United in Love:

How Love for One Another Holds the Church Together

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1–7

> [1] If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. [2] And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [3] If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.
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> [4] Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant [5] or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; [6] it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. [7] Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (ESV)

Big Idea: A church can be gifted, active, and growing, yet be in great danger if its members do not love one another. Love is essential to the church's health, and Christ is both the source and the pattern of the love we are called to show.

I. A Thriving Church with a Serious Problem (1 Cor. 13:1–3)

II. Love Is Essential to the Wellbeing of the Church

> "Holiness is not a mystical condition experienced in relation to God but in isolation from human beings. You cannot be good in a vacuum, but only in the real world of people." -John Stott

III. What Love Looks Like in the Life of the Church (1 Cor. 13:4–7)

1. Love is patient — v. 4
2. Love is kind — v. 4
3. Love does not envy — v. 4
4. Love does not boast or become arrogant — v. 4

5. Love is not rude — v. 5
6. Love does not insist on its own way — v. 5
    - Prescription: What does Scripture require?
    - Piety: What might best promote the church's spiritual health?
    - Preference: What do I personally want?
7. Love is not irritable — v. 5
8. Love is not resentful — v. 5
9. Love rejoices with the truth — v. 6
10. Love bears all things — v. 7
11. Love believes all things — v. 7
12. Love hopes all things — v. 7
13. Love endures all things — v. 7

IV. Jesus Is the Fulfillment of Love

Ten Questions for Reflection and Prayer

1. Which attribute of love in 1 Corinthians 13 most exposes a weakness in my own life?
2. What weaknesses in others most test my patience, and how has Christ been patient with me?
3. How can I make kindness more visible in the way I treat people at church?
4. Where am I guilty of insisting on my own way or seek recognition for my contributions?
5. Do I genuinely rejoice when God uses someone else more visibly than He uses me?
6. When I disagree with a church decision, can I distinguish biblical convictions from wise judgments and personal preferences?
7. Am I quick to take offense or assume the worst about another person's motives?
8. Is there a wrong I need to address, or a resentment I need to surrender and forgive?
9. When a fellow Christian struggles or falls, do I seek restoration or feel vindicated?
10. Who in our church family is carrying a burden, needing encouragement, or testing my capacity to love patiently—and what can I do this week to reflect the love of Christ to them?