

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

2025-08-31 – 1 Corinthians 13



The church at Corinth had a real problem. The people were divided by arguments around who they followed, what they practiced, and how to live in a pagan world. Come join us this Sunday as we look at how Paul breaks down one of the biggest issues of their day that we as Christians still face today.

Well, good morning. It's good to see you all this morning. If you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open up to 1 Corinthians 13. You are not at a wedding this morning, so you might be confused about why we're in 1 Corinthians 13. But we are going to be reading today about love, specifically about the love that we should have as the body of Christ and a love that we should have for one another that should invade the world. The world should not invade our love.

The world right now is a place, and it has always been a place. What is happening today? There is nothing new under the sun. But when we open our Bible today and look at the Church of Corinth and the struggles they were facing in the 1st century, we need to name something that is happening today to which Paul would have spoken, had he been around back then: algorithms and AI. Yeah, they didn't have that back then. There's no Greek word for it, although algorithms are probably based on a Greek word. But if you go back to that time, there were issues arising in the culture that were infiltrating the church in the way that people loved one another and connected. We're going to see that as we read today.

But as we see that, I want to aim for you what I see as the biggest problem in our modern culture related to Christian and non-Christian communities alike: cheap connection. There was a survey done recently of young people asking if they would consider dating an AI for companionship. And over a—I'm glad you're laughing. I thought it was fake. I genuinely thought it was fake, but it turns out that about one-fourth of the people who read through it said, "Well, if it's a satisfying relationship, that is the relationship I would have." It's bizarre. That's bizarre.

And we hear this and think of young people, just like when social media first came out, everyone was like, "Look at the young people with social media." But when I go visit my family, I know that it's not just the young people who doom-scroll. And I'm sure some of you, as you sit out there, say, "Well, the young people," but then you're on Facebook, and you're sharing, and you're doing. We find our connection in cheap ways in our modern culture. When you binge-watch a show you've already seen, and you're rewatching it, what are you doing? You're trying to connect into

a community again that you were a part of for a while. Maybe you watched the show with someone in the past, or maybe you're just lonely, and a way to be less lonely is to watch some.

Our modern culture is built around cheap connection, and technology that should be making our jobs easier so that we can spend more time with our families is instead robbing the time we should spend with one another. Because when we're around each other, we're using technology to be connected and feel gratified in relationship. I talk to people regularly, and if you're a person I've talked to about this, if you tell me that you listen to certain podcasts every day, you are telling me that there is one voice speaking three or four hours into your life a day. I, as your pastor, get like an hour a week, maybe two, if we hang out outside the church. But we find our connection and our community in online platforms with people and with things and with algorithms that are designed to connect us and designed to make us want to connect more. But there is no true connection or love.

I promise you, influencers, no matter how much they tell you they love you as their followers, they love that you're following them. I promise you that when you go on any measure of AI, one of the most fascinating things about AI is when you type in and start talking to it, what humans don't understand is they think AI has all wisdom and knowledge. I've talked to people who say, "Well, it knows better than I do." No, it responds to you in order to give you what you're hoping for. And that can be devastating. In the news recently, there was a young man who took his life because, after talking with his AI friend for a long time, he decided it was worthwhile. There are businesses being built around romantic relationships through AI for young men and young women, and they are increasingly perverse. And we're just at the beginning of this.

We are in a culture that values cheap connection because to go deeper costs something from us. To go deeper takes work. Look at the rate of failures in marriage. Look at the modern family crumbling and divorces running rampant inside and outside the church. It's because we don't want to put in the hard work that it takes to have true connection and love.

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

Today, we're going to talk about **The True Cost of Cheap Connection**. Our goal today, as we talk about the **The True Cost of Cheap Connection**, is to not focus on cheap connection but to name it and then move towards a connection and a love with one another that lasts. My hope today for believers here is that you will leave today with clear steps on what it looks like for us to connect deeper together as the body of Christ. And if you are here today and you are not a believer, my prayer is that as you leave today, you leave longing and knowing what the Savior has done for you on the cross because it is through His love that we are able to connect deeply. And it is only through what He has done.

To that end, I'm going to pray, and then we will jump in.

Father in heaven, we thank You for this day. Father, we thank You that as we talk about connection and love, You so loved the world that You sent Your Son. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Son of God took human form. He was fully God and fully man, and He humbled Himself, and He humbled Himself to the point of death on the cross. And through His death and resurrection, and through the work of Your Spirit, we can have life in His name. Father, I pray Your Spirit would be moving in our midst. For believers, I pray that we would be encouraged and challenged by this passage and how we love one another, and for anyone who does not know You, I pray that today they would not run away from this, but they would recognize the incredible love You have for them. I pray, Lord, that You would speak to me, and I pray You would speak through me. I pray as I preach this passage that it would be Your words and not mine. And Father, we thank You for the great love of Your Son Jesus. It is in His holy and precious name we pray. Amen.

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

The one serving without love is nothing

Now, as we talk about **The True Cost of Cheap Connection**, I'm going to present a negative point, read the passage, and then a positive point. The reason for that is, as we read 1 Corinthians chapter 13, we need to remember the whole time that Paul is writing a letter to kick the behinds of a church that has lost their way. Paul is not writing a letter to people who are doing well in order to say, "Keep it up, guys." He's writing a letter to say, "How dare you treat each other like this." He's writing a letter to say, "Do you not remember that it is Christ crucified, whom you follow?" Why are some of you in the church saying, "I follow Paul"? Someone in the church said, "Well, Paul baptized me, therefore I'm greater than the rest of you." And Paul, in response in 1 Corinthians 3 and 4, says, "I wish I'd baptized none of you because you're missing the point."

The first Corinthian church was walking in immaturity. That was evident each and every place they went. I'm going to show you for a moment how awkward it was. The church was probably between 50 and 100 people, and they would have met daily or every other day in courtyards and houses. And as they gathered together, here's how they would gather: as someone was presenting the Word of God, everyone in the room would start talking to one another, right? The person next to you would say, "Hey, don't listen to him, Apollos. I follow Apollos, and let me tell you what you should listen to," and the whole room was a place of chaos. People were speaking in tongues and spiritual languages. People were saying, "Look at my faith." People were there in order to be self-validated and to say, "Look how great I am."

The pagan community around them mocked the Christians, and Paul said they mocked you with good reason. You have lost the plot of what it means to be a follower of Christ, he said. And he said, "Let's get it back." And so, to start that, he told them that **the one serving without love is**

nothing. And that “is nothing” is strong language. We don't like saying to one another, “You're nothing.” And yet Paul says it three times.

If I speak human or angelic tongues

but do not have love,

I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy and
understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains

but do not have love,

I am nothing.

And if I give away all my possessions,
and if I give over my body in order to boast

but do not have love,

I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 CSB

1 Corinthians 13:1 begins, ***“If I speak in human or angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.”***

The imagery here is, if I'm speaking, if I have all the languages of the world, if I can speak spiritually in every single way, if I have a divine heavenly tongue, and I am lacking love, it would be like if Dave James was just pounding on a cymbal the entire time I preached. And it's silly, but it's not, because look at what he says. He doesn't say your words are a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. He says, “You are.” “You are.” If you are operating in the gifts without love and doing it in order to make yourself great and to make everyone look at you and say, “Now look at that guy or look at that woman,” if you are doing the gifts out of what you gain from them, you are nothing.

Paul is using, first, the gift that in Corinth would have been the most important gift in the eyes of the culture. In the pagan temples, people would have these ecstatic moments where they were going on babbling, and everyone was saying, “Look how spiritual they are. The gods must truly love them. They must truly be great.” And Paul is saying, “Get that out of the church. If you come into the church with that mindset, you are a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Not the sounds you're making—You.”

Corinth was known for its brass, its beautiful, wonderful Corinthian brass or bronze, depending on which scholars and historians you read. But it was the most beautiful in the day. The temple doors, some of the temple doors, when Herod updated the temple, they made them out of that brass. The people of that day in Corinth would have heard the banging of the blacksmith in the

background throughout the day. And Paul is saying, "You sound like that. You are like that if you are doing it for yourself outside of love."

He goes on to talk **about the gift of prophecy**, and when he says prophecy, he's not talking about predicting the future; he's talking about accurately speaking the Word of God to one another. Because as some people were banging and clanging and banging and clanging, other people were saying, "Don't listen to him. Let me tell you what I've discovered. Let me tell you the true purpose of what is." And Paul is saying, "Even if you have every single right answer to every single Bible or doctrine or any question, and if you have such faith that you can look at a mountain and say, 'Go over there,' and it will listen, **if you do not have love, you are nothing.**"

Lastly, he says, "**If you give away all your possessions, and if you give over your body,**" and the language here is, "even to the point of death and martyrdom, if you do it **in order to boast**, and you do it not out of love, you gain nothing."

The language here is a stark reminder to the people: you are gathering together in order to puff yourselves up. And when you do that, you are nothing. And if you proceed in that, if that is how you carry on, you are nothing. None of that will last in the end.

If I speak human or angelic tongues	but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains	but do not have love, I am nothing.
And if I give away all my possessions, and if I give over my body in order to boast	but do not have love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 CSB

The imagery Paul is using here, the easiest thing I can compare it to, is salt. I once had a friend named Mike. And I've had more than one friend named Mike—that sounded temporal—but when Jess and I lived in Huntley over the summers with our youth ministry, we would always have, for like a six or eight weeks, we'd have the youth leaders come over, and we'd do like taco nights. And Mike told me, "I'm going to make pico de gallo." And he said, "I found the best recipe online for pico de gallo. It's even labeled 'the best pico de gallo you'll ever have.'" He came to our

house early to make his pico de gallo. He had the cilantro and the jalapeño and the tomato and the lime. And I think garlic—I don't remember, but what I remember is he did not have salt.

And I said, "Mike, do you need some salt?" And I grabbed our salt, a little bowl, we sprinkle salt, and he said, "No, I don't need that. It's not in the recipe." Now, that's an odd thing to miss, and he said, "No, it's not in the recipe." And I never saw the recipe, but I bet it said "season to taste" somewhere. But Mike started dicing up his tomatoes and the jalapeños and everything, and he put it all together, and he mixed it around, and he tasted it. And then he got more lime and squeezed some more lime, and then he diced up a little bit more cilantro. And then he diced up a little bit more onion. And I said, "Mike, I think you need a little salt." And Mike said, "No." My wife was there, and she was like, "It doesn't taste right." He made her taste it, and we kept taking turns tasting it. And I kept saying, "Mike, I think it needs salt."

And eventually, I was thinking, "We need to throw this in the trash can if he's not going to let us put salt on it," or, "What's going to happen is everyone's going to load it up on their plate and then push it off of everything else because it was so off-putting that it had no season." Finally, after four or five tastes over about ten minutes of Mike cutting smaller and smaller amounts of cilantro and garlic and things, finally, Mike took a big spoonful and sprinkled a little bit of salt on it, and he took a bite, and his eyes lit up, and he said, "That's pico de gallo." And it's one of my favorite memories because, for ten minutes, we're like, "Mike, you need salt."

And I was ready to say, "We're not putting it on the table if you don't put salt in it," because it was useless without salt. In the same way that pico de gallo without salt is useless, operating the spiritual gifts without love is utterly useless, and if you do so, you are nothing.

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

The one serving without love is nothing

The one serving without love is nothing. It is harsh language, but it is useful language for the church because if our goal in serving is for our self-aggrandizement, for our self-validation, if it is for things about how to make ourselves great, we have misunderstood our Savior. We have misunderstood our King.

If you are a believer, the promise of Scripture is that you have spiritual gifts, and you don't have those spiritual gifts to say, "Look at me." You have those spiritual gifts in order to love one another and serve in the body and edify one another and build up the body. If you use your gifts because it's going to make you great, you have misunderstood the gospel. **The one serving without love is nothing.**

Now, this also means if you are here and you are not a believer, you will never be able to serve in a way that has substance for eternity. That is what Scripture says. That may sound harsh, but what's even harsher is a reality in hell separated from God if you do not understand His great love for you. **The one serving without love is nothing.**

So, what do we need to do?

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

The one serving without love is nothing
Serve! Serve with love at the center of your mind

Paul is not saying here that we need to not serve. He's saying to serve but **Serve with love at the center of your mind**. This is a passage calling the church to serve the right way. If you are a believer, it means you have spiritual gifts, which means you are called to serve within the body. If you are a believer, it means that you need to be looking for opportunities to use your gifts to serve within the body. If you are a believer and you are here today and you do not serve, this passage is calling you to serve. This passage is saying that is the way that we grow closer in connection. What was missing in the early church in Corinth is that they weren't serving. They were coming in for their own selves rather than serving one another in order to build up the body.

Serving is costly because it takes time. Serving is costly because it takes energy, and sometimes when we serve, we may not love what we're doing as we serve. But we are called to serve. We are called to serve one another when it's challenging or when it's joyful. We are called to serve. If you are a believer and you are not serving, and as you listen, you say, "Pastor Matt, I have no idea how I could serve," I'm going to give you a couple of ideas.

First and foremost, send me an email, and at some point in the month of September, I'll get back to you with some ideas. It might take me a little while. It's August today, so I get a whole month, okay? I'm clarifying because I was worried I'd say, "At the end of this month, I'll have an answer for you." But send me an email and say, "Pastor Matt, I'm looking for places to serve," and between myself and our elders and our pastors and our staff, we will find places to plug you in.

And the goal of that is not we need to fill holes. We do have needs at our church. We have 40 new people signed up for Awana, and that's on top of what was already a bigger year last year of Awana. And we have all of these people. So, if you are willing to serve, especially if you are a female who can work with 3rd through 5th grade girls, we do have deep need for serving. But this isn't about we need to fill holes. This is about we are the body of Christ, and we are called to serve one another. That is how we grow deeper.

If you've ever talked to people in a small group where they say, "I wish we could grow deeper together, we need to study deeper, we need to do more," there's a reality where there's a point where knowledge isn't going to take you deeper. There are points where, if we're not serving together and loving and working together, we're going to miss the mark because we are called to use our spiritual gifts in service to one another.

You may also be out there and you may say, "Well, Pastor Matt, I don't know what my gifts are." Well, first and foremost, we're going to offer some opportunities over the next year where we're going to have workshops for people to learn more about their spiritual gifts. But don't wait for those. And the reason I say don't wait for those is because the spiritual gifts workshops work much better when you're already serving. Because you can kind of see, "Okay, here's where I kind of see that gift in action." If you go into the spiritual gifts class and it's a vacuum of, "Well, I might have this, I might have that," you're going to come out on the other side still wondering. So, don't wait for that to serve.

If you're somebody here and you say, "Pastor Matt, my life situation right now is one where I can't serve," I know we've got some people who can't be here in person right now because of recovering from surgeries, or different things that they're facing. Allow yourself to be served by others. That is one of the hardest things within the church. I know people sometimes are willing to go to others and go the extra mile for others, but when it's their turn, they may say, "I'm good, I'm good." Allow others to use their gifts with you.

And something we all can do is we can be praying for one another. We can be praying for our body. That is a way you can serve that does not require anything except you looking to the Lord and lifting up the body of Christ. Serve. You want to go deeper in your faith? Start by serving. You have purpose because you have gifts from the Holy Spirit to use, so use them.

Paul is not trying to convince people not to serve. He's trying to say, "Serve one another with the others in mind. Serve with love in the center of your mind."

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

The one serving without love is nothing
Serve! Serve with love at the center of your mind

The markers of loveless actions are self-inflated sins

Now, that brings us to: we need to define love in order to serve well. As we talk about **The True Cost of Cheap Connection**, the problem in the day of the Corinthians was that **The markers of loveless actions were self-inflated sins**, and that is just as true today.

In the Corinthian church, everyone was gathering to lift themselves up and make themselves more prominent. And so, **their loveless actions led to self-inflated sins.**

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 CSB

"Love is patient," Paul says. "Love is kind. Love does not envy, it is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things."

Love is patient,	Love does not envy,
Love is kind.	Is not boastful,
	Is not rude,
	Is not self-seeking,
	Is not irritable,
	Love does not keep a record of wrongs
Love rejoices in the truth.	Love finds no joy in unrighteousness
It bears all things,	
Believes all things,	
Hopes all things,	
Endures all things.	

Paul says operating without love, you are nothing. And then he gives a clear definition of love, and notice, half of them are positive, and half of them are negative. He says what love isn't: love does not envy, it's not boastful, and that list. Paul is speaking to something that in their day was very prominent, not just in the church but in all of Roman thoughts.

Paul is concerned to disengage **love** in his own theology from Greek and other pagan ideas of love as primarily emotional, sexual, or ecstatic.

Thiselton, *NIGTC: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*

Paul is concerned, when he's writing to the Corinthians, to disengage love in his own theology from Greek and other pagan ideas of love as primarily emotional, sexual, or ecstatic.

You see, in their day, the way that people saw love was about hidden moments of spirituality and saw it as hidden moments of sexual gratification, or they saw it as moments where people were emotionally on mountaintops together. And the problem with all of these is, when you're there,

it's good, but only when you're there. And when we read this, I hope you see that it is no different today. People are chasing the same things in love today.

Love is patient,	Love does not envy,
Love is kind.	Is not boastful,
	Is not rude,
	Is not self-seeking,
	Is not irritable,
	Love does not keep a record of wrongs
Love rejoices in the truth.	Love finds no joy in unrighteousness
It bears all things,	
Believes all things,	
Hopes all things,	
Endures all things.	

And so, to that way of thinking, Paul says, "**Love does not envy. It's not boastful,**" which, with each of these things, Paul is saying that love is not something that should be self-serving, self-seeking. Love is not something that we do for our own sake. If we think that way about love, we will be sorely disappointed.

Whenever my wife and I do premarital counseling with a couple, one of the things we talk about at length is, within the first six months of your marriage, you're going to realize how selfish you are. But what happens first—and this is why we say this in premarital counseling—what happens first is you realize how selfish your spouse is. I'm glad you all know this, all you married people. You realize how selfish your spouse is. I remember a moment where I realized Jess was keeping a record of wrongs, and I started to notice every time she kept a record of a wrong. I hope you see the irony of that.

But in marriage, we see this upfront, and it's the same within the church as we are seeking to follow the Lord. There are going to be things where we miss the mark, where we are self-focused, where in our pride we think that it is about us, and Paul is saying it is not. You do not operate within the spiritual gifts for what you gain, but because of what God has done for us and out of His great love and out of the work of the Holy Spirit, we love one another in a way that is patient and in a way that is kind.

You cannot have love that is patient and kind without being in connection with other people. If you're patiently loving in your own little bubble without anybody around, there's no way to have patience or kindness. Now, the world would say, "Well, you need to be patient with yourself. You need to be kind with yourself." The world right now, when you look at different counseling

philosophies and things, when you go to a non-Christian, non-biblical-based counselor, here's what you're going to hear: "You just need to work on yourself. You're struggling with something? You need to work on yourself. You're struggling with this? Well, if you just learn to love yourself, you'd work through it."

And the problem with that is, when we look at the Bible, we know that we are totally depraved. The world is trying to tell us to love the one thing that, if our love is focused on ourself, we are missing the mark. The world is trying to tell us to idolize ourselves. No wonder we are a culture of anxious and depressed people who all relate to and hate narcissists. We are being told to love ourselves, and we don't know how, because instead of seeking to love others and seeking the love that comes from God that is lasting, we are seeking to make ourselves the center.

But true *love is patient and is kind, and it rejoices in the truth*, even when the truth is how sinful we are. *True love bears all things, it believes all things, it hopes all things, and it endures all things*. Now, with those four "all things," people can take these very wrong. When it says "bears all things," this is talking about how we as a body must lift each other up. When people are struggling, we bear them up. When we are struggling, we allow the body to bear us up.

With "believes all things," this isn't saying we just are naïve and what we do and say, "Well, I guess." No, "believes all things" means when we have struggles or conflicts, we challenge each other, we confront each other, but we do so trusting that the Spirit is moving in us and moving in them. We treat each other with love in order to say the hard things, trusting and believing that God is at work in our body.

Love "hopes all things." When I read this, I think about how love is us praying that we would see more and more revival, more and more people coming to know the Lord, that we would look at this church and cry out that the Lord would do more and more in our midst. And love "endures all things." When we fall short, when we operate in envy and boastfulness and arrogance, love "endures all things" means that we're going to still love each other. We're going to, in thick and thin, till death do we part, we are going to stay the body of Christ, working and wrestling together in the hard things.

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Serve! Serve with love at the center of your mind

The markers of loveless actions are self-inflated sins
Seek to imitate the King who displays perfect love

This is what Paul has in mind, not a cheap connection, but one that takes much work. **The markers of loveless actions are self-inflated sins**, but to the body of Christ, Paul is saying, "**Seek to imitate the King who displays perfect love**." Seek to imitate Christ, who displays perfect love. If love keeps no record of wrongs, think of our Savior on the cross, nailed to the cross in order that our wrongs could be forgiven. If love is not boastful, think of the Son of God who humbled Himself to the point of death. If love is patient and kind, think of every time Jesus talked to Peter. I love Peter, but think of the way Peter said, "I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that. I'm going to this. I'm going to that." And Jesus carefully, patiently, and lovingly worked with him and with all the disciples. Think of the way He bore our sins.

We need to **Seek to imitate the King who displays perfect love**. Throughout 1 Corinthians, the theme Paul speaks to is that we need to imitate Christ, and when we come to 1 Corinthians 13, the challenge as we serve and use our gifts in the body is we do that with the love of Christ in mind. Now, what this means on a high level is we need to know who Christ is, and we need to think about what His love looks like.

What this means on a very practical level is, when you're serving, do you pray before you come in to serve? And do you pray to the Lord and say, "Father, help me today to show the love of Christ to those that I'm serving"? When you come in to serve, are you thinking, "Well, I'm here out of obligation"? Or are you thinking, "I love the people I get to serve"? Because one of those is a clanging gong.

When we serve, we should start from a position of giving glory to our Lord and start with a posture of humility and looking to love the way He has displayed love. And you may say, "Pastor Matt, that's easy for you to say." I don't know if you would say that, but you may say, "Matt, this is your job to be up here and use your spiritual gifts." It was not my job to teach missions at VBS. At VBS this year, Jess and I both signed up to serve in the missions room, and the idea was, "Well, if our kids get sick, one of us will be there so we won't leave somebody in the lurch." And then Jess got sick.

And if there is one thing that I love but don't like to do, I love to watch people teach in the toddler room, and the first-graders, and the kindergarteners. I like talking to adults. I like when I'm in a room with people, and one person doesn't go to the bathroom, and then half the class leaves to go to the bathroom in the middle of the lesson.

The first day of VBS, I got done, and all I thought was, "I have to do this another day because Jess still had a fever." And by the end of the week, I did not feel any better about my ability to teach in that room. But what I did for the week is, every day before VBS, I was praying, and I was asking

the Lord, "Lord, help me to love these kids, help me to have the right mindset as I seek to serve them." And then I was asking Abby, who was gracious enough to one day say, "I'll come in and join you with the kids." She had to help me. I needed my hand held as I was working with that age group.

But I say this because, as we seek to love, we're not going to do it perfectly. We're going to have struggles. If you're out there and you're like, "Well, I don't know what I'm able to do," well, I know what I'm not able to do, and the Lord got me through it as well. I want to encourage you that we are called to do these things. We're called to serve one another, and as we do it, to **seek to imitate the King who displays perfect love**.

And it's not just as we come in; we pray as we go into it. There's another side to this. We need to check our hearts as we leave as well, because the enemy doesn't just say, "Well, they already served, okay, I missed my chance to get them or to twist anything." One of the things I learned when I started preaching week in and week out at this church is, when I leave, I need to spend time in prayer thanking the Lord. Because otherwise, on days where everything went well, I'd get a big head, or days where everything went poorly, I'd get a very small opinion of myself, rather than looking and trusting that it was the Spirit of God at work and giving glory to the Lord in either situation.

It is so important that we are giving glory to the Lord, that as we seek to serve, look at what Jesus says again and again in His life: He gives glory to the Father every chance He gets. We are to do the same. We're to do the same before we serve, and we're to do the same after we serve because none of this is about us. It is about His great love for us and how we can reflect it to one another through His Spirit.

The True Cost of Cheap Connection

The one serving without love is nothing
Serve! Serve with love at the center of your mind

The markers of loveless actions are self-inflated sins
Seek to imitate the King who displays perfect love

The things that puff up will come to an end

And this brings us to the last point: **the things that puff up will come to an end**. Paul's warning to the church is that **the one serving without love is nothing**. **The markers of loveless actions are self-inflated sins**, and the outcome of all this, the things that puff up, will come to an end.

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. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 CSB

In 1 Corinthians 8, he says this: ***"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, for we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end."***

With these wonderful words, Paul is telling me I have no job security in heaven. Paul is saying with these words that someday in heaven, we're not going to be speaking the Word of God to one another because we're going to be speaking to the One who is the Word of God. When we are in heaven, someday, the gifts that we use in this life, as our focus is on the gifts and on their prominence, we are missing the picture because someday we will be in His presence. We will be experiencing His love for all eternity in the new heaven and new earth.

The purpose of the gifts in this life is to help us to be thinking about the life to come and help us to be walking faithfully in this life as we seek to see on earth as it is in heaven.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:11-12 CSB

The point of Paul's message here is that what we see now is partial, and he goes on as he talks about this: ***"When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things."***

Paul, to the Corinthian church, is saying, "You know, this is a sign of immaturity, that you think the point of this is about the gifts instead of the love we have from Christ." I remember when I was a young pastor and working even as a youth worker, I was all focused on the message I gave and what I did, and I had this whole mindset of, "Look, look at how God worked through me," rather than thinking about those I was talking to. And the Lord broke me of that in some very strong ways, and praise the Lord for that. If you think it's about you, you are childish in your faith. You are immature in your faith because, just as Christ gave all glory to God, we should be giving all glory to God. When you become an adult, you put aside childish things.

He goes on: ***"For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known."*** And the beauty of these words: Corinthian brass. Paul began with clanging gongs and noisy cymbals, and near the end of this little unit on love, he talks about the reflection from Corinthian brass because, in that day, it was the most famous metal that they could see their reflection on. And yet, when they looked into that, it wasn't like

in the bathroom when you see the way we see it. No, it was bronzed, and it would have had a sheen that was better than anything else, but it's not how we picture a mirror. The color was off, and the reflection was not as deep.

And Paul is saying, "When you walk around your city of Corinth and you see this bronze on display anywhere and everywhere, every time you see it, the greatness of the city of Corinth, the greatness of this, every time you look at that mirror and see a reflection, remember that in this life we do not see what is yet to come. What we know about God's love, someday we will know in full." The truth we understand and comprehend to the best of our ability in this life, as we put aside childish things and focus on His Word and His great love for us, what we have now is a pale imitation of what someday we will experience in its full.

Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13 CSB

"Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." At the end, Paul reinforces that love never ends.

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The things that puff up will come to an end. For the Corinthian church, the idea that you serve in order to make yourself great, Paul says there is no eternal security in that at all. Instead, look to the One we love and, more importantly, to His great love for us.

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Savor the love that will last forever

So, what do we do with this? We must **Savor the love that will last forever**. We must **Savor the love that will last forever**. When you have moments in your life where you see the Spirit of God at work, and you see believers using their gifts together, I always think of when I was at Moody. There would be a missions week where all the nations would take turns singing in their tongues and praying, and it would be a night that would last hours. And every time I was there, all I could think is, "This is what heaven will be like."

Whenever I think about it, I get goosebumps. I think about a mission trip when we had an impossible task, and we started praying, and it was so windy, and we needed to be up on ladders and doing these things. And we prayed, and all of a sudden, stillness. And we painted as fast as we could, and the second the last stroke went, the wind picked up again. And I think of that moment, and I think of moments like last Sunday. Last Sunday, I was sitting kind of right around there, listening to Pastor Sami, who definitely has the gift of teaching, and the entire time he was preaching, I wished I could have bottled up that moment. I wished he had a seven-hour sermon. I just wanted to sit there and listen because I was challenged and encouraged and edified each and every moment.

Those moments are moments we need to savor. The moments when we're watching people get baptized, when we're hearing people's testimonies, when we're seeing people take big steps in their faith—those are moments as a church that we should be rejoicing, and we shouldn't have envy. We shouldn't be thinking, "Well, I remember the time I did that." No, we should instead be rejoicing that the Lord keeps doing and working in the church, and He will through all eternity.

We must **Savor the love that will last forever** because the other things are going to fade.

Serve! Serve with love at the center of your mind

Seek to imitate the King who displays perfect love

Savor the love that will last forever

And as we talk about this, I want to be really practical. To **savor the love that will last forever**, I don't have a practical application for this because you can't do this if you're not doing the first two. If you're not serving, you are keeping people from the opportunity to rejoice at what the Lord does in you. And if we are not serving out of love for the Lord, we are going to miss it entirely.

Brothers and sisters, when we serve with one another, when we lift each other up with our spiritual gifts, everyone benefits. When we do this with one another, it is the greatest thing we can do for the body of Christ because it is an opportunity. It is an opportunity to use our gifts for the glory of God, and it is an opportunity for others to experience them and to serve us back. And it is costly because it takes time. It takes our energy. It's not something that, if you just come in and out every week and say, "I'm going to come, I'm going to listen, okay, I got what I needed to get me through the next week," you're missing such a deeper life we are called to have as believers with each other.

We are called to serve with one another. We are called to care for one another. We're called to work through hard things with one another. We're called to be uncomfortable with one another at times as we seek to bear all things and believe all things and endure all things and hope all things. But if we're not going to do that, we are going to miss out on all that God has for us.

If you are a believer and you are not serving, this is a moment to come up and say, come talk to me after the sermon, send me an e-mail, say Pastor Matt I'm looking for where I can serve. If you're a believer this week and you serve, this week is a heart check to make sure you're serving out of a love for God. And if you're like, well, I don't love God right now as I'm serving, I feel obligated, don't, don't quit. Reset your heart. Turn to the Lord and say, Lord, help me to love the people I'm serving. It's like Pastor Matt had to say, Lord, help me love these preschoolers that can't sit still for 5 minutes.

We are called to serve one another, to use our gifts for the betterment of the body, and when we do that, what comes from it is wonderful, and we can savor that together, but we won't get to those moments if we are not using our gifts together and we are not just depriving ourselves of those moments, but we're depriving the body. So serve! And seek to serve following in the example of our king. And then expect to savor those moments where it feels like heaven on Earth.

Let's pray. *Father in heaven, we thank you, Lord. We thank you that your son came and showed perfect love in patience and kindness. We thank you, Lord, that our record of wrong he has wiped clean through his blood for all who believe. We thank you, Lord, that we are called as a body to use our gifts with one another and Lord, we thank you that your spirit has given us those gifts that we can serve one another.*

We pray, Lord, that we would be a people who desire a true connection with one another and a deep love that only comes from serving and doing life together and going deeper. We pray, Lord, that we would do all of this out of a motivation to follow after your spirit and follow after the example of your son. And Father, I pray if there is anyone here who, as they hear this, they realize they don't know you, they would not leave today thinking, well, I am nothing, but they would leave today crying out to you, Lord, on my own I am nothing, but your son died for my sins out of his great love that I could have relationship with you and I could have substance.

The True Cost of Cheap Connection
Pastor Matt Johnson

I pray, Lord, that you would draw those to you that need to know you and for us who do know you, this would be a reminder to serve and to go deep in our imitation of your son with one another. We thank you, Lord, that we look to your son Jesus Christ the Messiah, and that it is in his name we have eternal life. It is in his name we pray. Amen.



Digging Deeper – The True Cost of Cheap Connection – 1 Corinthians 13

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

Read 1 Corinthians 13

2. As you read through these verses, what stands out to you?
3. In the first three verses the key theme is the gifts of the body outside of love are nothing. Can you think of examples you have seen of this in action? Has there ever been a time when you have sought to use your gift outside the lens of love?

4. Look at the list of what love is in verses 4 through 7.

What is love?	What isn't love?
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5. Which of these attributes of what love is do you admire in others the most?
6. Which of these attributes of what love is do you struggle to live out the most?
7. Read through the list of what love isn't. Can you give examples of people in your life who embody love by not being these things?
8. As you come to the final verses (8-13), what stands out to you about the nature of love verses the actions mentioned?
9. How does Paul's imagery of child to adult help us think differently about love?
10. How do these verses cause you to long for eternity?
11. Read through the passage again and consider how your life group can more clearly show each other the love that is illustrated in these verses.
12. Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.