

# 1 Corinthians: Christ, the Church, and the Hope of the Resurrection.

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"1 Corinthians: Christ, the Church, and the Hope of the Resurrection."

Nearly 2,000 years ago, in the glamorous but depraved city of Corinth, a young church was slowly disintegrating. They are torn apart by pride, confused by culture, and even almost forget their true identity. In the midst of this chaos, the spiritual father, the broken-hearted pastor, and the fearless apostle – Paul – wrote a letter that is still fiery and urgent to this day.

This is the story of 1 Corinthians: a rescue operation to a church in crisis that is too much like us.

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## 1. The church is torn apart

Corinth was rich, refined, and unabashedly indulgent in pleasure. The believers brought the competitive culture of the city into God's house: "Me and Paul." "I belong to Apollos." "Peter and me." "I only need Christ."

This is not a simple preference, but a proud party. Paul poured cold water on him, "Was Christ separated? Did Paul crucify you? Are you baptized in Paul's name?" He was adamant that the church would not be built on anyone, but would only be rooted in Christ: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God made it grow.....The foundation that has been laid is Jesus Christ, and no one else can build it."

Today's question is equally acute: Are we still exalting preachers, ministry, styles, denominations, and not exalting Jesus alone? Paul's message is still clear: stop tribalism. It is not fame that connects the church, but the cross.

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## **2. Salvation that looks "stupid"**

Corinth worships wisdom. The streets are filled with philosophers and orators who show eloquence and thought. Paul walks into this atmosphere and preaches the absurd-sounding news that God saves the world through an executed "criminal", Jesus, who was crucified in Rome.

"The doctrine of the cross is foolishness to those who perish, but to us who are saved it is the power of God." Instead of packaging the message with clever eloquence, he aspired to "know nothing but Jesus Christ and His crucifixion."

In an era where academics, achievements, and success are still worshipped, the gospel is still stubbornly "out of trend". It declares that you are not saved because you are wise, powerful, or particularly spiritual, but because a Savior died for you in weakness so that you might live in Him powerfully. The most "smart" decision a person can make is to boast only in this crucified and risen Christ.

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## **3. A scandal that they were proud of**

An incident occurred in the church that even Gentiles found unspeakable: a man lived with his father's wife, and the church boasted of being "loving and indecisive."

Paul was extremely angry, not because he hated that man, but because he loved the church and was reluctant to watch sin erode the entire community. "A little leaven can raise the whole mass." He wants the church to take this matter seriously, in order to wake up the person and protect the whole community.

Then he raised his perspective: the believer's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, no longer his own, but bought by the Lord at a high price. So glorify God with the body. Holiness is not legalism, but a thankful response; We do not obey in exchange for God's love, but because we have been redeemed and embraced by this love, we are willing to obey.

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## **4. Brothers sue brothers**

Some believers take each other to pagan courts for personal disputes, so that unbelievers see the infighting in the church and naturally despise the gospel. Paul could hardly believe it, "Why are you reluctant to be deceived, why are you reluctant to suffer?"

He doesn't want believers to be weak to be slaughtered, but to live according to the last judgment, as if he really believes that a righteous judge will make it all right. The gospel creates a community that is willing to "absorb" unrighteousness and is not in a hurry to take revenge, because Christ has absorbed the ultimate evil for us.

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### **5. Marriage, singleness, and "distraction" devotion**

In a highly sexualized, status-oriented culture, Corinthians were confused about sex, marriage, and singleness. Rather than adding a bunch of rules, Paul gives them wisdom in freedom: the principle is to "maintain who you are when you are called, and live as a believer in the situation God has assigned you."

If you are married, let it be a living witness of the faithful love between Christ and the Church. For those who are single, think of singleness not as a temporary waiting room, but as a special calling to serve the Lord more attentively and without distractions. Marriage and singleness are both gifts and missions, and neither determines your value; What really determines is your single-mindedness to Christ.

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### **6. Food, freedom, and don't hurt your brother**

The Corinthian market was full of meat offered to idols. Some people are very sure: "Idols are nothing, just eat!" Others feel uneasy when they touch it.

Paul's answer is very precise: Yes, you are free in Christ. But love sometimes requires you to voluntarily let go of that freedom. "Knowledge makes people arrogant, but only love can edify people." If his dietary choices would cause his brother to stumble, he would rather never eat meat. Freedom can never be an excuse to hurt a brother's conscience. True love is the willingness to limit oneself so that others can be established.

To this day, the principle is the same: your freedom should stop when it comes to your brother's conscience.

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### **7. Have the right but choose to give up**

It stands to reason that Paul had the right to receive the provisions of the church, to take his wife and co-workers, and to enjoy respect and influence. As an apostle, these are all legal and reasonable. But he would rather work with his own hands, remain single, and become "to whom he is" just to "save some."

His motto is simple but striking: "I would rather endure everything than hinder the gospel of Christ." The gospel is more important than rights. If this sentence really lands in the heart of the church, too much normality will be overturned.

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### **8. Alarm bells in the wilderness: Don't fall in love with disasters**

Paul brought the history of the Israelites in the wilderness before their eyes. They all experience the same salvation, the same baptism, the same spiritual provision—the rock is Christ Himself. However, God was not pleased with most of them, and they fell into the wilderness.

He pointed out four fatal pitfalls: idolatry, sexual indulgence, temptation of the Lord, and complaining. These things are "a warning for us" and remind us not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Then there is the familiar verse: temptation will not exceed what man can bear, and God will give you a way to endure it. That way out is always to escape to God, not to drill into temptation.

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### **9. A table that exposes the human heart**

The main meal in Corinth became a class-defined banquet: the rich ate and drink first, while the poor and slaves watched hungry; And this meal was originally a witness to "one body".

Paul said harshly that he could not praise them, but instead corrected them. He reiterated the Lord's words about the establishment of the sacrament, reminding them that this table was not a private snack, but a public declaration that "we are united in the body of Christ." To hurt a member before the table of the Lord's body is to trample on the cross.

Therefore, "man should examine himself.....Discern the body of the Lord." come with awe, reconcile to one another first, and then receive it; Come with a thirst for Christ, not just for bread and cups.

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### **10. One body, many gifts**

The Corinthians used spiritual gifts as trophies to show their spiritual status. Paul said, "No, gifts are only instruments, given by the Holy Spirit to every member for "good to men."

In the body of Christ, the feet do not need to envy the hands, and the eyes do not look down on the ears. Those parts that seem "unseemly" should be doubly honored. The church is not a place to compete for who is more important, but a place where everyone serves one another with their gifts. Stop comparing and start serving.

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## **11. A better path**

Against this backdrop, Paul wrote the most famous chapter of love throughout the ages. Without love, no matter how powerful tongues, prophecies, knowledge, faith, dedication, and martyrdom are, they will all return to zero in the end.

Love is the willingness to endure when you really want to explode; when you want to speak ill the most, you still choose to be kind; When you have a large copy of "the other person's fault" to turn out, it does not hold a grudge. Gifts will stop one day, but love will never stop. When everything else is refined by fire, only love can stand.

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## **12. Worship God, not yourself**

The Corinthian meeting was like a charismatic carnival: everyone rushed to speak, no one translated tongues, no one discerned the prophecies, and the whole meeting was in chaos. Paul reminds them, "God does not confuse people, but quiets them." Everything should be proper and orderly, so that when outsiders come in, they can sincerely say, "God is really in your midst."

Gifts are good, but love and order cannot be compromised. The center of worship is always God, not our own expression.

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## **13. Resurrection: the key to everything**

Without the resurrection, the whole Christian faith would collapse like a house of cards. "If Christ had not risen, your faith would be in vain, and you would still be ..... in sin We are more pitiful than everyone else."

But Christ did rise from the dead as the firstfruits of those who fell asleep, and it is guaranteed that one day our bodies will change from corruption to incorruptibility. Then death will be completely swallowed up by victory, and we can proclaim aloud, "Death, where is your power of victory? Death, where is your stinger?"

For He lives, so shall we live; Because He lives, everything we do in the Lord will not be in vain. So Paul exhorted, "Be steadfast and unshakable, and always strive to do much of the Lord's work."

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## **14. The final sprint**

The letter concludes with a series of short and powerful commands: be vigilant, stand firm in your faith, be strong and courageous, and do everything with love. This letter begins with heartbreak and ends with hope.

Corinth was full of chaos; We are the same today. But the gospel that saves them is saving us. In that case, stop being led by culture like the Corinthians, but live like people who have truly risen in Christ.

"Come, Maranatha, Lord Jesus!" Until He returns, one thing never fails: love. If we learn to love as He does, we will not live in vain.

You are not Paul's, nor Apollonius's, nor do you belong to any of your favorite preachers or denominations. "You are of Christ, and Christ is of God." Now, live out this identity.

We pray

Gracious Father,

We come before You with grateful hearts after reading the book of 1 Corinthians. Thank You for speaking to us through Paul's words—words that challenge, correct, strengthen, and unify Your people.

Lord, help us to receive the call to **live in the unity of the Spirit**, laying aside pride, division, and anything that weakens our fellowship. Teach us to build one another up, remembering that we are all part of one body, joined together in Christ.

Fill us with the **wisdom of the cross**—the humble, self-giving love that Christ demonstrated. Guard us from relying on human wisdom or worldly strength, and center our lives on Jesus alone.

Holy Spirit, cultivate in us the **fruit of true spiritual maturity**. Purify our hearts, our motives, and our actions. Strengthen us to pursue holiness, flee from temptation, and glorify God with our bodies and our lives.

Most of all, Lord, write deeply on our hearts the way of **love that never fails**. Teach us to love patiently, generously, and sacrificially. Help our words, decisions, and relationships to reflect Christ's love flowing through us.

And as we long for the day when we see You "face to face," steady our faith, deepen our hope, and expand our capacity to love You and others with sincerity and joy.

May Your church be strengthened, our hearts be renewed, and Your name be glorified in all we do.

In the mighty name of Jesus we pray,  
Amen.