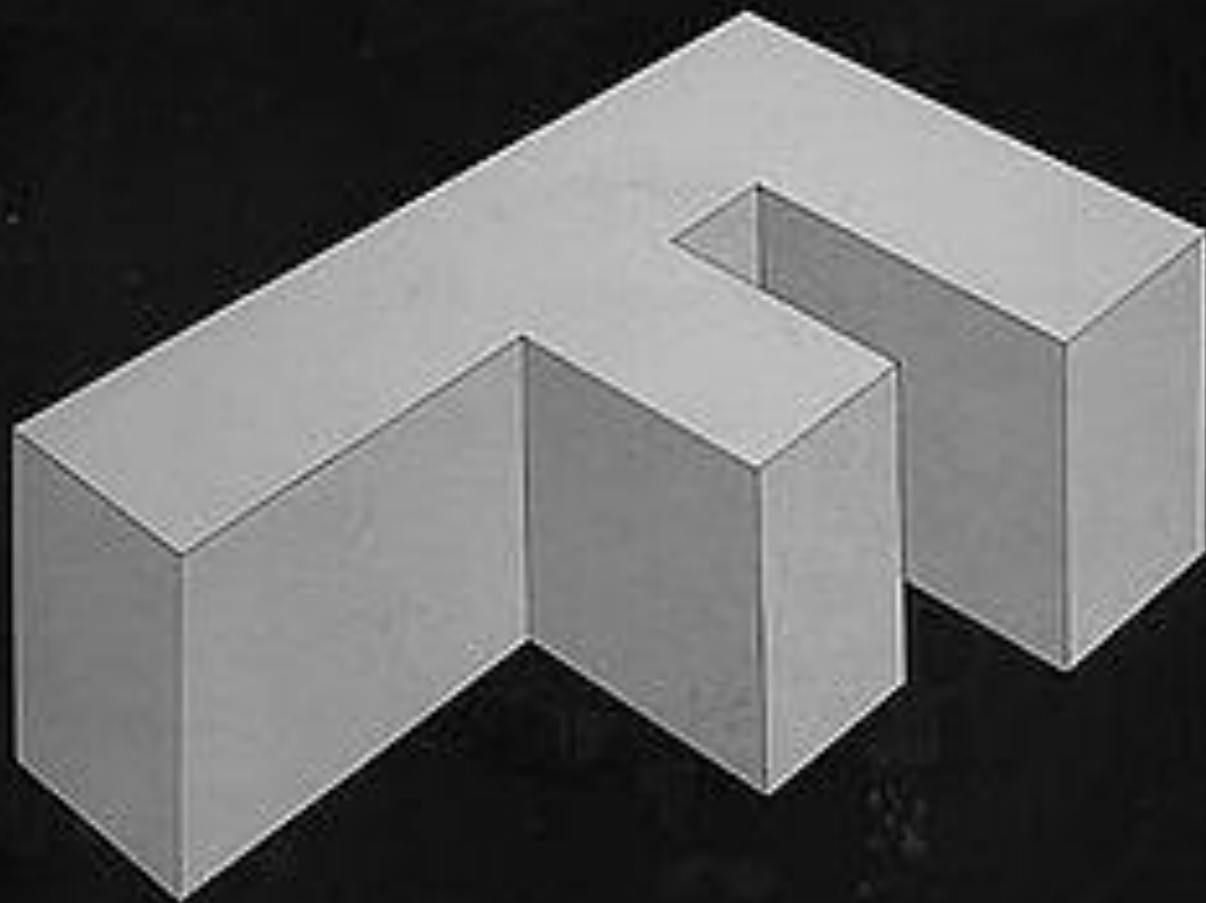


**I WANT TO KNOW
WHAT LOVE IS**

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

SJSM Church
1/2 August 2026

F O R E I G N E R



I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS

The BEATLES
All You Need Is Love
Baby. You're a Rich Man



2090 259

BEE GEES
HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE



WHAT IS LOVE... According to Hollywood



LOVE IS...

According to 1 Cor 13

- More than just emotion, romance or attraction
- Not governed by feelings
- Choosing the good of others
- Other-centred

1 CORINTHIANS 13

13 ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the partial will pass away.

¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.

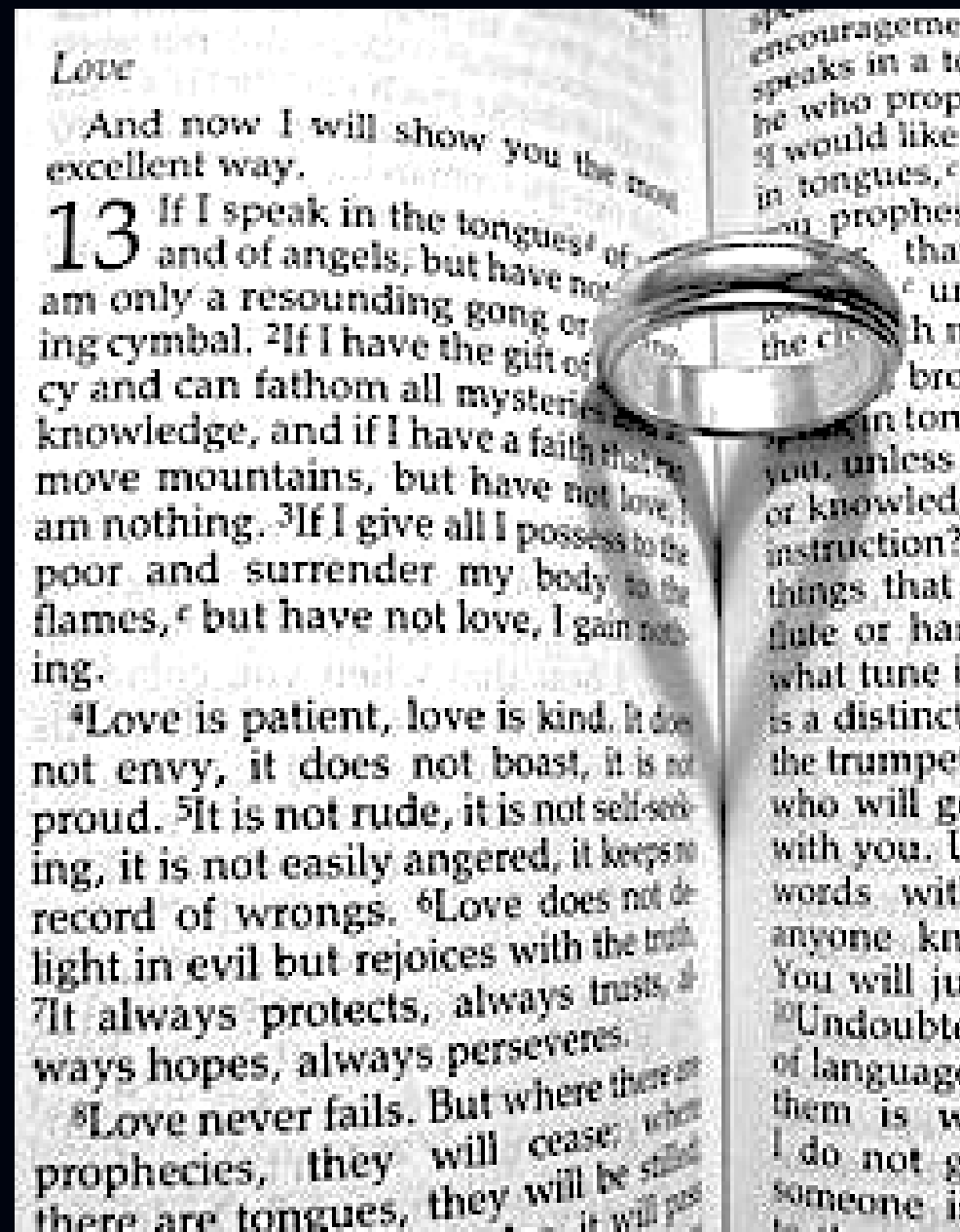
¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

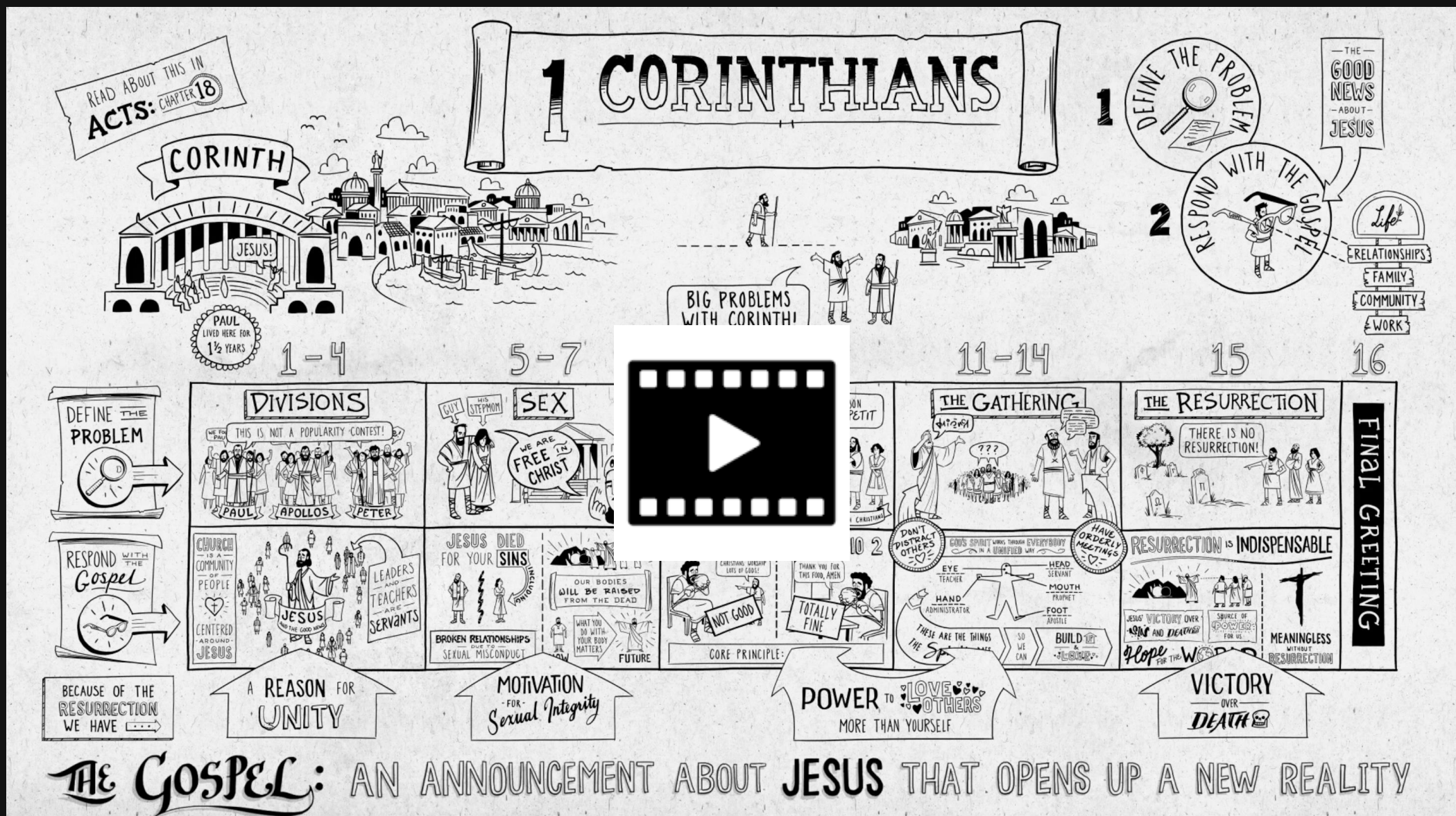


CONTEXT

- Written for weddings?
- A pastoral rebuke for the Corinthians' lack of love
- Problems: selfishness, arrogance, divisions, misuse of gifts, etc.



OVERVIEW OF 1 CORINTHIANS (Bible Project)



WHAT IS LOVE?

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

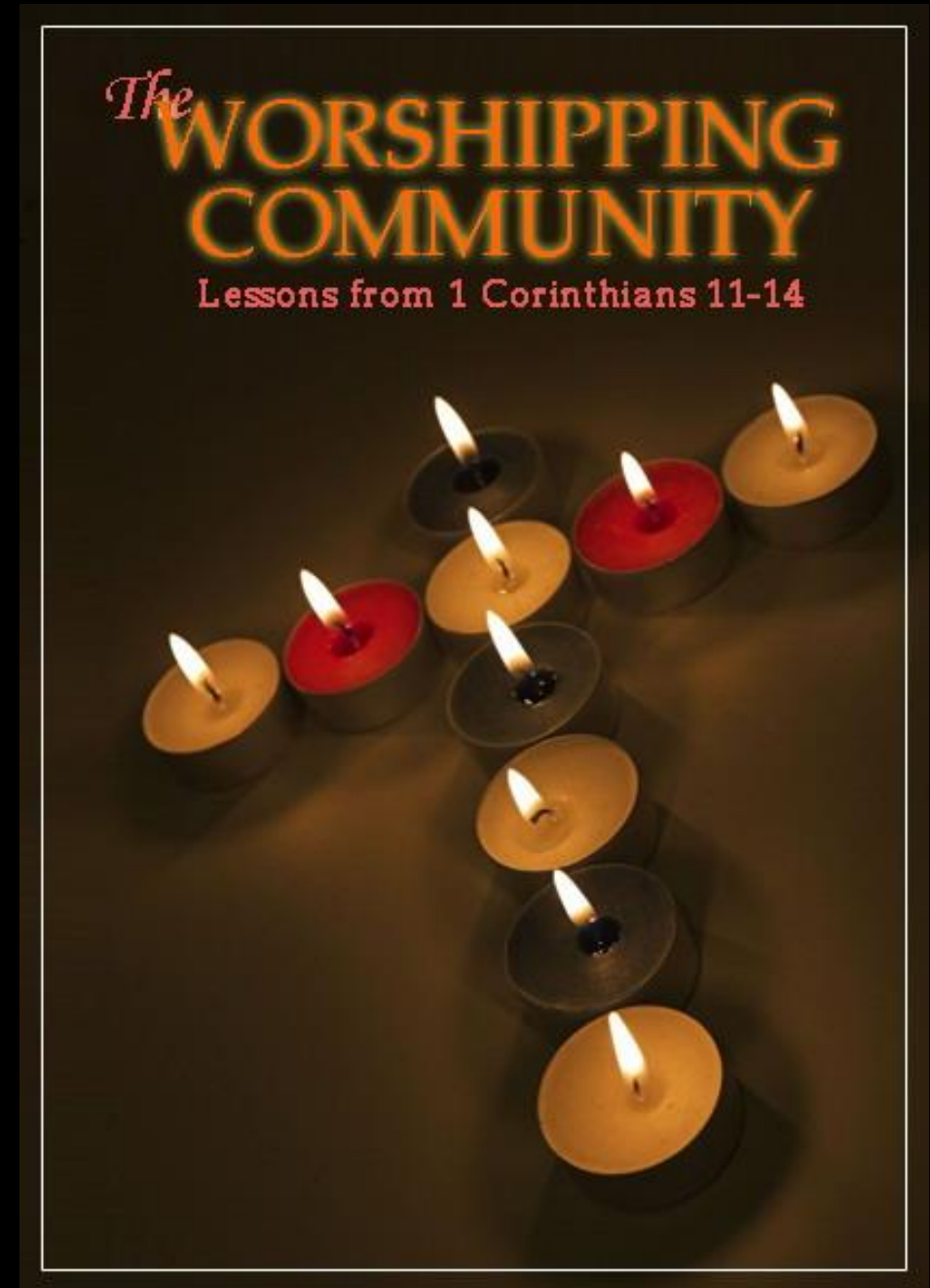
1. Love is **Essential** (13:1-3)

2. Love is **Edifying** (13:4-7)

3. Love is **Eternal** (13:8-13)

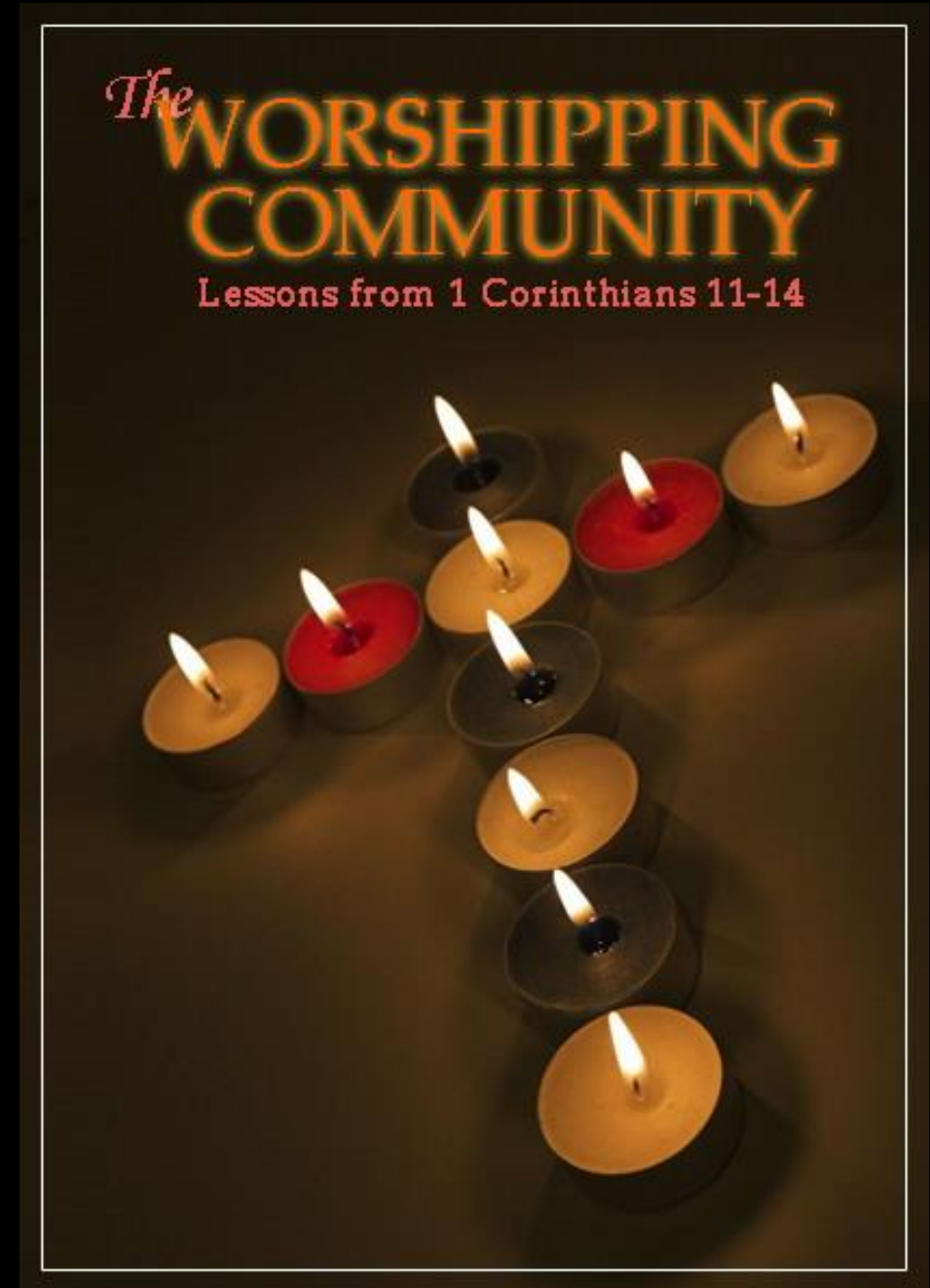
LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Problems in Gatherings
 - Lack of spiritual maturity
 - Highlighted in ch 11-14
 - Corinthians exercising gifts in a self-promoting, boastful and arrogant manner



LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Problems in Gatherings
 - Sign of spiritual maturity: not display of gifts but exercise of love
 - Paul addressed 3 areas: speaking, knowing, giving
 - Gifts without love = nothing

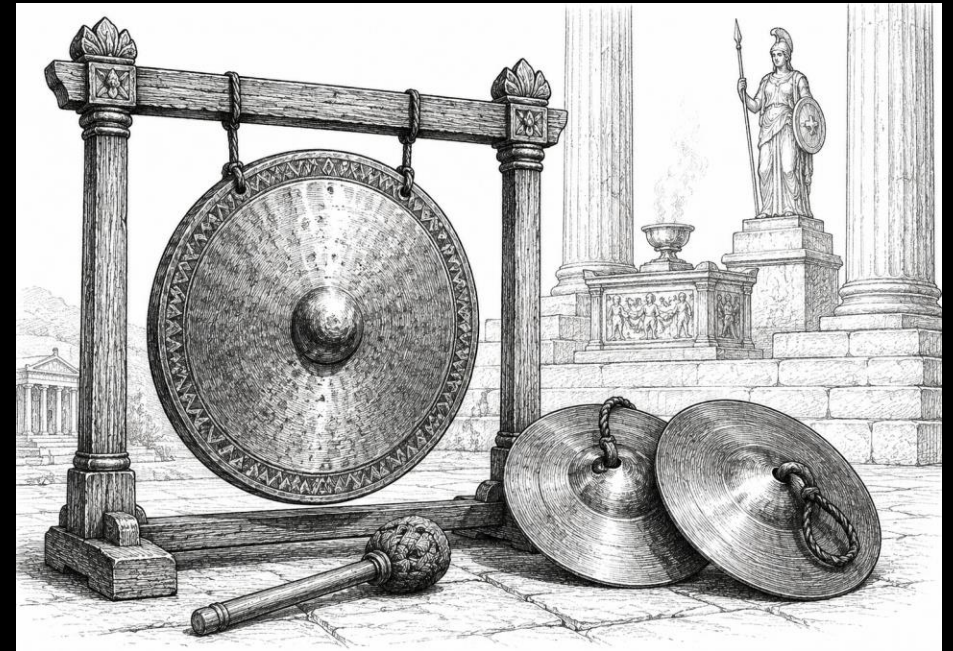
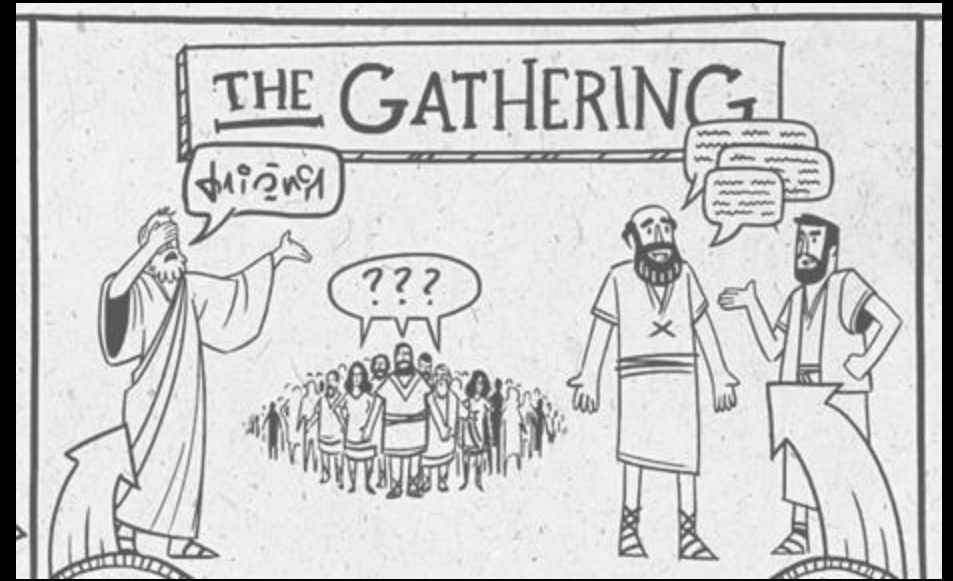


If I speak in the tongues of men and of
angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong
or a clanging cymbal.

1 Cor 13:1

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Speaking (13:1)
 - Gongs and cymbals used in pagan temples: attract attention of the gods
 - Speaking without love = no better than pagan worshippers

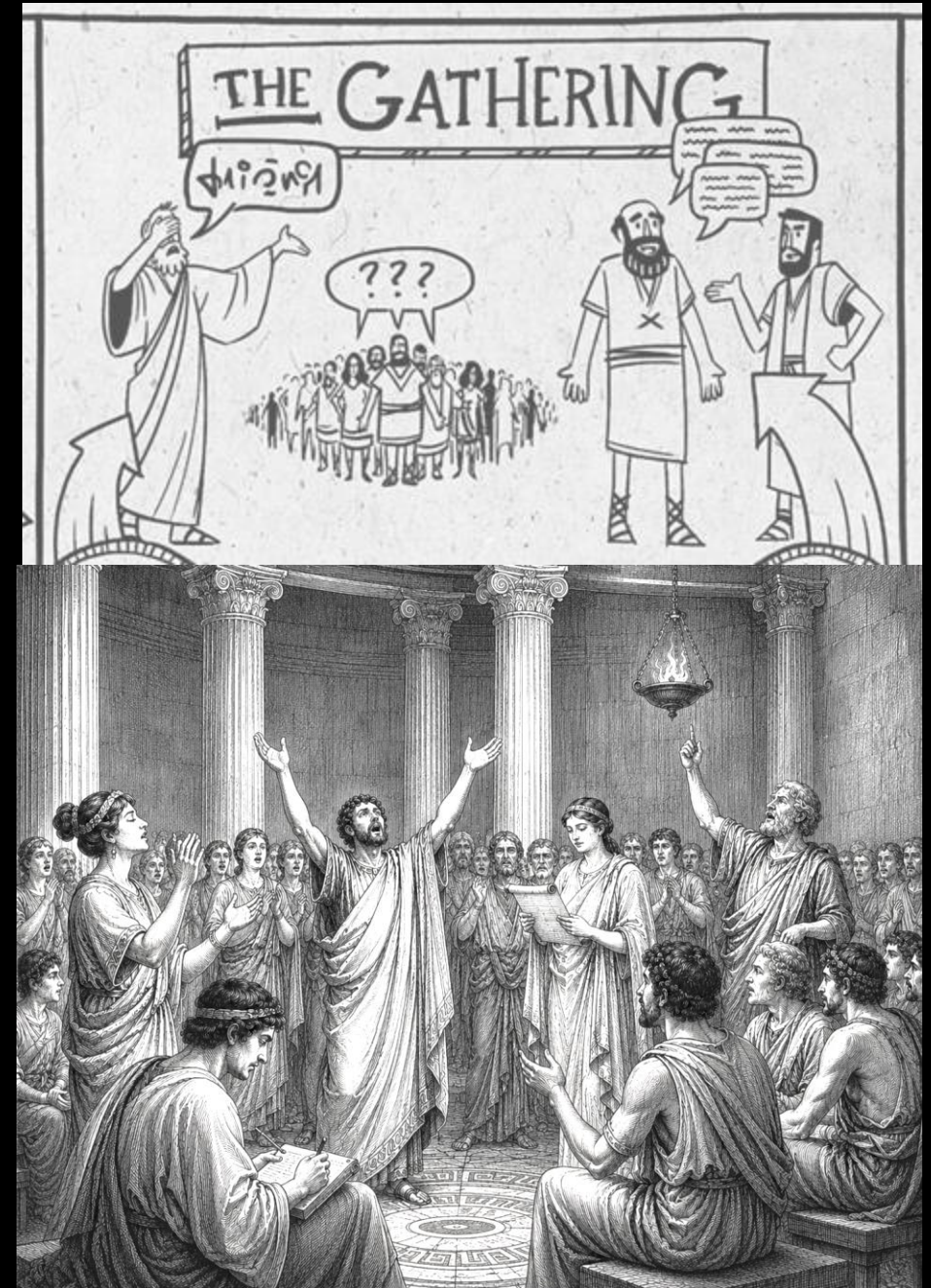


If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

1 Cor 13:2

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Knowing (13:2)
 - 3 gifts from earlier list in 1 Cor 12:8-10
 - Prophecy, knowledge, faith: not for impressing others but for building up of one another

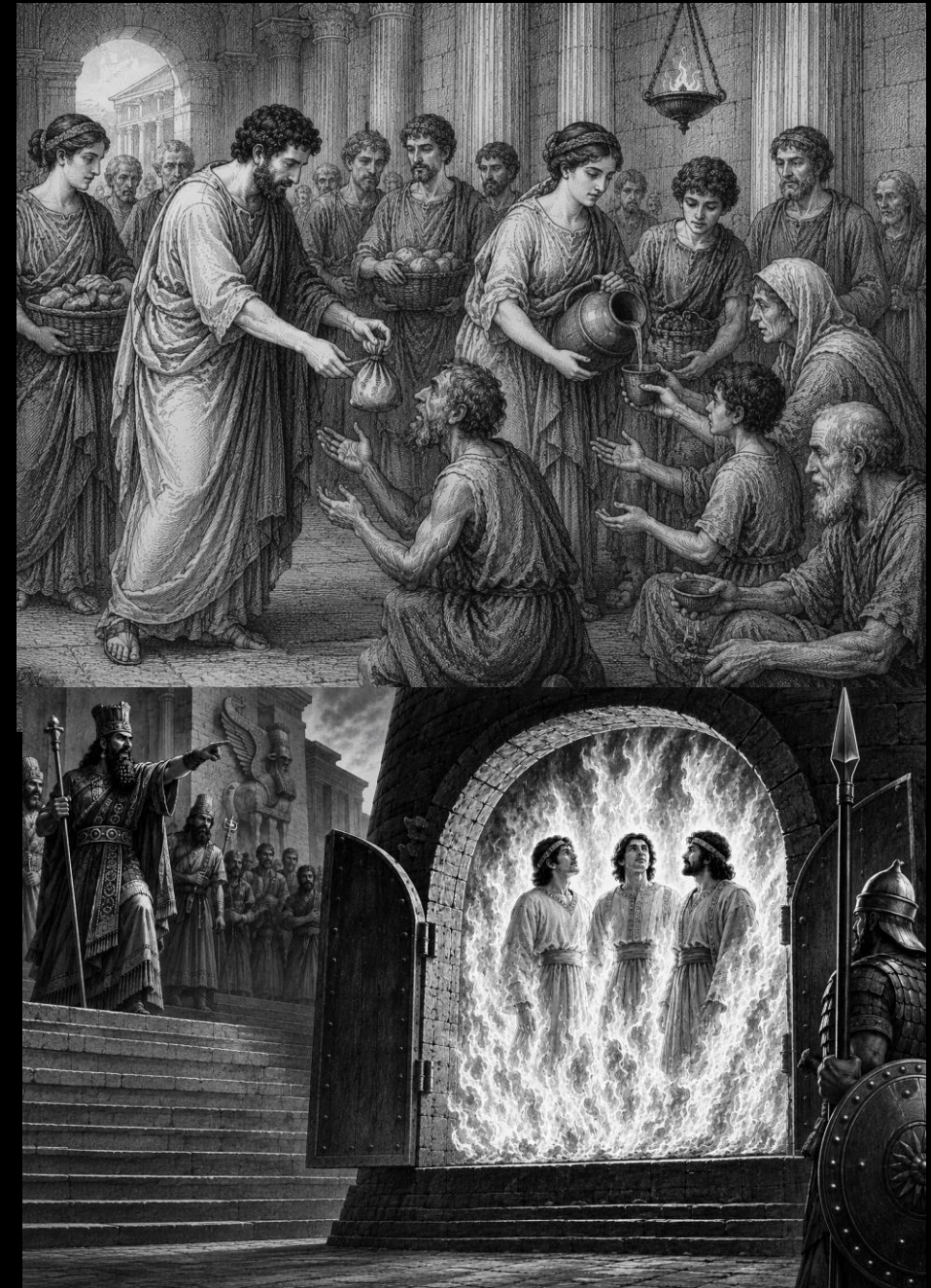


If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my
body to be burned, but have not love, I gain
nothing.

I Cor 13:3

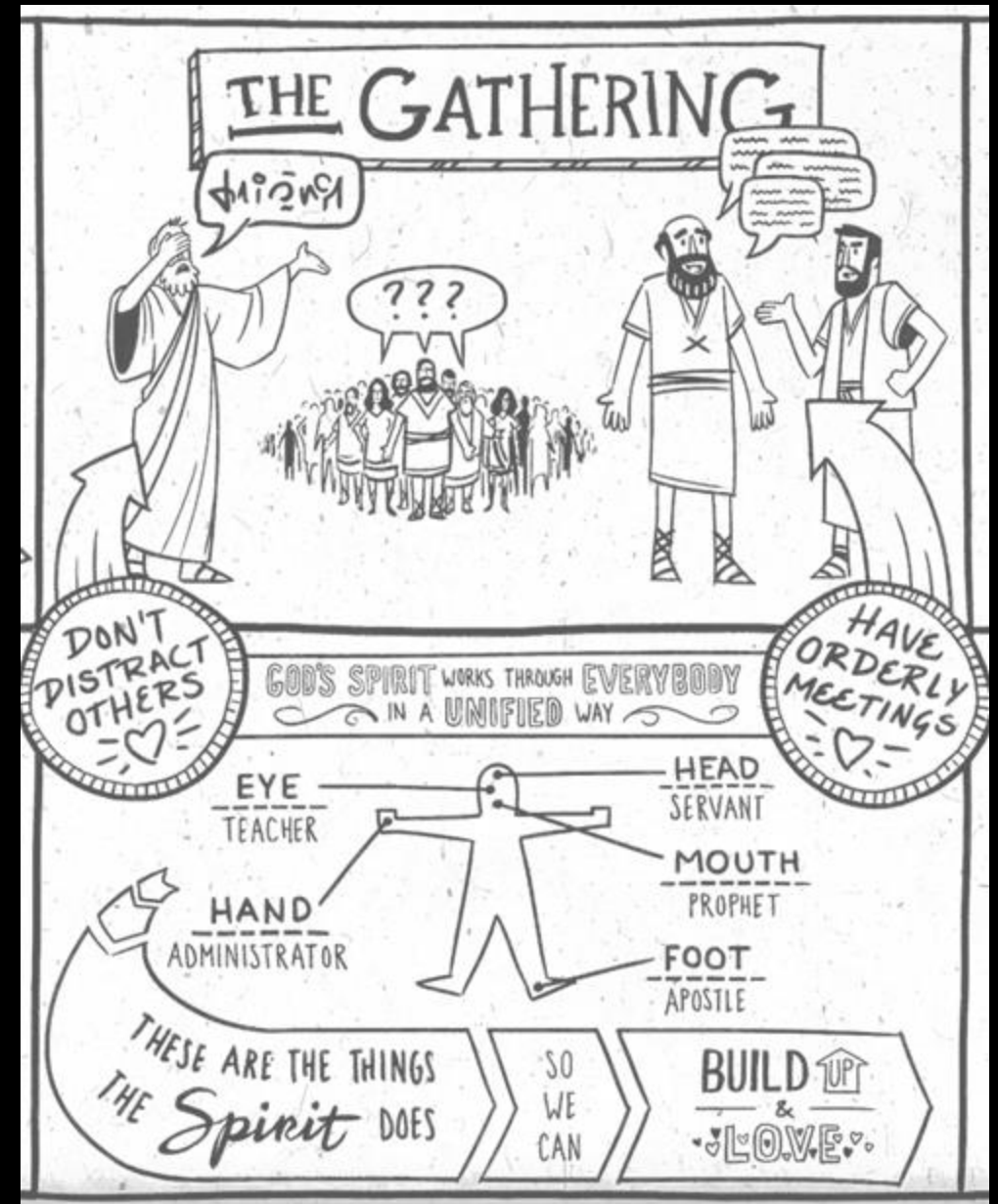
LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Giving (13:3)
 - Seems noble & commendable
 - Giving without love: to gain recognition, build reputation, patronize others into indebtedness, look spiritual



LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Reflection I
 - Gifts: everything that God entrusted to us
 - Isn't everything you have and everything you are sheer gifts from God? (1 Cor 4:7, MSG)



*Don't you know that everything we have is
a gift of God's grace?*

*It's not a trophy we've earned but a gift
we've received!*

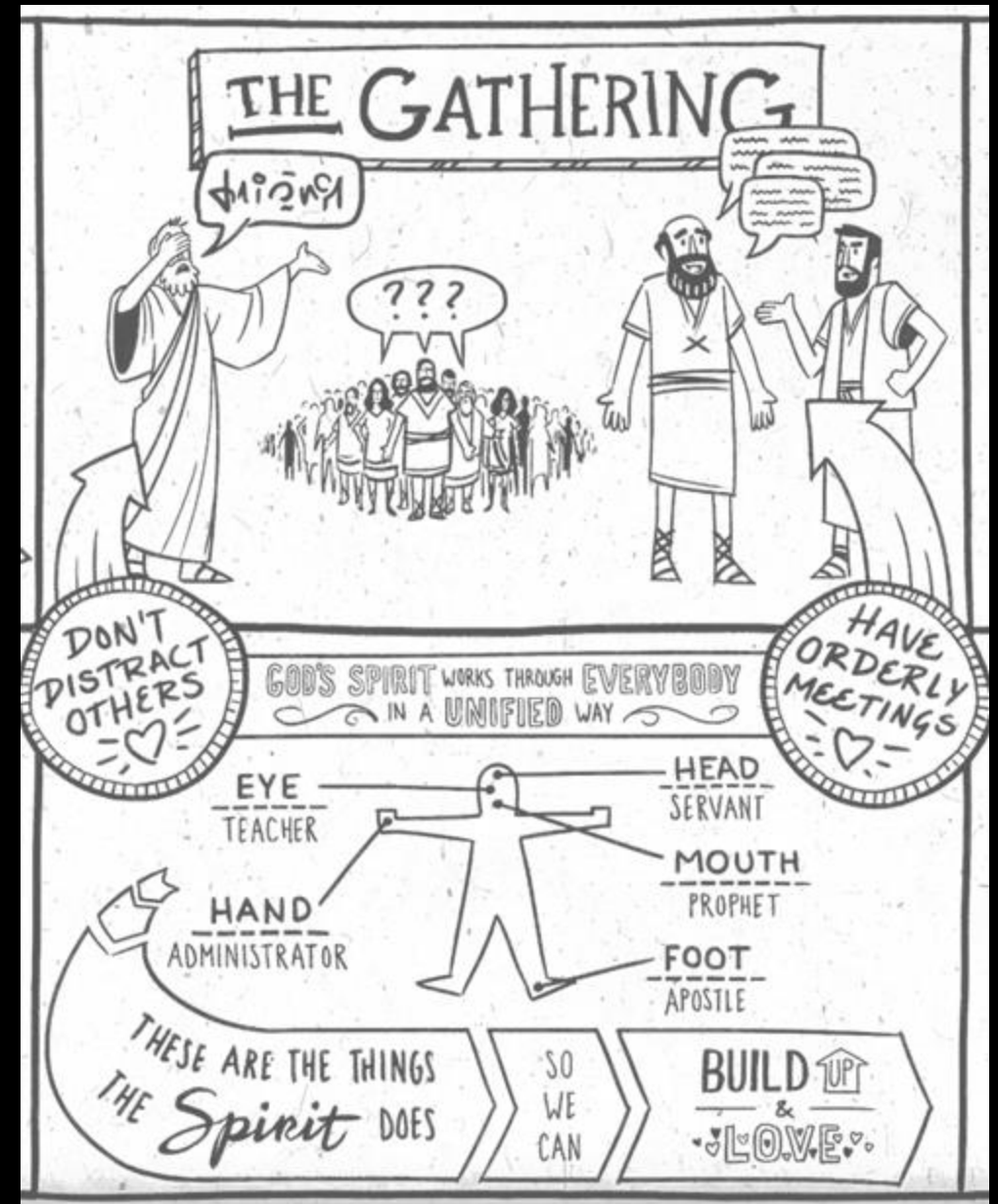
The 24 elders fall
down before Him who
is seated on the
throne and worship
Him who lives forever
and ever. They cast
their crowns before the
throne...”

Revelation 4:10



LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Reflection 2
 - Using God's gifts with love
 - Ministering and serving with love in areas of **speaking** and **knowing**



LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Reflection 2
 - Using God's gifts with love in area of **speaking**
 - Preaching, teaching, leading bible study, counselling, encouraging someone, etc



*Before you step into the
pulpit, always pray this:*

*Lord, fill my heart with
an overwhelming love
for this flock.*

Ps Rennis



LOVE IS ESSENTIAL

- Reflection 2
 - Using God's gifts with love in area of **knowing**
 - Studying to know God and helping others know Him



*If Paul were addressing the modern church,
perhaps he would say: You Christians who
prove your spirituality by the amount of
theological information you can cram into
your heads, I tell you that such knowledge by
itself proves nothing.*

D.A. Carson

*Lord, give us a hunger to
know You more.*

*Not so that we can
impress others with how
much we know.*

*But so that we may lovingly
lead others,
Into a deeper knowledge
and experience of You.*



It does not matter how well we **speak**, how much we **know**, or how sacrificially we **give**.

Love is essential! And love must be the reason we do all these things. Because if love is absent, then as Paul says, “I am only noise, I am nothing, and I gain nothing!”



LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Hymn of Love (13:4-7)
 - Love is described, not defined
 - Not what love feels like but what love does

LOVE
IS PATIENT AND KIND
LOVE DOES NOT ENVY OR BOAST
IT IS NOT ARROGANT OR RUDE. IT DOES NOT INSIST ON ITS OWN WAY
IT IS NOT IRRITABLE OR RESENTFUL
IT DOES NOT REJOICE AT WRONGDOING, BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH
LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS
BELIEVES ALL THINGS
HOPES ALL THINGS
ENDURES ALL THINGS
LOVE NEVER ENDS

LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Agape
 - Adopted by early Christians to describe a kind of love unfamiliar to the world

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*Agape is a love for the utterly unworthy, a love that proceeds from a God who is love. It is a love lavished on others without a thought on whether they are worthy or not. It proceeds from the **nature of the lover**, not from any **attractiveness in the beloved**.*

Leon Morris

LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Agape
 - Shapes how Christians are to love others
 - Other-centred: deliberate decision to seek others' good, regardless of whether they are deserving

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- 14 Marks
 - Love edifies through...
 - Graciousness (13:4a)
 - Selflessness (13:4b-6)
 - Steadfastness (13:7)

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Graciousness (Patience)
 - Slow to anger: how God is known (Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8)
 - Not reacting impulsively
 - Putting up with shortcomings

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Graciousness (Kindness)
 - Goes out of the way to do good
 - Intentionally and graciously blesses others

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Selflessness (13:4b-6)
 - 8 marks: what love is not
 - Envious, Boastful, Proud, Rude, Self-Seeking, Irritable, Resentful, Rejoicing at Wrong-doing
 - Common: self-centredness

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Selflessness (Not Envy)
- The envious: why do others have what I don't
- They struggle to rejoice at others' blessings and success

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Selflessness (Not Boasting)
 - Not showing off
 - Not drawing attention to oneself

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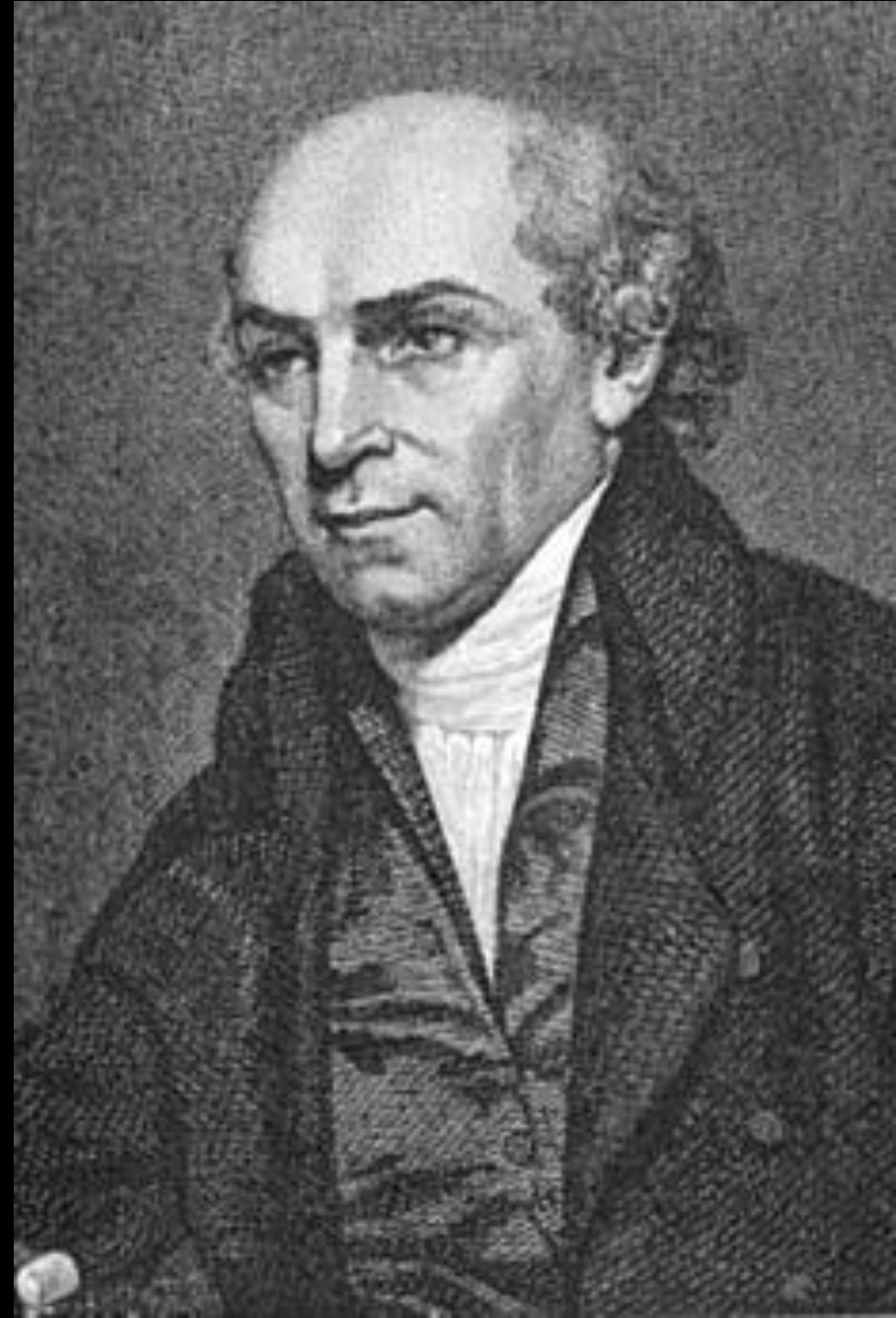
*"I heard that Mr Carey used to
be a shoemaker."*

- Guest at dinner

*"Oh no, sir, not a shoemaker;
only a shoe-mender!"*

- William Carey

(1761-1834, missionary to India,
father of modern missions)



LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Selflessness (Not Boasting)
 - Not showing off or drawing attention to oneself

*The arrogant person has a big head,
but the loving person has a big heart.*

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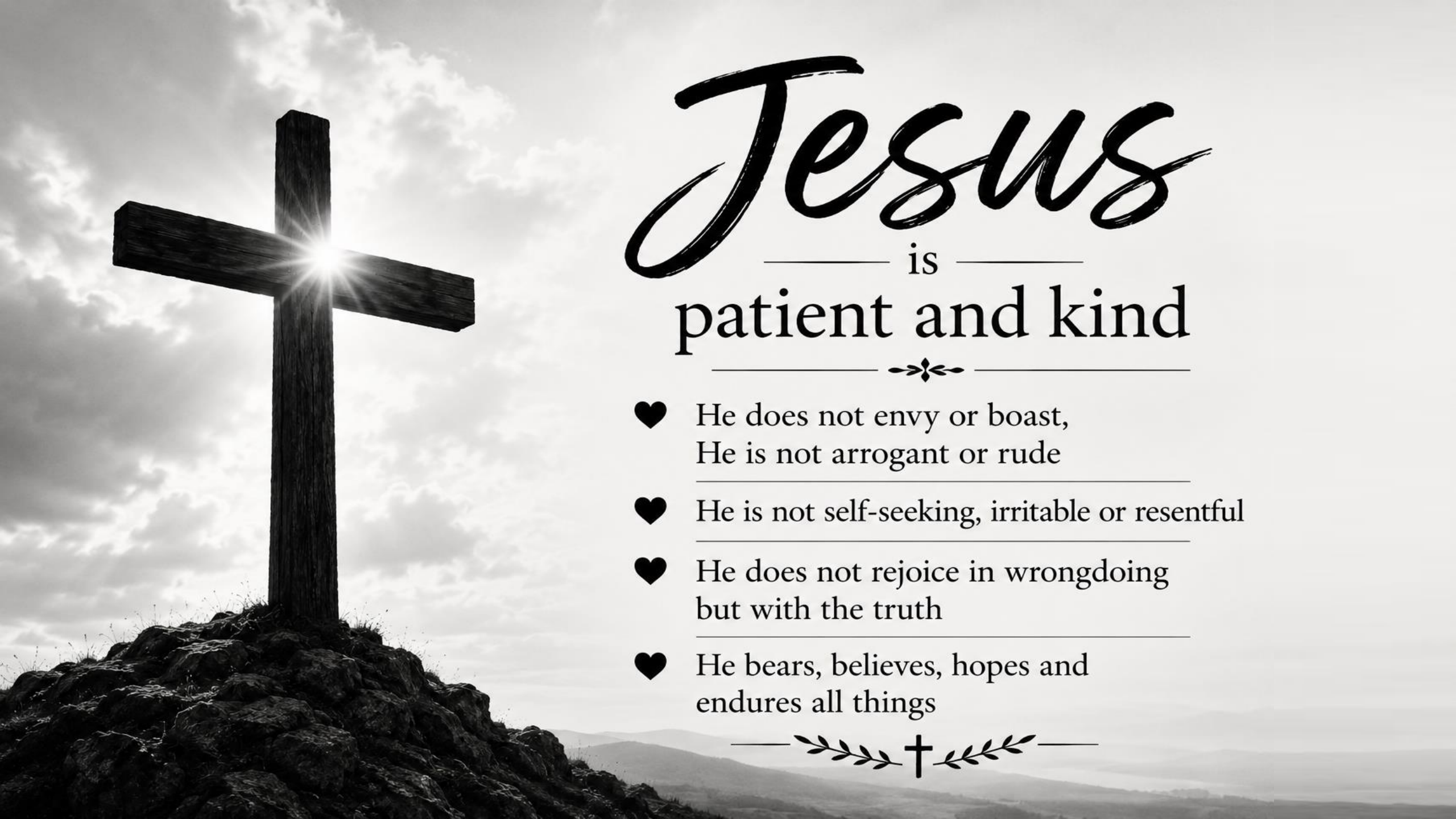
- Steadfastness (13:7)
 - Bears, Believes, Hopes, Endures All Things
 - Love refuses to give up on people: keeps loving even when it becomes difficult

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LOVE IS EDIFYING

- Hymn of Love (13:4-7)
 - Isn't just a portrait of love
 - It's a portrait of Jesus

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Jesus

is

patient and kind

- ♥ He does not envy or boast,
He is not arrogant or rude
- ♥ He is not self-seeking, irritable or resentful
- ♥ He does not rejoice in wrongdoing
but with the truth
- ♥ He bears, believes, hopes and
endures all things



WHAT IS LOVE?

1 Corinthians 13:1– 13

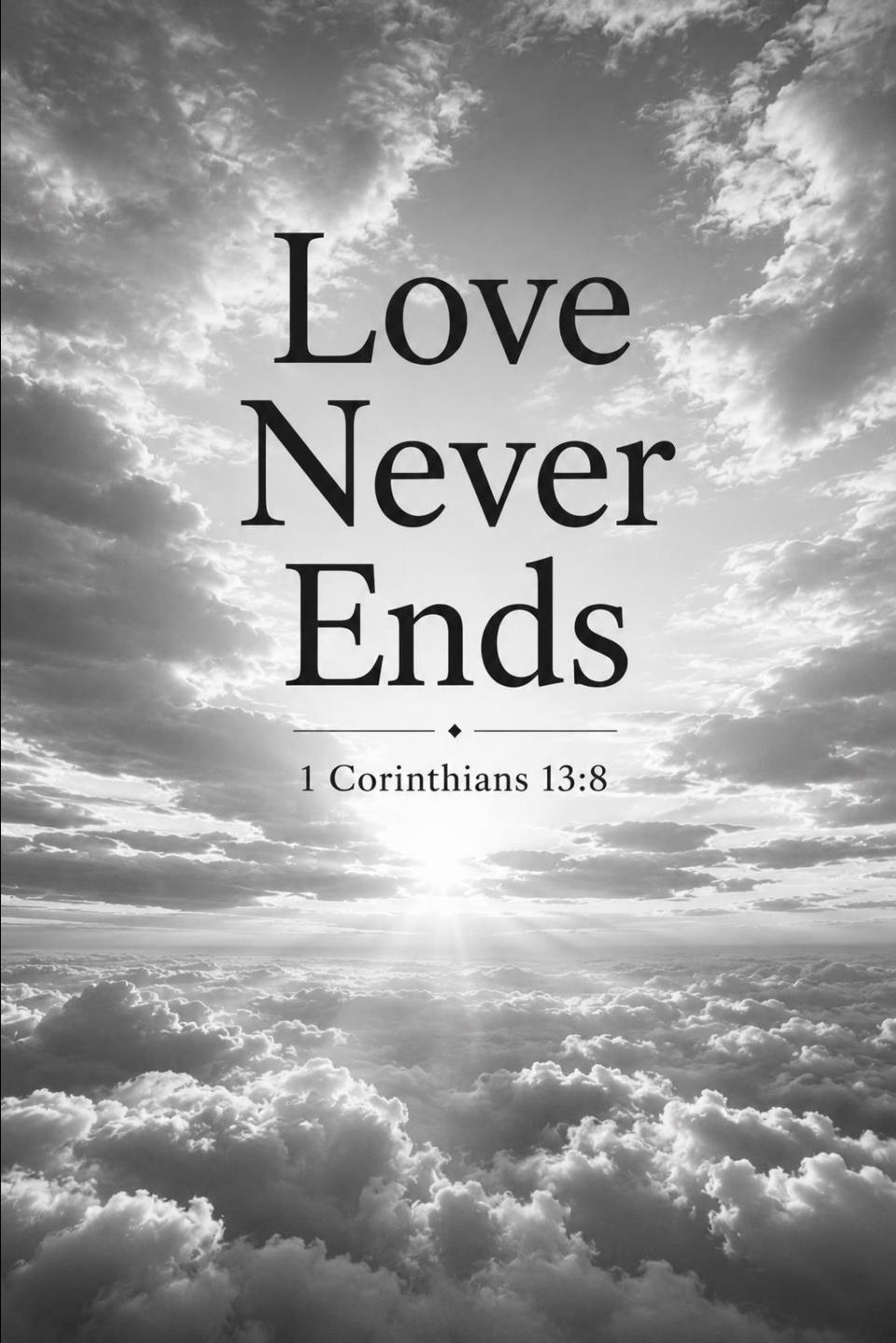
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LOVE IS ETERNAL

- Love Never Ends (13:8-13)
 - All spiritual gifts belong to this present age: they have an expiry date
 - Focus and invest in love: they last forever



Love
Never
Ends

— ♦ —
1 Corinthians 13:8

LOVE IS ETERNAL

- Love Never Ends (13:8-13)
 - Faith, Hope & Love (v13)
 - On that day: Faith will turn to sight, Hope will be fulfilled
 - Only Love will last forever because God is love

Now these three
remains:

Faith, Hope, Love.

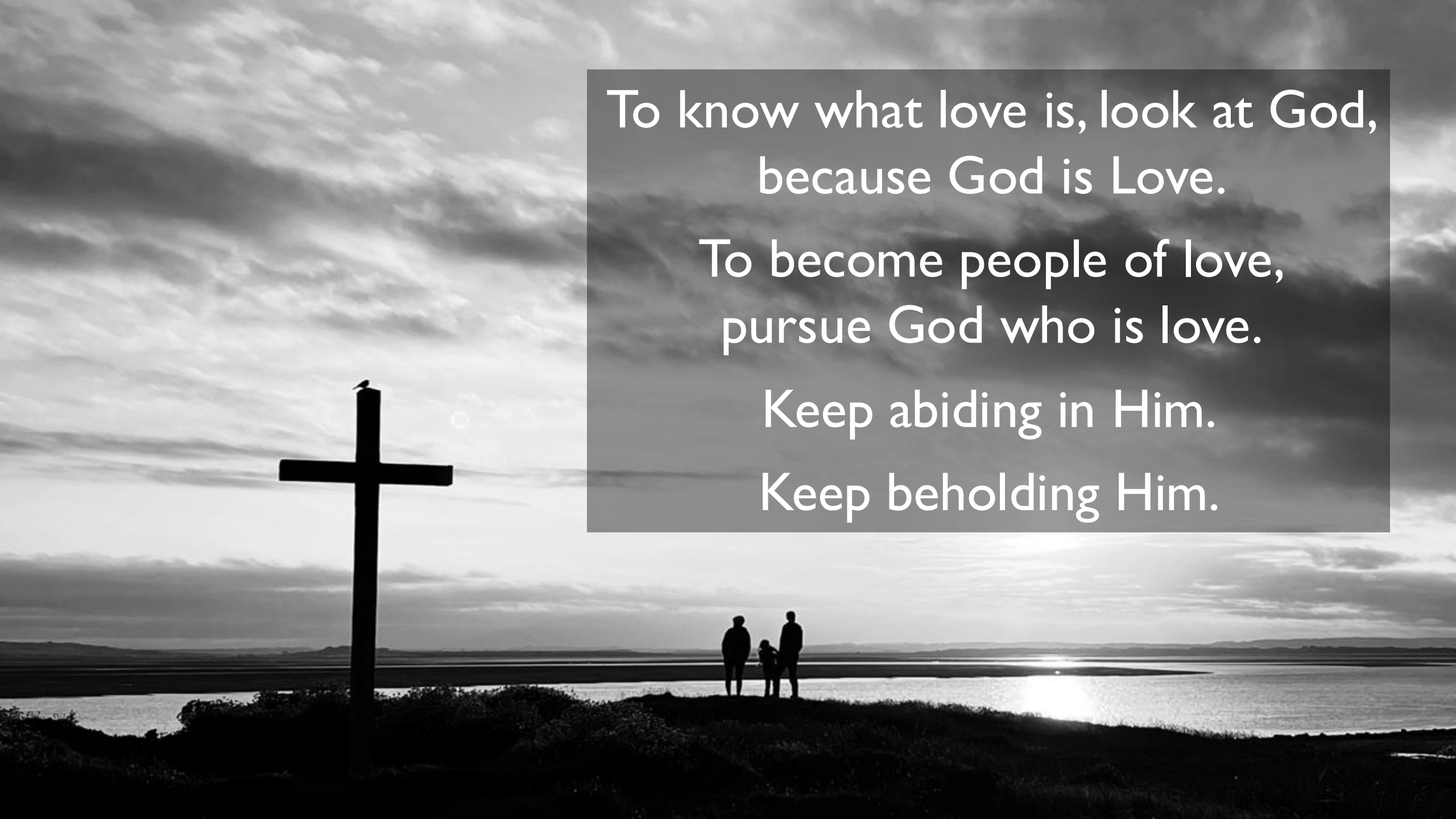
But the greatest
of these is **Love.**

— ♦ —
Pursue Love.

— ♦ —
1 Corinthians 13:13-4:1

Thank God for His gifts, use them faithfully to
serve His people and to build them up.
Above all else, pursue love. Become a person
of love. Become a community filled with
people known for their love (John 13:35).
Love is what will last forever.





To know what love is, look at God,
because God is Love.

To become people of love,
pursue God who is love.

Keep abiding in Him.

Keep beholding Him.

Before love can be a behaviour for a Christian,
love must first be an experience for the Christian.

Tim Keller



The LORD is gracious and compassionate;
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

Psalms 103:8

