

# 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9 Our Triple Calling in Christ

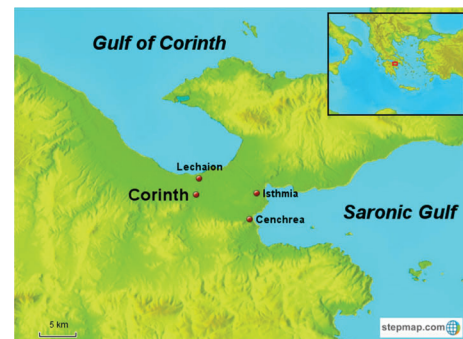
## OUR TRIPLE CALLING IN CHRIST

Corinth!



Corinth is situated on a narrow neck of land in Greece with a harbor on each side of it. This was called the Corinthian isthmus.

What's an isthmus? An isthmus is a narrow strip of land with sea on either side, forming a link between two larger areas of land. Perhaps the two most famous examples of isthmuses are Panama and Suez, where the two most famous canals in the world are now located. But the most famous isthmus in the biblical world was the Corinthian isthmus.



At the narrowest point of the isthmus the distance between the two seacoasts is about four miles. As with Panama and Suez, there is a canal that cuts through the Corinthian isthmus.



But the canal was only completed in 1893!

The Romans had tried but not succeeded in building a canal there. In fact, Nero had inaugurated one such project with great fanfare using a golden shovel. But it came to nothing.

But even if there was no canal, those who traded between Asia and the west preferred to use the port facilities of Corinth rather than travel by ship around Cape Malia, south of the Peloponnese peninsula, where winds and tides are often hazardous, especially in winter.



If they used light cargo ships, sailors or traders could transport even the ship on rollers over the paved road, called the *diolkos*, that linked the two harbors at either end of the Isthmus. Alternately they could unload cargo at one port and reload it at the other.

Looking more closely, on the east side, the harbor of Cenchreae faced across the sea to the Roman province of Asia and to Ephesus. On the west side, the port of Lechaion faced Italy and ultimately Rome.

And in between, located perfectly at the intersection of this critical crossroads for east-west trade, was the city of Corinth. And not only was it at the crossroads of the east-west trade traffic, but it was also located centrally between northern and southern Greece.

In Paul's time, therefore, Corinth was a busy, bustling, cosmopolitan business center. By comparison Athens might have seemed a slumbering university city dreaming of its greater past.

Tourists would flock to Corinth for the famous Isthmian Games, which were held every two years. Second only to the Olympic Games, the Isthmian games attracted participants, spectators, and other visitors from all corners of the empire between Rome and the east.

By the middle of the first century, the games had expanded to include a multiplicity of competitive and sometimes spectacular events. In addition to chariot races, athletic events, competitions in trumpet, flute, and lyre, poetry readings, and other events, the Isthmian Games had, unusually, introduced athletic contests for women.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-25:**

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize?

So run that you may obtain it.

Every athlete exercises self-control in all things.

They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

Corinth had been resettled in 44 BC as a Roman colony. The history of the city actually went back much earlier, to when it was a Greek city state. But in 146 BC, a Roman army sacked the city, and it was left virtually in ruins. About a hundred years later, in 44 BC, the year of his assassination, Julius Caesar re-founded Corinth as a Roman *colonia* for veterans in his legions.

So the new Corinth was initially resettled chiefly by Roman soldiers, Roman freed persons, and Roman slaves, and was very soon swelled by tradespersons and business entrepreneurs from various parts of the Roman Republic.

The government and laws of the new city were established on a fully Roman pattern. Loyalty to Rome was fundamental. The well-ordered colony then attracted an increasing number of immigrants, who came in the hope of making their fortune.

So for Corinth, every condition was in place: a cosmopolitan international center under secure Roman governmental order, with shipping routes to both Rome and to Ephesus and to the east, a plentiful supply of natural resources for manufacturing, and a vibrant business culture where quick success was part of the cultural ethos.

Competition, patronage, consumerism, and the celebration of success were part of the air breathed by citizens of Corinth. The city that Paul encountered in the first century hummed with economic wealth, business, and expansion. It was a city of up-and-comers where pride and self-promotion were the order of the day.

**Anthony Thiselton writes:**

When Paul carried the gospel to Corinth, it is not surprising that he came with much fear and trembling (2:3). The gospel of a humiliated, crucified Christ was an affront to people who cherished success and who loved winners.

Paul himself refused to carry himself like a professional lecturer or rhetorician, but insisted on working as an artisan in a leather workshop and leather goods shop.

**Anthony Thiselton: (cont'd)**

Paul did not come with high-sounding rhetoric or display of cleverness. But this consumer-oriented culture wanted precisely what Paul refused to give. His only selling point was the one thing that nobody would want: to speak only of a crucified Christ (2:2).

No wonder that the proclamation of the cross is for their part folly to those who are on their way to ruin, even if it is the power of God to us who are on the way to salvation (1:18).

Paul's self-humiliation, his assumption of a servant role, his laboring as a tradesman though being a highly educated person, contradicted expected values in a city where social climbing was a major preoccupation.

And so it was into this city that Paul arrived from Athens, as we read in Acts 18:

**Acts 18:1-3:**

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

**Priscilla and Aquila:**

From Rome, settled in Corinth; then taken by Paul with him to Ephesus, where (a) we learn that they explained the way of God more accurately to Apollos, who had only known of the baptism of John, and (b) they are mentioned 1 Corinthians 16:19: "The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord."

And they are mentioned again at the end of 2 Timothy as being still in Ephesus.

**Priscilla and Aquila:**

Paul would have spent many long hours in a workshop probably close to the agora or Forum.

Archaeologists have excavated shops or workshops of some 13 feet by 8 feet, some with sleeping accommodations above, which Aquila and Priscilla may well have used for his third quarters.

**Priscilla and Aquila:**

The presence of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth shows that there was one other feature of the city that Paul would have found useful:

The presence of a Jewish community and a synagogue, which allowed Paul to follow his preferred pattern of proclaiming the gospel – the good news – of Jesus Messiah “to the Jew first.” And so we read in Acts 18:

**Acts 18:4-6:**

And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.  
When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

We first meet **Silas** (Latin name Silvanus) at the Jerusalem Council, following which he is sent to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Then he travels with Paul 2nd journey (e.g., Philippi and Thessalonica). He and Timothy remained in Thessalonica while Paul went ahead to Athens and then to Corinth. Later, we see that Silas co-authored 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians. It may be this same “Silvanus” who is mentioned at the end of 1 Peter, as Peter’s secretary by whose hand the letter was written.

**Timothy** was from Lystra, the son of Eunice, his mother, who was a Jewish believer, a (non-believing) Greek father. His grandmother, and Eunice’s mother, Lois, was also a believer. He was circumcised by Paul “because of the Jews,” and shows up frequently in the New Testament as one of Paul’s most devoted and faithful fellow-laborers.

**Acts 18:7-8:**

And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

Titius Justus, a proselyte mentioned only here; he was the host of the first house congregation in Corinth.

Crispus was the "ruler of the synagogue," that is, a respected lay leader (not the rabbi), responsible for managing the building, organizing services, overseeing teaching, and maintaining order – sort of like a cross between a Ruling Elder and an Executive Pastor. Other rulers of the synagogue mentioned in Scripture are Jairus and Sosthenes. It is interesting that the ruler of the synagogue became a follower of Jesus!

**Acts 18:9-11:**

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."

And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

**Acts 18:12-18a:**

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law."

But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things."

**Acts 18:12-18a:** (cont'd)

And he drove them from the tribunal. And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

- *Poor Sosthenes, who seems to have been Crispus' successor as ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. He was beaten either by a Gentile mob angry at the Jews for having caused this disturbance or (more likely, in my view) by the Jews who in their frustration now turned on him as scapegoat for the failure of their case against Paul.*

**Acts 18:12-18a:** (cont'd)

After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila.

- *After his 18 months in Corinth, Paul made Ephesus his pastoral and missionary base for the next two years. From here, he would revisit the Christian communities in Galatia, Antioch, and elsewhere.*

Meanwhile, it seems that Apollos visited Corinth during this time and returned to Paul in Ephesus with disturbing news. This may well have prompted the writing of Paul's previous letter to the Corinthians, to which he refers in first Corinthians 5:9 – a letter now lost to us:

**1 Corinthians 5:9:**

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people.

Paul then received news of Corinth from two other sources. First, an oral report detailing problems in the Corinthian church reached him through "Chloe's people":

**1 Corinthians 1:11:**

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

**1 Corinthians 5:1:**

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

In addition, Paul had received a letter of inquiry from Christians in Corinth.

**1 Corinthians 7:1a:**

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote...

- *The letter had raised questions about marriage and celibacy, about food offered to idols, about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and other issues.*

So then, our "1 Corinthians" consists of Paul's responses to both these sources.

His response to the oral report from "Chloe's people" is given in 1:10-6:20; and his various replies to questions from the Corinthian congregants is given in chapters 7-10.

The tone, especially in the first section, is at times stern. He is distressed by these reports and is drawing on his full apostolic and (insofar as he is their father in the faith) his fatherly authority, to correct and redirect them.

In summary, as we'll see, Paul was confronted with factionalism, division, sexual immorality, and lawsuits – all being driven by presumption and pride.

If the message of his earlier letter to the Galatians was, "It is for freedom that Christ has made us free! Why then are you submitting again to the yoke of slavery through rules and regulations, as if it were not through faith that you had received the Spirit? Stop living as if you're not free!" But when it comes to the Corinthians, the message is modified: "Okay, remember I said you're free? You are, but you're misusing it! Guys!"

**1 Corinthians 6:12:**

"All things are lawful for me,"  
but not all things are helpful.

"All things are lawful for me,"

but I will not be enslaved by anything.

**1 Corinthians 10:23:**

"All things are lawful,"

but not all things are helpful.

"All things are lawful,"

but not all things build up.

This, then, is Paul's point in writing 1 Corinthians: to get them to see the folly and destructiveness of their pride, and to embrace a truly Christ- and cross-centered way of life – a way of life that knows and exults in the freedom of the gospel, but doesn't insist on exercising its freedom if doing so will cause another to stumble; that they would delight in the gifts God had given them in Christ, but would use those gifts to build up the church rather than thinking themselves better than others; that they would come to see that "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up, and to embrace this, love, as "the more excellent way."

#### **Structure of Today's Passage:**

- Called to Be Apostles (1:1)
- Called to Be Holy (1:2-3)
- Called into the *Koinonia* of Jesus Christ (1:4-9)

Thus, "our triple calling in Christ."

#### **Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

##### **1 Corinthians 1:1:**

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes.

- *Remember that name Sosthenes? It may be that it this is not the same person; the name was relatively common. But! It may indeed be the same person, in which case, it is extremely interesting to see Sosthenes listed here as co-author of 1 Corinthians with Paul!*

#### **Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

##### **1 Corinthians 1:1:**

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes.

- *In verse 1, Paul identifies himself as an apostle "called by the will of God." The office of apostle was an extraordinary one that existed during the foundation-laying era of the early church.*

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

With the closing of the canon of Scripture and the passing of that first generation of saints who had witnessed the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the “extraordinary” office of apostle, being no longer necessary, was no more, and the church was left with the two “ordinary” offices of elder and deacon.

What was an apostle and what were the qualifications for holding the office?

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**1 Corinthians 9:1-3:**

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?

**Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?**

**Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?**

If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

This is my defense to those who would examine me.

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**Acts 1:21-22:**

“So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us – one of these men must become with us **a witness to his resurrection.**”

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**1 Corinthians 15:5-9:**

And **he appeared to** Cephas, then to the twelve.

Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**1 Corinthians 12:28:**

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

**Galatians 1:11-12:**

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**Romans 1:1:**

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

**2 Corinthians 12:12:**

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**Acts 26:16-18:**

"But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles – to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

**Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

**Ephesians 2:19-21:**

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

### **Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

- A witness of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.
- Called and appointed by God, not by men.
- Attested by signs, wonders, and mighty works.
- Sent forth as a servant and witness of Christ.
- Sent to turn the gaze of others to Christ and stir up faith.
- Sent to provide the foundation layer of the church, built upon the rock of Christ.
- Thus, the apostolic office was an extraordinary one for laying the foundations of the church.
- But! The apostolic activity and character of the church continues.

### **Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

When we say that “we believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church,” we are saying with regard to the “apostolic” part that we conform to the apostolic testimony of Christ, which is contained in the New Testament, the church itself “being built on the foundation of apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 2:20), that is, of the testimony of the Old and New Testaments, “Christ himself being the cornerstone.”

And that apostolic faith and fellowship with Christ really is ours...

### **Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

#### **2 Peter 1:1:**

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ...

#### **1 John 1:3:**

That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

### **Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)**

While there are no more “capital-a” Apostles, formally called and sent by God and speaking with the authority of the Lord himself, through whom God’s word is infallibly revealed and by whom the meaning of what Christ has done is authoritatively explained; nevertheless, it may rightly be said that we, all of us, are “small-a” apostles, sent by God to all the world as witnesses of the life, love, light, and truth of Christ!

### Called to Be an Apostle (1:1)

So we are an apostolic church, built upon and confessing that which was first taught by the apostles, which is contained in the writings of the New Testament.

And therefore, all Christian witness should be apostolic. All Christian witness ought to direct others to Christ. "The only stumbling block should be that of the cross (1:18), not the distracting, self important, or sometimes unattractive personality of a witness."

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

Our word for "church" comes from the Greek *kyriakon*, meaning "belonging to the Lord" and referred to "the Lord's house." Through a sort of mangling of the Greek, we get the German *kirche* and the Scottish *kirk*, and our "church." Note how the word refers primarily to a building.

But the biblical word for church, *ekklesia*, refers to the people, meaning literally "the called-out" ones. The church is the community of those who have been "called out" of the world and called into communion (*koinonia*) with God in Christ.

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:2:**

To the **church** of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

We who follow the way of Christ have been called out from our allegiance to the world in its rebellion against God, and into communion, holy communion, with God.

#### **James 4:4:**

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

**Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)**

**1 John 2:15-17:**

Do not love the world or the things in the world.  
If anyone loves the world,  
the love of the Father is not in him.  
For all that is in the world –  
the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes  
and pride in possessions –  
is not from the Father but is from the world.  
And the world is passing away along with its desires,  
but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

**Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)**

**John 17:14-18:**

"I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."

**Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)**

**1 Corinthians 1:2:**

To the church of God that is in Corinth,  
**to those sanctified** in Christ Jesus,  
**called to be saints**...

- *The notion that Christians are called to be what God has already made them reflects the kind of logic that characterizes the command to ancient Israel to go in to possess the land that God has given them. (See Joshua 1:1-3, 11-12.)*

**Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)**

We have been sanctified in Christ AND we are called to be saints.

We are called to become – to be! – what we already are!

Christian discipleship involves striving to become that which in terms of status God has already given.

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

#### **WSC 35: What is sanctification?**

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

#### **Positional Sanctification:**

- We are set apart from the world as holy to God, a holy priesthood.
- Positional sanctification is all about our status in God's sight.
- It is done; we are saints already – sanctified in the service of God.

#### **Progressive Sanctification:**

- We become more and more like Christ, mortifying our sin.
- Progressive sanctification is all about our growth in godliness.
- It is never complete in this life; we are "called to be saints."

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

And what do these set apart, called out ones do? They call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with all the saints who confess Jesus as Lord:

#### **1 Corinthians 1:2:**

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints **together with all those who** in every place **call upon the name** of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

### Called to Be Saints (1:2-3)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:3:**

Grace (*charis*) to you and peace (*eirene; shalom*) from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- *Charis (Greek greeting) + shalom (peace = Hebrew greeting)*  
*The two fused into a distinctively Christian greeting.*  
*It shows up in every single one of Paul's 13 letters, as well as 1 and 2 Peter, 2 John, and Revelation!*

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

**1 Corinthians 1:4-8:**

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge – even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you – so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

Paul gives thanks always for them! Always. Why?

Because of the grace of God that was given to them in Christ Jesus, as shown in the fact that “in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and knowledge.” The Corinthians were especially gifted by the Spirit, and they delighted in their freedom.

Yet they were not using these gifts as God intended, in such manner as to build up the church in its purity and unity, but to the contrary were using them to create hierarchies and divisions, and as an excuse for impurity.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

In **Galatians 3:2-3**, Paul had asked them, “Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

He was rebuking them for having fallen back into reliance upon the externalities of legal observance rather than reliance upon Christ alone, by grace through faith. But in Corinth, it's as if they'd heard this message of freedom in Christ and were so abusing it as to make a mockery of that grace!

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

However! Even though Paul will direct them to use their spiritual gifts in a more holy and God-pleasing manner, he does here acknowledge and give thanks for their possession of these gifts by God's abounding grace.

The Corinthians are lacking in no gifts from God as they wait for the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

All those who by God's grace were given ears to hear, so as to follow the Lord Jesus Christ as his true disciples, have been set apart (sanctified) by God and given his Spirit, to seal them in the promise, to assure them of their salvation and calling, to confirm them in their adoptions as son, to open their eyes to the truth of God's word that they might not only understand it but delight in it and walk in it, and to equip them with power from on high, quickening their conscience so as to protect them from sin, and bestowing gifts to be used for the benefit of Christ's church.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

**1 Corinthians 1:9:**

God is faithful,  
by whom you were called  
into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of his Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

- *The word Christ is written 10 times in 10 verses. If God the father is the source and ground of all that is good, Christ is the mediator or channel of these gifts.*

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

**Philippians 1:6:**

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:**

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

Paul ends this opening section on a note of great confidence and hope: you are not lacking in any spiritual gift. That is, you are not lacking in anything that will keep you from final vindication and victory, "as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Toward this end, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

*We have not just been "called to be saints," but have been "called into the fellowship" of Jesus:*

**Galatians 2:20:**

I have been crucified with Christ.  
It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.  
And the life I now live in the flesh  
I live by faith in the Son of God,  
who loved me and gave himself for me.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

**Romans 6:3-5:**

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

**Called into the Koinonia of His Son (1:4-9)**

**Colossians 3:3:**

For you have died,  
and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**In Summary:**

- **Called to Be Apostles:** We are those who have been "called out" of the world and "sent forth" into the world.
- **Called to Be Holy:** We have been sanctified, set apart as holy to the Lord; now we are called to be holy, to live out the implications of that estate to which we've been called. O church of Christ, saints of God: BE WHAT YOU ARE!
- **Called into the Koinonia of Jesus Christ:** We have been called into fellowship with Christ, meaning union with him in both death and life, and communion all those in Christ.

# 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Divisions in the Church

## Two Powerful Temptations (in every age)

1 Cor 1:10-17

Boasting in leaders

Separating the *beginning* of the Christian life from *living* the Christian life

1 Cor 1:2

**Context:**  
**Graciously called to be saints together - in Christ**

"Called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours..."



MAIN POINT

**No splits; Be united.**

**The Situation:  
a disturbing  
report from  
"Chloe's people"**

CHAPTER 1 | VERSES 11-12



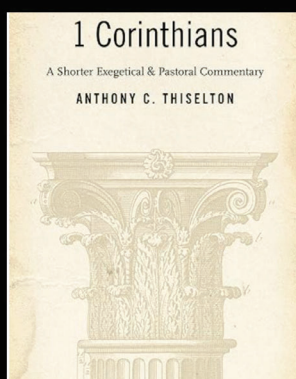
**"Each one of you  
says, 'I follow  
Paul,' or 'I follow  
Apollos,' or 'I  
follow Cephas,'  
or 'I follow  
Christ'...,,**

1 CORINTHIANS 1:12



**"The thrusting,  
competitive culture  
of the city of  
Corinth...makes it all  
the more certain  
that competitive  
power play... is the  
root,,**

Thistleton, *1 Corinthians*



1 Cor 1:12

**Roman  
Patronage  
System**

Wealthy patrons helped lower-class 'clients' secure good jobs, loans, and favors. In return, the clients showed the patrons deference, and agreed never to testify against them in court!



“Plutarch speaks of those who, like ivy, sought to gain height or eminence by winding themselves around some figure of stature to climb upward ...”



Plutarch's *Moralia* via Thistleton

“Each one of you says, 'I follow Paul,' or 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Cephas,' or 'I follow Christ'...”



James 2:1

Does that sound familiar?

Paul's Appeal:  
No divisions  
among you;  
be united!

CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 10



**I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement ...**



## σχισματα 'divisions' / 'splits'

These are not divisions of doctrine. It is "a power struggle, not a theological controversy." (Welborn)

CHAPTER 1 | VERSES 10, 13

**"Is Christ divided."  
No! Christ is ONE**



CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 10

**"I appeal to you, brothers."  
You are siblings together in God's family**



# Why unity matters

## Scriptural Basis: Trinitarian, Ecclesial, Ethical

John 17:20-23: "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you...so that the world may believe."

Ephesians 4:1-3: "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace... One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

Philippians 2:1-4: "So if there is any...participation in the Spirit...complete my joy by being of the same mind."

# What does unity look like practically?

**“In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity.”**



Augustine of Hippo; EPC Motto

## Finding the Right Hills to Die on

1st Tier:  
Essential to the Gospel

2nd Tier:  
Significant for church practice

3rd Tier:  
Disagreement possible within local church

4th Tier:  
Complete theological indifference

## Through the Ages...

Vincentian Canon (5th c.):  
"Everywhere, always, by all"

Reformers:  
Fundamental articles vs. *adiaphora*

WCF:  
Elements vs. Circumstances

EPC motto: In essentials, unity... In all things, charity.

"Each one of you says, 'I follow Paul,' or 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Cephas,' or 'I follow Christ'...,,

James 2:1



## Paul's Argument: vv. 13-17

CHAPTER 1 | VERSES 13-7



CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 13

**"Was Paul crucified for you?"**

**No - Christ was!**



CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 13

**"Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?"**

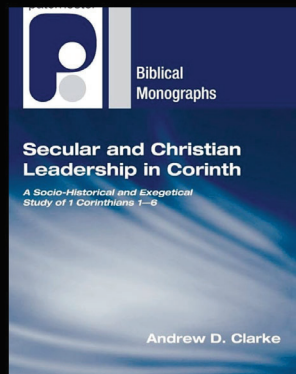
**No - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!**



**"To whom was your allegiance made when you became a Christian?"**

**Here is the ironic denunciation of all personality-centered politics...characteristic of the surrounding Greco-Roman society...,,**

*Clarke, Secular and Christian Leadership*



ROMANS 6 | VERSE 3

**"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"**



CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 17

**"For Christ  
did not send  
me to baptize  
but to preach  
the gospel."  
The power of  
the Gospel**



### Summary: Paul's 5 Arguments for Unity

Christ is One (1:13)

You are siblings  
together in God's  
Family (1:10)

Paul wasn't crucified  
for you; Christ was (1:13)

You were not baptized into Paul's  
name, but into the name of the  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1:13)

The Power of the Gospel is not in  
eloquent speakers (1:17ff)

## Closing Questions

CLOSING QUESTIONS

Are there ways I seek status  
that are **divisive**? Where are  
we currently split over issues  
that are not central to the  
gospel or union with Christ?

# 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Divisions in the Church

# 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

Christ the Power & Wisdom of God

“Each one of you says, 'I follow Paul,' or 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Cephas,' or 'I follow Christ'...,,



1 CORINTHIANS 1:12

“Plutarch speaks of those who, like ivy, sought to gain height or eminence by winding themselves around some figure of stature to climb upward ...,,



Plutarch's *Moralia* via Thistleton

1 Cor 1:12

**Context:  
No Splits!  
Be United!**

"I appeal to you brothers...that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement..."



**Summary: Paul's 5 Arguments for Unity**

Christ is One (1:13)

You are siblings together in God's Family (1:10)

Paul wasn't crucified for you; Christ was (1:13)

You were not baptized into Paul's name, but into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1:13)

The Power of the Gospel is not in eloquent speakers (1:17ff)

**Thesis:  
No divisions;  
you are united  
In Christ**

Exposition (1:11-17)  
You're status-seeking; the Christian life is about laying down status to raise others up

Argument 1 (1:18-25)  
God has deliberately overturned worldly wisdom by using the cross

Argument 2 (1:26-31)  
Exhibit A - The Corinthians Themselves

Argument 3 (2:1-2:5)  
Exhibit B - Paul's Ministry

MAIN POINT

**Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

God has  
overturned  
worldly wisdom:  
"the word of the  
cross is folly to  
those who are  
perishing..."

CHAPTER 1 | VERSES 18



## The Opposite Game

1 Cor 1:18

Folly

What's the Opposite of Folly?

“but to us who  
*are being  
saved...*”

Salvation in Three Tenses



## The Opposite Game

1 Cor 1:18

Folly

Power

**“I will destroy  
the wisdom  
of the wise...,,**

Isalah 29:14



**“...and the  
discernment of  
the discerning I  
will thwart...,,**

Isalah 29:14



**“You have seen all  
that the LORD  
your God did...  
But to this day  
the LORD has  
not give  
you...eyes to see,,**

Deut 29:2-4



**Jews demand signs and  
Greeks seek wisdom  
What do we seek?**

## Wisdom & Power

	'of this age'	Worldly Perception	'of God'
Power	For self	Weakness; stumbling block	For service and salvation
Wisdom	Self-glorifying	Folly	God-glorifying

σκάνδαλον  
stumbling block/deathtrap

But to those who are called both to Jews and Greeks, **Christ** the power of God and **the wisdom of God.**



### Exhibit A: The Corinthians

CHAPTER 1 | VERSES 26-31



CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 26

**For consider  
your calling,  
brothers:  
not many of you  
were wise [or]  
of noble birth**



CHAPTER 1 | VERSE 30

**so that no  
human being  
might boast in  
the presence  
of God**



**You are in Christ Jesus**

**Exhibit B:  
Paul's Ministry**

CHAPTER 2 | VERSES 1-5



CHAPTER 2 | VERSE 2

**I decided to  
know nothing  
among you  
except Jesus  
Christ and  
him  
crucified**



The Form of Ministry:  
*power over* or *power for?*

CHAPTER 2 | VERSES 4-5

**so that your  
faith might not  
rest on the  
wisdom of men  
but on the  
power of God**



Closing Questions

# 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

Christ the Power & Wisdom of God

## 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-23 All Things Are Yours...

Paul is writing to a church that has been called to be holy:

### **1 Corinthians 1:2:**

To the church of God that is in Corinth,  
to those **sanctified in Christ Jesus,**  
**called to be saints**  
together with all those who in every place  
call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
both their Lord and ours.

The church, it may be said, is called (then and now) to:

**"BE WHAT YOU ARE!"**

- But the Corinthian church is not being what is. Anything but!
- In fact, it is behaving very much like the world, beset as it was by factionalism, divisions, dissensions, and (as we'll see) lack of discipline for immorality.
- Paul's point thus far has been to point out the radical incompatibility of such behavior with the way of Christ, shown so clearly by his sacrifice for our sin on the cross. The church has been called to humility in grace and unity in Christ, not self-promotion and one-upmanship.

- In their boasting over allegiances and alignments and in their divisions, they are shredding the very *koinonia* (communion, fellowship, unity) for which Christ died that they might enter into and enjoy.
- In imagining themselves wise, they are showing themselves to be spiritually foolish and immature.
- Paul's goal is to redirect their hearts from being fixated on worldly things, so as to more deeply understand and embrace the true power of the way of the cross and the sanctifying blessing of life attuned to the Spirit.

#### **STRUCTURE OF TODAY'S PASSAGE:**

1. Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)
2. You Are God's Field (3:5-9a)
3. You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)
4. Indeed, You Are God's Temple! (3:16-17)
5. Don't Be Deceived: All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

#### **Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)**

##### **1 Corinthians 3:1-2a:**

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it.

- Back when Paul was first with them, he had not been able to address them as spiritual people. They had not attained to that maturity yet. Indeed, the converts had been worldly. What else could they be? They were mere infants in Christ.

#### **Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)**

Two things here:

- First, we shouldn't be surprised that the world is not Christian in its outlook and behavior. It's the world, and, well, the world's gonna world!
- Second, we shouldn't expect new converts to be sanctified and mature all at once. Thus, the warnings about qualifications for the office of elder:

### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

#### **1 Timothy 3:6:**

He must not be a recent convert,  
or he may become puffed up with conceit  
and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

- The ways of the world are like deeply ingrained habits that must be gradually broken and replaced with the habits of spiritual life among the spiritual family of God: anchored in the power of the cross and the life of the Spirit as it grows on us and in us over time.

### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

- But infancy is a phase to be grown out of, not one to remain in!
- We are called to be saints. We are called to be disciples of Jesus and to live lives shaped by the discipline of the way of Christ. This is life lived by the power of the cross and the equipping of the Spirit, and its goal is maturity:

### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

So again, there was nothing wrong with the Corinthians being infants at the time when Paul first came to Corinth. And infants need milk, not solid food:

#### **Hebrews 5:13-14:**

Everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

#### **1 Corinthians 14:20:**

Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

#### **Matthew 10:16:**

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

*Childlike, Not Childish:*

**Matthew 18:3:**

"Truly, I say to you,  
unless you turn and become like children,  
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

**1 Corinthians 13:11:**

When I was a child, I spoke like a child,  
I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.  
When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

**Ephesians 4:11-15:**

And he gave the apostles, the prophets,  
the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,  
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,  
for building up the body of Christ,  
until we all attain to the unity of the faith  
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,  
to mature manhood, to the measure  
of the stature of the fullness of Christ...

Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

**Ephesians 4:11-15:** (cont'd)

So that we may no longer be children,  
tossed to and fro by the waves  
and carried about by every wind of doctrine,  
by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.  
Rather, speaking the truth in love,  
we are to grow up in every way  
into him who is the head, into Christ.

Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

**Colossians 4:12:**

*We are praying on your behalf*  
that you may stand mature and fully assured in  
all the will of God.

- In summary, Paul didn't push these infant believers beyond their capacity, but gave them the level of teaching that was suited to their state. No problem. The problem is in the next verse!

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

##### **1 Corinthians 3:2b-3a:**

And even now you are not yet ready,  
for you are still of the flesh.

- It was all very well for the Corinthians to have been as infants when they were actually infants! But they should have outgrown that state long since. "Here you are after all this time, and you're still behaving like infants in Christ," and worse, as "people of the flesh"!

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

##### **1 Corinthians 3:3b-4:**

For while there is jealousy and strife among you,  
are you not of the flesh  
and behaving only in a human way?  
For when one says, "I follow Paul,"  
and another, "I follow Apollos,"  
are you not being merely human?

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

- The Corinthians seem to be moved entirely by human drives, competing as they are against one another for status and prestige.
- They are unspiritual! Indeed, the root of such behavior is the opposite of spiritual, but is demonic.

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

##### **James 3:14-16:**

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition  
in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.  
This is not the wisdom that comes down from above,  
but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.  
For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,  
there will be disorder and every vile practice.

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

- Note that this is not calling into question their salvation. All Christians have received the Spirit. Indeed, without the action of the Holy Spirit, a person cannot make a Christian profession of belief and a practical commitment to Christ is Lord at all.

#### **1 Corinthians 12:3b:**

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

#### **Romans 8:9:**

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

- There are no second-class Christians as far as the gift of the Spirit is concerned.

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

- So it's not that the Corinthians don't have the Spirit, but that their factionalism is so out of accord with the way of Christ – the way of the cross and the life of the Spirit – as to show that they are not living in accord with the Spirit they've been given. And as we'll see, this is in fact a very dangerous thing to be doing.
- "Come as you are!" Yes, amen, and may it always be so! But at the same time, "But don't remain as you are!" We have been justified by a great Savior, but we have also been called and sanctified by a great Lord. BETHAT!

#### Christians Who Cannot Be Called Spiritual (3:1-4)

#### **1 Peter 1:22-23:**

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

### You Are God's Field (3:5-9a)

#### **1 Corinthians 3:5-7:**

What then is Apollos? What is Paul?  
Servants through whom you believed,  
as the Lord assigned to each.  
I planted, Apollos watered,  
but God gave the growth.  
So neither he who plants  
nor he who waters is anything,  
but only God who gives the growth.

### You Are God's Field (3:5-9a)

#### **1 Corinthians 3:8-9:**

He who plants  
and he who waters are one,  
and each will receive his wages  
according to his labor.  
For we are God's fellow workers.  
You are God's field, God's building.

### You Are God's Field (3:5-9a)

Paul is making a double-sided point here:

- First, against those who make too much of the names of local leaders, Paul attacks are too high view of Christian ministers. What is Paul? Simply a servant!
- Second, against those who would seek to bypass the supportive minister's politics too low of view of Christian ministers ("I am Christ's"), Paul reminds them and us their work is indispensable for growth. "I planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase."

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

#### **1 Corinthians 3:9-10:**

For we are God's fellow workers.  
You are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me,  
like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation,  
and someone else is building upon it.  
Let each one take care how he builds upon it.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- The apostolic architect laid the foundation (i.e., he planted the church); now other builders continue the work (i.e., watering it).
- But what IS that foundation?

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

#### **1 Corinthians 3:11:**

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- We have a picture here of the church as a building. Christ is the foundation, the bedrock upon which the entire edifice is constructed according to his blueprint; the apostles then laid the critical first row of stones atop the bedrock of Christ; then others have been building atop that foundation ever since.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

#### **Matthew 16:18:**

And I tell you, you are Peter [*petros*], and on this rock [*petra*] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- It is Christ's church, and he has come to build it – by agency, first, of apostles who laid the foundational layer, then by that of others who continued building it.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- *Petros* is a loose rock, while *petra* speaks to a solid face of rock, bedrock. Peter is not the foundation of the entire edifice, but the critical first stone in that edifice built upon the foundation of Christ.
- Neither Peter the person nor his confession is the foundation of the church. It is Christ who is the *petra*, the foundation of the church. Christ is the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), who was rejected by men but who in the sight of God is chosen and precious; the stone that the builders had rejected that has become the cornerstone.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

#### **Ephesians 2:19-22:**

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,  
but you are fellow citizens with the saints  
and members of the household of God,  
built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,  
in whom the whole structure, being joined together,  
grows into a holy temple in the Lord.  
In him you also are being built together  
into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- Paul is making the point that, just like the agricultural illustration, where one planted and another watered, but the growth was of God, so too with the architectural illustration: the architect lays the foundational layer, and the other builders continue the work following the established pattern, but the foundation is none other than Christ himself.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

1. It is Christ's church, not ours.
2. The work we do is a shared enterprise in which we are co-laborers for a shared project, not competitors seeking to outshine the other.
3. The purpose of the work is to build the edifice toward its completion.

Now then, with regard to the character of the work, Paul dropped a warning there, in verse 10:  
"Let each one take care how he builds upon it."

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

#### **1 Corinthians 3:12-13:**

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- There is but one foundation, it's not the same with the superstructure. Here it is possible for astonishing varieties to make their appearance. Many materials may be used for the building. Paul is concerned simply with two types: the valuable (gold, silver, precious stones) and the worthless (wood, hay, straw).
- Workmen may try to make the building as worthy as the foundation as possible, or else they may, in a slovenly fashion, be content to put into it that which costs them little or nothing.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- Note also that gold silver and precious stones are fireproof, whereas wood hay and straw are not. There will come a time of testing for all that we have built.
- "The Day" clearly refers to the day when Christ returns, the day of judgment. That day is often referred to in terms of the believers' joy at being united to the Lord. But it will also be a time when the work that God's people have done will be judged.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- So the thought here is of a searching test, one likened to fire. The picture is a fire sweeping through the building, it consumes what is combustible, but leaves the metal and stone. The quality of the work will be shown, for the day will bring it to light. It will reveal it for what it is.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

**1 Corinthians 3:14-15:**  
If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

### You Are God's Building (3:9b-15)

- Even if the work whose work is burned up, it is said that he himself will be saved. Therefore, the distinction is not between the lost and the saved, but among the saved, between those who have built well and those who have built poorly.
- At the last day, such a builder may become aware that he or she has contributed little or nothing permanent for the kingdom. Such a builder will be saved, but as if through fire. This is clearly a metaphor for escaping by the skin of one teeth.

### Indeed, You Are God's Temple (3:16-17)

#### **1 Corinthians 3:16-17:**

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him.

For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

### Indeed, You Are God's Temple (3:16-17)

Two main points here:

- First, we see the reality of the church from God's perspective, that it is God's temple on earth. What a privilege this is for us, to have access to the very presence of God.
- Second, this very thing is a double-edged sword, as we dare not profane God's sanctuary. Unrepentant behavior that hurts the reputation of the church or tears at the fabric of its unity is a sin against the Holy Spirit!

### Indeed, You Are God's Temple (3:16-17)

- There is a strong warning here: will we dare desecrate God's holy temple with unrepentant sin and imagine that there will be no consequences?
- "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him." In letting factionalism and division and dissension and immorality (as we'll see) run riot in their midst, the Corinthians were playing with forces that threatened the holiness of God's temple, in effect putting themselves against the Holy Spirit. This is a warning for the church in every age.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**1 Corinthians 3:18:**

Let no one deceive himself.  
If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age,  
let him become a fool that he may become wise.

- Self-deception is an ever-present threat for us.  
We are be wary of resting on our own judgments,  
remembering always our proneness to sin and the  
continuing complicity of our flesh with the world.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**Isaiah 5:21:**

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,  
and shrewd in their own sight!

**Proverbs 3:5-7:**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.  
Be not wise in your own eyes;  
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**James 4:4:**

You adulterous people! Do you not know  
that friendship with the world is enmity with God?  
Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world  
makes himself an enemy of God.

**Matthew 4:4:**

But he answered, "It is written,  
'Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**John 14:16-17:**

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you  
another Helper, to be with you forever,  
even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,  
because it neither sees him nor knows him.  
You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

**1 Corinthians 2:16:**

For who has understood the mind of the Lord  
so as to instruct him?  
But we have the mind of Christ.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

- So yes, be wary of our proneness to sin and the world's allurements.
- But at the same time, let us rest in the freedom and wisdom of appropriating the resources of God!
- We have the mind of Christ!

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**1 Corinthians 3:19-20:**

For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.

For it is written,

"He catches the wise in their craftiness,"

and again,

"The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise,  
that they are futile."

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**1 Corinthians 1:22-25:**

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,  
but we preach Christ crucified,  
a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,  
but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,  
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men,  
and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**1 Corinthians 3:21-23:**

So let no one boast in men.

For all things are yours,

whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas

or the world or life or death

or the present or the future –

all are yours, and you are Christ's,

and Christ is God's.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

- What does Paul mean by saying that Christ is God's?

**1 Corinthians 15:28:**

When all things are subjected to him,  
then the Son himself  
will also be subjected to him  
who put all things in subjection under him,  
that God may be all in all.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

- In taking you down, God is taking you higher.
- Don't settle for the scraps of self-promotion. Rather, look at the world with the eyes of Abraham! "All things are yours!"
- Factionalism has no chance when we view the world this way, from the perspective of God's grace to unworthy recipients, called and sanctified to serve and labor together for the noblest of callings.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

- There is one foundation, but many gifts, all designed and given that we shall work toward a shared purpose, where seeking the glory of God and building up the church issues in our truest fulfillment – a fulfillment that eludes the world and its "wisdom."

**1 Corinthians 1:31:**

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**Ephesians 4:11-15:**

And he gave the apostles, the prophets,  
the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,  
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,  
for building up the body of Christ,  
until we all attain to the unity of the faith  
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,  
to mature manhood, to the measure  
of the stature of the fullness of Christ...

Don't Be Deceived, All Things Are Yours (3:18-23)

**Ephesians 4:11-15:**

So that we may no longer be children,  
tossed to and fro by the waves  
and carried about by every wind of doctrine,  
by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.  
Rather, speaking the truth in love,  
we are to grow up in every way  
into him who is the head, into Christ.

Amen!

**1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21**  
**The True Character**  
**of Paul's Apostleship**

Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

On Being Judged (4:3-4)

On Judging Others (4:5)

On Waiting and Walking (4:5-6)

On Suffering (4:8-13)

Spiritual Fatherhood (4:14-15)

Be Imitators of Me (4:16-17)

Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2:**

This is how one should regard us,

as **servants of Christ**

and **stewards of the mysteries of God.**

Moreover, it is required of stewards

that they be found trustworthy.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- When Paul says that apostles should be regarded as “servants of Christ,” the Greek term he uses is neither *doulos* (servant, slave) nor *diakonos* (one serves or ministers to the needs of others), but *hupēretēs*, meaning one under authority, someone in the service and under the authority of another, but with delegated authority of his own, i.e., an officer in the chain of command.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- *To be a servant of the Lord is not degrading. Rather, it simply follows the example of our Lord!*

#### **Matthew 20:25-28:**

But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you.”

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **Matthew 20:25-28:** (cont’d)

“But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- He also identifies himself and the other apostles as “stewards,” that is, as those entrusted by the master with the care of the household.
- And what is the key attribute of stewards? That they be found trustworthy!

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

**Luke 12:42-43:**

And the Lord said,  
"Who then is the faithful and wise steward,  
whom his master will set over his household,  
to give them their portion of food  
at the proper time?  
Blessed is that servant whom his master  
will find so doing when he comes."

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- By believing God and in trusting his word as faithful and true, we are called to place our entire weight on it, knowing it will bear that weight. His word will support us across the abyss; it will hold us; his word is dependable. Amen!
- Likewise, a steward is called to be one whose words and life imitate this characteristic of God, to be dependable, trustworthy, faithful, and true.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- In other words, stewards are to be conformed to the character of God himself, in the sense that he is trustworthy, faithful, and wise.
- That's why we can and ought to believe God when he speaks. We believe ('*aman*') God because God is faithful and true. Because he is the '*aman*' God, we can say *Amen* to all that he has promised and commanded.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- If you are looking for a financial planner to steward your financial resources, one of the most important concerns would be the person's trustworthiness. We would ask, Is this person reliable and responsible?
- How much more ought this be so with those entrusted with the mysteries of God, by whose ministrations of the word we have been called out of darkness into this marvelous light!

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- And what are these “mysteries of God” which the church has been called to steward?
- They are the truths of God’s revelation that were not known until they were revealed by God in Christ, involving the revelation of the plan of salvation and the purposes of God.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- These mysteries have been entrusted to everyone in the church:

#### **1 Peter 4:10-11:**

As each has received a gift,  
use it to serve one another,  
as good stewards of God’s varied grace:

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **1 Peter 4:10-11:** (cont’d)

Whoever speaks, as one who speaks  
oracles of God;  
whoever serves, as one who serves  
by the strength that God supplies –  
in order that in everything  
God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.  
To him belong glory and dominion  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- But the mysteries have been entrusted *especially* to specifically called and appointed officers of the church: first in time and honor, to the extraordinary office of apostles who were laid the foundation layer of the church; and second, to the ordinary office of elder-overseers who have served by God’s call ever since, shepherding, guiding, leading, feeding, and caring for the flock by the ministration of God’s word.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **1 Timothy 1:12-17:**

I thank him who has given me strength,  
Christ Jesus our Lord,  
because he judged me faithful,  
appointing me to his service.”

- *But he wasn't always this way! Paul's trustworthiness as a steward of God's mysteries in Christ was a gift of God.*

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **1 Timothy 1:12-16:**

... though formerly I was a blasphemer,  
persecutor, and insolent opponent.  
But I received mercy  
because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,  
and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me  
with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **1 Timothy 1:12-16:** (cont'd)

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **Titus 1:7-9:**

For an overseer, as God's steward,  
must be above reproach.  
He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered  
or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,  
but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled,  
upright, holy, and disciplined.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

#### **Titus 1:7-9:** (cont'd)

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- To summarize, the Corinthians in siding with one apostle against another to advance their own status were missing the entire point! Apostles – and all Christians – are called to be servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

### Servants and Stewards (4:1-2)

- And when we are faithful servants and trustworthy stewards, we are conforming ourselves to the very pattern of God himself. In our faithfulness, we are more like God.
- But even here, to the extent that we are faithful in these things: even this is by grace! This leaves no room for boasting in anything but in the Lord.

### On Being Judged (4:3-4)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:3-4:**

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

#### On Being Judged (4:3-4)

- Who is to judge my trustworthiness, Paul asks. You? Courts of law? No! It is God alone to whom we must answer in the end.
- And Paul doesn't even judge himself. It is God's – not mine – to acquit me. And just as surely, I will not condemn myself!

#### On Being Judged (4:3-4)

##### **1 John 3:19b-21:**

For whenever our heart condemns us,  
God is greater than our heart,  
and he knows everything.

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,  
we have confidence before God.

#### On Being Judged (4:3-4)

- It is the Lord who is our Judge. Surely, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31)
- But take comfort, Christian, knowing that the judgment that was yours to endure was borne by Christ on your behalf, because you are more loved by God than you can ever imagine. So rest in him with full assurance, for he is your Savior.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

##### **1 Corinthians 4:5:**

Therefore, do not pronounce judgment  
before the time, before the Lord comes,  
who will bring to light  
the things now hidden in darkness  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Then each one will receive  
his commendation from God.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- We are to be like God in our trustworthiness and faithfulness. But not to play God as judge!
- We are to refrain from the habit of sinful humans in this fallen world to play God and judge one another harshly – whether presuming to write someone out of the kingdom (“there’s no hope for this one”) or adjudging our brothers and sisters in Christ in a manner that is operating from the world’s standards of appearances.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

**Matthew 7:1:**

“Judge not, that you not be judged.”

- *Amen. But let’s be careful here!*

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- How often is this verse used against faithful Christians who are simply trying to conform their lives to the pattern of God’s word and who therefore call what is wrong, wrong and what is right, right; what is unjust, ungodly, and wicked vs. what is just and godly and righteous!

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- “Stop being so judgmental,” say the judgmental people, as if we are bound by Jesus’ words to cultivate and exercise no wisdom or spiritual discernment and no protection of the peace and purity of the flock of Christ?
- What then?

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- We are to judge, in the sense that we are to conform our thoughts, words, and deeds to the word of God, and to learn over time to love what God loves and to desire what God desires, while learning to hate what God hates and to not desire those things.
- And this involves calling things as they are, according to the evaluation of God's word.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

##### **Psalm 97:10:**

O you who love the LORD, hate evil!  
He preserves the lives of his saints;  
he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

##### **Proverbs 8:13:**

The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

##### **Amos 5:15a:**

Hate evil, and love good,  
and establish justice in the gate.

- *We are called as we grow in the knowledge of God and in our own sanctification, to love what God loves, and to desire what God desires, and to hate what God hates, which is all that brings ruin, misery, and degradation to his creation.*

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- The church is called to use wisdom and spiritually mature discernment in the exercise of discipline against its own. In this sense, we are to judge!
- But we are *not* to judge in the sense of playing God. Even in excommunication, the hope and desire is for restoration, not a permanent casting into darkness. It is God who judges!

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- What then? We are his servants and stewards. We are his servants and officers here on earth, serving under his authority, called to do his will to the best of our ability, and to encourage one another along the way to spiritual maturity, keeping one another on the way of righteousness that leads to life, keeping one another close to our Good Shepherd.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- And we must especially be careful not to bring a condemning judgment against a fellow servant of Christ!

#### **Romans 14:4:**

Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

#### On Judging Others (4:5)

- To God alone belongs the judgment.
- Being a follower of Christ entails growing in the appreciation of the greatness and sufficiency of God in this regard.
- Rather than promoting ourselves, then, we come to see that in God alone is our boast, that all we have and enjoy is by grace. But oh, what grace!

#### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:5:**

Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who **will bring to light** the things now hidden in darkness and **will disclose** the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

### On Being Judged (4:3-4)

#### **2 Corinthians 5:9-10:**

So whether we are at home or away,  
we make it our aim to please him.  
For we must all appear before  
the judgment seat of Christ,  
so that each one may receive what is due  
for what he has done in the body,  
whether good or evil.

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:6:**

I have applied all these things to myself  
and Apollos for your benefit, brothers,  
that you may learn by us  
not to go beyond what is written,  
that none of you may be puffed up  
in favor of one against another.

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

“That you may learn by us  
not to go beyond what is written”

- This is a capital principle, that we neither add to nor subtract from God’s word, but seek earnestly to conform our thoughts, words, and deeds to it in all we do. The power of the church is only ministerial and declarative, but that power of the word, is immense!

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

When we entrust God with the judgment of others and even of ourselves, and when we embrace our status as mere creatures – yet creatures blessed beyond measure by fellowship with Christ and the unmerited dignity of living and serving as a representatives of Christ and his Kingdom on earth: these things are a powerful antidote to being puffed up, and to self-importance, which is the essence of worldliness.

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:7:**

For who sees anything different in you?  
What do you have that you did not receive?  
If then you received it,  
why do you boast  
as if you did not receive it?

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

- Three questions here! What makes the Corinthians think that they are superior and distinct from other believers in Christ, including apostles and one another?
- It surely was not God, because God called them into the fellowship of his Son, a fellowship that he enjoys with every true Christian:

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:9:**

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### **2 Peter 1:1:**

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,  
To those who have obtained a faith  
of equal standing with ours by the righteousness  
of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

- *And what do you have that you didn't receive, as if it makes any sense for you to boast about it?*

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31:**

For consider your calling, brothers:  
not many of you were wise  
according to worldly standards,  
not many were powerful,  
not many were of noble birth.

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31:** (cont'd)

But God chose what is foolish in the world  
to shame the wise;  
God chose what is weak in the world  
to shame the strong;  
God chose what is low and despised in the world,  
even things that are not,  
to bring to nothing things that are...

### On Waiting and Walking (4:5-7)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31:** (cont'd)

So that no human being might boast  
in the presence of God.  
He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus,  
whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness  
and sanctification and redemption.  
Therefore, as it is written,  
"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:8:**

Already you have all you want!  
Already you have become rich!  
Without us you have become kings!  
And would that you did reign,  
so that we might share the rule with you!

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:9-13:**

For I think that God has exhibited us apostles  
as last of all, like men sentenced to death,  
because we have become a spectacle to the world,  
to angels, and to men.

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:9-13:** (cont'd)

We are fools for Christ's sake,  
but you are wise in Christ.

We are weak,  
but you are strong.

You are held in honor,  
but we in disrepute.

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:9-13:** (cont'd)

To the present hour we hunger and thirst,  
we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,  
and we labor, working with our own hands.

When reviled, we bless;  
when persecuted, we endure;  
when slandered, we entreat.

We have become, and are still,  
like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

- Paul contrasts the way of the apostle here with the way of the Corinthians – one is the path of worldly self-centeredness, self-importance, judgment of others, and division.
- But the apostles' path doesn't look like that at all. How can this be?

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

- Because the Christian life is not about this world only, but about two worlds – this world which is passing away, and a better, future world that is surely coming and that exists already in glimmers where God's will is done on earth, where fellowship with Christ is known and enjoyed.
- The suffering is worth it!

### On Suffering (4:8-13)

#### **Romans 8:18:**

For I consider that the sufferings  
of this present time  
are not worth comparing  
with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

### Spiritual Fatherhood (4:14-15)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:14-15:**

I do not write these things to make you ashamed,  
but to admonish you as my beloved children.

For though you have countless guides in Christ,  
you do not have many fathers.

For I became your father in Christ Jesus  
through the gospel.

### Be Imitators of Me (4:16-17)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:16:**

I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

### Be Imitators of Me (4:16-17)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:16-17:**

I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

That is why I sent you Timothy,  
my beloved and faithful child in the Lord,  
to remind you of my ways in Christ,  
as I teach them everywhere in every church.

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:18-21:**

Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.

For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:21:**

What do you wish?

Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

- Now Paul pulls out the stops and declares his fatherly authority! There are some within the Corinthian church who are arrogant, who are intent on defying the spiritual authority entrusted to him by Christ. And to this Paul gives stern warning: if those who are arrogant insist on maintaining their defiant attitude towards Christ's servants they will be confronted with the power of God.

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

- There is a divine authority, a spiritual power, that Christ exercises over the church through the church's appointed leaders. When necessary, it is an authority to confront, rebuke, and discipline those who live contrary to the commandments of Christ.

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

#### **Hebrews 12:5-11:**

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

#### **Hebrews 12:5-11: (cont'd)**

It is for discipline that you have to endure.

God is treating you as sons.

For what son is there whom

his father does not discipline?

If you are left without discipline,

in which all have participated,

then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

#### **Hebrews 12:5-11: (cont'd)**

Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them.

Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them,

but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

### Fatherly Discipline (4:18-21)

#### **Hebrews 12:5-11: (cont'd)**

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Amen!

## 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13 Don't Judge the World, Do Discipline the Church

### Sexual Immorality Defiles the Church (5:1-13)

- *Where we ended last time...*

#### **1 Corinthians 4:14-16:**

I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

### Sexual Immorality Defiles the Church (5:1-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 4:18:**

Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power...

What do you wish?

Shall I come to you with a rod,  
or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

### Sexual Immorality Defiles the Church (5:1-13)

1. A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)
2. What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)
3. A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)
4. You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

#### **1 Corinthians 5:1:**

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

- *Paul's use of the word "actually" here reveals how appalled he is to have heard this report.*

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- Paul calls attention to an egregious situation of sexual sin in the Corinthian church – a case of what seems to be incest! And not only is the offender unrepentant in his behavior, but the congregation has done nothing to stop it.
- The exact nature of the incestuous situation is not clear. The Greek word Paul uses is *porneia*, translated in the ESV as "sexual immorality."

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- "A man has his father's wife..." What does "has" mean here? It could mean that "he has as his wife" or "he has as his concubine." "His father's wife" almost certainly doesn't mean "mother."
- But as to whether it means that the offender had seduced his stepmother, or that the woman was divorced from his father, or that the father had died, leaving her a widow, is not clear.

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- What is clear is that it is an illicit union of a particularly unsavory kind – one that is "not tolerated even among pagans."
- Even the pagans saw such behavior as scandalous and condemned it as evil. For example, it was forbidden in the Roman law:

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- The Roman jurist Gaius wrote, "It is illegal to marry a father's or mother's sister. Nor can I marry her who was at one time my mother-in-law or stepmother."
- Cicero expressed disgust "when mother-in-law marries son-in-law," and added that such behavior is "unbelievable."
- And of course it was prohibited in the Torah:

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

#### **Leviticus 18:8:**

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

#### **Leviticus 20:11:**

If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

#### **Deuteronomy 27:20:**

Cursed be anyone who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's nakedness. And all the people shall say, "Amen."

- *Surely, it's not good when the Corinthian Christians are engaging in and/or allowing behavior in their midst that scandalizes even the pagans, let alone violates biblical sexual ethics! But it gets worse!*

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

#### **1 Corinthians 5:2a:**

And you are arrogant!  
Ought you not rather to mourn?

#### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- The attitude of the church members was making things even worse!
- Rather than grieving this sin in their midst, they were proud of themselves! "Puffed up!" What a great word for the vanity – emptiness, hot air – of pride, isn't it? There they are, acting all superior rather than showing forth humility and unity, but meanwhile allowing this to exist in their midst.

#### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- Apparently, some saw their Christian freedom as giving them license for all kinds of behavior – and especially, as in this case, sexual misconduct.

#### 1 Corinthians 6:12:

"All things are lawful for me,"  
but not all things are helpful.  
"All things are lawful for me,"  
but I will not be enslaved by anything.

#### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

#### 1 Corinthians 10:23:

"All things are lawful,"  
but not all things are helpful.  
"All things are lawful,"  
but not all things build up.

- *But I will not be enslaved by anything.*
- *But not all things build up.*

#### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- We must beware of using the concept of Christian liberty in such manner as to "submit again to the yoke of slavery" to the lusts of the eyes and of the flesh.

### A Situation of Egregious Immorality (5:1-2)

- At the same time, we must not allow the fact that we are sinners either to excuse our own sins or to fail to speak against sin in the church when it is manifest.
- We must have the courage to call what is sin sin (as the Bible defines it), and to hold ourselves and one another accountable, to repent of these sins, so as to preserve and protect the peace and purity of Christ's church.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

#### **1 Corinthians 5:2b-3:**

Let him who has done this  
be removed from among you.  
For though absent in body,  
I am present in spirit; and as if present,  
I have already pronounced judgment  
on the one who did such a thing.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- Paul is saying that, bad as this man's sin is, it is outrageous that the church as sat by and done nothing about it. Matters cannot be allowed to rest where they are!
- The Corinthians had failed in their duty, but the apostle's attitude is in sharp contrast to that. Those who were there, and who might have been expected to take action, had done nothing.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- Paul is "absent in body," but "present in Spirit."

#### **Colossians 2:5:**

For though I am absent in body,  
yet I am with you in spirit,  
rejoicing to see your good order  
and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- “And as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.”
- Paul has done what they ought to have done but failed to do. And now he was calling them to execute this judgment he’s already pronounced on the basis of his apostolic authority.
- What exactly is to be done?

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

#### **1 Corinthians 5:4-5:**

When you are assembled  
in the name of the Lord Jesus  
and my spirit is present,  
with the power of our Lord Jesus,  
you are to deliver this man to Satan  
for the destruction of the flesh,  
so that his spirit may be saved  
in the day of the Lord.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

When

- (a) You are assembled
- (b) In the name of the Lord Jesus, and
- (c) My spirit is present,
- (d) With the power of our Lord Jesus...

- Here is a solemn assembly of the church, where the apostle is there in Spirit, acting in the name (the authority) and power of Christ himself!

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- “You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”
- Whatever else these phrase means, it includes excommunication. The idea underlying all this is that outside the church is the sphere of Satan.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

#### **1 John 5:19:**

We know that we are from God,  
and the whole world lies in the power  
of the evil one.

#### **Colossians 1:13:**

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness  
and transferred us  
to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

#### **Ephesians 2:1-6:**

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins  
in which you once walked,  
following the course of this world,  
following the prince of the power of the air,  
the spirit that is now at work  
in the sons of disobedience –  
among whom we all once lived  
in the passions of our flesh...

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

#### **Ephesians 2:1-6: (cont'd)**

Carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,  
and were by nature children of wrath,  
like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy,  
because of the great love with which he loved us,  
even when we were dead in our trespasses,  
made us alive together with Christ –

### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

#### **Ephesians 2:1-6: (cont'd)**

By grace you have been saved –  
and raised us up with him  
and seated us with him  
in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

#### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- To be expelled from the church is to be delivered over into that region where Satan holds sway. It is a very forcible expression for the loss of all Christian privileges!
- "The destruction of the flesh" doesn't mean death, since the aim is actually restoration, but of "a mode of life lived in pursuit of its own ends, in an attitude of self-sufficiency without reliance on God."

#### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- The unrepentant offender, cut off from the approval and support of his community, will find his self-sufficiency and self-reliance eroded until he comes, Prodigal Son-like, to a change of heart.
- There's a sense, therefore, that by his discovering the pain of his choices, he would be brought back.

#### What the Church Is to Do About This (5:3-5)

- In summary, resolute action must be taken to deal with the offender, for the church must not countenance evil!
- As for you, cut it out with the pride and boasting. Your performance in this regard is ... nothing to boast about!

#### A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)

##### **1 Corinthians 5:6:**

Your boasting is not good.  
Do you not know that a little leaven  
leavens the whole lump?

### A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)

- “Your boasting is not good.” Or rather, it’s the nature of your boasting that’s not good.

#### **1 Corinthians 1:31:**

Therefore, as it is written,  
“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

- *As we’ve seen, the Corinthians didn’t just acquiesce in the situation. They were proud!*

### A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:31:**

Therefore, as it is written,  
“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

- The Corinthians did more than acquiesce in the situation. They were proud!

### A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)

- Now Paul borrows an illustration from the kitchen to show the dangers of their attitude. It requires only a very small amount of yeast to leaven quite a large lump of dough.

#### **Galatians 5:9:**

A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

### A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)

#### **Matthew 13:33:**

He told them another parable.

“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

- *“Leaven has unstoppable effects out of all proportion to its size” – for good or for ill...*

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

- By keeping the offender within the fold, they were retaining the bad influence, and it would inevitably spread, like leaven through the dough.
- Moreover, by their boasting, the Corinthians were admitting evil into their own lives. In time, it would work through their whole being. Sin must be put away resolutely, lest in the end the entire Christian life will be corrupted:

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

- “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened.”
- This is a “become what you are” situation! The Corinthians are a new batch without yeast, they really are. But to really be that new batch, they must get rid of the old yeast. They must clean it out.

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

##### **1 Corinthians 5:7:**

Cleanse out the old leaven  
that you may be a new lump,  
as you really are unleavened.  
For Christ, our Passover lamb,  
has been sacrificed.

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

##### **2 Corinthians 5:17:**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,  
he is a new creation.  
The old has passed away;  
behold, the new has come.

- *Be what you are, Christians!*
- *You are saints, called to be saints.*
- *Holy ones, called to be holy.*

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

- The great fact that makes all things new is that Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.
- In Egypt, each Hebrew household smeared the blood of the Passover lamb on the lintel, in order that the destroying angel would pass over them per God's promise. They were thus delivered from God's terrible judgment – passed over – and a slave rabble came forth as the people of God.

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

- Paul is using this imagery to remind his readers that the death of Christ had delivered them from slavery to evil and made them the people of God.
- Ancient Israel was commanded to remove all yeast before the sacrifice. But Christ our Passover Lamb has already been sacrificed. It is time and more than time that all yeast – all evil – be put away.

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

##### **1 Corinthians 5:8:**

Let us therefore celebrate the festival,  
not with the old leaven,  
the leaven of malice and evil,  
but with the unleavened bread  
of sincerity and truth.

#### **A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump (5:6-8)**

- We are not to “observe the feast” according to the old standards of the old life we have left. The old yeast is the yeast of malice and wickedness. This was characteristic of the old way of life.
- By contrast, our “festival” is to be kept with sincerity, which refers to purity of motives, and with truth, which points to purity of action.

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 5:9-10:**

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- When Paul says, "I wrote you in my letter," he is indicating that he had written the earlier letter he had written to them, which is no longer extant.

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- In that letter, he'd told them not to associate with sexually immoral people – literally, with *porneia* people. But his directions seem to have been misunderstood and misapplied.
- Apparently, they understood him to mean that they must have no contact with this world's evil people, but this was not at all what he meant.

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- Circumstances would inevitably arise in which they must meet with brazen sinners. Evil abound evil people abound in the world, and it's not possible to live without at least some contact with him.
- So Paul is not forbidding that. For that they would have to leave this world.

You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

**John 17:15-19:**

"I do not ask that you take them out of the world,  
but that you keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world,  
just as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth;  
your word is truth."

You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

**John 17:15-19:** (cont'd)

"As you sent me into the world,  
so I have sent them into the world.  
And for their sake I consecrate myself,  
that they also may be sanctified in truth."

You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

**1 John 2:15-17:**

Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world,  
the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh  
and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions  
– is not from the Father but is from the world.

You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

**1 John 2:15-17:** (cont'd)

And the world is passing away  
along with its desires,  
but whoever does the will of God  
abides forever.

#### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

##### **James 4:4:**

You adulterous people!  
Do you not know that friendship with the world  
is enmity with God?  
Therefore, whoever wishes  
to be a friend of the world  
makes himself an enemy of God.

#### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

##### **1 Corinthians 5:11:**

But now I am writing to you  
not to associate with anyone  
who bears the name of brother  
if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed,  
or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler –  
not even to eat with such a one.

#### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- His point is that they must not have intimate fellowship with anyone who calls himself a brother, but denies his profession by the way he lives and then refuses to repent when confronted by the authority of God's word.

#### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- Unrepentance is the unforgiveable sin that blasphemes the Spirit. One who refuses to submit to God's word is not truly behaving as a brother or sister in Christ.
- Paul is saying that such a one should be removed from the fellowship of the church, both for the peace and purity of the church and its witness, and for the saving of themselves.

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- This is really important. It is a perennial temptation and error for the church to get into a mode of being either both/and
  - (a) Judgmental & legalistic in its face to the world.
  - (b) Antinomian & licentious concerning its own sins.
- We are to be neither of these, but rather, humble and holy, free and disciplined, loved and loving.

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 5:12-13:**

For what have I to do with judging outsiders?

Is it not those inside the church

whom you are to judge?

God judges those outside.

“Purge the evil person from among you.”

### You Are to Judge Those Inside the Church (5:9-13)

- With regard to the outsiders: It is no business of Paul's, or for that matter of the Corinthians, to judge them. God will do that. Rather than presuming to pull out and apart from the world, we are to be in the world (but not of it) bearing the good news of Jesus Christ to any and all!
- But we must exercise discipline within the church, because it is for this we've been saved.

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-20**  
**Do You Not Know...?**

Do You Not Know...? (1-10)

**1 Corinthians 3:16:**

Do you not know  
that you are God's temple  
and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Do You Not Know...? (2-10)

**1 Corinthians 5:6:**

Do you not know  
that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Do You Not Know...? (3-10)

**1 Corinthians 6:2:**

Or do you not know  
that the saints will judge the world?

Do You Not Know...? (4-10)

**1 Corinthians 6:3:**

Do you not know  
that we are to judge angels?  
How much more, then,  
matters pertaining to this life!

Do You Not Know...? (5-10)

**1 Corinthians 6:9a:**

Do you not know  
that the unrighteous will not inherit  
the kingdom of God?

Do You Not Know...? (6-10)

**1 Corinthians 6:15:**

Do you not know  
that your bodies are members of Christ?

Do You Not Know...? (7-10)

**1 Corinthians 6:16a:**

Or do you not know  
that he who is joined to a prostitute  
becomes one body with her?

Do You Not Know...? (8-10)

**1 Corinthians 6:19:**

Or do you not know  
that your body is a temple  
of the Holy Spirit within you,  
whom you have from God?

### Do You Not Know...? (9-10)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:13:**

Do you not know  
that those who are employed in the temple service  
get their food from the temple,  
and those who serve at the altar  
share in the sacrificial offerings?

### Do You Not Know...? (10-10)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:24:**

Do you not know  
that in a race all the runners compete,  
but only one receives the prize?  
So run that you may obtain it.

### Ten Things You Ought to Know as Christians

1. You, O church, are God's temple.
2. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
3. The saints will judge the world.
4. We are to judge the angels.
5. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.
6. Your bodies are members of Christ.
7. He who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her.
8. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you.
9. Those employed in the temple get food from the temple.
10. In a race, the runners run to receive a prize (run to obtain it!)

### Ten Things You Ought to Know as Christians

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10. In a race, the runners run to receive a prize (run to obtain it!)

### Do You Not Know...? (6:1-20)

1. Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)
2. Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)
3. Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

### Where We Left Off Last Time...

#### **1 Corinthians 5:12-13:**

For what have I to do with judging outsiders?

Is it not those inside the church  
whom you are to judge?

God judges those outside.

“Purge the evil person from among you.”

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:1:**

When one of you has a grievance against another,  
does he dare go to law before the unrighteous  
instead of the saints?

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- What was the problem of taking lawsuits to secular courts? It's not so much that the courts were corrupt, but that they were composed of unbelievers. Such courts ordered neither their thinking nor their actions by the law of God.
- Paul isn't saying that believers can't obtain justice in pagan courts; he's saying that Christians had no business there at all.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:2-3:**

Or do you not know that  
the saints will judge the world?  
And if the world is to be judged by you,  
are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Do you not know that we are to judge angels?  
How much more, then,  
matters pertaining to this life!

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- Do you not know? Which is to say, the Corinthians should know better than to be doing what they're doing.
- Our commentary by Anthony Thistleton advises that we shouldn't be distracted by the language about Christians judging the world or angels, suggesting that Paul is once again using irony and parody.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- We saw this earlier, when Paul was being satirical about the Corinthians reigning as kings. The idea is that now he uses parody again to shame those who make grandiose claims as to their own wisdom and importance in God's sight, while in fact showing themselves incompetent to adjudicate even small claims matters "in house."
- But I'm not so sure that the main tenor is irony...

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- The idea that the saints will somehow assist in the final judgment of the world goes back to the teaching of Jesus:

#### **Matthew 19:28:**

Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, *you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**Luke 22:28-30:**

“You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and *I assign to you*, as my Father assigned to me, *a kingdom, that you may* eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and *sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*”

Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**Daniel 7:27:**

“And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and *all dominions shall serve and obey them.*”

Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**Revelation 2:26-27:**

“The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, *to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron*, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.”

Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**Revelation 3:21:**

“The one who conquers, *I will grant him to sit with me on my throne*, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **Revelation 20:4:**

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.*

Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and *reigned with Christ* for a thousand years.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **Revelation 22:4-5:**

They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and *they will reign forever and ever.*

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- This judging others at the end of the world does not denote judging as independent individuals, but as derivatively and corporately sharing in Christ's own glory as the great and just Judge.
- But back to our passage: while "judge" could be taken in that Hebrew sense of rule, what Paul is speaking about is not rule (government), but seeking judgment in disputes, i.e., lawsuits.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:2-3:**

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- The point here is the juxtaposition between our calling to judge the world and the angels (!) and the Corinthians seeming inability to judge the trivial stuff among themselves.
- But how we handle the trivial stuff matters is anything but trivial:

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**Luke 16:10; 19:17:**

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much...”

“And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’”

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- Not only does the practice of “going to law before the unrighteous” make a mockery of the Corinthians’ pride in their own giftedness and wisdom (i.e., you who have the mind of Christ outsourcing judgment on trivial matter to those who know neither God’s word nor his Spirit); but it also reflects badly on the church, showing a radical inconsistency between what you say you’re all about and what you actually do.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**1 Corinthians 6:4-6:**

So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame.

Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- Why would you entrust jurisdiction to those outside the church, who don't know the word and way of God, who don't have the mind of Christ, who lack the wisdom that comes from the knowledge of God's word?
- These "judges" have no standing in the church? They count for nothing among you, and yet you hand over the right to decide outcomes for you? Are they so wise? Are you so lacking in wisdom?

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- No, but "brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?"
- Not only are you so unwise as to continue with these divisions, but you bring shame on the church by exposing these things to the world. You are airing your dirty laundry.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- And concerning this issue: I really am writing to make you ashamed! You guys are going around, priding yourselves on your wisdom.
- What then? Is there really no one there wise enough to settle a dispute among you, that you have to submit yourselves to the world, exposing your divisions in the process and diminishing the glory of the church of Christ?

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

**1 Corinthians 6:7:**  
To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.  
Why not rather suffer wrong?  
Why not rather be defrauded?

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- “Don’t you get it?” Paul is saying, in effect. “You’re so stuck on the idea that you must win, that you must be vindicated, that you don’t see it’s *already* a defeat to have taken the course you’ve taken! It’s bad enough that a brother should want to go to law with brother at all. But even if he does that, it’s even worse that he should do so before unbelievers. How little is your faith!”

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **Matthew 5:39-41:**

“But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- Again, Paul’s point here is that, to go to law with the brother is already a defeat in itself, whatever the outcome of the legal process. The gaining of the verdict matters little. The cause is already lost when a Christian institutes a lawsuit.
- Is it really a victory when the body of Christ is divided and appeals to the authority of the world for vindication of “me”? Is this what Jesus taught?

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **1 Peter 2:19-25:**

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **1 Peter 2:19-23:** (cont'd)

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:8:**

But you yourselves wrong and defraud – even your own brothers!

- *Not only were the Corinthians not ready to follow the example of Jesus and the apostles, to suffer wrong while trusting in God, but they were actively doing wrong and defrauding their own brothers!*

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- So Paul has been addressing a disturbing situation in the church. Just like last week, in the case of sexual immorality that had been allowed to stand without the proper exercise of discipline, thus subjecting the entire church to the corrupting influence of that unrepented sin, so this week he is responding to a situation of where some in the church are dragging other believers before pagan courts to attain favorable verdicts.

### Lawsuits Among Believers (6:1-8)

- Paul's sense of outrage at the situation now spills over into a broader warning against the behaviors that are absolutely incompatible with our new life in union in Christ. As with pride and factionalism, as we have seen, so too with sexual immorality and failure to discipline; so too with seeking verdicts in the courts against one another; so too with all manner of other abusive and exploitative behaviors...

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:9-10:**

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:9-10:**

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral (*pornoi*), nor idolaters, nor adulterers (*moichoi*), nor men who practice homosexuality, (nor *malakoi* nor *arsenokoitai*), nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

- “Do you not know...?” Again!
- “The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God!” These things Paul lists here are incompatible with the kingdom of God, and those who practice them *without repentance* will not enter into it!

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

- It is important to note that this list denotes habits and practices, not isolated acts.
- Paul does not suggest that a Christian who is once tempted into a single act of adultery, theft, verbal abuse, or exploitation of others remains forever excluded from the kingdom of God. Or indeed that one who struggles and repents of these would be excluded.

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

#### **1 John 3:6:**

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning;  
no one who keeps on sinning  
has either seen him or known him.

#### **1 John 1:8:**

If we say we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

- Neither John nor Paul is suggesting that moral failure disinherits a Christian from salvation. Otherwise, the themes of forgiveness and justification by grace alone would lose their currency.
- But Paul, like John, does warn us that willfully to practice evil without resolve to change brings suspicion on the genuineness of a professed commitment to follow Christ.

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

- He is making a deep and important point here that should shape our understanding. We are no longer of the old life, but of the new!
- And the new life is not characterized by the practices of the old, i.e., these self-aggrandizing, exploitative, abusive, divisive, and/or degrading behaviors that shred the fabric of the *koinonia* for which Christ gave his life.

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

- Don't kid yourselves. Don't get into a mode of thinking that gets okay with the practice of sin and unrepentance. It has a way of hardening the heart and corrupting the soul.
- None of these things are fit for the kingdom!

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

- The Christian will look ahead to a new creation and to eternal life in God's kingdom; he or she will not look perennially behind, to the sins from which deliverance has in principle been granted.

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:11:**

And such were some of you.

- *Epic!*
- *This is humbling, to be sure. But it's also encouraging, and ultimately ennobling...*

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31:**

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31: (cont'd)**

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-31: (cont'd)**

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

#### **Deuteronomy 7:7-8:**

"It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

- Paul's point? It was no promising material that confronted the early preachers, but people whose standards were of the lowest! It required the mighty power of the Spirit of God to turn people like that away from their sins, and to make them members of Christ's church.
- "And such were some of you." Humbling... But take heart! You are no longer these things!

### **Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)**

#### **1 Corinthians 6:11:**

And such were some of you.  
But you were washed,  
you were sanctified,  
you were justified in the name  
of the Lord Jesus Christ  
and by the Spirit of our God.

### Behaviors Unfit for the Kingdom (6:9-11)

1. "You were washed," i.e., cleansed of sin's guilt and corruption, liberated from the dominion of sin, as signified by baptism!
2. "You were sanctified," i.e., set apart as holy, called to be holy, given a new identity, "saint," and filled with the Holy Spirit!
3. "You were justified," i.e., declared righteous ("right") in God's sight, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God!

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:12:**

"All things are lawful for me,"  
but not all things are helpful.  
"All things are lawful for me,"  
but I will not be enslaved by anything.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- Yes, it's true that the gospel brings glorious freedom – freedom from death's ultimacy, freedom from the dominion of sin, freedom from condemnation, freedom of the children of God!
- But! There are many things not expressly forbidden, but whose results are not helpful. We'll examine this in future weeks as it impacts one another, but the focus here is on ourselves.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- "All things are lawful for me,"  
but I will not be enslaved by anything.
- There is an ever-present danger that we bring ourselves into bondage by way of asserting our Christian freedom. By insisting on doing this thing because you can – because Christ has set you free – are you really doing it from and unto freedom, or is it more the compulsions of the bondage patterns of the old man...?

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:13-14:**

"Food is meant for the stomach  
and the stomach for food" –  
and God will destroy both one and the other.  
The body is not meant for sexual immorality,  
but for the Lord,  
and the Lord for the body.  
And God raised the Lord  
and will also raise us up by his power.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- It seems we have another saying here from Corinth. It's sort of saying, both food and stomach are both transient, so eat away. It doesn't matter. It's a matter of indifference.
- And the idea might be extended to all things pertaining to the body. But Paul shuts this down!

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- Unlike the stomach, the body is not destined to be destroyed. It is meant to be transformed and glorified. The body cannot be dismissed as unimportant, because the body is for the Lord. It is the instrument wherein we serve God. It is the means whereby we glorify God.
- The body therefore is much more than some transient, physical shell for the soul.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **Thiselton:**

If the body will be raised up in the resurrection, then there is a great dignity of the body. The resurrection forbids us to take the body lightly. If the body is to be raised, then it must not be put into the category of things that will be destroyed.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### 1 Corinthians 6:15-16:

Do you not know that  
your bodies are members of Christ?  
Shall I then take the members of Christ  
and make them members of a prostitute? Never!  
Or do you not know that he who is joined  
to a prostitute becomes one body with her?  
For, as it is written,  
"The two will become one flesh."

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### 1 Corinthians 6:17:

But he who is joined to the Lord  
becomes one spirit with him.

- *Again, "do you not know? What now?  
That your bodies are members of Christ!  
Believers are united to Christ in the closest way.  
They are members of his body.*

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- It is this fact that makes sexual sin so abhorrent. But the use of the same word "member," for Christ and for prostitute, brings out something of the intimacy and incongruity of the union with the prostitute. There is a horrible profanation of that which should be used only for Christ. Paul's response? *Mē genoito!* "Never!" May it not be so!" "God forbid." You've heard of "Amen"? Well, think the exact opposite!

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- "He who is *joined* to a prostitute." The Greek word denotes a method of bonding together, for example, in woodwork by glue, or in metallurgy by welding.
- Interestingly we should note that they don't become one person.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- In Christ, we are one body, one flesh, with one Spirit, united in intimacy. But Christ does not assimilate our personhood.
- Anyway, the point is that it is utterly incompatible to be committed to union with the prostitute and to union with Christ at the same time. Thus, we are to keep away from sexual immorality:

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- Paul doesn't say that sexual immorality is the most serious of all sins. But his point is that its relation to the body makes it unique. Other sins may have effects on the body, but this sin, and this sin only, means that a man takes that body which is a member of Christ, and puts it into union with another, incompatible with Christ.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:18:**

Flee from sexual immorality.  
Every other sin a person commits  
is outside the body,  
but the sexually immoral person  
sins against his own body.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- Other sins against the body – drunkenness, gluttony – may serve other purposes, like conviviality. But sexual sin has no purpose other than the gratification of lust.
- If the other sins are sinful in the excess, this sin – sexual immorality – is sinful in itself. The sexual sinner sins against his own body!

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20:**

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- Again, "do you not know?" Recall that Paul has already referred to the church as a whole as God's temple:

#### **1 Corinthians 3:16-17:**

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- But here the body is singular, so that each believer is a temple in which God dwells.
- Wherever we go we are the bearers of the Holy Spirit, temples in which God is pleased to dwell. This rules out all such conduct as not appropriate to the temple of God. The application to sexual immorality is obvious, but the principle is a far wider application.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- And as for you, not only are you a temple of God, but you are not your own, "for you were bought for a price."
- Christ at Calvary redeemed you, paid the price for your release, and made you his own. We belong to him.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **Thistelton:**

You were bought for a price. This verse alone would question the conventional notion of being redeemed as a slave in order to be free.

Purchased by another, or being bought with a price, signifies transference of ownership from one master or Lord to another.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

#### **Thistelton: (cont'd)**

The Christian is not purchased out of slavery simply to gain some new autonomous freedom in which he or she faces the world on their own. In such a situation they face every hazard alone, and might even face becoming enslaved again to a worse master. Christ purchases or redeems men and women as his. Henceforth it is he who has them in his care, they belong to Christ.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- And the word price indicates the costliness of redemption. Christ shed his blood, submitting himself to the humiliation and contempt of death by crucifixion.

### Freedom, Discipline, and the Body (6:12-20)

- In sum, Christ is the rightful Lord of those whom he has redeemed, bodily, and will resurrect, bodily; former slaves of sin now redeemed to belong and to serve.
- Thus, the public, everyday life of the redeemed Christian is to show forth the glory of God, to glorify God in our body.

### Summary

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world, and indeed, that we are to judge angels?

How much more, then, ought this be reflected in matters pertaining to this life!

*Therefore*, stop seeking the world's vindication, but **rest in the vindication of Christ!**

### Summary

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God!

*Therefore*, stop being what you were, and **get being what you are!**

### Summary

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ, and that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? And do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?

You are not your own, but were bought with a price!

*Therefore*, as you are in Christ and belong to him, **glorify God in your body!**

### Summary

You are not your own.

You were bought for a price.

Christ redeemed you from sin and death.

Now you are his, and he is God's, and all is yours!

1. Rest in the vindication of Christ.
2. Get being what you are.
3. Glorify God in your body.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-24 Marriage, Singleness & Calling or: To Marry or Not to Marry

### Marriage, Singleness & Calling (7:1-40)

1. Principles for Marriage (7:1-16)
2. Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)
3. Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion or:  
To Marry or Not to Marry (7:25-40)

### Principles for Marriage (7:1-16)

1. Principles for Marriage (7:1-16)
  - a. For Men and Women in General (7:2-7)
  - b. For Unmarried Persons and Widows (7:8-9)
  - c. For Married People re: Separation (7:10-11)
  - d. For the Rest re: "Unequal Yoking" (7:12-16)

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### 1 Corinthians 7:1:

Now concerning the matters  
about which you wrote:

"It is good for a man  
not to have sexual relations with a woman."

- *He is responding to their written query and is most likely quoting them.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

1. Paul, our founding apostle and father in the faith, who calls us to imitate him, is celibate. Should we imitate him in this, too?
2. The world is passing away; Christ is coming. Should we no longer bother with marriage?
3. If we're saved by grace and called to live by the Spirit, then ought we not disdain the body, either as a domain of no consequence (license) or as a thing unworthy of us spiritual people (ascetism)?

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **1 Corinthians 6:13b, 15, 19a:**

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body...

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ...?

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **1 Corinthians 6:13a:**

"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy both one and the other."

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **1 Corinthians 6:19b-20:**

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- *Paul's answer to those who would disdain the body, whether by license (it doesn't matter what you do with the body) or by asceticism (the body is unworthy of a spiritual person), is a powerful and rich theology of the body.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### 1 Corinthians 7:1:

Now concerning the matters  
about which you wrote:

“It is good for a man  
not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### 1 Corinthians 7:2:

But because of the temptation to sexual immorality,  
each man should have his own wife  
and each woman her own husband.

- *Celibacy is good (it is, indeed, a gift) but it is neither necessary nor normative. Celibacy is not – and must not be insisted upon – as a suitable mode of life for all who would follow Jesus as his disciples.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- “Each man ... his own wife ... and each woman ... her own husband.” Marriage between one man and woman is the default norm.
- For these, the attempt to live celibate lives would backfire, issuing in temptation and leading to sexual immorality. This need not be the case, and much of desire can be rightly directed to our spouses in a manner that honors God and our calling as human beings.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- Before moving on, let’s note the subtle introduction here of a powerful aspect of Christian marriage – which is *mutual possession*. The theme of mutuality! More on this later.
- “Each man should have *his own* wife and each woman *her own* husband.”

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### 1 Corinthians 7:3:

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

- *Here, Paul speaks to a key part of marriage: the conjugal rights each partner owes, one to the other.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- Sexless marriage by choice is not really a thing, or ought not be, as Paul would have it. (But more on this in a moment!)
- Sexless marriage by choice is a partnership of companionship. This thing – deep, intimate companionship, a partnership of love, one for the other – is a wonderful thing.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- But a partnership of companionship, even a deep and mutually committed lifelong friendship, is not to be confused with marriage, which entails at its core, at least in principle, sexual intimacy and a covenantal commitment to one another for the guiding and continuation of family life.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- Some of you may recall that we spoke about “brotherly love” (*philadelphia*) in our class on 1 Samuel last semester, when we examined the friendship of David and Jonathan, and the deep bond that such relationships can engender. David is said to have loved Jonathan, but we must be careful not to misinterpret this, as many of us moderns do, given our habit of inferring sexual desires and relations into all such friendships.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- Think here of Christ's love for his disciples and vice versa. In the ancient world (and in the Islamic world today), such love as this (brotherly love, the love of deep friendship) didn't cross genders.
- But it's interesting to see how women followed Christ and could be considered his followers and friends alongside his disciples – for example, Mary Magdalene.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- In fact, the amazing thing about Christian fellowship is that we who by God's grace have been called into fellowship with Christ are also called into fellowship with one another, and are made family; and in this family, men and women can enjoy true friendship in the Lord as brothers and sisters in the family of God. And that is a beautiful thing to be celebrated and enjoyed.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- So friendship is a good thing, and we can have friendships that cross the lines of gender. All good. Yea, even *very* good!
- But as for sexual desire and expression, it must either to be *controlled* (the way of celibacy) or *channeled* and expressed within the bounds of covenant marriage.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **1 Corinthians 7:4:**

For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

- *Here again is the idea of mutual possession and mutual ownership in marriage.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **Song of Songs 6:3:**

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.

#### **Song 7:10:**

I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me.

- *This intimacy in marriage is in fact a glorious picture of the gospel, revealing to a love-starved world the love of God for his people, the love of Christ for his church!*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **Ephesians 5:31-32:**

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,

and the two shall become one flesh.'

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- As the Son is sent by the Father, and reveals and glorifies the Father; so the Spirit is sent by the Son and the Father, and reveals and glorifies the Son and the Father.
- So, too: as Christ, the incarnate Son, was sent by the Father, and reveals and glorifies the Father, so the church, his Spirit-filled bride, is sent to reveal and glorify the Son and the Father.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- And it is in this sense that Adam and Eve typify Christ and the church: Adam as the type of Christ and Son of God, and Eve as the type of the Church, the body of Christ.
- So too with each husband and wife, where their union and mutual devotion is a picture of Christ and the church.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- In Genesis 2:23, the woman ('*ishah*, A-SH-H); like fire, '*aysh*, A-SH) is presented to Adam for the first time, and in the following verse (2:23), he who had been called until now '*adam* (A-D-M, '*adam* being the generic term for mankind), is for the first time called man (in the gendered sense of *not woman*), '*ish* (A-Y-SH). In other words, it's as if in seeing her glory, he is pentecostalized (fired up!).

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- But note the connection to the mission of Christ and the Church: Adam is the head and source and foundation, she glorifies him; together, they glorify God. By the way, in Jewish tradition, much is made of the fact that the word for man is the word for "fire" plus a "Y" and the word for woman is "fire" plus an "H," and that Y-H is the short form for the name of the LORD, *Yah* (as in *HalleluYAH*). I mean, I don't know, but ... cool!

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### 1 Corinthians 7:5:

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- *Here is an exception to the principle we mentioned earlier.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- We had said that sexless marriages by choice ought not be a thing, as that confuses the core thing that marriage covenants are for.
- However! Here we see that Paul envisions an exception, where couples can abstain from their conjugal relations for a time, so as to be devoted to prayer, but should then come back together after a time.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- It's almost like a New Testament version of the Nazirite vows, where a couple can be holy to the Lord for a time, but only for a time.
- This is actually a kindness. Paul is showing us that God doesn't want us to be miserable, driven in our desire to hypocrisy and sin. Rather, we are to give allowance for desire in the context of marriage! This pleases and honors God!

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- His encouragement of others to express sexual desire within the bounds of marriage is a concession to reality. But what he wishes is that all were like him. Not because it's morally better or purer, or anything like that. But, as we'll see, for a really practical and interesting reason. It turns out that celibacy has amazing advantages for those who would serve the Lord with singleness of purpose (pun intended!).

### Principles for Marriage: In General

#### **1 Corinthians 7:6-7:**

Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

- *Here and the next verse we catch a glimpse of the apostle's own view on the matter, and the clearest statement of his own singleness and celibacy.*

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- Celibacy is a gift given to some. Not everyone is given that gift, though everyone is given gifts of some kind.
- What is interesting here is that the Bible places a high value on singleness and celibacy, something that the modern church has not really done, seeing it more as a sort of falling short of the ideal of married life.

### Principles for Marriage: In General

- It's fascinating to consider that Paul looked at it exactly the other way around, i.e., that married life fell short of the ideal of celibacy!
- Again, however, it wasn't that celibacy was morally better. It's that it was a gift for some, called to serve the church with special devotion and singleness of purpose and attention. It was (and is) ... advantageous toward this end.

### Principles for Marriage: Unmarried & Widows

- This echoes verse 2, where Paul encouraged marriage for those without the gift of celibacy, "because of temptation to sexual immorality."
- For the unmarried and for widows, he advises a similar pattern: it is good – meaning, ideal – for them to remain single, "as I am." But if self-control is going to be an issue, they should marry.

### Principles for Marriage: Unmarried & Widows

#### **1 Corinthians 7:8-9:**

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

#### **1 Corinthians 7:10-11:**

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord):  
the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband),  
and the husband should not divorce his wife.

- *Now a word to the married, indeed, a charge...*

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- “Not I, but the Lord.” This isn’t Paul’s opinion, but comes from the Lord, and is spoken as with prophetic and apostolic authority, as in, “thus saith the Lord.”
- The principle is to not separate and to not divorce; and if there is a separation, to not remarry or else to be reconciled.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- There are rightful, biblical grounds for divorce (as we’ll see, for sexual immorality and abandonment), but we are not to initiate separation and/or divorce for reasons apart from these.

### Principles for Marriage: Unequal Yoking

#### **1 Corinthians 7:12-13:**

To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

### Principles for Marriage: Unequal Yoking

- First, a word about how we’re to understand what he means by “I, not the Lord.”
- It’s as if he is telling us, “this doesn’t come with the same prophetic authority as what I just said concerning spearing and divorce, but the principles are sound.” Moreover, we are given these words now in Scripture, every word of which is the very word of God, so ...

### Principles for Marriage: Unequal Yoking

- Here the issue concerns unequally yoked marriages. If I have become a believer but my spouse refuses to embrace the faith and continues in her pagan ways, can I leave her? No.
- The principle is to stay as you began. Don't use your conversion as a reason to leave your spouse.
- And the rationale is super interesting:

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

#### **1 Corinthians 7:14:**

For the unbelieving husband  
is made holy because of his wife,  
and the unbelieving wife  
is made holy because of her husband.  
Otherwise your children would be unclean,  
but as it is, they are holy.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- Why not leave your unbelieving spouse? Because by the faith and holiness of the one believer, the rest of the household is made holy, set apart!
- Note that this is not suggesting that they are necessarily *saved*, in the sense of being justified, but that they are nevertheless *made holy*, really set apart to God – by the righteousness and holiness of one member.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- Think of how eight people were delivered from the floodwaters because of Noah's righteousness! Consider in this regard Rahab and the deliverance of her household.
- Here is a powerful reason for the sign of covenant baptism for infants (and the baptism of entire households in the New Testament).

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- We see throughout Scripture that God delights in extending the benefits to the entire households of those who trust in him.
- In this sense, one righteous person who trusts the Lord and believes the word of the Lord exerts a sanctifying influence on the entire household. It doesn't mean they're saved, but the blessings are real; they are made holy, they are sanctified.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- There are thus two grounds for divorce for Christians: sexual immorality (**Matthew 19:9**: "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery") and abandonment.
- In the tightest reading, this restricts the allowable grounds of divorce in cases of abandonment to situations where an unbelieving partner has abandoned the marriage.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

#### **1 Corinthians 7:15:**

But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so.

In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.

- *So you, Christian, are not to leave your partner. But if that unbelieving partner leaves you, then you are free. Let it be so.*

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

- However, it could be reasonably argued that if someone who calls himself a Christian abandons his wife without biblical warrant, he is showing himself to not in fact be a true follower of Christ after all.
- Moreover, ought abandonment be limited to physical leaving only, or to *egregious covenant breach*, including, for example, abuse physical and/or spiritual? These things require wisdom.

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

#### **1 Corinthians 7:16:**

For how do you know, wife,  
whether you will save your husband?  
Or how do you know, husband,  
whether you will save your wife?

- *Remember the accumulative power of witness within a household!*

### Principles for Marriage: Marriage & Separation

#### **1 Peter 3:1:**

Likewise, wives,  
be subject to your own husbands,  
so that even if some do not obey the word,  
they may be won without a word  
by the conduct of their wives.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:17:**

Only let each person lead the life  
that the Lord has assigned to him,  
and to which God has called him.  
This is my rule in all the churches.

- *Here, we come to Paul's key principle in the entire passage: let each person lead the life God has assigned to him and to which he has called him.*

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- Christianity is a non-revolutionary movement that imposes personal, relational, or societal changes all at once. What I mean by that is that the gospel is aimed not at forcing external changes in society that can be undone by counterforce once the opponents of those changes take power again, but something altogether deeper and more wholly transformative.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- The gospel aims at the conversion of the heart and mind, leading to *total transformation* of lives, which in their aggregate, subverts wickedness, undermines unrighteous institutions and power structures, and brings transformation of society – slowly, but profoundly.
- We might say that Paul's point here is a corollary to the principle of *be what you are*. Yes, that! But also: *be where you are!*

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- All of life is infused with God's dignity, and where we are is where we're called to serve. We're not to wait for some future, better situated me to kick in to service, but are to do so now, where we are, where God has placed us at this moment.
- We come here to the profound doctrine of calling, of *vocation*.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:18:**

Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised?

Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision.

Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised?

Let him not seek circumcision.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:19:**

For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- We are to remain the estate or condition you were when we were called to be a Christian. It's not about changing these outward things as much as it is serving and obeying the Lord.
- The rest will follow. What counts? Keeping the commandments of God, by hearts whose very desires have been and are being transformed by the power of the gospel. Amen!

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:20-21:**

Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.

Were you a bondservant when called?

Do not be concerned about it.

(But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- "Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called." Huge principle here!
- Total transformation begins within. Again, Christianity is not a revolutionary movement, all about forcing external changes on others, but subverting and eradicating systems opposed to God by the total transformation of the persons living in those systems.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:22-23:**

For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord.

Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- Really good here. Were you a bond servant when called? Well, now you're free in Christ!
- Were you free when called? Well, now you belong to Christ!
- You were redeemed from your bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil. You were redeemed; you were bought with a price. Now you are Christ's!

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **Galatians 5:1:**

For freedom Christ has set us free.  
Stand firm therefore,  
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

- *So too, by all means (a) avail yourself of all legal opportunity to become free; and (b) do not become bondservants of men! Do not change your condition in the wrong direction!*

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20:**

You are not your own,  
for you were bought with a price.

- *But our greatest freedom is found and enjoyed in Christ and in the service of the Most High!*

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:24:**

So, brothers, in whatever condition  
each was called,  
there let him remain with God.

- *Paul restates the main principle from verse 20, "Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called," but now with the reminder that our condition is anchored in our fellowship with God!*

## 1 CORINTHIANS 7:25-40 Love God, and Do What You Will

### Marriage, Singleness & Calling (7:1-40)

1. Principles for Marriage (7:1-16)
2. Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)
3. Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion or: Love God, and Do What You Will (7:25-40)

### Principles for Marriage (7:1-16)

1. Principles for Marriage (7:1-16)
  - a. For Men and Women in General (7:2-7)
  - b. For Unmarried Persons and Widows (7:8-9)
  - c. For Married People re: Separation (7:10-11)
  - d. For the Rest re: "Unequal Yoking" (7:12-16)

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:17:**

Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

- *Here, we come to Paul's key principle in the entire passage: let each person lead the life God has assigned to him and to which he has called him.*

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

- Christianity is a non-revolutionary movement that imposes personal, relational, or societal changes all at once. What I mean by that is that the gospel is aimed not at forcing external changes in society that can be undone by counterforce once the opponents of those changes take power again, but something altogether deeper and more wholly transformative.

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- We might say that Paul's point here is a corollary to the principle of *be what you are*. Yes, that! But also: *be where you are!*

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- "Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called." Huge principle here!
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#### **Galatians 5:1:**

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and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

- *So too, by all means (a) avail yourself of all legal opportunity to become free; and (b) do not become bondservants of men! Do not change your condition in the wrong direction!*

### Live As You Are Called (7:17-24)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:24:**

So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

- *Paul restates the main principle from verse 20, "Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called," but now with the reminder that our condition is anchored in our fellowship with God!*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:25:**

Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- "I have no command from the Lord." Similar to "I, not the Lord." In other words, this isn't on the basis of prophetic word received, but of Spirit-guided wisdom and apostolic counsel.
- Then again, as we noted before, it's in the Bible, so it is authoritative. There is no "red letter" Bible in the sense that Jesus' words (set apart in red) have more authority than the rest.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:25:**

Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but *I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:6-7:**

Now as a concession, not a command, I say this.  
I wish that all were as I myself am.  
But each has his own gift from God,  
one of one kind and one of another.

- *To rightly understand and apply biblical teaching that is not necessarily commanded but is wise, we need to distinguish between law and wisdom.*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- Law sets boundaries between what is permissible and what is not; thou shalt not do what is outside the bounds set by God's laws.
- Wisdom is about making optimal choices within the bounds of the permissible. Yes, these things are allowed, but which is the best? Wisdom, in Scripture, is fundamentally about skill for living rightly and well.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **Romans 12:2:**

Do not be conformed to this world,  
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,  
that by testing you may discern  
what is the will of God,  
what is good and acceptable and perfect.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:25b:**

...But I give my judgment as one  
who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

- *"I give my judgment." A ruling, as in Old Testament case law (mishpat). However, as we'll see in a moment, the ruling here is not binding as a matter of law, but a matter of principle, providing a wise guideline. "Keep this principle in view."*

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- This gives us a good example of Christian ethics in action. At the end of the day, it's not about endless rules ("do this and not that, do this but exactly in this way and to this extent, but no other and no further," i.e, rabbinic reasoning), but about Spirit-guided freedom within the bounds of God's moral law, operating out of the overarching principle of love for God and love for neighbor.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

"Love God, and do what you will."  
~ Augustine of Hippo

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

"Love God, and do what you will,  
for the soul trained in love to God  
will do nothing to offend  
the One who is Beloved."  
~ Augustine of Hippo

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- As an apostle, Paul is a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God, and it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy (1 Cor. 4:1-2). And in this verse, he uses that word again (*pistos*: faith or faithful), and we learn that he is faithful, or trustworthy, by God's mercy.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **Titus 1:9:**

He must hold firm to ***the trustworthy word*** as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

- *Recall our discussion on the Hebrew word `aman, how it conveys the sense of being able to bear the full weight of your trust.*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

In summary, even when we do not have explicit commands from the Lord as to what we should do in a given situation, we do have the Spirit; and as we grow in the knowledge of God, being conformed to the pattern of his word, being trained in godliness, then we are free to do what we will, because we can trust that when we operate out of that overarching principle of love, this pleases God and aligns to his will. We are made trustworthy as we trust in him.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:26:**

I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is.

- *What is the present distress to which Paul is referring here? Does it refer to some local crisis in Corinth? But there is no indication elsewhere of such a crisis. What then? I believe that the "present distress" refers to the entire interadvental age.*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **Acts 14:21-22:**

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that ***through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.***

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Peter 4:12-13:**

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **Matthew 24:12-14:**

"And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

The distress of the present is the suffering experienced by the church as it is rejected and judged by a world that loves the darkness rather than the light. If the world rejected and persecuted the Christ of God, then we shouldn't be at all surprised if it rejects and persecutes us as well. Walking in the way of Christ will entail suffering. But the suffering of the present time is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us!

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **Philippians 3:13-14:**

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- *Ours is life lived with eschatology ever in view. We have been called and set apart for a purpose!*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:26-28a:**

I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:28b:**

Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.

- *Now Paul introduces us to the other principle here undergirding his teaching, i.e., that marriage entails worldly troubles that will and do distract from godly things and pursuits.*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:29-31a:**

This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:31b:**

For the present form of this world is passing away.

- *Christ is coming again! This world, and its cares, is passing away. We should invest as much as we can in the coming reality of heaven, storing our treasure there.*

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 John 2:15-17:**

Do not love the world or the things in the world.  
If anyone loves the world,  
the love of the Father is not in him.  
For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh  
and the desires of the eyes and pride of life –  
is not from the Father but is from the world.  
And the world is passing away along with its desires,  
but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

In other words, because “the present form of this world is passing away,” this reality ought to be kept in mind, and it ought to inform our daily choices.

We, like the Old Testament saints before us, “desire a better country ... a heavenly one” (Heb. 11:16); we long for the city that God has prepared for us; we know that Christ shall come again on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and we know that we’ve been called and set apart to serve him.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **Romans 13:11-12:**

Besides this you know the time,  
that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.  
For salvation is nearer to us now  
than when we first believed.  
The night is far gone; the day is at hand.  
So then let us cast off the works of darkness  
and put on the armor of light.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- Because of these realities, we know that it’s not just the suffering of the present time that is not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed in us, but also the good things of this life!
- Because of these realities, even things so seemingly important as the question of “to marry or not to marry” takes a back seat to the larger picture: rather, “Love God, and do what you will!”

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:32-35:**

I want you to be free from anxieties.  
The unmarried man is anxious about  
the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord.  
But the married man is anxious about  
worldly things, how to please his wife,  
and his interests are divided.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:32-35: (cont'd)**

And the unmarried or betrothed woman  
is anxious about the things of the Lord,  
how to be holy in body and spirit.  
But the married woman is anxious  
about worldly things, how to please her husband.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:32-35: (cont'd)**

I say this for your own benefit,  
not to lay any restraint upon you,  
but to promote good order  
and to secure your undivided devotion  
to the Lord.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- In verse 28, Paul had said, "Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that." Now he explains what he meant by that.
- Whereas single people can be focused exclusively on the things of the Lord, married people are anxious about pleasing their spouses and about worldly things. Their interests are thus divided.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- Thus, for those who grasp the truth of the call to live lives set apart and “on mission,” there is actually an advantage to being single.
- But Paul makes it clear that he’s not trying to lay down a sort of law – as in, “therefore, you must be single if you’re to be a real disciple of Christ.” No, but rather...

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

**1 Corinthians 7:32-35:** (cont’d)  
I say this for your own benefit,  
not to lay any restraint upon you,  
but to promote good order  
and to secure your undivided devotion  
to the Lord.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

**1 Corinthians 7:36-38:**  
If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly  
toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong,  
and it has to be, let him do as he wishes:  
let them marry – it is no sin.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

**1 Corinthians 7:36-38:** (cont’d)  
But whoever is firmly established in his heart,  
being under no necessity  
but having his desire under control,  
and has determined this in his heart,  
to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:36-38:** (cont'd)

So then he who marries his betrothed does well,  
and he who refrains from marriage  
will do even better.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- So again, are you engaged to marry? Are the passions strong? Go ahead and marry. It's no sin to do so. But do you have those raging desires under control? Then you can refrain from marriage.
- It's all good! It's just that the one who refrains from marriage will do *even better*, from the criterion of being better able to serve the Lord with singular purpose.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

#### **1 Corinthians 7:39-40:**

A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives.  
But if her husband dies, she is free  
to be married to whom she wishes,  
only in the Lord.  
Yet in my judgment she is happier  
if she remains as she is.  
And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- Finally, Paul speaks of a widow. Once her husband dies, she is free of her vows ("till death do we part"). And she is free to marry again. It is no sin for her to do so, provided she marries in the Lord. (No unequal yoking!)
- Yet she will be happier, says Paul, if she remains as she is. Why? Again, because she'll now at last be undivided in her focus on the things of God.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- “And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.” I love that Paul is so honest about this.
- On some issues (pertaining to separation and divorce), he’s spoken with prophetic authority – “not I, but the Lord,” as in, “this saith the Lord.”

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- On other things – staying in a marriage with a nonbeliever, or his teaching on betrothal situations – he’s spoken not by the prophetic word but with Spirit-guided wisdom – “not I, but the Lord” or “I have no command from the Lord.”
- Here, it’s sort of in the middle! “I think I have the Spirit of God on this.” Not a direct command, but more than mere wisdom. Amen.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- In summary, those who trust in Christ have been redeemed, bought for a price, brought from the kingdom of darkness into his marvelous light; but we are not our own; we belong to him. We have been called and set apart to serve him, conforming our lives to his word, being trained in godliness, and witnessing to his person and work, calling others out of the darkness by the gospel.

#### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- And when we understand our lives as being thus “on mission,” to be lived in light of the big picture of the reality of what he has already done, and of where all of this is heading (eternal life in fellowship with Christ and one another; the city of God!), then we realize that, not just the sufferings we endure, but even the good things of this life, are not ends in themselves, but are not worth comparing to the glory that is coming!

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- Therefore, you are free in Christ:  
Love God, and do what you will!
- Marry? Not marry? It's all good! Neither is required as "the" way for Christians. But what is new in Christ is that there is now a freedom for men and women to consider the matter from the perspective of our calling.

### Worldly Troubles vs. Undivided Devotion (7:25-40)

- And toward this end, singleness is advantageous in that it allows for undivided attention to the things of God, in a way that married life does not.
- Love God, and do what you will!

I Corinthians 8:1-13  
Knowledge, Love and Christian Freedom

### Statement of the Problem **"Now concerning food offered to idols"**

- This is the 6<sup>th</sup> problem covered in I Corinthians.  
Food sacrificed to idols.
- Paul's answer to this problem covers Chapter 8:1 to Chapter 11:1.
- Like the city of Athens, Corinth was the center for the worship of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love.
- There were multiple gods and deities as well.

## The Nature of the Problem

What complicated matters still further was this age believed strongly and fearfully in demons and devils. The air was full of them, and they were always lurking to gain an entry into a man, and, if they did, they would injure his body and unhinge his mind. One of the special ways in which these spirits gained entry was through food as a man ate and so got inside him. One of the ways of avoiding that was to dedicate the meat to some good god whose presence in the meat put up a barrier against the evil spirit. For that reason, nearly all animals were dedicated to a god before a slaughter; and if that was not done, as defense meat was blessed in the name of a god before it was eaten.

[William Barclay, *The Letters to Corinthians*, 72.]

## Paul's Response

### 8:1-3

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup> If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup> But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

## The Root of Problem

### Knowledge

Paul addressed the fundamental issue, "*all of us possess knowledge.*"

"This "knowledge" puffs up"

"If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know."

## On Knowledge

Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup> But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. <sup>20</sup> For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

I Corinthians 6:18-20

## On Knowledge

The Corinthians had studied the questions of the eating of the sacrificial meat, and they were convinced that they understood the problem except for a few minor details...they began with the intellect and determined their conduct by means of their intellect. That sort of procedure leads to pride, a sin which was not rare in Corinth. Knowledge without love is sin.

F. W. Grosheide, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 188

## Love

“Love builds up”

*So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

## On Love

Love has a good effect; it seeks the good of the community; it improves relationships and leads to good actions. Thus, before writing anything on the question under discussion, the apostle deals with its general background and analyses the evil principle which has brought the Corinthians to their attitude. The verdict is that they have started with knowledge and have neglected love.

F. W. Grosheide, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 189, See Gordon D. Fee's revised edition of this commentary, 402 ff.

## Paul's Response, Part Two

8:4-6 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”<sup>5</sup> For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—<sup>6</sup> yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

## One God and one Lord!

- Paul admitted, a partial argument made by some of the Corinthians
  - There is one true God
  - An idol is a false god—Lev. 2:1, I Chron. 16:26, Isaiah 2:8, Isaiah 10:10, 19:11 and 19, Isaiah 31:7, Psalm 90:5, Ezekiel 30:13, Habakkuk 2:18, Zec. 11:17
  - According to the Corinthians, this knowledge about the Triune God and idols is common sense.
- Therefore, A Christian cannot be led astray by knowingly eating meat offered to idols.
- But Paul objected to the common knowledge argument.

## Calvin, Cont.

For the man, who ventures upon anything in opposition to conscience, does thereby discover some contempt of God; for it is a token that we fear God, when we have respect to his will in all things. Hence you are not without contempt of God, if you so much as move a finger while uncertain, whether it may not be displeasing to him. As to meats, there is another thing to be considered, for they are not sanctified to us otherwise than by the word (1 Timothy 4:5.) If that word is wanting, there remains nothing but pollution — not that the creatures of God are polluted, but because man's use of them is impure. In fine, as men's hearts are purified by faith, so without faith there is nothing that is pure in the sight of God. [Calvin's Commentaries, XX:281]

## On “conscience, being weak, is defiled.”

God would have us try or attempt nothing but what we know for certain is agreeable to him. Whatever, therefore, is done with a doubting conscience, is, in consequence of doubts of that kind, faulty in the sight of God. And this is what he says, (Romans 14:23,) Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Hence the truth of the common saying, that “those build for hell, who build against their conscience.” For as the excellence of actions depends on the fear of God and integrity of conscience, so, on the other hand, there is no action, that is so good in appearance, as not to be polluted by a corrupt affection of the mind.

## Love as the Ground for Christian Liberty

**8:9-13** But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup> For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating<sup>[e]</sup> in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged,<sup>[d]</sup> if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? <sup>11</sup> And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. <sup>12</sup> Thus, sinning against your brothers<sup>[e]</sup> and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

## Proceed with Caution

- “We have here a noble instance of the principles on which Paul was willing to act. He was willing to deny himself of any gratification, if his conduct was likely to be the occasion of leading others into sin. Even from that which was in itself lawful he would abstain forever, if by indulgence he would be the occasion of another’s falling into transgression. But how rare is this virtue! How seldom is it practiced.!”

## According A. Barnes,

How few Christians and Christian ministers are there who deny themselves any gratification in things in themselves right, lest they should induce others to sin! And yet this is the grand principle of Christianity; and this should influence and guide all the professed friends and followers of Christ. This “principle” might be applied to many things in which many Christians now freely indulge; and if applied, would produce great and important changes in society.”

[Barnes Commentary: I Corinthians 8]

Amen!

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-27  
All Things to All People:  
All for the Sake of the Gospel

### [Review From Last Week](#)

#### **1 Corinthians 8:1:**

Now concerning food offered to idols:  
we know that “all of us possess knowledge.”  
This “knowledge” puffs up,  
but love builds up.

- *Knowledge that puffs up vs. love that builds up*

### Review From Last Week

#### **1 Corinthians 8:8-9:**

Food will not commend us to God.  
We are no worse off if we do not eat,  
and no better off if we do.  
But take care that this right of yours  
does not somehow become  
a stumbling block to the weak.

### Review From Last Week

- Idols are nothing and have no power at all (except over those who place their trust in them). Knowing this is just one of the blessings of our being in fellowship with the Living and True God.
- But we are not to let this knowledge puff us up, in such manner as that we insist on pressing our right to eat this meat even if that should become a stumbling block to our “weaker” brethren.

### Review From Last Week

- The “weaker” brother or sister in view here is one whose conscience is tender, who has not yet attained to the maturity of truly grasping their freedom in Christ.
- Paul is warning us that we should not press for our rights in such manner that these fellow believers might be caused to stumble back into the sin from which Christ had delivered them.

### Review From Last Week

#### **1 Corinthians 8:11-12:**

And so by your knowledge  
this weak person is destroyed,  
the brother for whom Christ died.  
Thus, sinning against your brothers  
and wounding their conscience  
when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

### Review From Last Week

#### **Mark 9:42:**

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

### Review From Last Week

#### **1 Corinthians 8:13:**

Therefore,  
if food makes my brother stumble,  
I will never eat meat,  
lest I make my brother stumble.

### Review From Last Week

#### **1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23:**

“All things are lawful for me,”  
but not all things are helpful.  
“All things are lawful for me,”  
but I will not be enslaved by anything....  
but not all things build up.

### Review From Last Week

- I love bacon am free to eat it! But I will not serve bacon to a recent Jewish convert, whose conscience might be troubled by it.
- We are free to drink alcoholic beverages (within reason). But I would think it utterly unwise to hold Bible studies in a pub. (Yes, this is a thing.)
- Paul is calling us to prioritize love for others over seeking our right to ease, pleasure, and comfort.

### All Things for All People:

#### All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:1-27)

1. Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)
2. Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)
3. I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)
4. I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

### All Things for All People:

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### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

#### 1 Corinthians 9:1-3:

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?  
Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?  
Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?  
If to others I am not an apostle,  
at least I am to you,  
for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.  
This is my defense to those who would examine me.

### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

- This seems at first to be an abrupt shift from the themes of the last chapter, so much so that many commentators read this as an entirely new section in which Paul is defending his rights as an apostle.
- In fact, he is. But he is doing so only en route to making a larger point.

### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

- He is establishing his rights as an apostle to make the larger point that he has not made use of these rights.
- Thus, we see that it is a continuation of the same theme as chapter 8. Paul is saying, in effect: "Take me, for example..."
- We are to imitate and emulate Paul's example of forgoing his rights in our own lives. (Matt. 10:24)

### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

#### 1 Corinthians 9:1-3:

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?

- *Again, "Take me, for example, if you want to know what having freedom and rights, but then choosing not to use them out of love for others and from prioritizing the gospel looks like!"*

### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

#### 1 Corinthians 9:1-3:

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?  
Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?  
If to others I am not an apostle,  
at least I am to you,  
for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.  
This is my defense to those who would examine me.

### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

- That Paul is an apostle is proved by (a) the fact that he is a witness of and to the Risen Lord Jesus, and (b) the fact of the Corinthian congregation itself! They are the seal of his apostleship.
- As he would shortly thereafter write in his Second Letter to the Corinthians:

### Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)

#### **2 Corinthians 3:2-3:**

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

### All Things for All People:

#### All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:1-27)

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### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:4-6:**

Do we not have the right to eat and drink?  
Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?  
Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?

- "We" *being the apostles.*

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

- We've established that I am indeed an apostle. Do I not therefore have a right to support, as do the other apostles?
- By the way, we are given an interesting historical insight here, concerning the marital status of Peter and of the brothers (plural, not just James!) of the Lord.

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:7:**

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?  
Who plants a vineyard  
without eating any of its fruit?  
Or who tends a flock  
without getting some of the milk?

- *Three examples from everyday life. The point? Labor is rewarded by the enjoyment of its fruit.*

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:8-9:**

Do I say these things on human authority?  
Does not the Law say the same?  
For it is written in the Law of Moses,  
"You shall not muzzle an ox  
when it treads out the grain."  
Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

#### **Deuteronomy 25:3-4:**

Forty stripes may be given him, but not more,  
lest, if one should go on to beat him  
with more stripes than these,  
your brother be degraded in your sight.

You shall not muzzle an ox  
when it is treading out the grain.

- *What is the connection? Do not degrade others.*

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

- The four categories of unrighteousness that violate the moral law and bring down God's righteous judgment everywhere and in every age: the three "I's" that pollute the land: idolatry, injustice, and immorality; and degradation of God's creation and of his creatures (including the crowning creature in creation that bears his image). (Note how these sins are different in character than violations of the ceremonial law.)

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

- But we might ask, what in the world has this verse from deep in Deuteronomy to do with supporting pastors...?
- Well, as it turns out, as Paul might say:  
"much in every way!"

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:10:**

Does he not speak entirely for our sake?  
It was written for our sake,  
because the plowman should plow in hope  
and the thresher thresh in hope  
of sharing in the crop.

- *If even an ox is to enjoy some fruit for its labor, how much more for us! Note the linkage Paul establishes between labor and hope.*

### Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:11-12a:**

If we have sown  
spiritual things among you,  
is it too much if we reap  
material things from you?  
If others share this rightful claim on you,  
do not we even more?

- *Surely, Paul's sowing the word that has issued in the harvest of believers is labor worth its wage.*

### All Things for All People:

#### All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:1-27)

1. Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)
2. Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)
3. I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)
4. I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

### I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:12b:**

Nevertheless,  
we have not made use of this right,  
but we endure anything  
rather than put an obstacle  
in the way of the gospel of Christ.

- *Here is Paul's big point: I've established that I have the right. But I haven't made use of it.*

### I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)

- Paul is pointing to himself as an example of what this love looks like that prioritizes removing any and all impediments to others that might block or obscure the gospel of Christ over my right to ease, comfort, pleasure, or whatever else.
- Here is an illustration of love that builds up, as opposed to the Corinthians' pattern of knowledge that puffs up.

### I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:13:**

Do you not know that those  
who are employed in the temple service  
get their food from the temple,  
and those who serve at the altar  
share in the sacrificial offerings?

- *Reiterating the point: employment in holy labor still entails labor and the hope of enjoying its fruit.*

### I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:14:**

In the same way,  
the Lord commanded that  
those who proclaim the gospel  
should get their living by the gospel.

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**1 Timothy 5:17-18:**

Let the elders who rule well  
be considered worthy of double honor,  
especially those who labor  
in preaching and teaching.  
For the Scripture says,  
"You shall not muzzle an ox  
when it treads out the grain," (Deut. 25:4)  
and, "The laborer deserves his wages." (Luke 10:7)

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**1 Corinthians 9:15:**

But I have made no use of any of these rights,  
nor am I writing these things  
to secure any such provision. *(note this!)*  
For I would rather die than have  
anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting.

- *What does he mean here? What is this "ground for boasting" of which he speaks?*

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**1 Corinthians 9:16:**

For if I preach the gospel,  
that gives me no ground for boasting.  
For necessity is laid upon me.  
Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**Jeremiah 1:17:**

But you, dress yourself for work;  
arise, and say to them  
everything that I command you.  
Do not be dismayed by them,  
lest I dismay you before them.

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**Jeremiah 20:9:**

If I say, "I will not mention him,  
or speak any more in his name,"  
there is in my heart as it were  
a burning fire shut up in my bones,  
and I am weary with holding it in,  
and I cannot.

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**Acts 26:16-18:**

"But rise and stand upon your feet,  
for I have appeared to you for this purpose,  
to appoint you as a servant and witness  
to the things in which you have seen me  
and to those in which I will appear to you,  
delivering you from your people  
and from the Gentiles –

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**Acts 26:16-18: (cont'd)**

"To whom I am sending you to open their eyes,  
so that they may turn from darkness to light  
and from the power of Satan to God,  
that they may receive forgiveness of sins  
and a place among those  
who are sanctified by faith in me."

**I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

**Acts 4:20:**

"For we cannot but speak  
of what we have seen and heard."

### **I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

#### **1 Corinthians 9:17-18:**

For if I do this of my own will,  
I have a reward, but not of my own will,  
I am still entrusted with a stewardship.  
What then is my reward?  
That in my preaching I may present the gospel  
free of charge, so as not to make full use  
of my right in the gospel.

### **I Have Not Made Use of These Rights (9:12b-18)**

- What then? Paul's reward is precisely that he does not make use of his right in the gospel, that he may present the gospel free of charge. This is his gift, his freewill offering, his expression of gratitude, to God.
- For Paul, his not making use of his right as an apostle to receive support is not a matter of suffering for him (nor less is it a cause for grumbling), but he sees it as is his very reward!

### **All Things for All People:**

#### **All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:1-27)**

1. Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)
2. Have I Not the Rights of an Apostle? (9:4-12a)
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4. I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

### **I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

#### **1 Corinthians 9:19:**

For though I am free from all,  
I have made myself a servant to all,  
that I might win more of them.

- *Here is the key to understanding Paul's ministry, and the entire point of this passage! Paul sees the prize at the end (Phil. 3:14) and runs the race, faithful to his calling, prioritizing the gospel even above his own right to freedom, ease, and comfort.*

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**1 Corinthians 9:20:**

To the Jews I became as a Jew,  
in order to win Jews.

To those under the law

I became as one under the law  
(though not being myself under the law)  
that I might win those under the law.

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**Galatians 5:1-4:**

For freedom Christ has set us free;  
stand firm therefore,  
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Look: I, Paul, say to you  
that if you accept circumcision,  
Christ will be of no advantage to you.

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**Galatians 5:1-4: (cont'd)**

I testify again to every man  
who accepts circumcision  
that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

You are severed from Christ,  
you who would be justified by the law;  
you have fallen away from grace.

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**Acts 16:3:**

Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him,  
and he took him and circumcised him  
because of the Jews who were in those places,  
for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

### I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:21:**

To those outside the law  
I became as one outside the law  
(not being outside the law of God  
but under the law of Christ)  
that I might win those outside the law.

### I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:22a:**

To the weak I became weak,  
that I might win the weak.

- *Hint: as you should, O foolish Corinthians!*
- *And as we should as well, O people of Fourth!*

### I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

#### **1 Corinthians 9:22b:**

I have become all things to all people,  
that by all means I might save some.

- *This can be read cynically as entailing hypocrisy or compromise, but Paul intends no such reading.*

### I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)

- This is about taking the gospel commission seriously, and about loving others enough to set aside what may be my right, but which right might, in the doing of which, obscure or block the reception of the gospel.
- Unto what end...?

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**1 Corinthians 9:22b-23:**

I have become all things to all people,  
that by all means I might save some.

I do it all for the sake of the gospel,  
that I may share with them in its blessings.

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

- The reward of all this prioritization of the gospel, even over my own rights, is that we might share the blessings of Christ. Thus, love and the enjoyment of it in communion with God and one another is the motive and end of all our striving.

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**1 Corinthians 9:24-25:**

Do you not know that in a race  
all the runners compete,  
but only one receives the prize?  
So run that you may obtain it.

Every athlete exercises self-control in all things.  
They do it to receive a perishable wreath,  
but we an imperishable.

**I Do It All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:19-27)**

**1 Corinthians 9:26-27:**

So I do not run aimlessly;  
I do not box as one beating the air.

But I discipline my body  
and keep it under control,  
lest after preaching to others  
I myself should be disqualified.

### All Things for All People:

#### All for the Sake of the Gospel (9:1-27)

1. Am I Not an Apostle? (9:1-3)
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*And this way of love, in the end, though it involves discipline and self-control, to be led by the Spirit and not by our own flesh, is not a grievous sacrifice but a very great reward and joy.*

## 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-22 Idols Aren't Real, but Idolatry Is: Flee From Idolatry!

### Review From Last Week

- An idol in itself is nothing, and it is fine for we "strong" Christians, who understood this, to act according to this knowledge *vis a vis* ourselves.
- However, love is more important than knowledge! So even though I may "know" that eating meat sacrificed to an idol is all right for myself, yet if it should cause my brother to stumble, I will not do it, out of concern for him and his spiritual wellbeing.

### Review From Last Week

- Just as Paul gave up his "right" to be supported by his own preaching of the gospel, so we "strong" must sometimes give up our "right" to do this or that, based on the principle of love towards the "weaker" brother.
- Then Paul showed us how important it is for Christians to give up their "rights" if doing so will help others come to Christ and/or grow in Christ.

### Review From Last Week

- Finally, Paul showed us how a Christian must be willing to give up some things – even “good” things – for the sake of winning the race God has set before us, otherwise we may become disqualified in the competition of the Christian life.
- We pick up from there, on the theme of disqualification...

### Idols Aren't Real, but Idolatry Is: Flee From Idolatry! (10:1-22)

1. All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)
2. OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)
3. A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)
4. *Koinonia* with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)

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### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

#### 1 Corinthians 10:1-4a:

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were **all** under the cloud, and **all** passed through the sea, and **all** were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and **all** ate the same spiritual food, and **all** drank the same spiritual drink.

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

ALL OF "OUR FATHERS" ...

1. Were under the cloud:  
*God's covering shelter and leading presence*
2. Passed through the sea:  
*God's deliverance from bondage to new life*
3. Were baptized into Moses in cloud and sea:  
*Sealed into the covenant blessings and duties*
4. Ate and drank the same spiritual food and drink:  
*Bread from heaven and water from the rock*

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- Just like in our baptism, where the promises and privileges of God are visibly sealed to us and we are ingrafted into Christ, so for the Israelites when God redeemed them: they had been redeemed – not so as that they should wander off and do whatever they want. No, but to the contrary: now they belonged to God! ALL of them.
- So, too, with all of us...

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

**1 Corinthians 6:19b-20:**

You are not your own,  
for you were bought with a price.  
So glorify God in your body.

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- *Baptism is a picture of this reality, given to us to serve as a reminder through the course of our lives of who we are and what are and whose we are!*

**Romans 6:3-4:**

Do you not know that **all of us** who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

#### Romans 6:3-4: (cont'd)

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

ALL OF "OUR FATHERS" ...

1. Were under the cloud:  
*God's covering shelter and leading presence*
2. Passed through the sea:  
*God's deliverance from bondage to new life*
3. Were baptized into Moses in cloud and sea:  
*Sealed into the covenant blessings and duties*
4. Ate and drank the same spiritual food and drink:  
*Bread from heaven and water from the rock*

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- What then? Paul is showing us that the Old Testament saints enjoyed the covenantal blessings and privileges of God's covering shelter and presence, his deliverance, and his provision. His intent is that we discern the strong parallel between their covenantal privileges and blessings and our own. The Hebrews in the wilderness really had these benefits. Keep this in mind; there's a "nevertheless" coming! But first...

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

#### 1 Corinthians 10:3-4:

And all ate the same spiritual food,  
and all drank the same spiritual drink.  
*For they drank from the spiritual Rock  
that followed them,  
and the Rock was Christ.*

#### **All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

- But what's with the rock following them around? Paul could be referring to a rabbinic legend that says the rock literally followed them through the wilderness.
- But we don't need to have that picture. Rather, the picture is one of Christ's constant presence and provision with them all the way.

#### **All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

- But ... was Christ in the Old Testament?
- Yes! This is a deep principle for understanding the Scripture. Christ is no Plan B: we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

#### **All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

##### **Ephesians 1:3-6:**

Blessed be the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us in Christ  
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,  
even as he chose us in him  
before the foundation of the world,  
that we should be holy and blameless before him.

#### **All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

##### **Ephesians 1:3-6: (cont'd)**

In love he predestined us for adoption  
through Jesus Christ,  
according to the purpose of his will,  
to the praise of his glorious grace,  
with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- This points to something even deeper, involving the Trinity and the structure of our relationship with God.
- The LORD is and always was the Triune God, and the Mediator has always been the second person of the Trinity, the Son-Word. The world was made through him; and no one has ever seen the Father except the Son who reveals him.

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- The Son-Logos reveals the Father; the Son-Logos is and always has been and always will be the Mediator, him in, by, and through whom alone we can know God and have fellowship with him.
- Through the entire course of the Old Testament, he has been actively interacting with, leading, and redeeming his people – from the very beginning!

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- He has been doing this not just through the promises of Scripture that point to him, but in his appearing in various forms (e.g., from his walking in the Garden of Eden, to his appearing to the Patriarchs and others as the Angel of the LORD, extending to other phenomena of his presence, like the smoking fire pot, the burning bush, the glory cloud); and also in typologies (e.g., Adam, David, Israel, the Temple, etc.).

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

##### **1 Peter 1:10-11:**

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time ***the Spirit of Christ in them*** was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- *So back to our passage, yes, we can say that Christ was with Israel through the wilderness wanderings, as evidenced by the manna and water by which they were spiritually and physically sustained all those years.*

#### Psalm 105:41:

He opened the rock, and water gushed out;  
it flowed through the desert like a river.

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- Paul is here assuming “the real presence of Christ in Israel’s history,” accompanying and providing for them. God’s wisdom guided and sustained Israel, and “Christ is the wisdom and power of God.” (1:30, 2:6, 16)

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

- So Israel in the Exodus gives us a picture for us to think about: they were blessed with all these many spiritual experiences.
- But... most of them ended up being disqualified from entering into the Promised Land. Though all had enjoyed the covenant benefits, not all ultimately inherited the promise. This is a warning for us to consider...

#### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

#### 1 Corinthians 10:5:

Nevertheless, with most of them  
God was not pleased,  
for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

- *“All” received the blessings, but the far greater part of their number displeased God, and their bodies were left in the desert. Message: don’t do likewise.*

**All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

**Psalm 95:1-7a:**

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;  
let us make a joyful noise  
to the rock of our salvation!  
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
let us make a joyful noise to him  
with songs of praise!

**All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

**Psalm 95:1-7a: (cont'd)**

For the LORD is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are the depths of the earth;  
the heights of the mountains are his also.  
The sea is his, for he made it,  
and his hands formed the dry land.

**All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

**Psalm 95:1-7a: (cont'd)**

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
and the sheep of his hand.

**All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)**

**Psalm 95:7b-11: (cont'd)**

Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,  
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,  
when your fathers put me to the test  
and put me to the proof,  
though they had seen my work.

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

**Psalm 95:7b-11:** (cont'd)

For forty years I loathed that generation and said,  
"They are a people who go astray in their heart,  
and they have not known my ways."

Therefore, I swore in my wrath,  
"They shall not enter my rest."

### Idols Aren't Real, but Idolatry Is: Flee From Idolatry! (10:1-22)

1. All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)
2. OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)
3. A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)
4. *Koinonia* with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

**1 Corinthians 10:6:**

Now these things took place  
as examples for us,  
that we might not desire [*crave*] evil as they did.

- *What incurred God's displeasure? Craving! Craving is "yearning for or intensely desiring what God has placed out of bounds."*

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

- As one commentator put it, "the craving for what lies on the other side of a permitted line brings judgment and disaster."
- And what is sin? Is it not misdirected desire? According to one theologian, sin is "an autonomy of the will that puts the self in the center and uses everything else as a means to the self as an end."

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

- This misdirected desire leads inexorably (a) to idolatry, (b) to immorality, (c) to doubt that puts God to the test, and (d) to despair, complaint, and grumbling.
- Paul now gives four examples of how the Old Testament saints thus disqualified themselves, to serve as a warning for the Corinthians (and us), especially “the strong.”

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:8:**

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

- *The rotten fruit of craving #2: Immorality!*
- *Again, the absence of self-control leads to disaster – as for the saints of old, so for us today.*

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:7:**

Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

- *The rotten fruit of craving #1: Idolatry!*
- *Beware of unrestrained self-indulgence. The absence of self-control leads to disaster.*

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:9:**

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents...

- *The rotten fruit of craving #3: Testing God!*
- *What does it mean, to “put Christ to the test”?*

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

- We test Christ by adopting a presumptuous attitude, provoking the Lord to the very limit, in the confident, complacent assumption that he will protect his people and not let them go.
- The Hebrews' overconfident attempt in the wilderness to play off God's protective love against their willful craving failed to work, and they found destruction by the serpents!

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

- Grumbling is in part the sin of ingratitude, despising God's provision for us, despising his grace to us.
- But grumbling is also a sin of disloyalty, in that it sows seeds of discontentment among others. As we see through the course of the wilderness wanderings, this particular sin angers the LORD.

### OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:10:**

Nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

- *The rotten fruit of craving #4: Grumbling!*
- *What is our grumbling but a whiny discontent with God's provision. Be careful of this malaise of discontent...*

### Idols Aren't Real, but Idolatry Is:

#### Flee From Idolatry! (10:1-22)

1. All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)
2. OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)
3. *A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)*
4. *Koinonia* with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)

### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:11:**

Now these things happened to them  
as an example,  
but they were written down for our instruction,  
on whom the end of the ages has come.

- *Note the way this teaches us how to read Scripture! It respects the original situation while applying it to our own.*

### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

- "On whom the end of the ages has come..."  
The end of the age is not simply nigh, but is upon us! The age to come is already, and not yet.
- Because Christians still live within the continuing world order, we must guard against presumption and heed moral exhortation; but because we belong to the new age, we have access to a definitive disclosure of God's will and access to divine grace in Christ.

### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:12:**

Therefore, let anyone who thinks  
that he stands take heed lest he fall.

- *A warning to the complacent. We ain't there yet!*
- *Dangers still lurk, O pilgrim!*
- *Your adversary the devil still prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.*

### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:13:**

No temptation has overtaken you  
that is not common to man.  
God is faithful,  
and he will not let you be tempted  
beyond your ability,  
but with the temptation  
he will also provide the way of escape,  
that you may be able to endure it.

#### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

1. All of us are tempted all the time.
2. To be tempted is not to sin. (Heb. 2:18, 4:15)
3. Temptation is not from God; but we are tempted when we are lured & enticed by our own desire.
4. It is a test. The devil's test (temptation) is to weaken and destroy you, by your yielding to the temptation, wherein desire conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

#### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

7. Resist the devil, flee from idolatry and sexual immorality. Beware the dangers of craving, of misdirected desires rooted in the prideful entitlement of a life where "me" is the center.
8. Above all, beware the seemingly opposite sins of presumption and despair, because in either of these estates our spiritual immunity is weakened and our ordinary proneness to sin is magnified to dangerous proportions.

#### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

5. God's test is to strengthen you, by your withstanding the temptation, because the testing of your faith brings forth steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect, for then we will be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
6. God is faithful: he will provide an escape.

#### A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)

9. If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Amen!

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

#### **Hebrews 3:12-14:**

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

### All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)

#### **Hebrews 3:18-19, 4:11:**

And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief... Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

### Idols Aren't Real, but Idolatry Is:

#### Flee From Idolatry! (10:1-22)

1. All Partake, but Only Some Are Faithful (10:1-5)
2. OT Examples of Disqualifying Behavior (10:6-10)
3. A Call to Stand Strong vs. Temptation (10:11-13)
4. *Koinonia* with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)

### *Koinonia* with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:14:**

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

#### **John Chrysostom:**

"Be rid of this sin with all speed."

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:15:**

I speak as to sensible people;  
judge for yourselves what I say.

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

“They had thought that knowledge mainly concerned the nonexistence of idols and liberty to act in a robust, libertarian way; but it turns out that knowledge more profoundly concerns solidarity with the whole covenant people of God, who include the vulnerable, and the risk of incurring divine displeasure.”

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:16:**

The cup of blessing that we bless,  
is it not a participation  
in the blood of Christ?  
The bread that we break,  
is it not a participation  
in the body of Christ?

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

- Like the Passover meal, the Lord’s Supper is a communal retelling of the story of our deliverance and a communal participation in the promises of God – specifically, in Christ’s body and blood.
- *Koinonia* is rendered as “participation” because “fellowship” is not strong enough here.

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:17:**

Because there is **one** bread,  
we who are many are **one** body,  
for we all partake of the **one** bread.

- *ONE three times. There is a single, common ground of unity, a single basis of salvation, that is, the body of Christ and the shared blood of Christ.*

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

- The giving and receiving of the bread and the cup constitute covenant pledges of loyalty and of solidarity in which God pledges himself to his people and God's people pledge themselves to God.
- They are tangible and visible pledges of God's redemptive love and of our reception of that and our own pledge to be faithful.

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:18:**

Consider the people of Israel:  
are not those who eat the sacrifices  
participants in the altar?

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:19-20:**

What do I imply then?  
That food offered to idols is anything,  
or that an idol is anything?  
No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice  
they offer to demons and not to God.  
I do not want you to be  
participants with demons.

#### *Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)*

- Paul's argument here doesn't contradict his earlier point that an idol isn't anything (8:4-6). But he affirms that perceptions of some Christians about what is involved here differ, and his pastoral point is that these people's perceptions matter, even if they may be mistaken. They cannot simply be ignored.

#### *Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)*

- In other words, "there is a difference between metaphysical, ontological, divinely given truth and what is interpreted or perceived as "true" by human social construction."
- Some in Corinth perceive the idol sacrifices as offered to demons, and perceive those who offer them or have offered them on their behalf as participants in demonic forces.

#### *Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)*

- Paul's concern to do justice both to the absolute nonexistence of idols and false deities and to the perceived experience of becoming dominated by them as powers.

#### *Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)*

- God is totally sovereign and salvation is from the sovereign LORD. But even as Paul would of course affirm this, he would have us recognize the destructive effects that idolatry and belief in demonic forces have played and still can play in people's lives. These effects have still to be addressed.

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:21:**

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord  
and the cup of demons.

You cannot partake of the table of the Lord  
and the table of demons.

- *Paul mentions "demons" four times in these two verses. And he does so only here and in one other verse (1 Tim. 4:1) in all his letters!*

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

- Paul doesn't often talk about demons. But he acknowledges that this still-fallen world, demons are out there, and idolatry (among other sins, but idolatry especially) opens us to this evil. So he warns Christians not to be involved in this sort of communal participation.

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

**1 Corinthians 10:22:**

Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?  
Are we stronger than he?

- *Such a breach of covenant loyalty and love would risk arousing the Lord's jealousy. And Paul's point is, do you really want to risk doing that?*
- *Recall Psalm 95!*

***Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)***

- At first sight, Paul's teaching here may seem to contradict the view he'd expressed earlier (from chapters 8-9) where eating food offered to idols didn't really matter (as idols are nothing), so long as we take into account the lingering effects of those idols (i.e., the damage done by the "weaker" brother's idolatrous past, and his tender conscience in this regard), and so long as we be concerned not to cause him to stumble.

### *Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)*

- But now he is warning us of the real danger of eating food that has been offered to idols – or at least doing so frequently, carelessly, and thoughtlessly.
- As we'll see next week, in the following verses (through 11:1), he will tie his whole argument together in a powerful and beautiful way.

### *Koinonia with Christ vs. with Demons (10:14-22)*

- For now, let us say only this: idols aren't real, but idolatry is! And we need to be careful, mindful, remembering the example of what happened in the wilderness as a warning to us, to not presume upon God's grace to engage in behaviors that may provoke him to jealousy.
- Idols are nothing. But idolatry is lethal. Resist the devil, yes. But flee from idolatry!

# Do All to the Glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1

PAUL'S SUMMARY

## Chapters 8-10

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up

Your right to eat isn't worth destroying the brother for whom  
Christ died.

CHAPTER 9

A

POSITIVE EXAMPLE

**Paul**

He catalogs his legitimate rights and then voluntarily surrenders them for the sake of the gospel

CHAPTER 10:1-13

B

NEGATIVE EXAMPLE

**Israel**

They had every spiritual privilege and they still fell. Spiritual experiences and knowledge aren't guarantees of faith.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:14

**Flee  
Idolatry.**

*"They must not try how near they can go,  
but how far they can fly."*

— Robertson & Plummer

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16

**κοινωνία**

koinōnía — communal participation

*"The cup of blessing that we bless,  
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?  
The bread that we break,  
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:17

*“Because there is one bread,  
we who are many are one body,  
for we all partake of the one bread.”*

The Supper unites us to Christ and constitutes us as a community.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:21

*“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord  
and the cup of demons.*

*You cannot partake of the table of the Lord  
and the table of demons.”*

“ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL”

1 COR 6:12

## Individual

*“I will not be  
dominated by anything.”*

Direction: inward  
What does this do to me?



1 COR 10:23

## Communal

*“Not all things  
build up.”*

Direction: outward  
What does this do to others?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23

# οικοδομέω

oikodomēō — to build up the house

When the Corinthians insist on their rights  
at others’ expense, they’re demolishing  
what God is building.

→ Anticipates the major theme of chapters 12–14

# Freedom **FOR**

not freedom from

---

Freedom for love. For service.

For the good of my neighbor. For the glory of God.

CASE STUDY 1 • THE MEAT MARKET • VV. 25-26

*“The earth is the Lord’s,  
and the fullness thereof.”*

— Psalm 24:1

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Paul grounds Christian freedom in the doctrine of creation.

CASE STUDY 2 • THE DINNER PARTY • VV. 27-29

*“If one of the unbelievers invites you  
to dinner and you are disposed to go,  
eat whatever is set before you without  
raising any question on the ground  
of conscience.”*

---

“You don’t need to ask fussy questions.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10:28-29

*“But if someone says to you,  
‘This has been offered in sacrifice,’  
then do not eat it...  
I do not mean your conscience,  
but his.”*

TWO WORDS FOR SACRIFICE

## εἰδωλόθυτον

eidōlothyton

“Food sacrificed to an idol”

The Christian/Jewish term — negative connotations.  
Paul uses this throughout chapters 8–10.

## ιερόθυτον

hierothyton

“Food devoted to a god”

The neutral pagan term — no negative connotation.  
Used by the speaker in v. 28. A pagan wouldn't call it “idol food.”

**The mature believer  
holds their freedom  
loosely enough  
to lay it down  
when someone else's  
good requires it.**

## Orthodoxy ≠ Orthopraxy

Having the right answer is not the same  
as taking the right action.

PAUL'S CRITERIA • VV. 31–33, 11:1

## A Framework for Faithful Action

HIGHEST POSITIVE	Do all for the glory of God	(v. 31)
HIGHEST NEGATIVE	Give no offense — to Jews, Greeks, or God's church	(v. 32)
2ND POSITIVE	Take account of the interests of everyone	(v. 33a)
2ND NEGATIVE	Not seeking my own advantage	(v. 33b)
SPECIFIC GOAL	The good of the many, with a view to their salvation	(v. 33c)
FORMAL GROUND	Follow the example of Paul, who follows Christ	(11:1)

Every one of these criteria faces outward.

ROMANS 14:20

*“Do not, for the sake of \_\_\_\_\_,  
destroy the work of God.”*

The faith of the vulnerable believer.

The witness of this church.

The unity of the body.

The advance of the gospel.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

*“Be imitators of me,  
as I am of Christ.”*

A cruciform pattern of life.

Let's pray.

Sunday April 26, 2026  
I Corinthians 11

Head Covering—11:1-16  
The Lord's Supper—11:17-34

## Biblical-Theological Basis for Head Covering

God is the Head of All People—verse 3

- *The head of every man is Christ*
- *The head of every woman is her husband*
- *God is the head of Christ*

## Biblical Support

**And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,<sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.** Eph. 1:22

**Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.** Eph. 4:15

## Men's Head Covering in Worship

*Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head—verse 4*

- As a mark of respect to God, men must not cover their heads in worship.
- For women, the opposite is true

## Women's Head Covering As An Emblem of Authority

*But every wife<sup>[e]</sup> who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. <sup>6</sup> For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head.*

## Paul's Biblical Analysis

### Man

- In the image and glory of God v7
- For man was not made from woman-v8
- Neither was man created for woman-v9

### Woman

- but woman the glory of man-v7
- but woman from man—verse-v8
- but woman for man-v9

## Paul's Argument from Creation

### Genesis 2: 18-24

- So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made<sup>[1]</sup> into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,
- “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”<sup>[1]</sup>

## The Angels?

### V10

That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, **because of the angels.**<sup>[1]</sup>

## Argument from Nature

*Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? <sup>14</sup> Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, <sup>15</sup> but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. <sup>16</sup> If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.*

# The Lord's Table

I Corinthians 11:17-34

## The Problems

Divisions in the Body of Christ

Abuse of the Lord's Supper

## The Church at Corinth

The early Church was the one place in all the ancient world where the barriers were down. That world was very rigidly divided; there were the free men and the slave; there were the Greeks and the barbarians—the people who did not speak Greek; there were the Jews and the Gentiles; there were the Roman citizens and the lesser breeds without the law; there were the cultured and the ignorant. The Church was the one place where all men [and women] could and did come together.

William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, revised Edition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 101

## The Profanation of the Lord's Supper

The Corinthians who are abusing the Lord's Supper have minimized or lost the basic Pauline sense that the life of faith is a life of community. The abusers have privatized their faith and their worship in a way that Paul finds it totally unacceptable; they have lost any sense that love as their right relation to others is the proper and necessary expression of their faith.

The New Interpreter's Bible X:935

## The Supper Gathers...

- But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you **come together** it is not for the better but for the worse.<sup>18</sup> For, in the first place, when you **come together** as a **church**.. When you come together...

Verse 30

Verse 31

## Self-Examination

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty **concerning the body and blood of the Lord**.<sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.<sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without **discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself**.<sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.<sup>[h]</sup><sup>31</sup> **But if we judged<sup>[l]</sup> ourselves truly, we would not be judged**.<sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined<sup>[l]</sup> so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

## Self-Examination

So, before we come to the Lord's Table, we are to make a curious and critical trial of ourselves by the Word. Self-examination, being a reflexive act, is difficult. It is hard for a man to look inward and see the face of his own soul. The eye can see everything but itself. But this work is necessary because, if we do not examine ourselves, we are at a loss about our spiritual estate...we should examine our sins that they may be mortified, our wants that they be supplied, our graces that they may be strengthened.

Thomas Watson, *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper* (in *The Puritans on the Lord's Supper*), 152-153

## Self-Examination

Christians have an obligation to know where they stand, and the way to do that is by self-examining their standing before God and in Christ...Without proper self-assessment, believers may lose track of where they really are in the life of faith. One's birth into the life of faith is associated with Christ's death; one's maturity or completion is identified with Christ's coming to mark the end of the age. The life of faith is lived from new birth to maturity or adulthood, and Paul sees it ideally as a progress, as growth in which one moves along a line between the two horizons of Christ's death on the one side and the *Parousia* on the other.

The New Interpreter's Bible, X: 938

# 1 Corinthians 12

Living a spiritual life the Body of Christ



Dave Shultz  
May 3, 2026

## PREVIOUSLY

(1)

...that in every way you were enriched in him **in all speech** and **all knowledge** (1:5)

So that you are **not lacking in any gift** (*charisma*) (1:7)

**that there be no divisions** among you...**united** in the same mind (1:10)

God chose what is low and despised in the world... so that **no human being might boast** (1:28-29)

## PREVIOUSLY

(2)

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God...So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God...**Now we have received...the Spirit who is from God**, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (2:10-12)

The **natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (2:14)

## PREVIOUSLY

(3)

But I, brothers, could not address you as **spiritual people**, but as people of the flesh. (3:1)

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that **God's Spirit dwells in you**? (3:16)

Do you not know that your **bodies are members of Christ**? (6:15) (Paul previews this illustration he gives here in chapter 12)

But **each has his own gift from God**, one of one kind and one of another. (7:6) (Paul previews his introduction of gifts here)

Because there is one bread, **we who are many are one body**, for we all partake of the one bread. (10:17) (NOTE the imagery of the many being of one body)

## One of Paul's goals: define what is meant by spiritual.

**1 Corinthians 2: 10-16** - <sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the **Spirit**. For the **Spirit** searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the **spirit** of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the **Spirit** of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the **spirit** of the world, but the **Spirit** who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the **Spirit**, interpreting **spiritual truths** to those who are **spiritual**.



<sup>14</sup> The **natural** person does not accept the things of the **Spirit** of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are **spiritually** discerned. <sup>15</sup> The **spiritual** person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

## ...and 1 Corinthians 1 Cor 3:1-4

<sup>1</sup> But I, brothers, could not address you as **spiritual people**, but as **people of the flesh**, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, <sup>3</sup> for **you are still of the flesh...**"



## How has this lack of "spirituality" presented itself:

**Divisions/quarrels/strife** in the church (1:10-17; 3:1-4; 6:1-8, and 11:18-19)

And **you are arrogant!** (5:2)

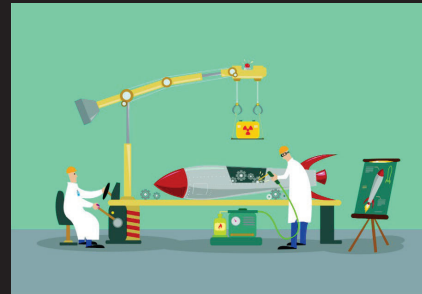
**Your boasting is not good.** (5:6) Pride (e.g. So **let no one boast in men.** (3:21))

I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but **brother goes to law against brother...**(6:5-6)

For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or **do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?** What shall I say to you? **Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.** (11: 21-22)



## We need to "reverse engineer" Paul's message



## Selected Words/Phrases from 1 Corinthians 14

[1] Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. [2] For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. [3] On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. [4] The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. [5] Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. [6] Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? [7] If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? [8] And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? [9] So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. [10] There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning. [11] But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. [12] So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. [13] Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. [14] For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. [15] What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. [16] Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? [17] For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. [18] I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. [19] Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. [20] Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. [21] In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me," says the Lord. [22] Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. [23] If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? [24] But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, [25] the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. [26] What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. [27] If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. [28] But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. [29] Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. [30] If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. [31] For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. [32] And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. [33] For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. [36] Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? [37] If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. [38] If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. [39] So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. [40] But all things should be done decently and in order.

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## Paul's focus on speaking in tongues – 1 Cor 14-12

1 Cor 13: 1 - 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: 8 – Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for **tongues**, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Cor 12: 10 – to another **various kinds of tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**.

1 Cor 12: 28 - ...**various kinds of tongues**

1 Cor 12: 30 - ...Do all **speak with tongues**? Do all interpret?

## The Structure of 1 Cor 12-14

We see an **A-B-A** pattern:

**A:** A **descriptive framework** for what of the spiritual life looks like (Chapter 12)

**B:** The **fundamental spiritual reality** that empowers the spiritual life - Love (Chapter 13)

**A:** A very specific response ("**correctives**") to the **descriptive framework** presented in Chapter 12 – with a focus on speaking in tongues (Chapter 14)



## Corinthians 12

12: 1-3 - after setting forth the core criterion for distinguishing between what belongs to the Spirit and what does not,

12: 4-30 - Paul begins by emphasizing the need for manifesting the Holy Spirit in the form of a diversity of gifts that reflect unity of the one Spirit.

12: 4-11 – Manifestations of the Spirit

12: 12 – 26 - Analogy of the body

12: 27-30 – Concluding reiteration



## 1 Corinthians 12: 1-3

<sup>1</sup> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.



## Paul has felt compelled to tell them what he knows

1:11-12 - **For it has been reported** to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

5:1 - **It is actually reported** that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans...

6:11 - Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

11:17-18 - But in the following instructions I do not commend you, **because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.** For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you.

## 1 Corinthians 12: 1-3

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## “Now concerning...” (περὶ δὲ)

- 1 Cor 7: 1 – **Now concerning** the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”
- 1 Cor 7: 25 - **Now concerning** the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.
- 1 Cor 8: 1 - **Now concerning** food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.



## “Now concerning...” (περὶ δὲ)

- 1 Cor 16: 1 - **Now concerning** the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.
- 1 Cor 16:25 - **Now concerning** our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.
- 1 Cor 12: 1 - **Now concerning** spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.



## 1 Corinthians 12: 1-4

<sup>1</sup> **Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.** <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.



## Spiritual “gifts”?

- ESV: Now concerning spiritual **gifts**, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.
- NIV: Now about the **gifts** of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.
- KJV: Now concerning spiritual **gifts**, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.



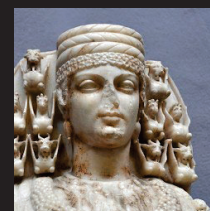
## Spiritual “gifts”? - continued

- NASB: Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware.
- Thiselton points out an important interpretive issue in verse 1 is should *ton pneumatikon* (τῶν πνευματικῶν) be translated as “concerning spiritual gifts” or “concerning spiritual persons/things”?
- E.g., “Asian Airliner Crashes in Jungle: No Word on the Missing”
- Early and Medieval commentators were divided on this question. Most grammarians tend to favor the “neuter” (things). (Thiselton, 192)



## 1 Corinthians 12: 1-3

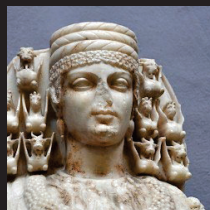
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## 1 Corinthians 12: 2

Three Options:

1. Paul intends to contrast their former life as idolaters with their new life as Christians...or related...to remind them that in their former lives **they had no basis to make judgments about speech inspired by the Spirit.**
2. To **contrast Christian prophets** and their Spirit-inspired utterance with their former experience with mute idols.
3. To remind the that “**inspired utterance**” were a **part of some pagan practices** – even though their idols can’t speak. Therefore “ecstatic speech” is not an evidence of the Spirit.



## 1 Corinthians 12: 1-3

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# 1 Corinthians 12: 1-3

Jesus is cursed (anathema)



Jesus is Lord...Jesus is YHWH

Speaking in the Spirit is "content related" that is - the Spirit guides what can be said and that it is the content that matters. So, if you speak in tongues...it matters what it means. The Spirit enables spiritual speech.

VS



# 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.



- 4 DIVERSITIES of gifts
- 5 DIVERSITIES of service
- 6 DIVERSITIES of workings

there are, but *the same Spirit*;  
there are, but *he same Lord*;  
there are but *the same God*;  
who works ALL THINGS IN ALL PEOPLE.

## 1 Cor 12: 4-11 Structural Diagram

7 TO EACH is given the **manifestations** of the Spirit for the common good.

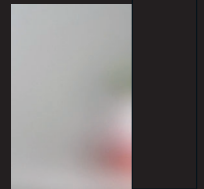
- for
- 8 TO ONE is given a message of wisdom, *through the Spirit*;
- TO ANOTHER a message of knowledge, *by the same Spirit*
- 9 TO ANOTHER faith, *by the same Spirit*;
- TO ANOTHER gifts of healings *by the same Spirit*;
- 10 TO ANOTHER workings of miracles;
- TO ANOTHER prophecy;
- TO ANOTHER discernment of spirits;
- TO ANOTHER kinds of tongues;
- TO ANOTHER interpretation of tongues;

## Manifestation

φάνερωσις (pha-ne-rō-sis)  
**manifestation**

From phaneros; to render apparent (literally or figuratively) -- appear, manifestly declare, (make) manifest (forth), shew (self).

**Concept of Manifestation (from Bible Hub – Topical Lexicon for (φανερός – adj))** - The term expresses the quality of being openly visible, unmistakably clear, or publicly recognized.

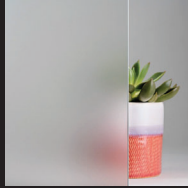


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## 1 Cor 12: 4-11 Structural Diagram

7 TO EACH is given the **manifestations** *of the Spirit* for the common good.

for

8 TO ONE is given a message of wisdom, *through the Spirit;*  
 TO ANOTHER a message of knowledge, *by the same Spirit;*

9 TO ANOTHER faith, *by the same Spirit;*  
 TO ANOTHER gifts of healings, *by the same Spirit;*

10 TO ANOTHER workings of miracles;  
 TO ANOTHER prophecy;  
 TO ANOTHER discernment of spirits;  
 TO ANOTHER kinds of tongues;  
 TO ANOTHER interpretation of tongues;

11 ALL THESE THINGS work *by one and the same Spirit,*  
 DISTRIBUTING to EACH ONE,  
 even as the Spirit wills / determines

## Comparing Lists of Gifts in Chapter 12

Vss 8 - 10

- the utterance of wisdom
- the utterance of knowledge
- faith
- gifts of healing
- the working of miracles
- prophecy
- the ability to distinguish between spirits
- various kinds of tongues
- interpretation of tongues

Vs 28 - 30

- gifts of healing
- miracles
- prophets
- various kinds of tongues
- interpretation of tongues
- apostles
- teachers
- helping
- administrating

## 1 Corinthians 11: 8-10 1 Corinthians 11: 28 Romans 12: 3-8 Ephesians 4: 11

1 Corinthians 11: 8-10	1 Corinthians 11: 28	Romans 12: 3-8	Ephesians 4: 11
	Apostles		Apostles
Prophecy	Prophets	Prophecy	Prophets
	Teachers	Teachers	Teachers
	Miracles		
Gifts of healing	Healing		
	Administration		
Various kinds of tongues	Speaking in tongues		
Interpretation of tongues	Interpretation of tongues		
		Service	
		Exhortation	
		Giving/Contributions	
		Leadership	
		Mercy	
			Evangelists
			Shepherds
Utterance of wisdom			
Utterance of knowledge			
Faith			
Working of miracles			
Distinguishing spirits			

## Manifestations of the Spirit - Prophecy

- NOTE the NT talks about false prophets and also in Revelation (Rev 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10)
- Note:
  - Num 11:29 – Moses longs for more prophets
  - Joel 2:28-29 (Acts 2: 1-18 - Pentecost)
  - Acts 11: 28 – Agabus: Famine predicted
  - Acts 15:32 – “encouraged and strengthened”
  - Acts 20: 23 - Allusion to multiple prophets
  - Acts 21:9-10 – Philip’s daughters; Agabus: Paul’s imprisonment
- Thiselton takes the position that there is a “near equivalence between prophecy and pastoral preaching (213).”



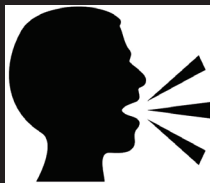
## Manifestations of the Spirit - Teachers

- Teachers exercise rational reflection on goals, content, and methods of communication. **Prophets** typically perform the speech actions of proclaiming, challenging, encouraging, and announcing while **teachers** more typically perform speech act of transmitting or handing on and explaining. (Thiselton 213-214)
- 2 Timothy 2:2 – “...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, **who will be able to teach others** also.”



## Manifestations of the Spirit – Tongues (1)

- There are at least five (5) views about speaking in tongues in scholarly literature. These include: (1) angelic speech, (2) miraculous power to speak foreign languages, (3) liturgical or archaic utterances, (4) ecstatic speech, and (5) mechanisms of release, especially in releasing long or praise. (Thiselton 203)
- Thiselton holds with this later position and sees a very close parallel with the Spirit’s speaking in or through a Christian “with sighs too deep for words (Ro 8:26-27).”
- (Thiselton 203)



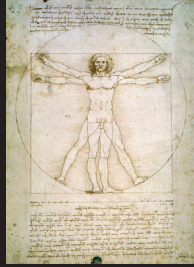
## Manifestations of the Spirit – Tongues (2)

- Paul expresses approval for this gift while qualifying it in three ways:
  - (1) in genuine form it comes from the Spirit of God; is must not be self-generated as a counterfeit
  - (2) it must not be exercised in public, but strictly only in private (1 Cor 14:5-25).
  - (3) the only way in which the gift or tongues may be used for public benefit is for the speaker to receive the further gift of being enabled to communicate the content in articulate speech (14:13). Note the text does not call for a second person called an interpreter. (204)



## 1 Corinthians 12: 12-20 – Analogy of the Body (Part 1)

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.



## The Structure for verse 12

- For just as the **body** is one A
- yet has many **parts** B
- and all the **parts** though many B' A'
- are one **body**
- So also is Christ
- See that **AB** strikes the note of diversity, and
- **B/A'** strikes the note of unity



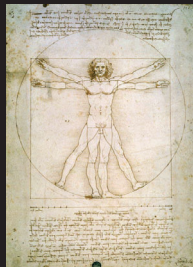
## 1 Corinthians 12: 13

- Basic structure of vs. 13

We **all** were baptized in the **one Spirit**,

and

We were **all** caused to drink of **one Spirit**.



## 1 Corinthians 12: 12-20 – Analogy of the Body (Part 2)

PAUL PRESENTS AN ABSURD CONVERSATION AMONG VARIOUS BODY PARTS

<sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

**PAUL'S POINT:** NO PART OF THE BODY OUGHT TO FEEL (OR BE MADE TO FEEL) LIKE THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE BODY SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ANOTHER PART.



## 1 Corinthians 12: 12-20 – Analogy of the Body (Part 2)

<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

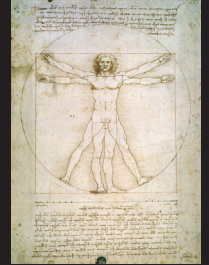
**PAUL'S POINT:** THE FUNCTIONING OF THE BODY WOULD BE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED (EVEN GROTESQUE) WERE THE WHOLE BODY TO BE MADE UP OF A SINGLE PART



## 1 Corinthians 12: 12-20 – Analogy of the Body (Part 2)

<sup>18</sup> But as it is, **God arranged** the members in the body, each one of them, **as he chose**. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are **many parts, yet one body**.

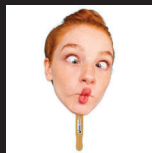
**PAUL'S POINT:** GOD HAS MADE THE BODY OF CHRIST JUST THE WAY HE WANTS IT. AND THAT WAY IS: MAY PARTS (i.e. DIVERSITY) IN ONE BODY (i.e. UNITY IN CHRIST).



## 1 Corinthians 12: 21 – Body Analogy Continued

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," ...

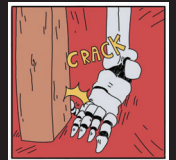
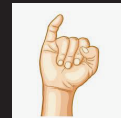
nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."



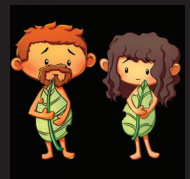
**PAUL'S POINT:** CERTAIN PARTS OF THE BODY HAVE NO BASIS TO REJECT THE IMPORTANCE AND/OR CONTRIBUTION OF OTHER PARTS

## 1 Corinthians 12: 22-24 – Body Analogy Continued

<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the parts of the body that **seem** to be **weaker** are **indispensable**,<sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that **we think less honorable** we bestow the **greater honor**, and our **unpresentable parts** are treated with **greater modesty**,<sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require.



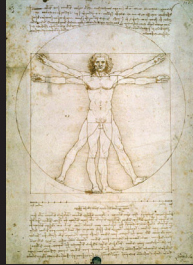
**PAUL'S POINT:** EVEN PARTS OF THE BODY THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED WEAK, OR LESS HONORABLE OR EVEN UNPRESENTABLE ARE, IN FACT, VALUABLE AND INDISPENSABLE



## 1 Corinthians 12: 21-26 – Analogy of the Body

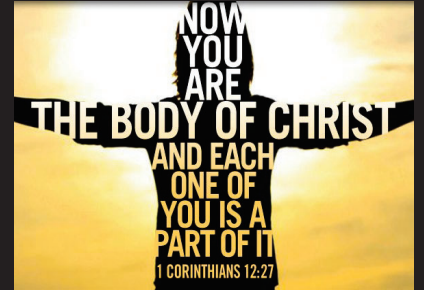
But **God has so composed the body**, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, **that there may be no division in the body**, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

**PAUL'S POINT:** GOD HAS COMPOSED THE BODY SUCH THAT THERE MAY BE NO DIVISIONS...SO THAT ALL MIGHT JOIN IN THEIR SUFFERING, BEING HONORED AND REJOICING TOGETHER.



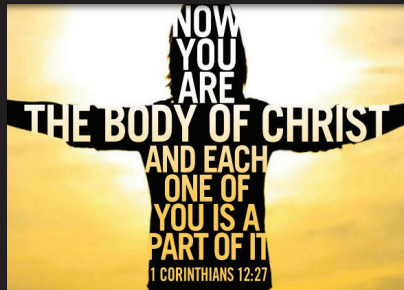
## 1 Corinthians 12: 27- 31

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the higher gifts.



## 1 Corinthians 12: 27- 31

“It was inconceivable to Paul that there should be **any** Christian without some gift of grace (charisma charitos).”

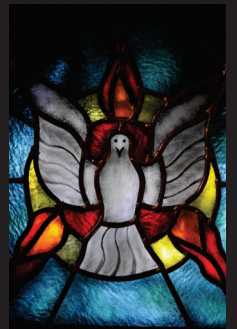


What is my spiritual gift?

This is the wrong question

What is the right question?

Is the Holy Spirit manifesting in MY LIFE in the body of Christ?





If you don't shoot,  
you can't score

Week 17—1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The More Excellent Way: Love (Agape)

## The Law Of Love

God-Trinitarian Fellowship

The love in view here is "deep respect and admiration, which is full of thoughtfulness and concern and always demonstrates itself, even to those who are inferior."

Cleon L. Rogers JR & Cleon Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 379

## The Law of *Love-Agape*

- <sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

• Matthew 22: 34-40

## The Law of *Love-Agape*

- <sup>17</sup> “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. <sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. Lev. 19:17-18
- A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

## The Law of Love

- Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends—John 15:13

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The foundation and cornerstone of love is GOD!

## The Primacy of Love

- If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And 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. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned,<sup>[a]</sup> but have not love, I gain nothing.

I Cor. 13:1-3

## The Primacy of Love

“Love is the indispensable addition which alone gives worth to all other Christian gifts.”

C. K Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Rows, 1968), 120

## The Attributes of Love

Love is patient and kind

• 1 Thes 5:14-15

- And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle,<sup>[3]</sup> encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. <sup>15</sup> See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone—1 Thes 5:

## The Attributes of Love

• 1 Thes 5:14-15

*Love is Patient  
and kind*

- And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle,<sup>[3]</sup> encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. <sup>15</sup> See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone

## Love Does not Envy

- “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

• Exodus 20:17

## Love does not envy or boast

“There are two kinds of envy. The one covets the possessions of other people; as such envy is very difficult to avoid because it is a very human thing. The other is worse—it grudges the very fact that others should have what it has not; it does not so much want things for itself and wish others had not got them.”

William Barclay, *1 Corinthians*, 320

## Love does not envy or boast

<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all.

Eph. 4:29-31

*It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;*

**“A consciousness of the presence of God will do much to produce this state of mind; and if we truly loved all people, we should be soon angry with none.”**

Barnes Notes, I Cor. 13

## But what if?

- “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed<sup>1</sup> in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” Matthew 18:15-17

*it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.*

- Psalm 1

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

- “It is often true that we make people what we believe them to be. If we show that we do not trust people, we may make them untrustworthy. If we show people that we trust them absolutely, we may make them trustworthy.”

W. Barclay, 122

## The Eternity of Love 8-13

*<sup>8</sup> Love never ends*

*<sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

## Practical Considerations

- Love is from God—Sinai—The Beatitudes—The Fruit of the Spirit, leads to love.
  - Philippians 4:8
- *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

## Conclusion

“love enters into the very nature of the kingdom of God; binds society together; unites the Creator and the creature; and blends the interests of all the redeemed, and of the angels, and of God, into one”

*Barnes Notes, 1 Cor. 13*

## Conclusion

<sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-40 All Things Decently and In Order

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40) or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech

- The topic of chapter 14 may seem to mark an abrupt shift from the last chapter, indicating an entirely new area of focus, but in fact, Paul is simply continuing his argument from chapter 12, now in light of chapter 13. In other words, when we understand that love is the way in, by, and for which we are to exercise our spiritual gifts, then these will bring benefit to the church as a whole.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40) or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech

- Such gifts as that of speaking in tongues may indeed have benefit for ourselves, but we are to exercise self-control and discipline, restraining ourselves as the situation requires, keeping in view the higher goal of putting others first and of seeking to build them up, rather than puffing ourselves up. This has been Paul's theme all along: just because I can doesn't mean I should...

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

- Anthony Thistelton writes: “This leads to the neglected and sometimes unfashionable truth that church order, i.e., acceptance of discipline and restraint in the life of the church, far from suggesting a lack of concern for the Spirit's renewal, provides a medium for the expression of love and respect for others inspired by the Spirit.”

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

- *“Indeed,” he continues, “this theme of self-discipline for the sake of love has been Paul's main point for several chapters now.” Let's review!*

**1 Corinthians 8:13:**

Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

And what about me (chapter 9)? Am I (Paul) not an apostle? Do I not have the right to be supported by you for the labor that I've been doing among you? Assuredly, I do!

And yet...

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

**1 Corinthians 9:15:**

But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

**1 Corinthians 9:23:**

I do it all for the sake of the gospel,  
that I may share with them in its blessings.

- *Paul will not press for his right, and will put aside his comfort, for the cause of the gospel, to win others to Christ and to build them up in him. This is love, that puts others first.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

**1 Corinthians 10:23:**

“All things are lawful,”  
but not all things are helpful.  
“All things are lawful,”  
but not all things build up.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

- *With regard to the gifts of the Spirit, then...*

**1 Corinthians 12:7:**

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit  
for the common good.

- *The blessings and privileges of the gospel are not to be used to puff up, but to build up.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

**1 Corinthians 12:31:**

Earnestly desire the higher gifts.  
And I will show you a still more excellent way.

**Chapter 13:**

What love really is...

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

- So now in chapter 14, this principle of love is applied to speaking in tongues and to prophetic speech.
- The chapter has a single coherent theme, but 14:1-25 focuses on *intelligibility* as a condition for building others up, while 14:26-40 focuses on the importance of *controlled speech*.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**  
**or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

1. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-25):  
or: Only Intelligible Communication Can Build Up
2. Orderly Worship (14:26-40):  
or: The Value of Controlled Speech

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-25)**  
**or: Only Intelligible Communication Can Build Up**

1. Are Gifts for the Self or the Benefit of Others? (14:1-5) (*Answer: YES! But mostly the latter.*)
2. The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)
3. "God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

- *Answer: YES! But mostly the latter...*

**1 Corinthians 14:1:**

Pursue love,  
and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts,  
especially that you may prophesy.

- *Pursue the one, the others are given.  
But do earnestly desire the spiritual gifts!*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

- *What are they and what are their purpose?*

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6-7:**

Now there are varieties of gifts,  
but the same Spirit...  
who empowers them all in everyone.  
To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit  
for the common good.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

1. The utterance of wisdom
2. The utterance of knowledge
3. Faith
4. Gifts of healing
5. The working of miracles
6. Prophecy
7. The ability to distinguish between spirits
8. Various kinds of tongues
9. The interpretation of tongues

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Apostles                | 8. Working of miracles                  |
| 2. Prophets                | 9. Helping                              |
| 3. Teachers                | 10. Administrating                      |
| 4. Utterances of wisdom    | 11. Prophecy                            |
| 5. Utterances of knowledge | 12. Ability to distinguish bet. spirits |
| 6. Faith                   | 13. Various kinds of tongues            |
| 7. Gifts of healing        | 14. Interpretation of tongues           |

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

**1 Corinthians 12:11:**

All these are empowered  
by one and the same Spirit,  
who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

- *What is clear? Spiritual gifts are manifestations of the Spirit, given and apportioned as the Spirit wills to each believer, for the common good, that is, for the benefit and edification of the church.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

- And per chapter 13, we have seen that LOVE is the way in which and toward which end the spiritual gifts are to be exercised.
- Now Paul turns our focus to an examination of the gifts of tongues and of prophesy and considers their character and relative value for the church.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

**1 Corinthians 14:2:**

For one who speaks in a tongue  
speaks not to men but to God;  
for no one understands him,  
but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

- *“In the Spirit,” that is, in the condition of being alive in, responsive to, and full of the Spirit.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

**1 Corinthians 14:3:**

On the other hand,  
the one who prophesies speaks to people  
for their **upbuilding** and **encouragement**  
and **consolation**.

- *Here then we see the purpose and power of prophesy in the life of the church.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

**1 Corinthians 14:4:**

The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself,  
but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

- *The right use of the gift of tongues really builds up the person who exercises the gift. Even so, the one who speaks in tongues builds himself up; whereas the one who prophesies builds up the church.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

**1 Corinthians 14:5:**

Now I want you all to speak in tongues,  
but even more to prophesy.  
The one who prophesies  
is greater than the one who speaks in tongues,  
unless someone interprets,  
so that the church may be built up.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

- *I want you all to speak in tongues...* Is this similar to when Paul said concerning celibacy, "I would that you were all like me," with the sense that, but of course you're not, and that's okay? Or does he really desire that "all" do this? And does that "all" include us here today? The logic of all that has gone before indicates the former: tongues are beneficial for the one who exercises the gift. It's a good thing. But not all receive it.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Are Gifts for the Self or for Others? (14:1-5)**

*The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues...* His point is that prophesy is greater, i.e., more important, than tongues because of its value and role in edifying the church.

*Unless someone interprets...* When someone interprets tongues, it has the effect of rendering intelligible what had been unintelligible and bringing benefit and upbuilding for those assembled. (For example, our visiting a synagogue!)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Prophesy and Tongues (14:1-25)  
or: Only Intelligible Communication Can Build Up**

1. Are Gifts for the Self or the Benefit of Others? (14:1-5) (*Answer: YES! But mostly the latter.*)
2. **The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**
3. "God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:6:**

Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues,  
how will I benefit you  
unless I bring you some revelation  
or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?

- *Here then the value of prophesy, or of tongues interpreted, in that it brings some revelation, knowledge, prophesy, or teaching.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:7-9:**

If even lifeless instruments,  
such as the flute or the harp,  
do not give distinct notes,  
how will anyone know what is played?

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:7-9: (cont'd)**

And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound,  
who will get ready for battle?

So with yourselves,  
if with your tongue you utter speech  
that is not intelligible,  
how will anyone know what is said?  
For you will be speaking into the air.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

- As musical instruments like flutes and harps require clearly discernible notes to play a melody, and as a bugle must play its notes clearly that its signal be understood, so with us and the use of our tongues: if our sounds are not intelligible, the signal will be lost in what is received as only noise. Clarity of expression makes sure that the noise is minimized and the signal is maximized.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:10-12:**

There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning...

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**Psalm 19:1-3:**

The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.  
Day to day pours out speech,  
and night to night reveals knowledge.  
There is no speech, nor are there words,  
whose voice is not heard.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:10-12:**

There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning.  
But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.  
So with yourselves,  
since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

It's not that tongues are totally unintelligible. By means of them we speak to God by the Spirit, and per Acts 2, they do indeed communicate some language or idiom, but only to those who are prepared to understand and receive the sounds of that particular tongue. Otherwise, though it may communicate some truth in some language of men or angels, yet it will issue in no edification for those hearing who do not understand. (It's Greek to me!)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**Romans 8:26:**

Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.  
For we do not know what to pray for as we ought,  
but the Spirit himself intercedes for us  
with groanings too deep for words.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

- Therefore, since we are eager for manifestations of the Spirit in and through us, let us strive to excel in building up the church by those gifts that accomplish that best, that is, by those that communicate edifying truths in an edifying manner:

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:13-14:**

Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue  
should pray that he may interpret.  
For if I pray in a tongue,  
my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:15-17:**

What am I to do?  
I will pray with my spirit,  
but I will pray with my mind also;  
I will sing praise with my spirit,  
but I will sing with my mind also.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:15-17:** (cont'd)

Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit,  
how can anyone in the position of an outsider  
say "Amen" to your thanksgiving  
when he does not know what you are saying?  
For you may be giving thanks well enough,  
but the other person is not being built up.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

**1 Corinthians 14:18-19:**

I thank God that I speak in tongues  
more than all of you.  
Nevertheless, in church  
I would rather speak five words with my mind  
in order to instruct others,  
than ten thousand words in a tongue.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Critical Importance of Intelligibility (14:6-19)**

- Paul is thankful that he has been given the gift of tongues. Nevertheless, he adjudges five true words from the Spirit spoken with the mind, i.e., in the form of intelligible prophesy, to be superior to ten thousand such words spoken in tongues unintelligible to those in the presence of whom they are uttered. (At the risk of being too literal here, intelligible speech is 2,000 times more effective than unintelligible!)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-25)**

**or: Only Intelligible Communication Can Build Up**

1. Are Gifts for the Self or the Benefit of Others? (14:1-5) (*Answer: YES! But mostly the latter.*)
2. Four Analogies on the Need for Intelligibility; Opening the Mind to God (14:6-19)
3. "God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**"God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)**

**1 Corinthians 14:20:**

Brothers, do not be children in your thinking.  
Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

**Matthew 10:16:**

Behold, I am sending you out  
as sheep in the midst of wolves,  
so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**"God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)**

**Matthew 18:3:**

"Truly, I say to you,  
unless you turn and become like children,  
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**"God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)**

**Ephesians 4:11-16:**

And he gave the apostles ... for building up the body  
of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith  
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,  
to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature  
of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be  
children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried  
about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning,  
by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**"God Is Indeed Really Among You" (14:20-25)**

**1 Corinthians 14:21:**

In the Law it is written,  
"By people of strange tongues  
and by the lips of foreigners  
will I speak to this people,  
and even then, they will not listen to me,  
says the Lord." (*quoting Isaiah 28:11*)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**“God Is Indeed Really Among You” (14:20-25)**

**1 Corinthians 14:22:**

Thus tongues are a sign not for believers  
but for unbelievers,  
while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers  
but for believers.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**“God Is Indeed Really Among You” (14:20-25)**

**1 Corinthians 14:23-25:**

If, therefore, the whole church comes together  
and all speak in tongues,  
and outsiders or unbelievers enter,  
will they not say that you are out of your minds?

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**“God Is Indeed Really Among You” (14:20-25)**

**1 Corinthians 14:23-25:** (cont’d)

But if all prophesy,  
and an unbeliever or outsider enters,  
he is convicted by all,  
he is called to account by all,  
the secrets of his heart are disclosed,  
and so, falling on his face,  
he will worship God  
and declare that God is really among you.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**“God Is Indeed Really Among You” (14:20-25)**

- In summary, tongues are given (a) for expressing prayer and praise to God in private (i.e., the deep groanings of our heart); (b) for expressing prayer and praise to God in the context of public worship, but only if and when an interpreter (or translator) is present, and (3) for cross-cultural outreach in performance of the Great Commission (i.e., Acts 2).

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- NO, according to **the cessationist view**. Spiritual gifts connected to new revelation have ceased with the completion and closure of the canon. This view seems to be reflected in the Westminster Confession of Faith 1.1, where the first paragraph ends with “those former ways of God’s revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.”

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- YES, according to **the continuationist view**. Spiritual gifts – even “revelatory” ones like the gift of tongues – continue to be bestowed today, though not as new revelation but rather for illuminating God’s will on the basis of God’s word already revealed in the completed and closed canon.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- PERHAPS, per **the “open but cautious” view**. The gift of tongues should not be expected as normative (still less as necessary evidence for Christian faith), but should also not be categorically denied. After all, per **1 Corinthians 14:39**, “do not forbid speaking in tongues”!

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- Extraordinary spiritual gifts like tongues have *mostly* ceased with the completion and closure of the canon, being now unnecessary in light of the efficacy of the ordinary exercise of the marks of the church and the means of grace.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### **Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- However, we might still be open to witnessing these gifts in missions contexts where the church's foundation is still being laid and where the fire of the Spirit has not yet been "clothed" by the ordinary marks and means of the church.
- But even here in the missions context, it is never new revelation, but illumination on the basis of God's word already given.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### **Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- Nor finally need we flatly deny that such gifts can be given even in the context of an established church like ours, but we might say that we ought not expect it ordinarily, as a normative thing, but might be cautiously open to God's sovereign will as he bestows gifts for the advancement of the church.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### **Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?**

- This is most clearly the case for the private expression of our innermost heart to God, when, per Romans 8:26, "we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### **All Things Decently & In Order (14:1-40)**

#### **or: Applying Love to the Gifts of Spiritual Speech**

1. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-25):  
or: Only Intelligible Communication Can Build Up
2. Orderly Worship (14:26-40):  
or: The Value of Controlled Speech

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**Orderly Worship (14:26-40):  
or: The Value of Controlled Speech**

1. **The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**
2. **On the Matter of Women and Speaking Out of Order vs. Decently & In Order (14:33b-40)**

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:26:**

What then, brothers?  
When you come together,  
each one has a hymn, a lesson,  
a revelation, a tongue,  
or an interpretation.  
Let all things be done for building up.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- We are given here a really interesting picture of New Testament worship. The idea is that everyone should come with something to offer for edification of the church, that is, some expression of praise, adoration, or thanksgiving, whether in the form of “a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.”

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- This accords with the pattern of Old Testament worship:

**Deuteronomy 16:16:**

Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. ***They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.***

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- Worship consisted in coming before the LORD, and never doing so empty-handed, but rather bringing some tangible evidence of praise or thanksgiving in the form of one of the three types of peace offering, i.e., first, the thanksgiving offering, more holy than the others; then second and third, respectively, the vow offering and the freewill offering.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- What would our worship look like were we to be sure never to appear before the LORD empty-handed?
- We should come to worship ready to encounter God, ready to offer up to him our “sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.” (Heb. 13:15)

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- We can also come with “a new song,” that is, with a testimony ready to share in the context of the fellowship of the saints, whether in prayer, praise, or shared words, concerning some personal and particular deliverance whereby God has evidenced his faithfulness to us in answering our prayer and helping us, toward the end not just of giving God the glory but of building up others in their hope and faith (see **Psalm 40:3**).

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

#### **1 Corinthians 14:27:**

If any speak in a tongue,  
let there be only two or at most three,  
and each in turn,  
and let someone interpret.

- *Here are guidelines for making sure that even a worship service where the gift of tongues is on display be done “decently and in order.”*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:28:**

But if there is no one to interpret,  
let each of them keep silent in church  
and speak to himself and to God.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:29-30:**

Let two or three prophets speak,  
and let the others weigh what is said.  
If a revelation is made to another sitting there,  
let the first be silent.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- Now Paul moves onto the matter of prophesy: as with speaking in tongues, two or three persons may prophesy in the context of any one service, and the others are to “weigh what is said.” In other words, though in the case of prophesy there is no need of an interpreter, as what is said is intelligible, nevertheless, what is said is to be considered by all those present as to its truthfulness and conformity to God’s word.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 John 4:1:**

Beloved, do not believe every spirit,  
but test the spirits to see  
whether they are from God,  
for many false prophets have gone out  
into the world.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- We are to test the words of those professing to speak God's will and word in church. Is this truly from God or is it only someone's opinion. The key issue is: does it conform to the pattern and principles of God's revealed word. (See Deut. 13:1-3; 18:21-22.)
- It is not just our right but our duty to "test the spirits" of those who say that they are declaring or explaining or applying God's word!

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:31-33a:**

For you can all prophesy one by one,  
so that all may learn and all be encouraged,  
and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.  
For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

- *"God is not a God of confusion but of peace."  
And this well-ordered worship is evidence of love  
in the form of self-restraint for the benefit of all.*

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

1. The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)
2. **On the Matter of Women and Speaking Out of Order vs. Decently & In Order (14:33b-40)**

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:33b-35:**

As in all the churches of the saints,  
the women should keep silent in the churches.  
For they are not permitted to speak,  
but should be in submission,  
as the Law also says.

If there is anything they desire to learn,  
let them ask their husbands at home.

For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- Are we to take these words literally? This is my usual advice when reading Scripture. We are to ask forthrightly, “What does it say?” and to the extent possible we are to avoid getting ourselves in knots trying to avoid the clear meaning of a particular passage.
- But! In this case, we have a problem if we adopt too literal a reading...

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- The command that women are to “keep silent in the churches” would seem, if we interpret it as a call to absolute silence, to contradict what Paul himself had written back in **11:5**: “Every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.”
- It seems that women come to church, lifting their voices in praise, as well as praying and prophesying. What then?

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- Some commentators are so struck by this seeming contradiction that they conclude that these verses, which seem to interrupt the flow of Paul’s thought, are a later addition and not part of the original text. I don’t think this is a wise approach to interpreting difficult passages of Scripture. There is no real warrant for excising these verses from Scripture because we deem them to interrupt the flow of thought!

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- What then? Let’s consider the context of our passage. The issue in all this has to do with orderly worship. We have already seen how those speaking in tongues or those prophesying are called to keep silent for situations already discussed. Paul has just been discussing the matter of prophesying and the importance of *weighing* what is said – evaluating it, testing it.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- Thiselton is interesting here. He writes:  
“The admonition to curb speech of a certain kind almost certainly refers to contributions from women who seek to join in the sifting or testing of a claim to speak with prophetic authority. What kind of situation would make such speech ‘out of order’?”

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- “It is not difficult to imagine the scenarios in which the opportunity to take a speaker down a peg might be open to abuse and undermine order. Perhaps [there were] inappropriate questions in the testing of prophecy, and the worship service was being disrupted.”

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- “The hypothesis that some women raised questions about prophetic speech from their own husbands becomes more plausible in the light of verse 35: “If they want to learn anything let them interrogate their own husbands at home.”
- What then? It could be that Paul is giving a warning about the situation where untrained women were abusing the duty to weigh the things being spoken.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

### The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)

- This actually accords with 1 Timothy 2:11-12, where a similar situation pertained, i.e., the problem of women untrained in Scripture and/or coming out of more pagan conceptions of the nature of prophesy were speaking out of turn and bringing disorder to the service.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- We should note, though, that this doesn't exhaust the meaning. As we saw in chapter 11, Paul is trying to keep in our view the balance that, yes, Galatians 3:28 is the glorious principle of the new covenant in Christ, but at the same time, we are still in this world, with its mediated, hierarchical structures, and that the church is to reflect God's protocol for men and women in the household of God (the church).

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:36-40:**

Or was it from you that the word of God came?  
Or are you the only ones it has reached?  
If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual,  
he should acknowledge  
that the things I am writing to you  
are a command of the Lord.  
If anyone does not recognize this,  
he is not recognized.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

**1 Corinthians 14:36-40:**

So, my brothers,  
earnestly desire to prophesy,  
and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

But all things should be done  
decently and in order.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- This last is the goal of our worship: to glorify and enjoy God, and to do so decently and in order, in the conviction that by doing so, we are not constraining the Spirit, but to the contrary, are endeavoring to manifest our love for one another through the maximization of "signal" and minimization of "noise," that the gospel of Christ might shine forth the more brightly in its glorious clarity and intelligibility to build all of us up.

ALL THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

**The Ordering of Public Worship (14:26-33a)**

- AMEN!

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-34  
The Reality and Necessity  
of the Resurrection

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Reality & Necessity of the Resurrection**

- The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)
- The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Reality & Necessity of the Resurrection**

- The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)
- The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:1-2a:**

Now I would remind you, brothers,  
of ***the gospel!*** I preached to you,

- *Euangelion* (εὐαγγέλιον), lit. *eu* (good) + *angelia* (message) = “good news,” gospel, evangel
- *Eucharistia* (εὐχαριστία), lit. *eu* (good) + *charis* (grace, favor) = thanksgiving

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

- “The gospel which I preached,” i.e., the *euangelion* which I *euangelizo’d*...
- Thus, when we evangelize, we proclaim, declare, and spread the gospel.
- And the word “evangelical” simply conveys the sense that we as a church are wholly committed to the gospel.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

- So what is this *euangelion*, this gospel, this “good news”?
- In the Greco-Roman world, the word was most often used to herald the ascension or the arrival of a new king or emperor, or the event of a great victory.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

- How interesting it is to consider that the good news, the gospel, of Jesus Christ consists in the proclamation that he, the King of kings and Lord of lords, has come, and his kingdom with him.
- It is Christ whom we proclaim, not Caesar. He is Lord over all! It is Christ whom we proclaim; he is the victor over sin, death, and the devil (*Christus Victor*).

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Matthew 4:23:**

And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

- And in the Old Testament, too, the word was used to convey this sense of proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and of the coming and victory and reign of its king:

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Isaiah 40:9:**

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion,  
herald of good news;  
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem,  
herald of good news;  
lift it up, fear not;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Behold your God!”

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Isaiah 52:7:**

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him who brings good news,  
who publishes peace,  
who brings good news of happiness,  
who publishes salvation, who says to Zion,  
“Your God reigns.”

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Isaiah 61:1:**

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison  
to those who are bound.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Mark 16:15-16:**

And he said to them,  
“Go into all the world and proclaim  
the gospel to the whole creation.  
Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,  
but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

- Thus, the gospel, is the announcement (the good news) that the true King, Jesus, has come, and with him his kingdom; that he has overcome the world and the flesh, has defeated the devil and death, and brings liberation to all those who have been under the dominion of sin, but who now, by God’s grace, have been given ears to hear and hearts to believe and receive and rest in him, Christ alone, for salvation and eternal life.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 Corinthians 15:1-2a:**

Now I would remind you, brothers,  
of the gospel ***I preached to you,***  
which ***you received,***  
in which ***you stand,***  
and by which ***you are being saved...***

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

The gospel which Paul preached

- which you received
- in which you stand
- by which you are being saved

**Romans 5:2:**

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into ***this grace in which we stand***, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 Peter 5:12b:**

This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

**Ephesians 6:13:**

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and ***having done all, to stand firm***.  
(KJV: "and having done all, to stand")

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

The gospel which Paul preached

- which you received
- in which you stand
- by which you are being saved

**Ephesians 2:8a:**

For by grace you have been saved through faith.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Romans 5:9-10:**

Since, therefore, ***we have now been justified*** by his blood, ***much more shall we be saved*** by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, ***much more***, now that we are reconciled, ***shall we be saved*** by his life.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Romans 13:11b:**

For *salvation is nearer to us now* than when we first believed.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Romans 8:23-24:**

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For *in this hope we were saved.*

And yet, in **1 Thessalonians 5:8**, he speaks of "*the hope of salvation.*"

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**1 Corinthians 1:18:**

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Philippians 2:12:**

Therefore, my beloved... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

- Thus, the gospel is not simply an announcement about what God has done in Christ, but is an announcement *with power* from God to effect what it announces for those who receive it:

**Romans 1:16:**

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 Corinthians 15:1-2:**

Now I would remind you, brothers,  
of the gospel I preached to you,  
which you received,  
in which you stand,  
and by which you are being saved,  
***IF you hold fast to the word***  
I preached to you —  
unless you believed in vain.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Hebrews 3:6, 14:**

Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.  
And we are his house  
***if indeed we hold fast our confidence***  
and our boasting in our hope...

For we share in Christ,  
***if indeed we hold our original confidence firm  
to the end.***

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Matthew 10:22b AND 24:13:**

***"The one who endures to the end will be saved."***

**Revelation 2:10:**

***"Be faithful unto death,*  
and I will give you the crown of life."**

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 Corinthians 1:7b-8:**

You wait for the revealing of ***our Lord Jesus Christ,***  
who ***will sustain you to the end,***  
guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Philippians 1:6:**

And I am sure of this,  
that ***he who began a good work in you will  
bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.***

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Ephesians 1:3-5a:**

Blessed be the **God** and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ... ***chose us in him before the foundation of the world***, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ***he predestined us*** for adoption through Jesus Christ.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**1 Peter 1:3-5:**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, ***he has caused us to be born again to a living hope*** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ***to an inheritance*** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, ***kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation*** ready to be revealed in the last time.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4:**

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received:  
that Christ died for our sins  
in accordance with the Scriptures,  
that he was buried,  
that he was raised on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures,

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

What are the elements of the gospel?

- Christ died,  
in accordance with the Scriptures.
- Christ was buried.
- Christ was raised on the third day,  
in accordance with the Scriptures.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **Colossians 2:11-12:**

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ (*1. Christ died, and you in him*), having been buried with him in baptism (*2. Christ was buried, and you in him*), in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (*3. Christ is risen, and you in him*)

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **Acts 2:22-24:**

“This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, ***you crucified and killed*** by the hands of lawless men. ***God raised him up***, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:5-7:**

And that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.  
Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.  
Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **Order of Appearances:**

- **1. To Cephas (Simon Peter):** Let’s begin by noting that this is clearly not an exhaustive list, as the first witness, Mary Magdalene, is omitted. But these seem to be a list of Jesus’ appearances to the apostles, to those who might be called the “authorized” witnesses.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Order of Appearances:**

- **1. To Cephas (Simon Peter)** (cont'd): So when did Jesus appear to Peter? The appearance itself is not recorded in Scripture, though the report of it by the other disciples is. It happened on Easter Sunday, some time before the return of the two disciples from the road to Emmaus.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Order of Appearances:**

- **1. To Cephas (Simon Peter)** (cont'd): I always thought that was a bit funny, as no doubt they'd hurried the entire way back Jerusalem and to the Upper Room to tell the disciples the world-shaking news that they had seen the risen Lord Jesus, only to get there and before they have a chance to speak, the disciples say, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Order of Appearances:**

- **1. To Cephas (Simon Peter)** (cont'd): It must be noted that the second disciple with Cleopas on the road to Emmaus may have been Simon himself, but it seems rather odd to mention Cleopas without mentioning Simon Peter, and it seems even odder for "them" to report that the Lord had appeared to Simon, but there were only two there, so ... the one talking didn't see Jesus?

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Order of Appearances:**

- **1. To Cephas (Simon Peter)** (cont'd): Who then might the other disciple be, if not Peter? If anyone other than Peter, then this appearance was omitted as well. Who then? The simple answer is, we don't know. But some speculate that it may have been "the other Mary," Cleopas' wife. Not a bad idea, but it's really only a guess. Sanctified speculation, I like to call it!

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **Order of Appearances:**

- **2. To the Twelve:** technically, he appeared first to the ten (minus Thomas), on the evening of that first Easter Sunday, then to the eleven (now including Thomas) the following Sunday, the Twelve being the name for the group of Jesus' officially called disciple-apostles.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **Order of Appearances:**

- **3. To More Than 500 Brothers:** this large group was most likely in Galilee, when Jesus gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28).
- Again, we see another omission: Paul doesn't mention here the appearance to the seven apostles on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, when they'd gone fishing.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **Order of Appearances:**

- **4. To James:** the brother of the Lord. As with the appearance to Peter, this one is not recorded for us in Scripture. But it must have happened prior to the ascension of Jesus.
- **5. To All the Apostles:** at the very latest at the Ascension, which is my preferred guess for this.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:8-9:**

Last of all, as to one untimely born,  
he appeared also to me.  
For I am the least of the apostles,  
unworthy to be called an apostle,  
because I persecuted the church of God.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

- As recorded in Acts 9, when the risen Lord Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. The great persecutor of the church becomes its great proponent. All that energy and genius of Paul that had been directed against Christ and his followers, now redirected so as to be in the service of Christ and his followers! His commission given at that time is recorded in a speech he gave later:

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Acts 26:16-18:**

“I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me ... delivering you from ... the Gentiles – to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 Corinthians 15:10:**

But by the grace of God I am what I am,  
and his grace toward me was not in vain.  
On the contrary,  
I worked harder than any of them,  
though it was not I,  
but the grace of God that is with me.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

- Who are you to condemn those whom God has forgiven, for whom Christ died and lives and intercedes? Do not call common what God has made clean!
- And for that matter, who are you to condemn yourself, whom God has forgiven, for whom Christ died and lives and intercedes? For you too: do not call common what God has made clean!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**Romans 8:34:**

Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died –  
more than that, who was raised –  
who is at the right hand of God,  
who indeed is interceding for us.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 John 3:20-21:**

For whenever our heart condemns us,  
God is greater than our heart,  
and he knows everything.  
Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,  
we have confidence before God;

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**So again, what is the gospel?**

The gospel is the message, the good news, that we  
are more sinful and flawed than we had ever dared  
imagine, but we can be more loved and accepted  
than we had ever dared hope, because Jesus Christ,  
in our place and on our behalf, lived the life we  
ought to have lived, and died the death we ought to  
have died, to save us. Amen!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**So again, what is the gospel?**

The result of all this is that when God looks at us, he  
sees not my unworthiness, not my sin and manifold  
failings, but the very righteousness of his Son,  
wrapped around me like a glorious mantle. So we  
can rest wholly and completely in the love that  
Christ has for us, who died for us and gave himself  
for us, and now lives and intercedes for us, until we  
come home.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

What a glorious message this is!

We are free in Christ! Free to be what we are in God's sight, assured of his love, and called to rise to the nobility for which we were created and in which we are called as his children.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**John Newton:**

"I am not what I ought to be,  
I am not what I want to be,  
I am not what I hope to be in another world;  
but still I am not what I once used to be,  
and by the grace of God I am what I am."

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 John 3:1:**

How great is the love  
that the Father has lavished upon us,  
that we should be called children of God –  
and that is what we are!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)**

**1 Corinthians 15:11:**

Whether then it was I or they,  
so we preach  
and so you believed.

- *Here is the mystery of God's method of salvation: that it comes by hearing a message and receiving it, and there's nothing we can do to stop its benefits from coming to us, all the way to glory.*

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

- We are to believe the word of God more than the evidence of our eyes, which as we learn from experience, is misleading. (Consider Lot choosing the green plains of Sodom.) We are to live by faith, not by sight. We are to follow the way that God has set for us, remembering that he loves us, and will never leave or forsake us, and is guiding us all the way heavenward and home. He is our good and faithful Shepherd.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Psalm 23:**

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.  
He makes me down to lie;  
In pastures green: he leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.  
My soul he doth restore again,  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteousness,  
Ev'n for his own name's sake.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Psalm 23:** (cont'd)

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,  
Yet will I fear no ill;  
For thou art with me, and thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.  
My table thou hast furnished  
In presence of my foes;  
My head thou dost with oil anoint,  
And my cup overflows.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Psalm 23:** (cont'd)

Goodness and mercy all my days  
Shall surely follow me;  
And in God's house for evermore  
My dwelling place shall be.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)

**Proverbs 3:5-7:**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.  
Be not wise in your own eyes;  
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Reality & Necessity of the Resurrection

- The Resurrection of Christ (15:1-11)
- The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:12:**

Now if Christ is proclaimed  
as raised from the dead,  
how can some of you say that  
there is no resurrection of the dead?

- *All this good news is predicated on one singularly and singularly unique event: the resurrection of the Christ from the dead.*

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:13-14:**

But if there is no resurrection of the dead,  
then not even Christ has been raised.  
And if Christ has not been raised,  
then our preaching is in vain  
and your faith is in vain.

- *If there is no resurrection, and if therefore Christ has not been raised, then all this is in vain.*

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:15:**

We are even found  
to be misrepresenting God,  
because we testified about God  
that he raised Christ,  
whom he did not raise  
if it is true that the dead are not raised.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- If Christ be not raised from the dead, then woe to us for bearing false witness and standing in the role of false prophets. Everything depends on the truth and historical factuality of the resurrection.
- If Christ is not raised, then we who proclaim him to be risen deserve the punishment for bearing false witness as false prophets!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:16-17:**

For if the dead are not raised,  
not even Christ has been raised.  
And if Christ has not been raised,  
your faith is futile  
and you are still in your sins.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Repeating what he said earlier, that if the dead are not raised, then not even Jesus has been raised; and, again, if that were the case – if Christ is not raised – then your faith is futile (it is like Ecclesiastes puts it, “vanity of vanities”) and you are still in your sins. Nothing has been forgiven, you are still cut off from communion with God by your unforgiven sins.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:18-19:**

Then those also  
who have fallen asleep  
in Christ have perished.  
If in Christ we have hope in this life only,  
we are of all people most to be pitied.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- *“If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”* Here in these words is the strongest statement I know of in all of Scripture as to the central importance and utter necessity of the resurrection for the gospel. Christianity without the resurrection is not just a lie grounded in false witness, but is powerless to save, and is pointless in its ethical claims.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- As Paul says in **verse 32**, “If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’” If the dead are not raised, what’s the point of our patient endurance in the face of suffering?
- Without the resurrection, the story of Jesus is not a story of world-transforming hope, but a tragedy. It would simply be another depressing example of the injustice the world metes out to those who seek to challenge those in power.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:20a:**

But in fact  
Christ has been raised from the dead...

- *Establishing the factuality of the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event is critically important, because if it’s true, then the whole of the testimony he bore about himself is true. Christ’s resurrection changes everything!*

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

How do we know that the resurrection really happened? What evidence do we have?

First, **the testimony of the empty tomb**. It is interesting that the opponents of Christ, who might have falsified the disciples' claims, did not argue that the reports of the empty tomb were false, but created counter-narrative explanations for why that was so. But that itself is rather significant evidence!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

Second, **the testimony of the many eyewitnesses** who testified that they had seen Jesus, and that he had risen bodily. None of these witnesses broke ranks, even under the pressure of severe persecution, to say that their testimony to the resurrection was either a lie or a delusion. And this is a most important thing to consider, because they persisted in their claims despite persecution, even to death. (See Chuck Colson's discussion on this.)

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

Third, **the transformation of the apostles themselves**. The disciples were not always the most insightful or discerning of spiritual things before the crucifixion of Jesus. But after the resurrection, and from then on to the end, even in the face of persecution, we see the spiritual power, moral clarity, and confessional unity among them. The resurrection changed everything!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

Fourth, related to the last: **the transformation of countless lives ever since**. Those who hear and believe the gospel and who receive and rest in Christ are witness both to the power and the truth of the gospel message. It has brought transformation to my life, courage, boldness, humility, and hope. Praise the Lord!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Without the resurrection, there is no gospel. Without the gospel, there is no Christianity.
- But with the resurrection, well, that changes absolutely everything! We have seen – we are witnesses to – the power of the gospel to transform lives and renew communities and nations and entire civilizations.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Steve Martin wrote a funny song several years ago, complaining that “Atheists Don’t Have No Songs.” It’s funny, but true. Why? Or let’s put it the other way around: what is it in the message of the risen Lord Jesus Christ that has led so many to write and share and sing praise in the form of sharing “a new song”?

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Does this desire to praise not rise from within us as a sort of desire to sing and to share praise of God’s faithfulness with others who have experienced it?
- Does it not well up in us from a sense of gratitude at the power of the gospel to bring hope, joy, and meaning to our lives? Where are the atheists’ songs of deliverance...?

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:20:**

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- *Christ didn’t just come to be resurrected himself, but to save and redeem us, his people; to remove our guilt and restore us to fellowship with God, by uniting us to himself in his death and in his life.*

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**Galatians 2:20:**

I have been crucified with Christ.  
It is no longer I who live,  
but Christ who lives in me.  
And the life I now live in the flesh  
I live by faith in the Son of God,  
who loved me and gave himself for me.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**Romans 6:4-5:**

If we have been united with him  
in a death like his,  
we shall certainly be united with him  
in a resurrection like his.

**Colossians 3:3:**

For you have died,  
and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

- Because we are united to him in his death and in his life, as signified by our baptism, therefore we will be raised to eternal life like he was.
- Christ was but the firstfruits of the resurrection.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**1 Corinthians 15:21-22:**

For as by a man came death,  
by a man has come also  
the resurrection of the dead.  
For as in Adam all die,  
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Here is covenant language. We are either “in Adam” or “in Christ.” If we are in Adam, then we remain in the house of judgment, where sin and death have dominion. But if we are in Christ, then we are in the house of grace, bound for glory.
- Christ, Second Adam, ran the race all the way to the end, as Adam should have done – as each of us should have done – and finished it; so now shall all in him be made alive.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:23:**

But each in his own order:  
Christ the firstfruits,  
then at his coming  
those who belong to Christ.

- *Indeed, we may add this affirmation to the list of elements in the absence of which we have no gospel message:*

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

#### **The Elements of the Gospel Message:**

1. Christ died.
2. Christ was buried.
3. Christ, the firstfruits, is risen.
4. Christ is coming again.  
And when he does, then those who belong to him will rise from the dead.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- When will the resurrection happen?
- At his coming, at the Parousia, Second Advent.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:51-52:**

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18:**

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**Revelation 11:15:**

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet *(that is, the seventh, and final, trumpet)*, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

Want to hear my favorite two questions and answers from the Westminster Shorter Catechism?

**WSC 37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?**

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united in Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**WSC 38:**

**What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?**

At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**1 Corinthians 15:24:**

Then comes the end,  
when he delivers the kingdom  
to God the Father  
after destroying every rule  
and every authority and power.

- *Note that! Then comes the end.  
When is that? When Jesus comes again.*

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**Matthew 24:14:**

“And this gospel of the kingdom  
will be proclaimed throughout the whole world  
as a testimony to all nations,  
and then the end will come.”

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**Psalm 110:1-2:**

The LORD says to my Lord:  
“Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.”  
The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

[The Resurrection of the Dead \(15:12-34\)](#)

**WSC 1:26:**

**How doth Christ execute the office of a king?**

Christ executeth the office of a king,  
in subduing us to himself,  
in ruling and defending us,  
and in restraining and conquering  
all his and our enemies.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- And then he will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, “after destroying every rule and every authority and power.”
- But... will Christ not be our Lord forever? What does Paul mean here when he says that the Son will deliver the kingdom to the Father?

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:25:**

For he must reign  
until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

**Psalms 110:1-2:**

The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.”  
The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:26:**

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

- *This accords with the order given in Revelation:*

**Revelation 19:20:**

And *the beast* was captured, and with it *the false prophet*... These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**Revelation 20:10:**

And *the devil* who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

**Revelation 20:14:**

Then *Death and Hades* were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:27:**

For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." *(Psalm 8:6)*

But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Makes sense, right? God the Father put all things in subjection to Jesus. All things! Except of course him who did the subjecting, who is over all, who indeed as we saw in chapter 11, is the only head of Christ:

**1 Corinthians 11:3:**

But I want you to understand that ...

**the head of Christ is God.**

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

**1 Corinthians 15:28:**

When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- So then, at the end of the age, when the gospel has been preached the ends of the earth, then Christ shall return, the resurrection shall happen, and then shall come the great judgment. Christ shall then finally destroy the last of his and our enemies: first, the Beast and the False Prophet; then second, the devil; then third and last of all, Death and Hades.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Once “all things” have been subjected to him, “then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him.” The way I understand this is that the mediatorial and messianic character of Christ’s present reign, in this “already and not yet” era of overlap, when the gospel is still advancing and the devil still prowls around like a roaring dragon seeking someone to devour, will change at his coming.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Now Christ reigns and intercedes for us in the heavenly temple as our Redeemer, exercising the messianic offices of prophet, priest, and king. But at the end of the age, the messianic and mediatorial aspect of his reign will have been perfectly completed, and he will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. Christ will continue to rule and serve as the mediatorial person in the Trinity, but it will now be God that is all in all.

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:29:**

Otherwise, what do people mean  
by being baptized on behalf of the dead?  
If the dead are not raised at all,  
why are people baptized on their behalf?

## THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)

- Just when you thought it was safe to go to the beach, after we’d made it through the exegetical difficulties of chapter 11 and especially chapter 14, surely, we thought were home free! But no, we are confronted here with what may well be the most difficult verse in the entire epistle! As you can imagine, there are many interpretations of this. Among the strongest of these views, we have the following three:

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

1. “We should read the verse at face value and conclude that Paul is referring here to a practice of the *vicarious baptism* or *proxy baptism* of those now dead.” Many commentators favored this view in the first half of the 20th century, but support for it has declined since then, as it would imply the practice of a mechanical and salvific sacramentalism of the sort that Paul clearly rejects elsewhere.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

2. “We should understand Paul as saying that some of the Corinthians sought baptism for the sake of the dead, in the sense that *they longed to join them in the future life.*” In other words, this view looks to the *motive* of those being baptized, as entailing a desire to be joined with loved ones who had already died and who had entered into the everlasting rest that awaits those who trust in Christ. Maybe! But it’s speculative.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

3. “We should understand Paul as saying that some of the Corinthians sought baptism because they had witnessed the radiant confidence of the saints when they were dying.” In other words, there were some who faced the prospect of death with such radiant joy, anticipating their imminent meeting with Jesus, that others witnessing this may have been moved to commit their lives to Christ and be baptized because of it. I like this third view most, I suppose.

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

In any event, whatever we conclude Paul means here, what is common to all of the explanations is the foundational point that the act of *baptism is above all about identification with Christ in his death and resurrection.*

Therefore, baptism without reference to the resurrection would mean nothing and be utterly pointless and powerless. Futility! Vanity!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

**1 Corinthians 15:30-31:**

Why are we in danger every hour?  
I protest, brothers, by my pride in you,  
which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord,  
I die every day!

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

**1 Corinthians 15:32:**

What do I gain if, humanly speaking,  
I fought with beasts at Ephesus?  
If the dead are not raised,  
“Let us eat and drink,  
for tomorrow we die.”

THE REALITY & NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection of the Dead (15:12-34)**

**1 Corinthians 15:33-34:**

Do not be deceived:  
“Bad company ruins good morals.”  
Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right,  
and do not go on sinning.  
For some have no knowledge of God.  
I say this to your shame.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58  
The Mystery and Victory  
of the Resurrection of the Body

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Mystery and Victory of  
the Resurrection of the Body (15:35-50)

- The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)
- Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Mystery and Victory of  
the Resurrection of the Body (15:35-50)

- The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)
- Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

**1 Corinthians 15:35:**

But someone will ask,

“How are the dead raised?

With what kind of body do they come?”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

1. How can we say the dead are raised? How can we make such a claim in light of the evidence in all the world that this does not happen?
2. And then we must ask “*How* are the dead raised?” The claim seems even more outlandish when you realize that we’re not just talking about merely “spiritual” resurrection, but *bodily* resurrection. “With what kind of body do they come?”

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Let's address the first question: How can we say that the dead are raised? We moderns are not the first or only ones for whom the concept of resurrection – let alone bodily resurrection – seemed not just improbably but wholly impossible, given the relentless and fact of death's irreversibility. We see no exceptions to this rule, ever.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- When the person dies, it is instantaneous and irreversible by our best medical science: the person we had known, whom we had known and loved and who had lived among us, is gone, and what remains is like a husk, the body in and through which that person had lived.
- In every culture, this one thing is universal: death comes to all and there is no going back.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- But just as surely as that, most every culture also intuited some survival of the soul. Varied explanations were given for what has become of the souls of those who had died, most often involving some sort of joining with the ancestors, with whom it was believed we retain connection through rituals of filial piety.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- In the case of both Israel and Greece, the afterlife was a shadowy existence (or perhaps a better word might be persistence) in Sheol, the Hebrew word for it, and Hades, in Greek. Both of these described the realm of the dead, the place where the souls of those who had died all go.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Sheol is often translated as “the grave” in the ESV, though we should note that this is a bit misleading, as “grave” in English describes the place where the *body* is laid, while in Hebrew it connotes the place where *the disembodied souls of the dead reside*, similar to Hades in this regard.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- It is pictured as a subterranean place (“the pit”), to which all humans go upon their death, regardless of moral standing – patriarchs, kings, knaves, and fools alike, both the righteous and the unrighteous.
- It is described as a state of silent inactivity and waiting and a place from which no praise comes:

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Psalm 6:5:**

In death there is no remembrance of you;  
in Sheol who will give you praise?

#### **Psalm 30:9:**

What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down to the pit?  
Will the dust praise you?  
Will it tell of your faithfulness?

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Isaiah 38:18-19a:**

For Sheol does not thank you;  
death does not praise you;  
those who go down to the pit do not hope  
for your faithfulness.  
The living, the living, he thanks you.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Sheol or Hades is not to be confused with hell, or Gehenna, the lake of fire, the place of the second death (eternal death), but something more like a realm into which all come upon their death. (Thus, he descended into Hades, not hell!)
- It may not be a place of eternal torment, but it is not a place or condition to be particularly desired either:

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Psalm 88:10-12:**

Do you work wonders for the dead?  
Do the departed rise up to praise you?  
Is your steadfast love declared *in the grave*,  
or your faithfulness *in Abaddon*?  
Are your wonders known *in the darkness*,  
or your righteousness  
in the land of forgetfulness?

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Indeed, Sheol, the realm of the dead, is identified here with *Abaddon*, the bottomless pit, the abyss, a word that means “destruction.” In the New Testament, Abaddon is not the place but is personalized, as the angelic king of the abyss, with its locust-scorpion armies, called in Greek Apollyon, “destroyer”:

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Revelation 9:11:**

They have as king over them  
the angel of the bottomless pit.  
His name in Hebrew is Abaddon,  
and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

- *This is actually a pretty-hell-like picture!*

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- But the New Testament also presents us with distinctions within the realm of the dead, indicating a separation (albeit an interim separation prior to the final judgment), between the righteous and the wicked.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Lowest Hades is Tartarus:

#### **2 Peter 2:4:**

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into *hell* (lit. *Tartarus*) and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- The gloomy lower parts of Hades are described by Jesus in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man as being separated from the upper parts by an expanse. This is a *parable*, so we want to be careful about demanding a level of literalism that Jesus did not intend. Nevertheless, it conveys something true about the afterlife, at least prior to his resurrection:

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Luke 16:22-23:**

“The poor man [Lazarus] died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.”

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Righteous Lazarus enjoys rest and blessing with Father Abraham above, while the rich man experiences torment below, all the more so given his inability to access that rest and blessing.
- Again, this may just be an illustrative picture given for us, but it does convey something of great value for us.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Finally, we need to note one final thing about Sheol-Hades: the Old Testament expresses the hope that God's saints would not be abandoned in Sheol, and presents us with a beautiful promise of death's end.
- First, to set the stage for this promise, we see that Sheol is presented as a greedy devourer, swallowing the living, never satisfied:

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Proverbs 27:20:**

Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied,  
and never satisfied are the eyes of man.

*Sheol never says "Enough!"*

*(per Proverbs 30:15, Habakkuk 2:5)*

#### **Proverbs 1:12:**

Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole,  
like those who go down to the pit. *(Medieval art...)*

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- In the cathedrals of Europe, there is artwork everywhere that shows death as a terrifying demon-monster, greedily devouring people and taking them "in" to his realm.
- But death the greedy swallower will itself be swallowed up by God!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**Isaiah 25:7-9:**

And he will swallow up on this mountain  
the covering that is cast over all peoples,  
the veil that is spread over all nations.  
He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears  
from all faces, and the reproach of his people  
he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**Isaiah 25:7-9: (cont'd)**

It will be said on that day,  
“Behold, this is our God;  
we have waited for him that he might save us.  
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

In summary, we see that

1. Sheol/Hades is not to be identified with final hell.
2. It is the place where disembodied souls were believed to reside. While it should not be confused with final hell, there were understood to be distinctions between the conditions for the righteous and the unrighteous.
3. It was a place not so much of afterlife as *after-existence*, an interim estate, place, condition.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**Acts 2:23-24, 31-32, 36:**

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”

#### THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

##### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

**Acts 2:23-24, 31-32, 36:** (cont'd)

“God raised him up, *loosing the pangs of death*, because *it was not possible for him to be held by it...* He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that *he was not abandoned to Hades*, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses...”

#### THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

##### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

**Acts 2:23-24, 31-32, 36:** (cont'd)

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that *God has made him both Lord and Christ*, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

#### THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

##### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- It was not possible for him to be held by death. Why? Because though he was sifted, there was found no sin in him to hold him there! Death and Hades and Satan were powerless to stop him, not only in his exiting from the realm and power of death, but in his taking the “key” to the fortress and leading the righteous saints after him to heaven:

#### THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

##### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

**Revelation 1:17-18:**

“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and *I have the keys of Death and Hades.*”

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Perhaps you've heard the phrase "the harrowing of hell"? That word "harrowing" is derived from the Old English word *hergian*, meaning "to plunder" or "to despoil."
- The harrowing of hell refers to Jesus' plundering of the strong man in his very realm, opening the gates of Hades and rescuing the righteous, leading them out with him to heaven.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Now that Christ has entered into the heavenly temple and sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father, the saints of God when they die no longer go to Hades, there to wait for his coming to rescue them, but pass immediately into glory:

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **WSC 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?**

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Revelation 20:5b:**

This is the first resurrection.

- *That is, the spiritual resurrection of the saints, who will reign with Christ for the period of the millennium.*

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- That for which the Old Testament saints longed, per **Psalm 23:6**: “goodness and mercy all my days shall ever follow me, and in God’s house forevermore my dwelling place shall be,” has been fulfilled and enabled for God’s saints, in, by, and through Christ!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**Philippians 1:21-23:**

For to me to live is Christ, and ***to die is gain***.

If I am to live in the flesh,

that means fruitful labor for me.

Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

I am hard pressed between the two.

***My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.***

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- In other words, those who are in Christ (by faith) will be with Christ after death. Praise the Lord!
- Yet! Even this is but an intermediate estate. Those who have gone before us and entered into the church triumphant, that great cloud of witnesses who are resting with the Lord, await the return of Christ and the resurrection of the body, just like we do!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- Let’s be clear: ***resurrection*** is not to be confused with mere ***reanimation***, being brought back to life only to die again at some later time. Nor is it to be confused with the idea of ***reincarnation***, where the soul brought back in another body. The resurrection which the Bible teaches and promises, and for which we long and hope, entails nothing less than being raised again, bodily – your body – to eternal life.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

As Christ was resurrected, bodily, so it will be with us who are “in Christ.”

**1 Corinthians 15:20-22:**

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**Philippians 3:20-21:**

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- Bodily resurrection! As with Jesus, so with us who trust in him, who are “in Christ.”
- In fact, we see this hope find expression in the Old Testament as well:

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**Daniel 12:2-3:**

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Job 19:25-27:**

I know that my redeemer lives,  
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.  
And after my skin has been destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I will see God;  
I myself will see him with my own eyes —  
I, and not another.  
How my heart yearns within me!

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- And this is where the problem came. The biblical promise of physical, bodily resurrection seemed to be crude and implausible to the Greek mind that celebrated the permanence of perfection of the ideal world of forms, ideas, and spirit, as opposed to the impermanence and imperfection of the world of things. Why would you want to be in your body forever? And even if you answer that, how would that work?

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- As we've seen, the Greeks didn't have that much of a conceptual problem with the idea of the after-existence of disembodied souls in Hades.
- Indeed, the strong Gnostic tendencies in much of Greek thinking made disembodiment key to our entire hope, the idea being that death liberates the divine spark of our soul from its enchainment in the darkness and imprisonment of flesh.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- According to Gnostic thinking, those with the knowledge (*gnosis*) of the truth might hope to ascend as pure spirit, a divine spark rising, and to rejoin with the absolute, which is pure spirit and light. The problem with Gnosticism, of course, at least from the Christian perspective, is that it makes the created order bad, something to be escaped from, and the one who made it evil.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Recall the question we had asked earlier:  
“How can we say the dead are raised, given all the evidence in history to the contrary?”
- The answer is this: we can say it because, and *only because*, of the world-transforming fact that Jesus, who was crucified, dead, and buried, and who descended into hell (Hades), rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father!

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- We teach it because it happened. It is a fact of history. Though we might qualify it a bit and say that it is THE fact of history!
- Like we said last week, the resurrection is utterly foundational and essential to the Christian message: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! And if this is so, then everything – everything! – changes.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:35:**

But someone will ask,

“How are the dead raised?”

With what kind of body do they come?”

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

We might apply Arthur Eddington’s memorable quote about the inexorable inevitability of the increase of entropy to death:

“If your theory is found to be against the second law of thermodynamics [*substitute the finality of death*], I can give you no hope; there is nothing for it but to collapse in deepest humiliation.”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:36-37:**

You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

1. *What is sown does not come to life unless it dies.*
2. *The body that is sown isn't the body that is to be.*

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**John 12:24:**

“Truly, truly, I say to you,  
unless a grain of wheat  
falls into the earth and dies,  
it remains alone;  
but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- I watched a beautiful timelapse video this last week. It began with a single seed being planted in the soil, and followed its transformation into a mature bonsai tree bearing many fruit. What an absolute miracle to behold! And to think that it's the most everyday occurrence on earth! The seed falls to the earth and yields its form, but then bears much fruit.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- The husk of the seed is pushed aside as first a root, then an entire root system, presses deep into the soil all around; then a shoot emerges, pressing forth, this time upward, breaking from the soil, then growing upward and branching into many leaves, then flowering, then bearing fruit, each containing many seed!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**John 3:3-5:**

Jesus answered him,  
“Truly, truly, I say to you,  
unless one is born again  
he cannot see the kingdom of God...  
Unless one is born of water and the Spirit,  
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:36-37:**

You foolish person!  
What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.  
And ***what you sow is not the body that is to be,***  
but a bare kernel,  
perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- The picture of metamorphosis is a particularly powerful and wonderful one. Consider the way a caterpillar larva issues in a butterfly – a staggering transformation! It is the same creature, yes, but in a wholly new form. The old form was put off and the new put on, as it were.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- And note this: what had been a creature whose body was fit for and bound to the terrestrial realm, now takes flight and has access to a domain which its former form had no ability to access. Interesting!
- There is continuity and discontinuity: continuity of the organism, discontinuity of form.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- We see evidences of this in Jesus' resurrection appearances, as when he bids Thomas to touch the marks in his hands and feet where the nails had pierced him. The point? This was indeed the same person, and his body bore the marks of his earthly body.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- And yet at the same time, he was now able to enter a room whose door was locked. And there was now a repeated pattern of initial nonrecognition, followed by recognition, indicating some measure of change in appearance: "Rabboni!" "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." "It's the Lord!"

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:38:**

But God gives it a body as he has chosen,  
and to each kind of seed its own body.

- *Now Paul deals with the idea of kinds. Each seed issues in its own particular kind, an expression of its own species.*

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- It is interesting to consider how nature doesn't present itself as a continuum where everything blurs into everything else.
- Rather, wherever we look, living things exist as particular species marked by distinct characteristics, "each according to its kind."

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:39:**

For not all flesh is the same,  
but there is one kind for humans,  
another for animals, another for birds,  
and another for fish.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- As we see when we examine the world around us, the world, there are different “seeds” for different “kinds,” each coming to expression bearing the traits of the species of which it is a particular seed. The fact that we have now discovered the mechanism for this process in the genetic information encoded in the strings of nucleotides in DNA molecules doesn’t remove this mystery but makes it all the more awesome!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:40-41:**

There are heavenly bodies  
and earthly bodies,  
but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind,  
and the glory of the earthly is of another.  
There is one glory of the sun,  
and another glory of the moon,  
and another glory of the stars;  
for star differs from star in glory.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- Ecology is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their environment. Genesis 1 presents an ecological view of creation, in which God first creates a series of domains, then fills them with life forms appropriate to each.
1. Day and Night      Sun and Moon (and Stars)
  2. Sea and Sky Fish and Birds
  3. Land                      Land Plants, Animals, Humans

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- And in these verses, as in Genesis, it's interesting that we move beyond DNA-based lifeforms to speak of the sun, moon, and stars, too, in terms of their kinds as well.
- This is drawn from Genesis 1, where the sun was assigned "rule" of the day and the moon of the night, and the sun, moon, and stars were given for "signs and seasons."

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **1 Corinthians 15:42:**

So is it with the resurrection of the dead.  
What is sown is perishable;  
what is raised is imperishable.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Here is Paul's astonishing point: as we saw with the example of the butterfly, it is not just a change of form that happens, as when the old form is put off and the new put on; but it is also – for the butterfly – a change of domain. Whereas before, its form was bound to the terrestrial realm, now it is given access to the sky through its newly acquired capacity for flight.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Paul is saying that, as it is with these examples from nature, so it shall be with our resurrection body: "what is sown is imperishable, what is raised is imperishable."
- We will be raised in bodies fit for the domain of heaven, fit for eternal life!

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- Our bodies as they now are cannot function for eternity (they can barely function for more than a number of decades), but at the resurrection we will be given bodies that are fit for eternal life!
- How exhilarating this is! And how unlike our present condition.

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- We will be raised “imperishable”! Unable to die, with bodies unable to be destroyed as now by the battering storm of sin, misery, and death. Because death itself shall have been swallowed up and shall be no more!
- We will be like Jesus, who, per **Hebrews 7:16**, now reigns by “the power of indestructible life.” Amen!

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

#### **Luke 20:35-36:**

“Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead... cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”

## THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

### The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)

- It is interesting in this regard to speculate on the nature of our spiritual bodies, fit for eternity. Will we be able to walk on water and move from place to place like Jesus? If so, I suspect that it won't be a matter of “magic” in heaven, but of the principle of John 17:3, in which context of knowing God and Jesus Christ, we will know how to navigate the universe in our new bodies, following the lead of our Lord, Jesus.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**John 17:3:**

And this is eternal life:  
that they know you, the only true God,  
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:43-44:**

It is sown in dishonor;	<i>Imperishable!</i>
it is raised in glory.	<i>Glory!</i>
It is sown in weakness;	<i>Power!</i>
it is raised in power.	
It is sown a natural body;	<i>Spiritual!</i>
it is raised a spiritual body.	
If there is a natural body,	
there is also a spiritual body.	

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- We will be given a new, spiritual body fit for eternity, and yet one possessing real continuity with the body that was before, through which his personhood has always expressed and manifested itself to ourselves and to the world all around. And yet, unlike our bodies now, they will be imperishable, and full of the glory and the power of resurrection life!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:45:**

Thus it is written,  
“The first man Adam became a living being”;  
the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- Now Paul moves to consider the contrast between Adam and Christ, the one embodying the earthly principle (that which was before, that which is sown, which is incapable of and unfit for heavenly life) and then the one embodying the spiritual, heavenly one.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

- Adam received life, becoming a living being when the LORD God blew the breath of life in his nostrils.
- But Jesus, the second and last Adam, *gives life* by his word and Spirit:

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**John 5:21:**

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.”

**John 6:33:**

“For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:46-47:**

But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:48:**

As was the man of dust,  
so also are those who are of the dust,  
and as is the man of heaven,  
so also are those who are of heaven.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:49:**

Just as we have borne  
the image of the man of dust,  
we shall also bear  
the image of the man of heaven.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)**

**1 Corinthians 15:22:**

For as in Adam all die,  
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**The Mystery and Victory of  
the Resurrection of the Body (15:35-50)**

- The Resurrection Body (15:35-49)
- **Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Corinthians 15:50:**

I tell you this, Mystery and Victory (15:50-58) inherit  
the kingdom of God,  
nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**John 3:3-5:**

Jesus answered him,  
"Truly, truly, I say to you,  
unless one is born again  
he cannot see the kingdom of God...  
Unless one is born of water and the Spirit,  
he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Corinthians 15:51-52:**

Behold! I tell you a mystery.  
We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,  
at the last trumpet.  
For the trumpet will sound,  
and the dead will be raised imperishable,  
and we shall be changed.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**Revelation 11:15:**

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet,  
and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,  
"The kingdom of the world has become  
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,  
and he shall reign forever and ever."

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18:**

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven  
with a cry of command,  
with the voice of an archangel,  
and with the sound of the trumpet of God.  
And the dead in Christ will rise first.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: (cont'd)**

Then we who are alive, who are left,  
will be caught up together with them in the clouds  
to meet the Lord in the air,  
and so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore, encourage one another  
with these words.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Corinthians 15:53:**

For this perishable body must put on the  
imperishable,  
and this mortal body must put on immortality.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**2 Corinthians 5:2-4:**

For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our  
heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may  
not be found naked. For while we are still in this  
tent, we groan, being burdened – not that we would  
be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed,  
so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Corinthians 15:54-55:**

When the perishable puts on the imperishable,  
and the mortal puts on immortality,  
then shall come to pass the saying that is written:  
“Death is swallowed up in victory.”  
“O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?”

- *Victory*

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**Isaiah 25:8:**

He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears  
from all faces, and the reproach of his people  
he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**WSC 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?**

At the resurrection,  
believers, being raised up in glory,  
shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted  
in the day of judgment,  
and made perfectly blessed  
in the full enjoying of God to all eternity. (Amen!)

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Corinthians 15:56-57:**

The sting of death is sin,  
and the power of sin is the law.  
  
But thanks be to God,  
who gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

**1 Corinthians 15:58:**

Therefore, my beloved brothers,  
be steadfast, immovable,  
always abounding in the work of the Lord,  
knowing that in the Lord  
your labor is not in vain.

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

- Here is the radically anti-Ecclesiastes message of the resurrection! “Vanity of vanities,” is it? Well, yes, this is the case for those not in Christ.
- But for those who *are* in Christ (and we are in Christ by faith), then our labor in the Lord, and our life and our hope, is not in vain!

THE MYSTERY AND VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION

**Mystery and Victory (15:50-58)**

- It is not “vanity of vanities,” but the Song of Songs that has the last word, and that word is LOVE, which was also the first word, as it was in the Father’s love that we were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and will be held in that goodwill forever.
- Amen!



LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Let All That You Do Be Done in Love:  
Conclusion to the Letter (16:1-24)**

1. The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)
2. Plans for Travel (16:5-9)
3. On Timothy and Apollos (16:10-12)
4. Final Instructions (16:13-18)
5. Greetings (16:19-24)

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Let All That You Do Be Done in Love:  
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LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:1:**

Now concerning the collection for the saints:  
as I directed the churches of Galatia,  
so you also are to do.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:2:**

On the first day of every week,  
each of you is to put something aside  
and store it up, as he may prosper,  
so that there will be no collecting  
when I come.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:3-4:**

And when I arrive,  
I will send those whom you accredit by letter  
to carry your gift to Jerusalem.  
If it seems advisable that I should go also,  
they will accompany me.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:1:**

Now concerning  
the collection for the saints:  
as I directed the churches of Galatia,  
so you also are to do.

1. *What is the collection for the saints?*
2. *What is the biblical-theological principle behind this collection?*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

To understand Paul's zeal for the collection,  
we need to go back to the early days of his ministry:

- Saul is converted, then three years in Arabia
- Escape from Damascus
- 1<sup>st</sup> Jerusalem visit w/ Barnabas for 15-days
- Sent off to Tarsus for ten years
- Called by Barnabas to serve in Antioch

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Acts 11:27-30:**

Now in these days prophets came down  
from Jerusalem to Antioch.  
And one of them named Agabus  
stood up and foretold by the Spirit that  
there would be a great famine over all the world  
(this took place in the days of Claudius).

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Acts 11:27-30:** (cont'd)

So the disciples determined,  
everyone according to his ability,  
**to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.**  
And they did so, sending it to the elders  
by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Galatians 2:9-10:**

And when James and Cephas and John, who  
seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was  
given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship  
to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the  
Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Only, **they asked us to remember the poor,**  
**the very thing I was eager to do.**

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Therefore, this notion of connecting the mission to the Gentiles with remembrances of the poor saints in Jerusalem was written into the DNA of Paul's thinking from the beginning. As Paul brought spiritual benefit to the Gentiles from the Jews, so it was fitting that the Gentile recipients of this spiritual benefit should provide material benefit to the poor Jewish brothers in Jerusalem.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, through Asia Minor
- Conflict in Galatia and the Jerusalem Council
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, reaching to Greece, during which time he spent 18 months in Corinth
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, coming to Ephesus, where he spent some two and a half years.
- Toward the end of his time in Ephesus, before the Ephesian crisis (i.e., the riot and his subsequent departure, arose **the Corinthian crisis.**

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- Paul writes a letter to the Corinthians, which is now lost. In it, he instructs them “not to associate with sexually immoral people” (1 Cor. 5:9).
- Then Chloe’s people” bring disturbing oral report that “there is quarreling” among the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:11). Paul is also shocked by report of sexual immorality that has been allowed to stand (1 Cor. 5:1), “of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans.”

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus are sent to Paul in Ephesus from Corinth (1 Cor. 16:17), delivering a letter from the congregation asking questions about various matters. We see that Paul refers to these matters whenever he writes “now concerning...” – which he does six times (7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, and 16:12), re: celibacy and marriage, betrothal, food offered to idols, spiritual gifts, the collection, and Apollos.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

1 Corinthians is Paul’s response to these 3 things:

- (a) The oral report of factionalism and quarreling among them (chapters 1-4)
- (b) The report of sexual immorality among them (chapters 5-6)
- (c) The written letter with its questions concerning the various topics.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- The letter was written in Ephesus, and we learn of the context of all this, and of Paul’s plans in verses 5-9 of our passage today.
- So let’s take a quick look at that section before returning to our examination of the first verse:

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Plans for Travel (16:5-9)**

**1 Corinthians 16:5-6:**

I will visit you after passing through Macedonia,  
for I intend to pass through Macedonia,  
and perhaps I will stay with you  
or even spend the winter,  
so that you may help me on my journey,  
wherever I go.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Plans for Travel (16:5-9)**

**1 Corinthians 16:7-9:**

For I do not want to see you now just in passing.  
I hope to spend some time with you,  
if the Lord permits.  
But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost,  
for a wide door for effective work  
has opened to me,  
and there are many adversaries.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Plans for Travel (16:5-9)**

- Thus, Paul is already planning to visit the Corinthians after passing through Macedonia; indeed, he hopes to spend the winter with them.
- But he plans to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, “for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”
- Now back to our examination of the emerging Corinthian crisis:

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Apparently, the Corinthians didn't respond well to the letter, leading Paul to make what he calls a “painful visit” to them (2 Cor. 2:1). At this point the situation has become a serious crisis, as the Corinthians have not only refused to deal with the situation of sexual immorality festering in their midst, but some there are now openly challenging Paul's apostolic authority.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- In response to this, Paul writes what is referred to as the “fierce letter” (possibly no longer extant), written with much anguish of heart (2 Cor. 2:4), calling them to task, asserting his authority in full measure, and demanding that they exercise discipline against the offending brother. The letter was given to Titus that he should deliver it in person.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- The letter may no longer be with us, but we know its effect: it brought about mourning and repentance among the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:8ff.) and their obedience in exercising discipline against the offending member (2 Cor. 2:6-8).
- Note that many scholars suggest that this “fierce letter” actually survives, in 2 Cor. 10-13, appended to the later letter, our 2 Cor. 1-9!

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- But we’ve gotten ahead of ourselves! As it happens, just as the Corinthian crisis is thus reaching its climax, now Paul is faced with the Ephesian crisis!
- Paul had written the “fierce letter” in Ephesus and sent Titus to Corinth with it. But now, following the riot in Ephesus, Paul departs from there to Macedonia, without having yet heard an answer from Titus as to their response.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- When he finally does hear back from Titus concerning their positive response, 2 Corinthians is Paul’s letter of joy and relief, written in Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13, 7:5-7).
- In 2 Corinthians, Paul writes about the collection, which by this time has been successfully completed in Macedonia, and which he now calls them to undertake as well (2 Cor. 8:1ff.).

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- Following all these things, Paul comes for his third and final visit to Corinth, where he stays for three months. During this time, he writes the letter to the Romans (Rom. 16:21, 23; Acts 20:2-3), in which, again, he mentions the now successfully completed collection in Macedonia and Achaia (Rom. 15:25-26).

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- Paul plans to bring the collection to Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 20:16), then following that, to go to Spain, stopping at Rome en route to visit the church there (Rom. 15:24-28).
- However, as he is making his way on the journey, it begins to be made clear through prophesy that he will be arrested in Jerusalem (20:22-23; 21:4, 10-14). He travels to Jerusalem anyway, in full knowledge of what awaits him there.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- And when he arrives in Jerusalem, Paul is indeed arrested, where at his defense he says the following words:

**Acts 24:17:**

Now after several years  
I came to bring alms to my nation  
and to present offerings.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)

- Whereupon, after many twists and turns, he ends up in Rome after all, albeit as a prisoner.
- What an incredible story! And note how the collection is woven through the whole of it.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- What then? We see that, if the first and second missionary journeys were about the planting of churches, the third Journey involved a harvest from those churches.
- Why was this so important to Paul? Was there some motive that went beyond mere alleviation of physical need (though of course that was important)? Why did he use this language of alms and offerings?

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Romans 15:25-27:**

At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.

For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Romans 15:25-27: (cont'd)**

For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them.

For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Thus, for Paul, the Gentile recipients of God's grace and spiritual blessing through the Jews made them debtors, such that the sharing of their material blessing with the Jews would serve as a tangible evidence of the reality of that Jesus has indeed "broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility" between Jew and Gentile and made them both one (Eph. 2:14).

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Indeed, the collection is itself the fulfillment of that which was prophesied through the course of the Old Testament!

**Genesis 49:10:**

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until tribute comes to him;  
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Psalm 72:10-11:**

May the kings of Tarshish        *Spain! (Rom. 15:24)*  
and of the coastlands  
render him tribute;  
may the kings of Sheba  
and Seba bring gifts!  
May all kings fall down before him,  
all nations serve him!

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Isaiah 2:2-4:**

It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Isaiah 2:2-4: (cont'd)**

And many peoples shall come, and say:  
"Come, let us go up  
to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths."

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Isaiah 2:2-4:** (cont'd)

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.  
He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Isaiah 66:18-21:**

For I know their works and their thoughts,  
and the time is coming  
to gather all nations and tongues.  
And they shall come and shall see my glory,  
and I will set a sign among them.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Isaiah 66:18-21:** (cont'd)

And from them I will send survivors to the nations,  
to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow,  
to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away,  
that have not heard my fame or seen my glory.  
And they shall declare my glory among the nations.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**Isaiah 66:18-21:** (cont'd)

And they shall bring all your brothers  
from all the nations  
as an offering to the LORD...  
just as the Israelites bring their grain offering  
in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.  
And some of them also I will take for priests  
and for Levites, says the LORD.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Why Pentecost? Because that is the feast that celebrated God's giving of the Law at Sinai in the Old Testament, and now celebrates God's giving of the Spirit in the New. It is the celebration of the world-changing reality of the breaking down of the ancient wall between Jew and Gentile and the ingrafting of the nations into the promises and blessings of the covenant.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- The collection is nothing less than the fulfillment of the OT prophesies that the nations would come to worship the God of Israel, and that they would be ingrafted into the covenant promises of Israel. Toward this end, Paul sees himself as "a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:15-16).

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- The collection is the tangible evidence of all this! Of "what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience – by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God – so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ." (Romans 15:18)

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:2:**

On the first day of every week,  
each of you is to put something aside  
and store it up, as he may prosper,  
so that there will be no collecting when I come.

- *Is this passage the basis for NT tithing?*
- *What is the role of mercy giving in the church?*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Paul's collection was not a tithe. It was a voluntary relief offering gathered from Gentile churches to support impoverished believers in Jerusalem.
- Let's examine the principle of tithing in the Old Testament: the Israelites did not pay a single 10% tithe; instead, they had *three* distinct tithes, (a) to support the Levites, (b) to fund the festivals, and (c) to provide a social safety net:

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- **1<sup>st</sup> Tithe: the Levitical Tithe (Num. 18:21-24)**  
Because the Levites were tasked with religious duties and were not given an inheritance of land in Israel, this tithe was a mandatory annual 10% tax on all agricultural produce and livestock. The Levites, in turn, gave a tenth of this tithe (the "tithe of the tithes") to the Aaronite priests who serviced the altar. (Every year except the sabbatical year, when the land lay fallow.)

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Tithe: the Festival Tithe (Deut. 14:22-26)**  
After the 1<sup>st</sup> tithe was removed, households set aside another 10% of their remaining crops. The family took this produce directly to Jerusalem to consume during religious festivals. This tithe was only gathered only during the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> years of the seven-year cycle.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

### **The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Tithe: the Poor Tithe (Deut. 14:28-29)**  
This tithe replaced the 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe during specific years. Instead of being brought to Jerusalem for personal celebration, this 10% was kept locally within municipal storehouses. It was distributed directly to those without land or resources: the Levites, resident foreigners, orphans, and widows. It was gathered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years of the seven-year cycle.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- In sum, an Israelite household effectively gave 20% of their annual increase during years 1, 2, 4, and 5 (for the Levitical and Festival Tithes); 20% during years 3 and 6 (for the Levitical and Poor Tithes); and nothing during the Sabbatical Year.
- In the New Testament, we are not explicitly directed to tithe, as tithes were like taxes, associated with living in the land of promise. (Though we have warrant to do so, Gen. 14:20.)

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- We may not be required to tithe, but we are to understand and embrace the biblical teaching on giving. We are directed to support the ministers who labor in our midst and the work gospel ministry, according to our ability (Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Cor. 9:9-10). This is in some ways an echo of the Levite tithe.

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**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- Likewise, “the collection” of which we’ve been speaking is an echo of the Poor Tithe, something given *in addition to* the regular giving for the care and upkeep of the minister and the work of the gospel ministry. Indeed, recall how the Poor Tithe was done every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the sabbatical cycle. Isn’t it interesting that this notion of saving up and presenting the tithe every third year is echoed in Paul’s multi-year offering.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

- And this in turn is similar in principle to how we do it: the regular giving for the support of the gospel ministers and the gospel ministry, in addition to periodic diaconal offerings for the support of the mercy ministry.
- While the principle of giving is important for Christians to embrace, it is not a matter of a mandated percentage as in the OT, but is to be voluntary, from willing and even joyful hearts:

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**2 Corinthians 9:6-7:**

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly  
will also reap sparingly,  
and whoever sows bountifully  
will also reap bountifully.  
Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,  
not reluctantly or under compulsion,  
for God loves a cheerful giver.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:2:**

On the first day of every week,  
each of you is to put something aside  
and store it up, as he may prosper,  
so that there will be no collecting when I come.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

***Our giving is to be...***

1. **Regular:** "on the first day of every week."  
synchronized with weekly worship
2. **Personal:** "each of you"
3. **Proportionate:** "as he may prosper"
4. **Purposeful:** "put something aside and store it  
up... so that there will be no collecting when I  
come"

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:3-4:**

And when I arrive,  
I will send those whom you accredit by letter  
to carry your gift to Jerusalem.  
If it seems advisable that I should go also,  
they will accompany me.

- *Accountability, transparency, advancing in-person connections between churches*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Let All That You Do Be Done in Love:  
Conclusion to the Letter (16:1-24)**

1. The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)
2. Plans for Travel (16:5-9)
3. On Timothy and Apollos (16:10-12)
4. Final Instructions (16:13-18)
5. Greetings (16:19-24)

- *We've already examined Paul's plans for travel...*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Let All That You Do Be Done in Love:  
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LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Plans for Travel (16:5-11)**

**1 Corinthians 16:10-11:**

When Timothy comes,  
see that you put him at ease among you,  
for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.  
So let no one despise him.  
Help him on his way in peace,  
that he may return to me,  
for I am expecting him with the brothers.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 16:12:**

Now concerning our brother Apollos,  
I strongly urged him to visit you  
with the other brothers,  
but it was not at all his will to come now.  
He will come when he has opportunity.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

- Recall that one of the issues dividing the Corinthian church was a wholly misguided conflict over which apostle or teacher the people attached themselves to (1:10–12). Paul rejected this as foolish and made it clear that he did not consider other Christian leaders, including Apollos, to be competition, but instead "God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3:9).

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

- So when we see that Paul "strongly urged" Apollos to go to Corinth, it should make it clear to the Corinthians that Paul does not see himself in competition with Apollos and – indeed, to the contrary – would see great value in Apollos spending more time with them.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

- Why then did Apollos refuse to go?  
It is possible that Apollos didn't want to add to the divisions already festering among the Corinthians by spending time with them. This is a reasonable hypothesis, but it's only speculation. FWIW, I find this view quite plausible. Were I in Apollos' sandals (!), I'd have probably resisted going back myself. But Paul adds that Apollos will come when he has the opportunity.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14:**

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith,  
act like men, be strong.  
Let all that you do be done in love.

- *Great verse! In fact, perhaps the climactic verse of the entire letter, as it draws the theme of the entire letter into one exhortation:*
- *Let all that you do be done in love!*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

- You are saints, and you are called to be saints. Be what you are!
- Cut it out with the factions and strife! This is not at all the way of Christ, which is the way of the cross. Your "me, me, me" is immature & unwise!
- Moreover, the worldly status that you are seeking by attaching yourselves to the coattails of this or that teacher is too small a thing!

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 3:21-23:**

So let no one boast in men.  
For all things are yours,  
whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas  
or the world or life or death  
or the present or the future –  
all are yours, and you are Christ's,  
and Christ is God's.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20:**

Or do you not know that your body  
is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,  
whom you have from God?

You are not your own,  
for you were bought with a price.  
So glorify God in your body.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 8:1b:**

"Knowledge" puffs up,  
but love builds up.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 8:8-9:**

Food will not commend us to God.  
We are no worse off if we do not eat,  
and no better off if we do.  
But take care that this right of yours  
does not somehow become  
a stumbling block to the weak.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 8:11-12:**

And so by your knowledge  
this weak person is destroyed,  
the brother for whom Christ died.  
Thus, sinning against your brothers  
and wounding their conscience  
when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 8:13:**

Therefore,  
if food makes my brother stumble,  
I will never eat meat,  
lest I make my brother stumble.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23:**

"All things are lawful for me,"  
but not all things are helpful.  
"All things are lawful for me,"  
but I will not be enslaved by anything....  
but not all things build up.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 9:22b-23:**

I have become all things to all people,  
that by all means I might save some.

I do it all for the sake of the gospel,  
that I may share with them in its blessings.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 13:13:**

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
but the greatest of these is love.

**1 Corinthians 16:14:**

Let all that you do be done in love.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 16:15-16:**

Now I urge you, brothers –  
you know that the household of Stephanas  
were the first converts in Achaia,  
and that *they have devoted themselves  
to the service of the saints –  
be subject to such as these,*  
and to every fellow worker and laborer.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Final Instructions (16:12-18)**

**1 Corinthians 16:17-18:**

I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas  
and Fortunatus and Achaicus,  
because they have made up for your absence,  
for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours.  
Give recognition to such people.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Let All That You Do Be Done in Love:  
Conclusion to the Letter (16:1-24)**

1. The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)
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4. **Greetings (16:19-24)**

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Greetings (16:19-24)**

**1 Corinthians 16:19:**

The churches of Asia send you greetings.  
Aquila and Prisca,  
together with the church in their house,  
send you hearty greetings in the Lord.

- *Priscilla (here Prisca) and Aquila, who had served with Paul in Corinth when the church was planted, were now in Ephesus.*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Greetings (16:19-24)**

**1 Corinthians 16:20:**

All the brothers send you greetings.  
Greet one another with a holy kiss.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Greetings (16:19-24)**

**1 Corinthians 16:21:**

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

- *The rest of the letter was most likely written by an amanuensis, that is, by someone writing the words as Paul dictated, and this in turn was most likely "our brother Sosthenes" (1:1). But now Paul signs off in his own writing. (See Galatians 6:11 for another example of this.)*

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

**Greetings (16:19-24)**

**1 Corinthians 16:21-24:**

If anyone has no love for the Lord,  
let him be accursed. [Lit. *anathema*]  
Our Lord, come! [Lit. *Marana tha!*]

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.  
My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.  
Amen.