had, for the sports I played, nobody ever told me that your joints, they've got an expiration on them. Nobody ever told me that your body would only be good for only so many thousands of miles. Nobody ever told me that! And, if they had told me, I was young, I wouldn't have cared, anyway. I would have done what I was going to do. Even now, I see people out there, young bucks, I see them out there, playing football, and shooting hoops, I think, “Ah, I could strap my knees up. I've got a couple of plays left in me. I could get back out there,” in your mind, in your mind; anybody else, over a certain age, that would think like that? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You see them, I mean, there might be a little frost on the top, but there's still plenty of fire in the bosom, right? But, sometimes, the steps are actual steps, and, after all that playing, all that athleticism, and after all that life that I done lived, now, when it gets to—I don't know if anybody else can identify—but, now, when it gets to some steps, I almost cringe, and I want to count how many of them steps do I got to go up before I get to where I got to go to. I don't know if anybody else feels that, but, you know, Arthur speaks to us, Arthur Itis. He knows our names, you know, and he speaks real loud, but the steps, the steps, sometimes, you got to know that sometimes they are actual steps, and the only way to get to that upper elevated position is to climb the steps. Now, I know it's going to be painful. Oh, man, these steps are hard, and they ain't got a whole lot of give in them; the only give is going to be in my knees, and my knees ain't got a whole lot of give in them, so I just have to grit my teeth. If I want to get to the net level, I have to climb the steps. I have to climb the steps. Yes, sometimes, the steps hurt, and, sometimes, there's a lot of steps. And, many times, especially if it's to go into a building I haven't been into before, it's a whole new destination, it's a whole new experience. I don't want anybody to see me cringing and hurting as I climb the steps to get to my destination, but that's the only way, and, it's the same God. There are steps that He has ordered us to take. He ordered some steps for us. Yes, you have to hit the first one. Yes, you hit the first one to get to the second one. Yes, you have to hit the second one to get to the third one, and on and on and on, because He has ordered a path for you to go. Yes, the steps of a good man are ordered. If we think they are too long, He still ordered them. If we think they are too jagged, He still ordered them. If we think there are too many of them, He still ordered them. And, the only way for me to get to that is by following His orders. Yes, by following His orders. Now, the steps going up, that's a process, and it takes you to places you haven't been before. But, I have a hard time, the hardest time I have, is with the steps coming down. And, sometimes, He orders us to go down the steps. Sometimes He orders us to abase ourselves. Yes, sometimes He orders us to humble ourselves. “Yeah, you go down; I've got a path for you.” And, if there's an argument with that, all you have to do is turn to the example of Joseph, that's all you have to do, and He ordered some steps, and he went all the way down to prison, not knowing, not knowing what was going to befall him, only knowing that God was going to deliver him. But, He ordered that path for him to go. All that was required was that he be faithful. And, this last part of this, God ordering steps for us, the military people understand this: it's an order. God ordered it, and, when He ordered it, that's an order for us over our

lives. He ordered the steps. And, orders—am I right?—you must obey. They must be obeyed. That's the only way to be right in the the will of God.

## Part 2: Never Again

Now, one thing I have discovered is, for some reason, people don't ask for as much as they used to. They've gotten away from it. And there could be several reasons, whether it's because they're trying to be content, or they're trying to be comfortable, or, sometimes it's because they've done got a little older and they know that the more you ask for, the more responsibility you get, and the more responsibility you get the more accountability you've got to have, and, if you've got accountability, that means you've got to do more work, so “I won't ask for any more, so that I won't be accountable for any more, so I won't have to do any more, so I won't get in trouble fro any more...” Whatever the reason, there's a whole spirit, now, that we don't ask God for as much as He wants to give us. There's a whole spirit going on out there, and it really amounts to the same thing, but the Lord Jesus said, “Ask...”

**Matthew 7:7** *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

So, the Lord Jesus said, “Ask.” Ask, ask. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:” But, there's a whole dilemma going on, and it didn't just happen here. It's been going on for thousands of years, with the people that God is wanting to have more interfacing with. The Book of Matthew chapter twenty-three, it talks about the Jews; the Lord had wanted the same relationship with the Jews, and He was abject, because they wouldn't ask.

**Matthew 23:37-38** *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

So, here He says, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets...” And He told them, “You know what I want to do with you? I want to spread my arms around you. I want to give you one of those essence hugs. I want to make you feel like your loved. I want to have this wonderful relationship. I want to protect you. I want to be with you every place you go. I want to make sure nothing comes along and harms you. That's what I want. That's the relationship I want.” And then He says, at the end of verse thirty-seven, “Like a chicken would spread her wings over her brood, but you didn't want that. You didn't want Me, you didn't want this love coming from Me. So, therefore, because you didn't want this relationship,” verse thirty-eight, “Now your house is left unto you desolate.” While we were going through all the things they were going through, and they asked. Oh, because you didn't want the shelter, and the protection, and the love that God wanted to give you, that's why you're suffering. I like that example that you used, Malcolm, and, especially Pastor Thomas. He has just a way of putting things. He said, “If the only time, the only time that you talk to God is when you're suffering, and going through trouble, God has no problem with keeping you there, just so you'll talk to him, just so you'll talk to him.” I don't know if anybody else felt that, but I felt that. I felt that. And I had to go back over my

life and see if some of that trouble, for me, is self-inflicted, if it's my fault because I don't talk to God. And, to get that relationship, so that He can give me more. So, the Lord told them, "I wanted to have this, but you did not." This has been an issue with God's people down through the ages. Now, thank God He provides a reconciliation. Thank God that He provides reconciliation.

When we were in Israel, some years ago, our guide, his name was Kobi, and when we were in Israel, we were told that during the Holocaust so many people, they allowed everything to happen to them. They allowed it to happen. And Kobi was telling us, we, in this generation, can't figure out why they allowed all that to happen to them. He went on to say that they allowed themselves to be put in camps, and they allowed themselves to have everything taken away, and they allowed themselves to be put on trains, and they allowed themselves to be put in the gas chambers, and they allowed themselves to be pilfered and pillaged. They allowed it, they allowed it, they allowed it. But he said, "We say now, we say now, never again. Never again. We say, never again. Something might come this way, but we won't allow it; it's going to have to fight, if it's going to come after us." And, when he said that, I heard him; I heard him say that.

That ought to be the motto for God's people, everywhere. That ought to be the motto for Christians. That ought to be the motto—if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that ought to be your motto. "Devil, you have ripped up things in my life, but I'm not going to allow it any more. No, no, devil, no, you're not going to—I plead the blood of Jesus! I'm not going to allow you to come in and rip up in my family. I'm not going to allow you to come in and rip up in my marriage. I'm not going to allow you to come in and take authority over my kids. I'm not going to allow it! I'm not going to allow it! You might come, but you're in for a fight, devil! You may come here, but, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to fight you! You know how I'm going to fight you? I'm going to lift my eyes up to the hills from whence cometh my help, devil! And, then, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to plead the precious blood of Jesus, because that's one thing you ain't got no power against. I'm not going to allow it coming in here, never again."

And, one more thing for never again: There has been an attitude, there has been a spirit that comes after God's people. There's been a spirit, and this one comes, and it says, "You can't do that. You can't do that; that won't happen for you. You..." And it gives you an excuse why you can't be blessed by God, why you can't be used by God. "Why? You're not the one. Why there's something wrong with you. There's an issue where God can't get in there and use you and bless you like he wants to." That's been going on for thousands of years! Moses had that problem. God said, "Moses, I want you to come and lead My people out of captivity. I want you to speak for Me, Moses. And Moses said, "Um dum bum, I can't do that." "What do you mean, you can't do that? I'm telling you, I'm going to make you—" "Dra la bah, Lord, I can't do that. Lord, don't You know, I'm slow of speech? Lord, I-I-I k-k-kind of st-st-st-stutter. I can't do that." So, it's been going on for a long time! And, then, God had to use his brother, Aaron. And, then, there was other people who made excuses. Jeremiah, when God called him, Jeremiah said "You can't use me, I'm too young." And, the Lord said, "Say not, I am a child. I put your mouth. You will speak my Word. Sarah said, "You can't use me, I'm too old!" And then God had to go, not to her, but to her husband, "Why did she laugh? Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" It has been going on for thousands of years, an excuse, why God can't bless you. That's another thing, we have to just turn, "Devil, no. No, devil, never again. Never again I'm going to listen to your excuses. I'm going to lift my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help, and I'm going to plead the blood of Jesus to encourage my life, to strengthen my life, to get me on the track that God has for me. He's ordered some steps for me, devil, and I'm taking them. You know, the Lord said—I've got to say this—everything

that comes after us, the Lord said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." So, don't believe any lies, when the devil says, "No, no, no," the Lord said I have received power, because the Holy Ghost has come upon me, and I claim it in Jesus' name, the power that God gave me.

### **Part 3: Lord, Increase our Faith**

Increase our faith, the disciples turned to the Lord, and said, "Increase our faith. Increase our faith, Lord." Now, how in the world is that done? How do we get our faith increased? Do we lift weights? What about having a forty day fast, huh? A couple of people in the Bible, they fasted for forty days; I don't know about that. Forty days, you'd better be right with God. We got a couple of people in here, I know they went ten, fourteen days, but, fourteen, and there was a cut-off, "I'll go back to eating." And, fasting is something we have to do, anyway. But, what is the process of increasing our faith? Well, according to the Lord, He gives us the formula for increasing our faith:

**Luke 17:5-10** *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

How do we increase our faith? The Lord said if you have faith as great as a mustard seed, you could say to this tree, "Be thou plucked up." That's what the Lord said. But, then He said, "Which of you, having a servant," and He started off right there: You want to increase your faith, be a faithful servant. Number one, number one, starts with serving the Lord. He said, if you have a servant, and he's out in the field, when he's done with what he was doing out in the field, do you say, "Go ahead, take your ease; get something to eat?" No, no, no, no, no. He's *my* servant; he serves *me*. You make some food for me, and, then, afterward, you'll have your turn. You want to increase your faith? Serve God continually. Be faithful as a servant. Don't turn it off. Allow yourself to serve Him in the inconvenient times. Allow yourself to be listening to His voice. Allow yourself to be under subjection. You want to have your faith increased? The Lord is saying, here, "Serve Me! Serve Me. The strength of how you serve Me, will determine the blessing that comes. Serve Me, if you want your faith increased." I look at some of the people that I visit from time to time. When I was visiting Brother Jesse—and, Brother Jesse, you are an example to my life. You're an example to my life. As we visited him, some time recently, we visited him, and we would have a prayer. Different brothers, different brothers would go and visit Brother Jesse, and they would have a prayer—different sisters, too, I'm sorry. Brothers and sisters, and families would visit, too. Am I right? Am I right? I know I'm right. They would visit, and he would call me up, "It's so good, I've got to tell somebody. Let me tell you the blessing when these brothers, these sisters, this family came over and let me tell you what happened. We had a song. We had some fellowship. They shared some great Scripture with me. And, all of the sudden, God just started taking over." And he said, "It's my turn. I'm looking for what God's got for me. I want to encourage people. I

want to go out here, if you've got for me to preach, God, I'll preach it. Whatever you got for me, I'm doing it, Lord." What an example; serving Him in the inconvenient times.

I look at Brother Jeff. Brother Jeff Lynch called me last night and I was working on the message; he didn't know. But, he called, and I don't know how many people have heard, it's been put out, and we've had prayer, but, his father has cancer; it's pretty far along. It's really discouraging. He thought it was a done deal, shut the door, move it on, but, he said, "Me and my family started praying," and he said they prayed with tears. And they found out his aunt, his mother's sister, she also has cancer. And they're pretty far along. They're up in years, but they're pretty far along in their cancer. And the doctors have said, basically, "Well, you're old people, what do expect to happen?" "But we ain't listening to that, Brother Parrish. I don't care if the doctors don't hear it, I'm turning to God. God can do this thing. He said, "I ain't got nobody else to turn to, and I've been seeing it. I've been seeing God move in my family, and I've seen God blessing them, and they're further along, now, than they were before." He said, "But I'm not taking my faith off the table. I'm not taking my works off the table. I'm not taking my service off the table. We're going to see complete victory!" That's what Brother Jeff Lynch said, and, yeah, we had a real encouraging time. Because, is we're ever in a situation where we need to call on our faith, the Bible says, without faith, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). So, that's the first thing we've got to take on the scene, the first thing we've got to take on the scene.

We're just about to wrap up, here; as we are wrapping up, there is something we must recognize, is that the gifts of God, the precious gifts of God, every single one of them, every single one that He's given us, every single one that He's given His people, they all have a purpose. The gifts that He's put in every one of our lives, He's shown us, they all have a purpose. The gifts of God have a purpose. What good is it to have a degree, if all we do is hang it on a wall? What good is it to be able to knock a ball clear out of the park, if we never pick up a bat? What good is a book, if it never gets opened and read? Yes, the gifts that God gives us, and has in our lives, they all have a purpose, and, that purpose, the Bible says, is to edify the church, and bring people to Jesus; to edify the church, and to bring people to Jesus.

And, as a sidebar, as a sidebar, the Bible says that the greatest of these three, faith, hope, and charity, is charity. And, when we hear that word—and I want to call the devil out on this one—when we hear that word, charity, we always think of a lesser love. The society of the world, they give it a negative connotation, they boil it down, they try to stick it over in a corner, and they say, "Charitable giving. If you receive charity, you must be in poor shape. If charity is anywhere in your room, and you're not the one whose giving it, you must be bad off." Charity. It (the word) isn't even used a lot, and it is the type of thing that you know you give freely, and, when you give it, you give it up. You don't even bring it up. You have given it, and, wow, it's gone from you. And, you know what? That's exactly how God sees it. That's exactly how God sees charity. He's given it up, and it's gone from Him. He's given it to His people, freely, without stipulation, without any type of conditioning. He's given it; it's already been given, is that charitable love from God.

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

And why? Why is Charity the greatest of faith, hope, and charity? Why is charity the greatest? Why is this great love of God that is given so freely, so wonderfully, so beautifully, so fully, why this the greatest? The Bible says:

**1 John 4:8**      *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

Why is charity the greatest gift? Because God is Love. Because God is love. So, when the Lord gave His love to us He gave us the most precious thing; He gave us Himself. Last Scripture:

**John 3:16**      *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Give the Lord a praise.