

# The Heartbeat of God

## Opening Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1, 14:7-8

**13:1** *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

**14:7-8** *Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? <sup>8</sup> For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?*

**This is a ‘noisy’ passage:** so many sounds mentioned here: the sounds of tongues, the sounding brass, the clanging cymbals. The sound of flutes harps and trumpets. So much sound!

Paul is writing to the Corinthians. If you lived in that busy city of Corinth,

- You would most definitely come across noisy crowds and multitudes of people.
- Being a great cosmopolitan city, you would definitely hear the many tongues and languages of its many visitors.
- Historians tells us that one thing you wouldn't be able to escape was the constant, nonstop, annoying, aggravating, frenzied sound of clanging brass that was performed in pagan worship, in its many temples. At the same time, loud, nerve-racking cymbals were played to arouse emotion and religious fervour.
- The many pagan temples of the city were filled with worshipers who danced wildly and under the influence of wine or hallucinogenic drugs. Pagan priests would wildly play metal drums to drive people into a state of spiritual frenzy.

Noise was inescapable in Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul addresses believers that had just come to faith in Jesus. They were ‘new arrivals’ in the Kingdom. They had had a powerful encounter with God, were Spirit-filled, spoke in tongues of men and angels, but Paul says that the most important aspect of their faith is love.

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

Paul is saying that one of our strongest distinctives as followers of Jesus is love – otherwise we would be just another noisy religion.

Jesus said, “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” (**John 13:35**)

In a passage about ‘sounds’, Paul speaks about love. Does love have a sound? Yes. Love is the heartbeat of God!

## 1. The heartbeat of God

A human heartbeat can hardly be detected or noticed. It is an infrasound. Its frequency is way below the range of human hearing (20 hertz). Yet, infrasound can destroy huge structures and infrasound can travel very far.

God's heartbeat is the most powerful sound in the universe – it can shake people, it can shake a city, it can shake nations!

**Haggai 2:6-7** - *For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts.*

The love of God is the most powerful force on earth. Jesus went to the cross to show us how big God's love is. There was so much power in that moment that the lights of our planet went out for three hours (Luke 23:44), an earthquake tore the veil of the temple and graves were opened, followed by the resurrection of many from the dead.

## **2. God wants everything we do to carry His heartbeat, His love.**

That is the purpose of the passage we read: that everything we do would not just be religious activity and religious noise but love. That we would love God (not just offer sacrifices) and that we would love people.

- We need to be led by God's pulsation. We need to find His heart and be led in that way. We need to tune into God's frequency. Our heart needs to be synchronised with God's. Jesus said, *'I and the Father, we are one'*. Jesus walked in the perfect will of the Father, His whole life was in synch with God's heart.
- The church cannot operate in cardiac arrest. Heartbeat is an indicator of life. The presence of love is an indicator of life.

**1 John 3:14** - *We know that we have passed from death to **life**, because we **love** the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*

Heartbeat is one of our vital signs. In the absence of heartbeat, we are dead. This passage says that we can know we are alive because we love! We love those around us, we love God, we love the lost. We love. If we don't love, we are in cardiac arrest.

Jesus said in **Matthew 24:12** that in the last days *the love of many will grow cold.*

Another passage that speaks about the last days is

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** - *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> For men will be **lovers of themselves, lovers of money**, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> **unloving**, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**, <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

Something will happen to love in these last days: it will grow cold or it will be misguided:

- *Lovers of money*
- *Lovers of themselves* (self-absorbed, narcissistic, egotistical)
- *Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God* (hedonistic)
- *Unloving* (detached, uncaring)

Warren Wiersbe said,

*“We should worship God, love people, and use things. But if we start worshipping ourselves, we will ignore God and start loving things and use people. This is the formula for a miserable life”.*

At the end of this letter of Paul to Timothy, he mentioned that one of his associates, Demas, left the faith ... *“having loved this present world”* (2 Timothy 4:9).

God doesn't want any of us to be part of that end-time crowd: *from such people turn away!* Let us be part of the crowd of people who in these last days will love God and love our neighbour – emphatically, passionately, and authentically!

### **3. A fresh revelation of the love of God**

I believe that many need a fresh revelation of what love sounds like and what looks like.

I love this passage in

**Song of Solomon 5:2a:** *“I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved”*

Love has a sound. It sounds like Jesus – the voice of the Beloved! May we be awake to His voice like Mary was when she visited the tomb after Jesus rose from the dead. She was alert while the others were asleep and she heard His voice, ‘Mary’. To which she immediately replied, *Rabboni, which is to say Teacher!* (John 20:16).

Love sounds like Jesus and love looks like Jesus!

In **John 13:1-17** we read about Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

**Verse 12:** *So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you?”*

**We need a fresh revelation of that kind of love** (love looks like that!).

**Ephesians 3:19** - *to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

We need to know this love. We need a fresh revelation of this love, and we need to **practice it**. After washing His disciples' feet Jesus said,

**John 13:17** - *If you know these things, blessed are you if you **do** them.*

### **Conclusion**

Basically 1 Corinthians 13 says that in a world full of noise, our love needs to rise above that of the crowds and sound louder than cymbals, brass, and trumpets!

As we conclude today, let us remember some other things we've covered:

- The most powerful force in this world is the love of God. His love can shake people's lives, cities and even nations!
- Everything we do needs to carry the heartbeat of God. We need to love people like He loves them, and love God like He deserves to be loved.
- Let us pursue a fresh revelation of this love and walk in it!