

How Far Will YOU Go for the Gospel?  
1 Corinthians 9:1-27

**I. The Story of Captain Sandsbury**

**A. The Story**

1. Nantucket, MA
  - a. Nantucket is an island about 30 miles (50 km) by ferry south from Cape Cod, in the U.S. state of Massachusetts.
    - (1) Together with the small islands of Tuckernuck and Muskeget, it constitutes the Town of Nantucket, and the conterminous Nantucket County.
    - (2) As of the 2010 census, the population was 10,172.
  - b. located next to important shipping lanes along the East Coast
2. Toward the end of the 1800s, given the huge number of ships passing the island and the treacherous shoals and stormy weather associated with that part of the world, more than 700 shipwrecks nearby caused the area to be called a “graveyard of the Atlantic.”
  - a. Given the number of wrecks and the death of so many sailors, the local people began life saving efforts including
    - (1) building life-saving huts along the shore,
    - (2) giving swimming lessons to Boston public school students
    - (3) producing instructional posters on resuscitation methods
    - (4) Developing volunteer life-saving crews that would row out to the ships to rescue shipwrecked sailors.
  - b. March 31, 1879
    - (1) A violent storm swept across Nantucket Sound bringing powerful winds, freezing rain, snow, and heavy fog.
    - (2) By April 1, over 68 vessels lay wrecked or disabled around the island.
3. Capt. Thomas Sandsbury
  - a. In the midst of the storm, Sandsbury and his crew rowed their surfboat out toward the schooner John W Hall, where they rescued the crew and rowed them back to shore.
  - b. They headed back out to the schooner Emma J Edwards.
    - (1) a single survivor was visible on the wreck.
    - (2) The ship rolled from side to side in the turbulent seas, its mast thrashing the water making it impossible for the surfboat to approach the perishing ship.
    - (3) George Coffin, a member of Capt. Sandsbury’s rescue crew tied a line around his waist to prevent himself from being swept away and jumped into the water.
    - (4) George Coffin rescued the sole survivor.
  - c. For 32 consecutive hours Sandsbury and his crew endured the hardships of the storm
    - (1) Moving from wreck to wreck they rescued more than a

dozen sailors.

- (2) Other crews were doing the same.
- (3) By the time the storm broke the local life-saving effort has rescued over 40 sailors.

- d. The motto for this group of brave and heroic men was this: “You have to go out, but you don’t have to come back.”
  - (1) They were never paid.
  - (2) They never lacked volunteers.
  - (3) **They risked everything to save lives.**

**B. The Parallel and the Point**

1. The parallel: The apostle Paul, acting in the love of Christ for the gospel and for the lives of others, demonstrates this same theme, and calls the Corinthians to it:
2. The point: **“For the sake of the gospel, love goes the distance!”**

**II. Seven Lengths to Which Love Goes for the Sake of the Gospel**

**A. For the sake of the gospel, love gives up special pleasures.**

1. “I will never eat meat” (8:13)
2. I will forego the special occasions attached to the consumption of meat if it will mean a deeper, more successful faith for others.

**B. For the sake of the gospel, love gives up personal rights (9:12)**

1. The right to marry and to make his living from the work of the ministry
2. I will forego the normal rights and expectations others share if it means others see Jesus more clearly and love Him more robustly

**C. For the sake of the gospel, love endures anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel (9:12)**

1. v. 3 suggests Paul is being criticized by some to the point that he feels forced to defend himself to the church
2. He says he will endure anything, including unjust criticism by some if it means others will hear and believe the message of God’s love in Jesus Christ

**D. For the sake of the gospel, love makes itself a servant to all (9:19)**

1. Love crucifies pride and serves in order that more will be won.

**E. For the sake of the gospel, love makes itself whatever is necessary to save some (9:22-23)**

1. Paul does not become a “sinner” in order to win sinners
2. Paul appropriately uses the cultural perspective in order to gain a hearing for the gospel (a living parable)

**F. For the sake of the gospel, love does everything to share with others its blessings. (9:23)**

1. Love’s priority is enabling others to enjoy the blessings of a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.
2. “Community Service Sunday” -
  - a. unless there is gospel, there is nothing more than washed cars and raked leaves
  - b. Love makes sure the message accompanies the mission

**G. For the sake of the gospel, love disciplines itself in body, mind, and spirit (9:27)**

1. Love keeps watch over itself and trains itself for personal gospel success.

**III. How Far Will You Go for the Gospel?**

**A. Questions for Consideration:**

1. How far will you go for the gospel?
2. What lengths will the love of Christ in you and the love for Christ from you lead you for the sake of the gospel?

**B. Questions**

1. For the sake of the gospel, will your love go the length of postponing your Sunday dinner an hour or so and join in worship with the residents of the local nursing home?
2. For the sake of the gospel, will your love go the distance to add the proclamation of the gospel to your daily ministry?
3. For the sake of the gospel, will your love train your soul and spirit in the word, taking advantage of opportunities to learn with your brothers and sisters?
4. For the sake of the gospel, will your love go so far as to volunteer as a Sunday school teacher, or nursery supervisor, or toilet cleaner, or English speaker
5. For the sake of the gospel, will your love go the distance and open your home to the homeless, open your checkbook to the poor, open your heart to the vulnerable, open your closet to the naked, open your kitchen to the hungry, open your time to the broken and imprisoned?

**C. For the sake of the gospel, love goes the distance.**

1. How far will YOU go for the gospel?