

## Until perfection comes...

### 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13.

8(a) *“Love never fails.”*

- “...never fails” in Greek means literally: ‘does not fall/ collapse/ suffer ruin’.

8(b) *“But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.”*

- Word ‘cease’ (& ‘pass away’) in Greek means: ‘become inoperative’
- Until then though, all three are precious & part of God’s gift to His church.

9 *“For we know in part and we prophesy in part”*

- Why? Because: (a) we are limited by our place in time & we cannot see the whole picture, (b) our fallen nature intrudes, (c) we make mistakes, (d) God does not tell us everything, as we cannot take it all in.
- Not that this invalidates either the reality, or the importance of these experiences. But this is why we test prophetic messages.

10 *“but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.”*

- Can be translated: ‘but when totality comes, that which is partial shall be done away with’. God points us towards a time when all will be revealed.
- And this will replace our state of partial understanding.
- Precious as our present experience is, God promises even better.
- Amazing as the insight God currently gives us, God promises even more.

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

- ‘Love’: the *quality* in which we do everything.

#### Applying the scripture:

1. In what sense does ‘love never fail’ (v8)? What does this mean?
2. What does the second half of v8 mean? *When & why* will this happen? Look also at v10.
3. Think about v9. Share some of the ways that a church can test prophecy, to decide whether or not the message is from God. Which of these can we use in cell?
4. Why is ‘love’ so emphasised in v13?
5. What do you find most challenging in this reading? And why?