



SUNGAI WAY-SUBANG  
METHODIST CHURCH



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1 Corinthians

be an apostle of Christ  
of God, and our brother  
with words of human wisdom, lest the cross  
Christ be emptied of its power  
Christ the Wisdom and Power  
refer the message of  
to those who are  
being saved

# Only God Makes Things Grow

1 Corinthians 3: 5-11

*Bishop Joshua Khong*

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*Sermon*



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*Bishop Joshua Khong*

**Only God Makes Things Grow**

**1 Corinthians 3: 5-11**

# Introduction



1. Christ, the centre and focus of all we do,
2. the gospel of Christ is understood through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
3. Christians are the Body of Christ,
4. keeping ourselves morally pure,
5. partaking of the sacrament worthily, in godly reverence
6. gifts of the Holy Spirit,
7. the reality of the Resurrection,



## the city of Corinth, the church in Corinth

- a prosperous city and busy port
- a cosmopolitan metropolis
- Aphrodite worship, 3 temples dedicated for the goddess
- a Greco-Roman cultural hub





# a little about the Apostle Paul

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- a passionate Jew, Paul described himself, "Hebrew of Hebrews," a Pharisee, a disciple of Gamaliel
- a learned man, well versed in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic
- well-groomed, a citizen of Tarsus, a university town, capital of Cilicia (Strabo placed it above Athens and Alexandria)
- Paul met the Risen Christ (Acts 9)





# a peek into Paul's mind

- Paul invested 1½ years in Corinth,  
building deep relationships there (Acts 18)
- Paul has a repeated pattern in 1 Corinthians.
  - a) He **identifies** the problems & issues the church in Corinth struggles
  - b) He **follows through** with responses for the problems & issues
  - c) He **draws them back** to the **FOUNDATION**, gospel of Christ,
  - d) The **foundation** gives Christians their identity, a new identity
  - e) The **foundation** gives life, new life, in Christ



# 1. Standing on the shoulders of saints before us

- Paul is an Apostle, a church planter, a spiritual father, a mentor, a teacher, an encourager, a nurturer and many more.

*I am a servant...* for Paul, it is more than the broad-stroke humility. The theology that Paul instils here:

- a. The Church is the Body of Christ
- b. Jesus Christ is the HEAD of the Church
- c. Succession in continuity, until Christ comes back for us



# 1 Corinthians 3: 5

“**What**, after all, is Apollos? And **what** is Paul?

Only servants,

through whom you came to believe –

as the Lord has assigned to each his task.”





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## Joshua 1: 2

“Moses My **servant** is dead.

Now then, you and all these people,  
get ready to cross the Jordan River into the  
land I am about to give to them,  
to the Israelites”.



# In God's Kingdom work

- We are all servants
- We are co-workers, co-labourers...  
servants of God's sending
- Servants do not have AGENDA of their own,  
they are on their Master's business
- the title "servant" is empowering



# “servant” is an empowering word

- It is empowering  
for the church
- It is empowering  
for the person
- It is empowering  
for the body life



# 1 Corinthians 3: 6-7

<sup>6</sup> “I planted the seed,  
Apollos watered it,  
but God has been making it grow.  
<sup>7</sup> So neither the one who plants  
nor the one who waters is anything,  
but only God, who makes things grow.”



## The church in Corinth is a growing church:

- a. In the frail and sinful nature of the congregation, the Church grew
- b. The Church did not grow because of its sinful ways
- c. The Church grew because of God's compassion on those who are receiving healing, redemption, restoration



2. Corinth is a mega city,  
a metropolis, a major city in the south,  
bustling, prosperous and modern.





Why did Paul use an agricultural example for an urban church in a bustling metropolis?



## 1 Corinthians 3: 6b-7

6<sup>b</sup> God has been making it grow.

7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.



Will Paul's readers connect with him  
and the message he intended for them?



Paul used a  
biblical  
example

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God,  
the Source  
of Life





“I Am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard.

He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful.”





### 3. Foundation

ON CHRIST,  
THE SOLID ROCK I STAND.  
ALL OTHER GROUND  
IS SINKING SAND.



**Paul says,** (in 1 Cor 3:10-11)

<sup>10</sup> By the grace God has given me,  
I laid a **foundation** as a **wise builder**,  
and someone else is building on it.  
But each one should **build with care**.

<sup>11</sup> For no one can lay any **foundation**  
other than the one already laid,  
which is Jesus Christ.



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# Our Response





1. It delights God to see His saints, whom He has chosen and nurtured for the church to engage in ONENESS in the eternal and glorious work He started.

Therefore, let us embrace each other as co-workers and fellow saints in Christ, and teach this to our children, and children's children.



2. ONLY God makes things grow.  
We CANNOT do anything by ourselves,  
on our own.

It is God who sustains His church,  
and blesses her with life, vibrant,  
glorious life in Christ.



3. The Body of Christ **MUST** submit to God in **godly fear and reverence**, in an **orderly manner**, in **unity and continuity**, honouring God, and lifting-up Christ.





We bow in prayers

