

A People of the Book
A Textual Study

A Study of

I Corinthians

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Introduction & Greeting

Introduction

1. **Written by the Apostle Paul on 3rd missionary journey** – probably AD 54-56
 - a. 1 Cor.16:8 – said would tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost (written in Ephesus)
 - b. When Paul in Corinth Gallio was deputy of Achaia – Acts 18:12
 - c. History says - Gallio entered this office in AD 51
 - d. Paul left Corinth soon after this – Acts 18:18
 - e. After leaving he traveled to Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem & Antioch.
 - f. From there he starts his 3rd missionary journey & comes to Ephesus

2. **Purpose of writing**
 - a. Draw the church together in unity – extremely fractured
 - b. Deal with moral laxity
 - c. Answer certain question raised by the church at Corinth

3. **Foundational facts about servants of God – 1:1-3**
 - a. Called by the will of God
 - 1) Jn.15:16 – you did not choose Me, but I chose you
 - 2) 2 Cor.5:20 – we are ambassadors of Christ
 - b. A brother to other believers
 - 1) Because Paul was an Apostle made him no better than other believers
 - 2) He was to be respected as an Apostle (special messenger)
 - 3) Rom.12:3 – not to think more highly of self than ought
 - 4) Phil.2:3,4 – nothing be done through vain glory
 - c. Local church
 - 1) It is the church of God
 - a) Acts 20:28 – feed the church of God
 - b) The church belongs to God, not any man or group of people
 - c) The church exists to do the will of God not man
 - 2) The church (believers) are those set apart & are called saints
 - a) Believers are called to be different from the world
 - b) Their lifestyle & purpose is different from the world – Rom.12:2
 - c) 2 Cor.6:17,18 – come out from among them
 - d) 1 Pet.1:14,15 – be holy in all manner of life
 - e) Saints
 - Eph.4:24 – put on the new man created in righteousness
 - 2 Cor.5:17 – any one in Christ is a new creation
 - 3) All are brothers – no caste system – none greater than others
 - a) Super spirituality & pride have no place in the church
(Only God to be honored & exalted)
 - b) Christ is Lord & all believers are brothers
 - c) Acts 10:34 – God is no respecter of persons
 - d) Rom.14:4 – who are you to judge another man's servant

Paul's Greetings

1. **Notice** – Paul mentions Jesus Christ 10 times in 1st 10 verses
 - a. Paul's goal is for them to exalt Jesus – focus upon Him – 1 Cor.2:1-4
 - b. With Jesus as their central focus all other matters will take care of selves
 - c. See also – Heb.12:1,2; 2 Cor.4:16-18

2. **Believers were enriched in every way**
 - a. In speaking & knowledge – able to know & understand truth & make it known
 - b. Paul's testimony about Christ was confirmed in them (evidence they believed)
 - c. They lacked no spiritual gift – Eph.1:3ff

3. **The believer's assurance**
 - a. Jesus will keep us strong unto the end
 - 1) Phil.1:6 – confident He will finish what started
 - 2) 2 Tim.1:12 – persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed
 - 3) 1 Pet.1:5 – who are kept by the power of God
 - 4) Jude 24 – able to keep you from falling
 - 5) Rev.3:10 – I will keep you from the hour of temptation
 - b. Called into the fellowship of God's Son Jesus
 - 1) Rom.8:15-17 – received a spirit of adoption
 - 2) Rom.8:29 – predestined to be conformed unto His image
 - 3) Gal.4:4-6 – because are sons – sent Spirit of His Son into hearts
 - 4) Rev.3:20 – I stand at door & knock ... hear voice open, I will come in

A Divided Church

Introduction

One thing that stands out as you read the book of 1 Corinthians is the division that was rampant among the believers. Their fellowship was so deteriorated that the church was about to crumble & collapse. Severe dissention & division can be clearly seen; verbal accusations, competition, power struggles, envy, grumbling, murmuring, quarrelling, & gossiping etc. Disaster was threatening & a severe split was clearly upon the horizon. In chapters one through four Paul deals with this problem & provides several solutions to the problem of division among believers.

1 Cor.1:10-17

1. Paul's approach

- a. Not judgmentally or with a spirit of rebuke or even fight in his heart
- b. "I appeal to you" KJV = "I beseech you"
 - 1) **Means** – I call you to my side; let's share together; talk this matter over
 - 2) Paul is pleading & begging them to hear what he has to say
- c. Twice in these verses he refers to them as brothers
- d. He begs them in the name of Jesus to listen & heed his words
 - 1) For the sake of Jesus they must be united
 - 2) He wants them to remember their love for the Lord Jesus – His cause
- e. **Important how we approach those who are causing division in the church**
 - 1) A spirit of tenderness & love must always be manifested
 - a) Mt.5:7 – blessed are the merciful = receive mercy
 - b) Prov.15:1 – gentle answer turns away anger; harsh words stir up
 - c) Mk.11:25 – as pray forgive offender
 - d) Mt.18:15-17 – ought against another = go privately
 - 2) Jesus' example
 - a) Lk.5:27-32 – ate & drank with sinners to win them
 - b) Acts 10:34-38 – God not show favoritism; He is Lord of all
 - c) Mt.5:43-47 – love enemies so be sons of Father in heaven
 - 3) Other verses
 - a) Gal.6:1- restore them gently
 - b) 2 Tim.2:24-26 – must not quarrel; be kind not resentful

2. Paul's admonition – must be one

- a. **Strong & straightforward** = wants no misunderstandings
- b. **Agree** – reach agreement; quit talking against one another
 - 1) Stop the accusing, the attacks
 - 2) Stop the grumbling, the gossip, the slander & murmuring etc
 - 3) Stop allowing the tongue to divide & destroy
 - a) James 3:5-18 – tongue is a fire, a world or evil
 - b) James 4:11 – don't speak evil of another
 - c) 1 Pet.2:1 – get rid of all slander

d) 1 Pet.3:10- love life & see good days = keep tongue from evil

e) Prov.13:3 – keep mouth = keep life

f) Prov.21:23 – guard mouth = keep out of trouble

c. Allow no division among you

1) Division = splits, tearing apart

2) A divisive church is useless to God.

3) Division is sinful & devastating to God's kingdom

a) Lk.11:17 – house divided against itself cannot stand

b) 1 Cor.3:3 – envy, strife & division are of men not God

c) James 3:13-16 – is of the devil

d. Goal – be perfectly joined together in mind & thought

1) **Greek word picture** = torn net repaired & mended; broken & dislocated limb restored to its proper place.

2) **In both mind & thought (KJV mind & judgment)**

a) Speaks of motivations, affections & intentions

b) Also conclusions, purposes, goals & objectives

3) Eph.4:3 – endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit

4) Phil.1:27 – stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together

5) 1 Pet.3:8 – live in harmony together

3. The report of their division

a. Paul not identify who; just the household – some might attack them

b. Problem

1) Quarrels = wrangling, strife, faction

2) Church was arguing & splitting into groups – cliques

3) Church was allowing the flesh to rule – Eph.5:19-21

c. Exalting former ministers

1) Exalting preaching ability & style

a) Apollos was eloquent & mighty in the scriptures – Acts 18:24

b) Paul was not a great orator – 2 Cor.10:10; 11:6

2) Failed to see God's gifting & calling

a) Paul excelled in establishing churches & strengthening believers

b) Peter's ministry was to the Jews = more tradition & ritual

3) Considered themselves mature & privileged spiritually

a) Passed judgment on others

b) Usurped God's authority as judge – James 4:12

4. Division is never right

a. Three questions

1) Is Christ divided?

a) Division dethrones Christ – divider always thinks they are right

(1) Sets self as Lord – person able to judge right & wrong

(2) Feels Christ would hold their position – agree with them

b) Jesus can't be divided – only one Lord – Eph.1:22; Col.1:18

- 2) Was Paul crucified for you?
 - a) Division exalts men not Jesus
 - b) Believers don't owe their allegiance to preachers or leaders
 - c) 1 Cor.4:6 – not think of men above scriptures
 - d) Gal.1:7-9 – preach another gospel = anathema

- 3) Were you baptized into the name of Paul?
 - a) Baptism is in the name of Jesus; not a man or a church
 - b) It is a commitment of our life to the Lord Jesus
 - c) To exalt a man is to violate that commitment to Jesus

b. Note – Paul is adamant, he never tried to secure a personal following

- 1) Baptized only Crispus & Gaius
 - a) Crispus = leading ruler of synagogue – Acts 18:8
 - b) Gaius – Paul's host at Corinth – Rom.16:23
- 2) Sent to preach not to baptize
 - a) Central focus was to be his message
 - b) Not matter who does the baptizing
 - c) Ministers need to be careful to not allow other things to take them from their primary responsibility – study, prayer & the sharing of the message of Jesus
 - (1) Acts 6:3,4
 - (2) 2 Tim.2:15
- 3) Christ is to be exalted – His words, His works; not men
 - a) 1 Cor.2:1-5
 - b) Rom.1:15,16

1 Corinthians Study
Lesson # 3

Paul's 1st Answer To Division – The Cross

Introduction

The church at Corinth had allowed division to dominate them. They were fractured because of their focus upon & exaltation of man. Paul is adamant; they must become one, being perfectly united in mind & thought. Salvation has come through Jesus & He must be the one who is exalted, not men. In this lesson we will focus on Paul's 1st answer to division – the cross.

1 Corinthians 1:17-25

1. The primary mission of the preacher – preach the gospel

a. **The cross** = the message of the gospel – 1 Cor.15:1-5

- 1) Demonstrates the love God has for man
- 2) Everything else hinges what Jesus accomplished at the cross
- 3) God reconciled man to Himself at the cross – 2 Cor.5:21

b. **One who speaks for God can empty the cross of its power**

- 1) When their focus is the wisdom of words
 - a) Being eloquent or concerned with flowery speech
 - b) Emphasis is persuasive words & enticing arguments
 - c) Interest is charisma or appearance – being politically correct
 - d) Attention is placed upon the proclaimer not the message
- 2) Preachers task is not to impress people with his charm, eloquence or vast wisdom – it's to proclaim Jesus
- 3) Lives change because of Jesus & what He did on the cross

c. 1 Cor.2:1-5 – Paul's attitude

2. Cross is the power of God unto salvation

a. **Notice sharp contrast** between words of wisdom & the message of the cross

- 1) Words of wisdom = plural
 - a) Hints at differences & divisions
 - b) Offers many ways to find truth & the meaning of life
- 2) Message of the cross – singular (one-way)

b. **Message of cross is foolishness to those who are perishing**

- 1) Perishing = continuous action
 - a) Suggests that man is not static or sitting still
 - b) Either moving toward God or moving toward destruction
- 2) Perishing means - lost; to be utterly destroyed; one that has no hope
 - a) One facing condemnation & separation
 - b) To be separated from God is to be in torment eternally
- 3) Foolishness = silliness, absurdity
 - a) So ridiculous will not even consider it
 - b) Jews saw the cross as a curse – Deut.21:22,23

- c. Message of the cross is the power of God unto salvation**
- 1) Rom.1:16,17
 - 2) No other message can change lives
 - 3) Called to take up cross & follow Jesus
 - a) Mt.10:38,39; Lk.14:26,27 – more important than family
 - b) Mt.16:24,25 – more important than self
 - c) Lk.17:33 – more important than the world
 - d) Jn.12:24,25 – must willingly die to be fruitful
- 3. Cross - makes the wisdom of the world foolishness**
- a. Quotes Isa.29:14; 33:18 – God speaking to the spiritually ignorant
 - b. Exposes the fallacy on man's reasoning**
 - 1) Man seeks to gain life through the pursuit of science, technology & the religion of human effort
 - 2) Uses what is at his disposal to conquer nature, disease, suffering, corruption & death (as if he has the ability)
 - 3) Man wants life on his terms – so he can do, as he desires
 - 4) **Result** – man could never find God
 - 1) Chose to find him in idols – Rom.1
 - 2) Gave into the cravings of the flesh – became reprobate – Rom.1
 - 3) Have only a form of godliness but no power – 2 Tim.3:1-8
 - c. Cross - shatters all such reasoning**
 - 1) Man can do nothing about his lost condition – hopelessly lost
 - 2) No amount of pursuing wisdom, science or religion can help
 - 3) God had to intervene – provide a way
 - 4) Now man must accept God's answer – answer in God not man
 - d. All real & lasting happiness & hope come through the message of the cross**
 - 1) Through love & sacrifice man finds life's answers
 - 2) Jesus demonstrated that, as He became sin's offering
 - 3) Abundant & eternal life comes only through the message of the cross
- 4. Never come to know God through the world's wisdom**
- a. Pursuing Him through science, technology & religion of human effort**
 - 1) No matter what he does – he can never become perfect
 - 2) In spite of all that he achieves – he still falls short
 - 3) Illustration – jump a hundred foot chasm
 - b. World makes two mistakes when they look at the cross – foolishness**
 - 1) Jews see selves as the chosen – by being religious they are acceptable
Rom.10:1-4
 - 2) Greeks admired wisdom & flowery words – cross is too simple
Acts 17:16-21
 - c. Through the message of the cross –only hope of men**
 - 1) Calls men to surrender all he has & all that he is to Jesus
 - 2) Gal.2:20 – crucified with Christ – yet I live (not I but Christ in me)
 - 3) Acts 4:12 – salvation is found in no one else (nothing else either)

- d. **Man wants signs & wisdom** – always comes up short
 - 1) Jews wanted signs – Mt.12:38; 16:1; Mk.8:11,12; Lk.11:14-16; Jn.2:18; 6:30,31
 - 2) Fallacy – Satan gives signs too – Pharaoh’s magicians; 2 Thess.2:9-12
 - e. **Flesh will always fail us – foolish to depend upon it**
 - 1) In the flesh we are dead to God – Eph.2:1-3; Col.2:13
 - 2) In the flesh we are powerless to fulfill God’s will – Rom.8:3,5-8
 - 3) Gal.3:1-5 – some Christians foolishly exalt own works = in vain
- 5. Because the cross of Jesus is only way man can be saved – don’t exalt men**
- a. Salvation is of God; not men
 - b. Following & exalting men is foolishness – can’t save
 - c. Jesus must be one exalted in life – only hope

Pride & Self-Sufficiency Are Wrong

Introduction

As the Corinthian church struggled with the exaltation of men, Paul makes it abundantly clear that such actions & thinking are not of God. Christ is not divided nor is it His will that we exalt men & divide among ourselves. A vital principle is revealed – pride & self-sufficiency have no place in the church. The world elevates the wise, the powerful & the noble. Yet as you examine those who answer God’s call, not many of these respond. Therefore there is no reason for snobbery, criticism & ignoring others. We are only what God has made us & such things do not secure us any special treatment.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

1. Look at the type of people who respond to God’s call

- a. **Not many wise** – educator, teacher, philosopher, politician
 - 1) Those who seek (focus on) the wisdom of the world
 - 2) Man does not discover God by pursuing the wisdom of the world
- b. **Not many influential** – powerful & wealthy rulers & business leaders
 - 1) Those who control the wealth & authority in the world
 - 2) Their trust & focus is in having & keeping wealth & power
- c. **Not many of noble birth** – upper class; well born; those of respected heritage
 - 1) Those considered high-bred or the nobility of society
 - 2) One man considers great because of family heritage
- d. **Having knowledge, influence & nobility often hinders** one in accepting Jesus
 - 1) Although esteemed by man, they often get in the way of obeying God
 - 2) Such people have a tendency to think they are above others
 - 3) Often they feel their background ought to put them in better standing with God than the average person.
 - 4) God is not impressed with pride, self-sufficiency, self-attainment & self-righteousness.

e. Scriptures

- 1) Rom.12:16
- 2) 1 Cor.8:2
- 3) Prov.3:7
- 4) Prov.26:12
- 5) Prov.28:26
- 6) Gal.6:3

f. Thoughts

- 1) Paul possibly went over the membership of the Corinthian church in his mind as he wrote verse 26.
 - a) He reminded them that they had very few who were famous, wealthy, highly educated, powerful, or influential when they believed in the Lord.
 - b) It is likely that, when they became Christians, they lost a great deal of the prestige, influence, and income they did have.

- 2) God is not looking for Phi Beta Kappa's to save and to do His work. Nor is He looking for millionaires or famous athletes or even entertainers or statesmen.
 - a) His salvation is open to them just as surely as to others, but only on the same basis of faith.
 - b) The very things that put them ahead in the world may actually put them behind with God.
 - c) It is the feeling of inadequacy that makes people aware that they have need, and often draws them to the gospel.
- 3) Jesus prayed on one occasion, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes" (Matt. 11:25).
 - a) As the context makes clear, this prayer was spoken publicly as a part of His preaching to the crowds. He was addressing His hearers as much as His Father.
 - b) He wanted them to know that God wanted only their faith and nothing else.
 - c) He was also warning that "the wise and intelligent" were at a disadvantage as far as spiritual life and understanding are concerned.
 - d) It is not that they could not accept and believe, but that pride in and dependence on their accomplishments and abilities could keep them from the kingdom.
 - e) Weakness and insufficiency are the climate in which God's strength is made manifest.

2. God chose the foolish things to shame the wise

a. Chose – to select

- 1) God does the choosing not man – vs.26,27,28
- 2) God's choice is simple humble people
- 3) Man wants to be independent of God; to be his own god & God will have no other gods before Him.
- 4) Unless man is willing to humble himself before God he cannot accept God's call to be saved.

b. Reasons behind God's choosing

- 1) **To shame the wise** – dishonor, disgrace; by implication put to blush
 - a) Many of the wise look down upon those who have less
 - b) They have a tendency to see them as tools, pawns etc
 - c) They are self-sufficient in their education & knowledge & have no need of God
 - d) In their quest for wisdom they choose the wisdom of man over the wisdom that comes from God.
 - e) They are full of pride, arrogance & close-mindedness & cannot find God – 2 Cor.4:4

- 2) **To shame the strong**
 - a) **Weak** = those without influence, position & wealth
 - (1) The less important, insignificant & disposable
 - (2) Person without authority & influence
 - b) Person whom stands before God erect, with his chest out, professing his position, authority, wealth & diligent work will be rejected by God – Lk.18:9-14
- 3) **To nullify the things that are**
 - a) **Nullify** – to render useless
 - b) **Lowly things of the world** – distasteful, depraved, dirty
- 4) The wise & influential are unwilling to give all they are & have to Jesus
 - a) They want some religion but not self-sacrifice
 - b) They want for themselves & are unwilling to totally surrender
- 5) God is not against the pursuit of wisdom & the seeking of knowledge
 - a) God expects man to subdue & gain dominion of his universe
 - b) God gave us a mind for the purpose of reasoning & discovering truth
 - c) God wants man to conquer & control the destructive forces nature as much as possible. Gen.1:27,28; Ps.8:6
 - d) God calls man to reason with Him – Isa.1:18
(come with an honest & seeking heart)

c. Thoughts

- 1) God's wisdom is a kind of paradox.
 - a) In human thinking, strength is strength, weakness is weakness, and intelligence is intelligence.
 - b) But in God's economy some of the seemingly strongest things are the weakest, some of the seemingly weakest things are the strongest, and some of the seemingly wisest things are the most foolish. The paradox is not by accident but design.
- 2) A simple, uneducated, untalented, and clumsy believer who has trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior and who faithfully and humbly follows His Lord is immeasurably wiser than the brilliant Ph.D. who scoffs at the gospel.
 - a) The simple believer knows forgiveness, love, grace, life, hope, God's Word—God Himself. He can see eternity.
 - b) The unbelieving Ph.D., on the other hand, knows nothing beyond his books, his own mind, and his own experience. He sees nothing beyond this life, and he cannot be considered anything but foolish.
- 3) We are often tempted to think how wonderful if such-and-such a great athlete, or brilliant scientist, popular entertainer, or world leader would become a Christian.
 - a) Jesus did not think this way when He chose His disciples. Some were probably well known in their local circles and perhaps a few of them were well off financially.

- b) Jesus did not choose them for their wealth or influence, and in His training of them He did not try to capitalize on any such things. None of them had anything so great that he was not ready to leave it to follow Christ.

3. God's ultimate goal in choosing – to eliminate all boasting

a. Realize how weak & helpless man is in this universe

- 1) Such a small part of it
- 2) Can't control our own behavior much less our destiny
- 3) Even knowledge & wisdom is changing, modified & often discarded
- 4) Often helpless to stop a simple virus, much less an accident, a disease or death
- 5) Man does not deserve God's attention, much less His salvation

b. No one is perfect – all are flawed

- 1) Even what is recognized as wisdom & nobility is just in the mind
- 2) All men are flesh – circumstances & surroundings make difference

c. Thoughts

- 1) The simplicity of the gospel and the humility of faithful believers is incomprehensible to the world; it seems to be abject foolishness.
- 2) It is interesting to note that **the despised** means, in the root form, "to be considered as nothing."
 - a) The Greek is in the perfect tense here, indicating that what was once despised will continue to be despised. So people who were thought to be nobodies in society would continue to be thought of as nobodies.
 - b) The phrase **things that are not** translates the most contemptible expression in the Greek language. "Being" was everything to the Greeks, and to be called a nothing was the worst insult. The phrase may have been used of slaves.
- 3) According to God, the greatest man who ever lived, apart from Jesus Himself, was John the Baptist. (Matt. 11:11)
 - a) He had no formal education, no training in a trade or profession, no money, no military rank, no political position, no social pedigree, no prestige, no impressive appearance or oratory.
 - b) This man fit none of the world's standards but all of God's.
- 4) Men are saved not by their intelligence, accomplishments, or human wisdom.
 - a) Those who trust in these will never receive God's salvation and life and wisdom—because these may be had only by humbly receiving what His Son has done on our behalf on the cross.
 - b) Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (Jn 14:6)

4. It is because of Him that we are in Christ

a. He did the saving; the calling; all the planning & work

- 1) Man was helpless to save himself – a slave to Satan & sin
- 2) Unless God had acted there was no hope
- 3) There is absolutely no room for boasting or the exalting of men

b. Jesus is the wisdom of God

- 1) Our righteousness – only way to righteousness
- 2) Our holiness – without Him we can do nothing – Jn.15:5
- 3) Our redemption – purchased us with His blood – 2 Cor.5:21
- 4) Given so that man might know the way, the truth & the life of God

c. Thoughts

- 1) Godly wisdom has a progressive aspect. The God whom we have come to know through Christ we come to know better as we live by His Spirit.
 - a) Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers to be given “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him,” (Eph. 1:17).
 - b) They already had the initial gift of God’s wisdom, received when they first believed. But the apostle was concerned that they continue to grow in His wisdom and truth (cf. 2 Pet. 3:18).
- 2) Wisdom from God also has a future aspect.
 - a) Same prayer Paul asks, “that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”
 - b) Both “hope” and “inheritance” suggest future fulfillment of wisdom and knowledge. God has given us wisdom, He is now giving us wisdom, and He will ultimately give us wisdom.
- 3) The person of the world cannot see or receive God’s wisdom
 - a) Therefore men live only for the moment, having no idea where they came from, where they are going, or what they are doing here in the first place.
 - b) Yet the simplest, most uneducated person in Christ is given the truth about all things. He knows what all the philosophers have never been able to discover or will ever be able to discover. He has God’s wisdom.

5. All boasting must be in the Lord – not man

a. Man has absolutely no reason to boast in himself

- 1) Always falls short; flawed, easily deceived, confused & misunderstood
- 2) Limited in what he can ever achieve, know or understand

b. God is the only one we should ever boast in

- 1) All knowing & all powerful
- 2) One who knows & reveals all truth

1 Corinthians Study
Lesson # 5

What God Intends preaching To Be

Introduction

The Corinthian church is deeply divided. At issue was the exalting of one man over another. They disputed about what kind of preacher was needed or had accomplished the most for the church. Paul has argued that all such division is wrong. Christ is not divided & neither should the church. In this lesson Paul shares his approach to proclaiming the gospel & what God intends preaching to be.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1. **Emphasis is not to be on eloquence of speech or human philosophy**

a. **Eloquence** = superiority, elevation, preeminence, rising above

- 1) Speaking about words – trying to sound superior or elevated
- 2) Concern about being recognized as superior in one's speaking ability
- 3) Wanting to be recognized as a deep thinker

b. **Human wisdom or philosophy**

- 1) World is continually seeking wisdom, education, science, & technology
- 2) Wants new & novel ideas about reality & truth
- 3) Problem – focus is the world not God
 - a) Destiny of world is destruction & death
 - b) No permanency (wisdom & knowledge continually changing)
 - c) No real foundation for one's faith

c. **Emphasis to be upon the testimony of God not men**

- 1) The mystery & revelation of God
- 2) Man's wisdom elevated
 - a) Self-development; self-esteem & positive thinking
 - b) Education, science, history
 - c) New & novel ideas

d. **Thoughts**

- 1) Paul came to Corinth as a witness not a philosopher.
 - a) He came proclaiming the testimony of God.
 - (1) Testimony means just that—a testimony or witness.
 - (2) A person can only testify to what he himself has seen or heard or experienced.
 - (3) He is not to speculate, guess, or deduce.
 - b) Paul was a witness only to God's revelation, not to his own human understanding or reason or inclinations.
 - (1) 2 Cor.4:2 – not walking in craftiness or distorting word
 - (2) The task of the minister is to manifest the truth of God.
- 2) We should not come to church to hear opinions about politics, psychology, economics, or even religion.
 - a) We should come to hear a word from the Lord.
 - b) God's Word edifies & unifies; human opinions confuse & divide

2. One great theme – Jesus Christ & Him crucified

a. I determined = a deliberate decision; strong determination

- 1) His message – the person of Jesus & Him alone
- 2) His focus – the crucifixion

b. Why is Jesus & Him crucified so important?

- 1) By the death of Jesus we are cleansed – Mt.26:28; Jn.1:29; Heb.9:22-28
1 Pet.2:24; 1 Jn.1:7; 1 Jn.3:5
- 2) By the death of Jesus we are accepted & reconciled to God
Eph.1:6,7; Col.1:20
- 3) By the death of Jesus we are justified – Rom.5:9
- 4) By the death of Jesus we are redeemed – Rom.3:24,25; Col.1:14;
1 Tim.2:5,6; Heb.9:12; 1 Pet.1:18; Rev.5:9
- 5) By the death of Jesus are delivered from death – 2 Tim.1:9,10; Heb.2:9
- 6) By the death of Jesus we are delivered from condemnation & wrath
Rom.8:1,34; 1 Thess.1:10; 5:9,10
- 7) By the death of Jesus we are delivered from the curse of the law
Gal.3:13; Col.2:14,15
- 8) By the death of Jesus we are delivered from this present evil world
Gal.1:4
- 9) By the death of Jesus we are delivered from Satan's power
Heb.2:14,15; Rev.12:11
- 10) By the death of Jesus we are saved – Rom.5:6-10; 1 Pet.3:18
- 11) By the death of Jesus we are drawn to God – Jn.12:32; Heb.10:19,20
- 12) By the death of Jesus we are enabled to live a life of righteousness
2 Cor.4:10,11; 5:15,21; 1 Cor.6:19,20

c. Thoughts

- 1) The preaching of the cross was so dominant in the early church that many Jews & Gentiles accused Christians of worshiping a dead man.
- 2) Paul would go to any length to explain & clarify truth but he would not say one word to modify or contradict truth.

3. Proclaim it with a great sense of inadequacy

a. Reasons Paul might have felt inadequate

- 1) His appearance
 - a) Small framed – 2 Cor.10:10
 - b) Speaking ability – 2 Cor.11:6
 - c) Voice more geared to teaching than oratory
 - d) Suffered from physical infirmity – Gal.4:14; 6:11
 - e) Greeks put a lot of stock in charisma; skill & ability
- 2) Previous experiences
 - a) Trouble faced in Philippi; Thessalonica; Berea & Athens
 - b) Had a promising beginning, but efforts smashed by legalists
 - c) Tried to speak to Athenians on their level – using their terms & quoting their authorities – Acts 17:22-31

- 3) Knew the futility of doing the work of the Lord in his own strength
 - a) His sufficiency was in the Lord – Phil.4:13; Col.1:28; Jn.15:5
1 Cor.15:10; Eph.3:7,8; 1Tim.1:15
 - b) Knew the importance of his message – Acts 4:12

b. Reasons we should feel inadequate

- 1) The power to convert is in the Spirit not the messenger – Jn.16:5-11
- 2) Only God can deliver one from death & give them an abundant life
Jn.10:7-18
- 3) Absolutely no reason to exalt men – exalt God – 1 Cor.3:5-9

c. Thoughts

- 1) By fear & trembling I do not think he was referring to mental timidity or even to physical shaking.
 - a) He preached boldly, lived boldly, and counseled other believers to be bold in the things of the Lord
(Acts 13:46; 19:8; Eph. 3:12; 6:19).
 - b) He used the phrase “fear and trembling” in several other passages, each of which have to do with deep concern over an important, urgent issue
(2 Cor. 7:15; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12).
- 2) Paul came to Corinth after being beaten & imprisoned in Philippi, run out of Thessalonica and Berea, and scoffed at in Athens
(Acts 16:22–24; 17:10, 13–14, 32).
 - a) He also came knowing that to be “Corinthianized” meant to be morally corrupt in the extreme
 - b) Corinth was the epitome of paganism and moral degeneracy.
 - c) He had every human reason to be discouraged & no doubt every temptation from Satan to compromise, yet Paul would not change his message.
- 3) He was fearful and trembling only in the sense of being deeply anxious that the gospel somehow find root even in this most unpromising of places.
 - a) He was not fearful for his own life or safety or of the gospel’s having lost its power.
 - b) He was fearful only of its being rejected, & of the terrible consequences of that rejection.
 - c) Surely he also feared his own inadequacy and sin which could weaken his ministry (cf. 1 Cor. 9:16, 27).

4. Not in persuasive words but a demonstration of the Spirit

a. Persuasive = plausible & enticing arguments

- 1) Reasonings that are calculated to captivate the hearers
- 2) Reasoning & words used to persuade through mans wisdom

b. Demonstration of the Spirit

- 1) Demonstrating the power & the presence of the Spirit
- 2) Truth readily & obviously evident in life of messenger

- a) Jn.13:34,35 – by this know My disciple
- b) 1 Tim.4:11-16 – everyone may see your progress
- c) 1 Pet.2:11,12 – may see your good deeds & glorify God
- d) Gal.5:16-26 – live by the Spirit

c. Thoughts

- 1) Human words of wisdom, no matter how impressive & persuasive, would have robbed the gospel of its power.
 - a) Paul saw no place for calculated theatrics and techniques to manipulate response.
 - b) Sadly many have responded to an emotional appeal, without a true knowledge and conviction of God.
 - c) Paul may have had a wider and more receptive response, but his hearers would have been left in their sins, without a Savior
- 2) Paul had great natural abilities, but he did not rely on them.
 - a) Even the human words and wisdom of an apostle could not save.
 - b) Paul did not want his hearers to identify with his own wisdom, which could give them only another philosophy, but with God's wisdom in Jesus Christ, this gives eternal life.
 - c) One preacher was talking to another & said - "Do you see that man over there? He is one of my converts." He then explained, "Not the Lord's, but mine." The man had become a disciple of the preacher but not of Christ.

5. Soul purpose of preaching –faith be in God's power not man's wisdom

a. No value in just knowing

- 1) Jesus was a historical person – actually lived
- 2) That Jesus is the Son of God & savior
- 3) Other religions & philosophies are wrong
- 4) Is a place for the teaching of these things, but just knowing them does not save anyone – James 2:19; Jn.12:42,43

b. One's faith must be in what Jesus did & can do

- 1) Religion based on man & his reasoning is in vain
 - a) Mt.15:3-9 – focus was tradition not God's word
 - b) 2 Tim.3:1-5 – having a form of godliness but denying it's power
 - (1) Making excuses for sin
 - (2) Saying some sin is acceptable & to be expected
 - (3) These behaviors are not really that bad
- 2) Consequences when faith is not in Jesus – His work
 - a) No foundation to build faith upon – on feelings, experience
 - (1) What happens when not having feelings, experiences?
 - (2) What happens when God allows experience to change?
 - b) Not really converted
 - (1) Jesus not really their Lord
 - (2) Fear, anxiety & dread rules when expectations not met
 - (3) Easily give up Jesus when threatened

- 3) How we can strip the gospel of its power
 - a) Focus on entertainment & appealing to the flesh
 - (1) Using the world's music to attract a crowd
 - (2) Focus on comfort & not offending – politically correct
 - b) Focus on externals & ignoring our personal holiness
 - (1) Make worship appealing to the physical senses
 - (2) Allowing those with sin to go unchallenged
 - (3) Not insisting on the fruit of repentance
 - (4) Refusing to be accountable – confess sin

c. Thoughts

- 1) Charles Spurgeon said:

The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul.

- 2) If the Corinthians had come to have faith in **the wisdom of men**, even in Paul's wisdom, they might have changed intellectually, but they would not have changed spiritually.
 - a) They would still have been spiritually dead, and Paul would not have been able to write to them as saints and brothers
1 Cor.1:2, 10
 - b) Paul had not come with his own message but had come simply as a channel of God's message. Only the message of God brings with it **the power of God**.
- 3) The church should not have divisions based on philosophy any more than it should have divisions based on individuals.
 - a) We are to be united around God's wisdom, not human wisdom.
 - b) We are one in Jesus Christ and should be one in His Word and power, and in the fellowship of those who are His.

1 Corinthians Study
Lesson # 6

Knowing God's Revealed Wisdom

Introduction

Intellectual pride was becoming a problem in the Corinthian church. Paul wanted them to understand that such pride had no place in God's kingdom. Man does not nor can he discover God's wisdom on his own. God's Spirit is the one who reveals God's wisdom & it is given only to those who seek to be perfect before God.

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

1. God speaks His wisdom among the mature

a. **Mature** = finished, complete, fully developed, grown

1) **Mature** ($\diamond \mathcal{M} \bullet \mathcal{M} \neq \square \star$) can mean "perfect" (KJV) or "complete," but can also

refer to a person who has full membership in a group, one who is fully initiated.

2) Here Paul uses this term in the same way it is used in other forms by the writer of Hebrews (6:1; 10:14) to refer to salvation.

a) **Those who are mature** are those who are redeemed and are completely trusting in Jesus Christ.

b. **Paul is not saying** that he speaks God's wisdom only when he is with believers who are advanced in the faith, but only when he is among believers who are truly in the faith—the saved.

1) True believers are the only ones among whom the gospel can be wisdom. To all others it is a stumbling block or foolishness

2) While the Christ rejecters hear his message as foolishness, to believers it is wisdom—the wisdom of God.

2. God's wisdom is not humanly discovered

a. **Not of this age or the rulers of this age**

1) **Age** = ($\mathcal{O} \neq \square \star \blacksquare \star$) refers to a period of time, an historical age.

2) **Rulers** = leading men, or men of authority & influence

3) All human wisdom is **passing away**. It is empty, futile, and comes to naught.

4) In the worlds wisdom there is no God or if He may exist we cannot know it for sure.

b. **We speak God's secret wisdom**

1) **A hidden wisdom** – cannot be known by natural means

2) **Mystery** ($\circ \blacklozenge \star \blacklozenge \mathcal{M} \neq \square \star \blacksquare$) does not refer to something strange and puzzling

but to that which is held secret.

a) A fact or truth man is unable to discover by himself

b) God intentionally holds His wisdom a secret from natural man and his earthly wisdom (cf. Matt. 11:25; 13:10-13).

3) **God's wisdom has to be revealed** (unknown until God reveals it)

4) **God predestined before the ages** to give His wisdom through His Son **to our glory.**

2

a) Before time began, our heavenly Father determined to give us His saving wisdom that would lead ultimately to our eternal glorification (Rom. 8:18).

b) Before we ever realized the need God had already planned for all that we needed in Christ

c. **Proof that none of the rulers of this age understood it**

1) The crucifixion of Jesus – in their willing ignorance of God, they executed His Son

2) They had no concept of who or what He was – Jn.1:10

3) Had anyone understood God's wisdom, Satan would have used him or her to thwart God's plans.

d. Vs.9 - "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"

1) **Paul is not referring to the wonders of heaven**, but to the wisdom God has prepared for believers.

a) **His point** is that the natural eyes, ears, and hearts of men cannot know or comprehend His wisdom.

b) **It is prepared only** for those who love Him.

2) Neither externally nor internally, objectively nor subjectively, can man discover God.

a) God's truth is not observable by the **eye** or the **ear**, no matter how many sophisticated instruments we may use.

b) We are just as helpless in trying to discover His truth through our minds (**heart**). Rationalism cannot reason out God's truth.

c) Man's two greatest human resources, his observation and his reason, are equally useless in discovering divine truth.

3) But God's truth, God's plan, God's wisdom, is not hidden from His children. **All that God has prepared for those who love Him.**

3. **God's wisdom is revealed by God's Spirit**

a. **Only God's Spirit knows the things of God**

1) No one really knows another except the spirit within that person

2) The same is true with God – His Spirit must reveal it

3) Natural man cannot penetrate the spiritual world

a) Jn.1:18 – no man has seen God

b) 1 Jn.4:12 – no man has seen God at any time

c) To understand it – it has to be revealed to us by God's Spirit

b. **The things of God are revealed only to believers**

1) Only those who accept Jesus understand the things of God

2) Jn.3:3-6 – unless born again can't see or enter God's kingdom

3) Rom.8:5-8 – natural man cannot please God

c. **Thoughts**

- 1) **God used angels for many amazing & wonderful services.** But He did not entrust the revelation of the New Covenant to an angel.
- 2) **The truths of His Word God revealed through the Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is the divine author of Scripture. God has used many human agents, but the message is entirely His.
- 3) To illustrate the Holy Spirit's unique qualification for revealing the Word, Paul compares the Spirit's knowledge of God's mind to a human being's knowledge of his own mind.
 - a) No person can know another person as well as he knows himself
 - b) Even husbands and wives who have lived together for dozens of years, and have freely shared their thoughts and dreams and problems and joys, never come to know their mates as intimately as they know themselves.
 - c) Our innermost **thoughts**, the deep recesses of our hearts and minds, are known only to ourselves.
- 4) In a similar way, only God's own Spirit can know Him intimately.

3

4. God's truth is freely given

- a. **It is available for all** who truly seek Him
 - 1) God's truth can only be received - it cannot be discovered
 - 2) Jn.1:9-13 – all who receive given right to become children of God
 - 3) Jer.29:13 – will find if seek Me with all your heart
 - 4) The Bible is the Spirit's vehicle for bringing God's revelation.
- b. The **we's** & the **us** of verses 12–13 (as in vv. 6–7, 10) do not refer to Christians in general but to Paul himself.
 - 1) God's Word is for all believers, but was *revealed* only to the apostles and the other writers of Scripture. Only those men properly can be said to have been *inspired*.
 - 2) The promise of John 14:26 (“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you”) is for the benefit of all believers, but was given only to the apostles.
 - 3) Paul and the other writers of Scripture did not record their own ideas and interpretations. They recorded what God *gave* them and only what He gave them. **We have received ... that we might know.**
 - 4) The Spirit used words that the human writers knew and used, but He selected them and arranged them in precisely the order that He wanted. The Bible, therefore, not only is God's Word but God's words.
 - 5) It is not simply the “Word behind the words” that is from God, as many liberal interpreters maintain. “*All Scripture is inspired by God [lit., ‘God-breathed’]*” (2 Tim. 3:16). *Scripture* means “writings,” and refers specifically to what God's chosen men wrote by His revelation and inspiration, not to *everything* they said and wrote.

It refers, as Paul explains, to **the things freely given to us by God**, to the “God–breathed” words they recorded.

4

5. The man without the Spirit cannot accept the things that come from God

a. They are foolishness to him

- 1) It is possible to read the Bible—even many different copies and versions of the Bible—and yet not understand it.
 - a) It is possible to study the Bible for many years, memorizing much of it, and still not understand it.
 - b) The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day were highly trained in the Old Testament, yet they missed its central message.
- 2) The scribes & Pharisees completely failed to recognize the promised Messiah when He came and lived among them (John 5:37–39).
 - a) They did not believe Jesus because they did not truly believe Moses, the great lawgiver in whom they placed their hope (vv. 45–47).
 - b) They did **not accept the things of the Spirit of God** because those things seemed to be **foolishness**. Because those men did not belong to God, they *could not understand them, because they are spiritually appraised*.
 - c) Those scribes and Pharisees, like everyone who rejects God, lived only in the realm of the **natural man**. They had no means and had no desire to understand the spiritual nature of God’s Word.

b. God’s Word is spiritually evaluated, spiritually discerned, spiritually understood and the natural man is spiritually dead.

- 1) The psalmist understood the need for God’s illumination of His Word.
 - a) He prayed, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law” (Ps. 119:18).
 - b) He did not need the Lord’s help to read His Word, but he knew he needed His help to understand it.
- 2) God must open the eyes of our understanding before we can truly know and rightly interpret His truth.
- 3) His truth is available only to those with a regenerate spirit and in whom His Spirit dwells, for only the Spirit can illumine Scripture.
- 4) Just as the physically blind cannot see the sun, the spiritually blind cannot see the Son.

c. Thoughts

- 1) It is just as impossible for the world to understand faithful Christians as it is for them to understand God Himself and His Word.
 - a) They try to appraise believers, but they are always wrong.
 - b) They may accurately evaluate our faults, shortcomings, and our living that is inconsistent with our faith.
 - c) But they cannot accurately evaluate our faith. If the gospel itself is a stumbling block and foolishness to them, so is faith

based on the gospel.

2) The person in Christ will be misunderstood and mistreated just as Christ was misunderstood and mistreated (John 15:20).

5

a) The world will laugh at us, mock us, and, in many places of the world still today, even kill us.

b) The world crucified Christ and it will crucify His followers.

3) Unbelievers frequently want to correct believers, to argue about the truths we believe and follow.

a) But when they contradict scriptural teaching, they are not arguing with us but with God, whose thoughts they do not understand.

b) They are trying to **instruct Him**. What folly.

4) This teaching on illumination does not mean that we can know and understand everything (Deut. 29:29); that we do not need human teachers (Eph. 4:11–12); or that study is not hard work 2 Tim. 2:15. It does mean that every Christian can understand Scripture who is diligent and obedient.

Carnal Christians

Introduction

Divisiveness is a terrible problem. Solomon wrote a long time ago that there are seven things that are an abomination to God & the last one listed is “someone who sows discord among his brothers” (Prov.6:16-19). From 1:18 through 2:16 Paul points out that the church was divided because of worldliness, because of their continued love for human wisdom. In 3:1-9 the apostle shows them that they also were divided because of the flesh, because of their continued yielding to the evil in their humanness. He shows the cause, the symptoms, and the cure.

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1. The cause of division – giving in to the flesh

a. Introduction

- 1) In his book *The New Life* Michael Green reports that a friend of his came to him and explained his new-found Christian life in words like these:
 - a) It is rather like a cyclist who, when he is climbing a long hill, thinks he will be able to freewheel down the other side.
 - b) It is not until he reaches the top that he sees that his task has only just started and that the road winds on with even steeper hills than the one he has just climbed.
- 2) **Fact** - faithful Christian living often becomes increasingly more difficult and more demanding. It is the furthest thing from a downhill ride. In many ways living is far more demanding than before we were saved.
 - a). **There are two reasons:** the world and the flesh.
 - (1) The first is outside us, the second is inside us.
 - (2) These are Satan’s supreme instruments in tempting believers and keeping us from faithfulness and victory.
 - b) When we become a Christian we also become a new creation, with a new nature, & a favorable disposition toward God
 - (1) From that point on , until the Lord takes us to be with Himself, we are swimming upstream, like a salmon returning to spawn.
 - (2) We discover that gravity & the current are continually against us. Our new heart drives us in an entirely different direction from that of the world around us.
- 3) The church has often thought of worldliness only in terms of dancing, alcoholic drinking, and the like.
 - a) But worldliness is much deeper than bad habits; it is an orientation, a way of thinking and believing.

- b) Basically it is buying the world's philosophies, buying human wisdom.
 - (1) It is looking to the world—to human leaders, to influential and popular people, to neighbors, associates, and fellow students—for our standards, attitudes, and meaning.
 - (2) Worldliness is accepting the world's definitions, the world's measuring sticks, the world's goals.

b. The cause of their division was more than external

- 1) The Corinthians were succumbing to the pressures & enticements of their own flesh.
 - a) Scripture says no good thing about the flesh - Rom.7:18
 - b) Man in the flesh cannot please God - Rom.8:8
- 2) **Notice Paul calls them “brothers”**
 - a) A term of recognition & love for fellow believers
 - b) They were still saved & he stood with them as a brother not as a judge
- 3) **However, Paul could not speak to them as spiritual men**
 - a) Even though saved years earlier – still acting like new Christians
 - b) Term spiritual used in a number of ways in scripture
 - (1) Neutral = spiritual things in contrast with the physical
 - (2) Applied to men – two ways (positional & practical)
 - (a) Unbelievers are totally unspiritual ((both ways)
 - (b) Believers are spiritual - given a new nature
 - (c) However, believers can act unspiritual
 - (3) When a Christian sins, he is being practically unspiritual, living on the same practical level as an unbeliever.
 - c) **Realize**
 - (1) Paul had spent 18 months with them
 - (2) After that – the highly gifted Apollos
 - (3) Some were acquainted with Peter & some had even heard Christ
 - (4) There was no excuse for their immaturity, yet they were babes - Heb.5:11-14
- 4) **Three things said about the carnal Christian**
 - a) **Not spiritually mature** – like deformed babies – underdeveloped (mind & behavior not focused on Christ)
 - b) **They have to be fed with milk**
 - (1) Have not paid attention, studied or prayed as others
 - (2) As in many things more experience have – more know
 - c) **They are plagued with division**
 - (1) Envy strife, jealousy
 - (2) James 3:13-16

c. **Some congregations do not want the preacher to get “too deep.”**

- 1) Their fleshly habits are not much threatened if, for instance, the preacher sticks primarily to evangelistic messages.
 - a) Although evangelism is the cutting edge of the church’s mission, it is for unbelievers, not believers.
 - b) Many want Scripture to be preached so superficially that their sin is not exposed, much less rebuked and corrected.
- 2) There is no difference at all between the truths of a spiritual milk diet and a spiritual solid food diet, **except in detail and depth.**
 - a) All doctrine may have both milk and meat elements. It is not that we are to be continually learning new doctrines in order to grow, but that we are to be learning more about the doctrines we have known for years.
 - b) A new Christian might explain the atonement, for example, as, “Christ died for my sins.” A long-time student of the Word, on the other hand, would go into such things as regeneration, justification, substitution, and propitiation.
 - c) One explanation would not be truer than the other; but the first would be **milk** and the second, **solid food**.

d. **Thoughts**

- 1) Nothing is more precious or wonderful than a little baby. But a twenty-year-old with the mind of an infant is heartbreaking.
 - a) A baby who acts like a baby is a joy; but an adult who acts like a baby is a tragedy.
 - b) It doubtlessly grieved the Holy Spirit, as it grieved Paul, that the Christians in Corinth had never gotten out of their spiritual infancy.
- 2) This tragedy is immensely worse than that of the physically or mentally retarded, who have no responsibility for their conditions.
 - a) Spiritual retardation, however, is always primarily our own doing.
 - b) If we do not grow spiritually, the reason is always that we are **still fleshly**.
- 3) It is essential to understand that carnality is not an absolute state in which a believer exists (Rom. 8:4–14)
 - a) It is a behavior pattern he chooses one moment at a time.
 - b) To say it another way, a Christian is not fleshly in the sense of being, but in the sense of behaving.

2. **The symptoms of division – jealousy & strife**

a. **Jealousy & strife are always found in immature congregations**

- 1) Jealousy is the attitude & strife is the action that results
- 2) These sins are more destructive than many Christians seem to think. They are far from being petty sins, because, among other things, they cause division in the church

3) **Jealousy** - a severe form of selfishness, begrudging someone else what we wish were ours.

b. Selfishness is one of the most obvious characteristics of babyhood.

- 1) An infant's life is almost totally self-centered and selfish.
- 2) Its whole concern is with its own comfort, hunger, attention, and sleep.
- 3) It is typical of a young child to be self-centered, but it should not be typical of an adult, especially a Christian adult.
- 4) It is spiritually infantile to be jealous of and to cause strife among fellow believers, and it betrays a fleshly perspective.

c. Division can only occur where there is selfishness.

- 1) Fleshly, immature people cooperate only with those leaders and fellow believers with whom they happen to agree or who personally appeal to them or will flatter them.
- 2) Factions cannot help resulting where there is jealousy and strife, or any other form of carnality. When a congregation develops loyalties around individuals, it is a sure symptom of spiritual immaturity and trouble.

3. The cure for division – glorifying God

a. All ministers are simply servants through whom you came to believe

- 1) They are the instruments, not the source of salvation
 - a) Servant – a menial worker of any sort – slave or free
 - b) Paul was saying in effect, “No one builds a movement around a waiter or busboy, or erects monuments to them.
 - (1) Apollos and I are just waiters or busboys whom the Lord used as servants to bring you food. You do not please us by trying to honor us.
 - (2) Your honor, your glory, is misplaced. You are acting like the world, like **mere men**. Build your monuments, give your praise to the One who prepared the spiritual food we delivered.”
 - c) The human instrument is only a tool – the honor is to go to God
- 2) In our eyes, some Christian work is more glamorous, or seems more important or more significant than other work.
 - a) But if God has called a person to a work, that is the most important ministry he can have. All of God's work is important.
 - b) To glorify one kind of Christian work above another is just as carnal and divisive as to glorify one leader above another.

b. Mt.20:1-16

- 1) Demonstrates the equality of ministry & reward
- 2) To correct problem in disciples – one more important than another
Mt.19:27-30

c. **God rewards on the basis of labor not results**

- 1) Jeremiah was one of God's most faithful and dedicated prophets, yet he saw little result of his ministry. He was ridiculed, persecuted, and generally rejected along with the message he preached.
- 2) Jonah, on the other hand, was petty and unwilling, yet through him God won the entire city of Nineveh in one brief campaign.
- 3) Our usefulness and effectiveness are purely by God's grace (1 Cor.15:10)
- 4) God will "give their reward to [His] bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear [His] name, **the small and the great**" (Rev. 11:18).

Be Careful & Build Wisely

Introduction

The trouble of division plagued the church at Corinth. Trouble makers & opinionated believers had brought division & if allowed to remain would eventually destroy the church. In this section Paul shows that their actions were endangering the eternal destiny of believers. In this section Paul will discuss five aspects of the work in building the church.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

1. Paul the wise master builder.

- a. **Means** – superintendent or architect of the building project
 - 1) The word in Paul’s day carried the idea of a builder as well as designer.
 - 2) He was a combination architect and general contractor.
- b. **Paul’s specialty was foundations**
 - 1) The Lord had used him extensively in establishing churches throughout Asia Minor & Macedonia
 - 2) **Wise** = skilful; one who carefully & thoughtfully approaches his task
- c. **Notice Paul’s source**
 - 1) **Grace** – God’s doing not his own
 - 2) God enabled, empowered & equipped him to accomplish this work
1 Cor.15:10; Rom.15:18; Col.1:29
- d. **What Paul was building was people not a physical building**
 - 1) A body of people who believed in Jesus
 - 2) His goal was to assemble them together into a body to worship & serve the Lord. Where they met did not matter, what mattered was their love & dedication to the Lord
 - 3) Paul’s task was to lay the proper foundation of the gospel, to establish the doctrines and principles for belief and practice revealed to him by God (1Cor. 2:12–13). It was also the task of laying down the mysteries of the New Covenant (cf. Eph.3:1–9)
- e. **Others would follow him as builders**
 - 1) In the case of Ephesus, that person was Timothy (1Tim. 1:3).
 - 2) In the case of Corinth, it was Apollos.
 - 3) Paul was not jealous of those who followed him in ministry. He knew that, as one who laid foundations, he would have to be followed by other builders.
 - 4) Most of the Corinthians, for example, had been baptized by later preachers. Paul was glad for that, because it gave less excuse for the Corinthians to develop earthly loyalties to him (1:14–15).
 - 5) **Admonition** – take care how you build
 - a) Builds = present active indicative - stresses continual action
 - b) The context makes it clear – Paul has a broader and more inclusive application in mind than just the preachers.

- (1) The numerous references to “each man” and “any man” (vv. 10–18) indicate that the principle applies to every believer.
- (2) All of us, by what we say and do, to some extent teach the gospel.
- (3) No Christian has the right to be careless in representing the Lord and His Word. Every believer is to be a careful builder. We all have the same responsibility.

2. The one & only foundation – Jesus Christ

- a. **The foundation is not** - NT ethics; history; traditions; or even the decisions of churches & church leaders throughout the centuries.
 - 1) Some builders have tried to make the foundation of Christianity to be church tradition; the moral teachings of the human Jesus; ethical humanism, or some form of pseudo–scientism or simply sentimental love and good works.
 - 2) Without Jesus Christ as the foundation that spiritual building will not be of God & will not stand.
 - 3) Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain - Ps.127:1
- b. **Jesus is the cornerstone of God’s kingdom**
 - 1) Mt.4:24-27 – must build our lives upon His words
 - 2) Jn.8:24 – will die in sins unless believe in Jesus
 - 3) Jn.14:6 – Jesus is the only way to the Father
 - 4) Acts 4:12 – no other name under heaven whereby be saved
- c. **His teachings must be supreme when building**
 - 1) Jn.6:68 – He has words of live
 - 2) Jn.8:51 – keep His teachings never see death
 - 3) Jn.12:48-50 – His words will judge all in last day

3. Be concerned about the materials you use as you build

- a. **Permanent, valuable & incorruptible materials**
 - 1) Spiritual qualities of the Spirit – Gal.5:22,23
 - 2) Things that we add to our faith – 2 Pet.1:5-11
- b. **From the earliest history of the church** in Acts and the epistles, and from the accounts of the seven churches of Revelation 2–3 through today, it has been obvious that Christians and the congregations they form are vastly different.
 - 1) From the beginning there have been **gold** Christians and **wood** Christians, **silver** churches and **hay** churches, **precious stone** endeavors and those that are **straw**—in every degree and combination.
 - 2) Mt.7:21-23; Mt.15:9,13; Col.2:8; 2 Tim.2:14-16; 1 Jn.4:1-5
- c. **Materials used** do not represent wealth, talents, opportunity or spiritual gifts.
 - 1) The materials represent believers’ responses to what they have—how well they serve the Lord with what He has given them.

- 2) In other words, they represent our works.
 - a) We cannot be saved or stay saved by good works.
 - b) But every Christian has been “created in Christ Jesus **for** good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10)
 - c) Also we are to bear “fruit in every good work” (Col. 1:10).
 - d) Works are **not the source** of the Christian life, but they **are the marks** of it. James 2:14-26
 - 3) **The point Paul is making** - our purpose should always be to serve the Lord with the best He has given us & with full dependence on Him
- d. If Christ Himself is the foundation of our lives, He should also be the center of the work we build on the foundation.
- 1) The work we do should truly be His work, not just some external activity or religious busy work.
 - 2) It is easy to become deeply involved in all sorts of church programs and activities and projects that are hay work.
 - a) They are not bad programs or projects, but they are trivial.
 - b) The **wood, hay, and straw** are not apparently sinful things, but subtly sinful things.
 - c) Each can be useful in building something. Even hay or grass may be used to make a roof in some cases.
 - d) But when tested by fire, all three of the second group of materials will burn up.
- e. **Another thought** – 2 Tim.2:20,21
- 1) We build for the Lord, and use the various materials for the Lord, in three basic ways: by our motives, our conduct, and by our service.
 - 2) **Our motives.**
 - a) Why we do a thing is as important as what we are doing.
 - b) A campaign of neighborhood visitation done because of compulsion is wood, but visiting the same people in love to win them to the Lord is gold.
 - c) Singing in church and being concerned about how the people like our voice is hay, but singing to glorify the Lord is silver.
 - d) Giving generously out of duty or pressure from men is straw, but giving generously with joy to extend the gospel and to serve others in the Lord’s name is a precious stone.
 - e) Point - Work that on the outside looks like gold to us may be hay in God’s eyes. He knows “the motives of men’s hearts” (1 Cor. 4:5).
 - 3) **Our conduct.**
 - a) 2 Cor. 5:10 - “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”

b) “Bad” (□^ᄇᄃ^ᄃ◆●□^ᄃ) is here best understood as “worthless.”
It

produces no gain.

c) Our conduct, therefore, can be “good” (ᄃᄃᄃᄃ◆ᄃᄃᄃᄃ^ᄃ),
“inherently

good in quality”), evil, or just useless—like **wood, hay** and **straw** when tested by fire.

4) **Our service.**

a) The way we use the spiritual gifts God has given us, the way we minister in His name, is of supreme importance in our building for Him. In Christ’s service, we must seek to be those vessels “for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master.”

b) Some years ago a young man said he was leaving a certain ministry. The reason he gave was: “I wasn’t doing what I do best. I was using my abilities but not my spiritual gifts.” There was nothing wrong with the work he had been doing. In fact, for another person it could be gold. But for him it was wood, hay, or straw, because he was doing what others thought he should do, rather than what the Lord had particularly gifted him to do.

4. **A testing of fire is coming**

a. **Every believer’s work will be tested as to quality.**

1) **Fire** is the symbol of testing. Just as fire purifies metal, so will the fire of God’s discernment burn up the dross and leave what is pure and valuable

2) Job 23:10; Zech. 13:9; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 3:18

b. **This will not be a time of punishment but a time of reward.**

1) Even the one who has built with wood, hay, or straw will not be condemned; but his reward will correspond to the **quality** of his building materials.

2) When wood, hay, or straw come in contact with fire they are burned up. Nothing is left but cinders. They cannot stand the test. Gold, silver, and precious stones, however, do not burn. They will stand the test, and they will bring great reward.

c. **Whatever service we do to God’s glory** - He will reward.

1) The Lord’s reward for all His faithful followers are varied and wonderful, and all of them are imperishable (1 Cor. 9:25)

2) The New Testament refers to them as crowns.

a) 2 Tim. 4:7–8 - *For those who have true saving faith and thus are faithful to live in hope until Jesus comes, there will be ‘the crown of righteousness’*

b) 1Thess. 2:19–20 - *Because the faithful proclaim the truth, there is promised a ‘crown of exultation’*

c) 1 Pet. 5:4 - *Because of the service of the redeemed, the reward*

given is 'the unfading crown of glory'
d) James 1:12 - " For all who love the Lord "the crown of life"

5

5. The church is the Temple of God

a. Speaking of the church as a whole not individually

- 1) 1 Cor.6:19,20 – refers to us individually
- 2) This temple is composed of all God's elect
- 3) It is holy & God jealously guards it
- 4) Under the Old Testament any person, other than the high priest on the Day of Atonement, who dared to enter the Holy of Holies would drop dead on the spot.
 - a) He would not need to be put to death by the people; God would strike Him dead.
 - b) Even less does God look kindly upon those who threaten or defile His holy people (cf. Matt. 18:6–10).

b. Temple – sanctuary

- 1) Something that is holy & dedicated to God
- 2) Here (in the church) the Spirit of God dwells
- 3) The emphasis is the presence of God

c. Be very careful how you build because you are building God's sanctuary

- 1) Don't do anything to destroy His temple
- 2) The defiling of God's church will result in severe judgment
- 3) Those who were grumbling, complaining & being divisive were in extreme danger. Their actions were defiling God's temple.

d. Note word destroy in vs.17

- 1) Both come from the same Greek word
- 2) **Idea** = person who troubles the church will face the same kind of trouble himself (we reap what we sow)

e. How we can destroy God's temple

- 1) Make it impossible for God's Spirit to work within the believers
 - a) An attitude of disgust & ill will
 - b) An unwillingness to learn
 - c) Grumbling, griping, complaining, quarrelling & arguing
- 2) Splitting the church
- 3) Phil.2:3,4; 2 Tim.2:14, 24-26; Heb.12:15; James 3:6, 13-15

Seeing Ministers For What They Really Are

Introduction

In this passage Paul will discuss the root cause for the problems at Corinth – pride in who they were & what they knew. The church was glorying in their being a part of the intellectual, just as their city & region did. They possessed an intellectual worldly wisdom & felt that they knew more than most. They felt wise enough to judge church leaders & the truth. They were judging the way various ones preached & ministered to the church - their rhetoric, their persuasiveness, their delivery & arguments.

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

1. The proper view of ourselves

a. Corinthian church had certain advantages

- 1) Enjoyed philosophy & theology – culture where these openly discussed.
- 2) Ministered to by some outstanding preachers (Paul & Apolos)

b. Also had certain weaknesses

- 1) Wanted world recognition (known as intellectual & well educated)
- 2) Took pride in their idea & the ideas of their peers

c. Result – began to follow own ideas & discarded the word of God

- 1) Mt.15:8,9
- 2) Exalted men with unusual abilities
- 3) Exalted the wisdom & ideas of men over the word of God
- 4) They were deceiving themselves

d. Thought

1) Much division in the church would be eliminated if individuals were not so impressed with their own wisdom.

a) A person who thinks that he is wise in this age—that is, wise in contemporary human wisdom—does nothing but **deceive himself**.

b) Paul's admonition - anyone who is so self-deceived ought to **become foolish** (ὡς ἡλίθιος), that is, identify with those who

recognize that human wisdom, including our own, is mere **foolishness** ($\text{ὡς ἡλίθιος ἄνευ Θεοῦ}$) without God.

c) Those two Greek terms are from the same root from which we get *moron*.

(1) Human wisdom is moronic in the Lord's sight.

(2) Unity in the church can never come without recognizing human wisdom to be what God declares it to be: **foolish**.

2) Why does worldly wisdom fail?

a) **Worldly wisdom is superficial** – only seems wise. Any wisdom that seeks to know God apart from His revelation is superficial.

b) **Worldly wisdom is foolishness to God**

2

- (1) Man's heart is full of wickedness & evil
- (2) Nothing man can do to rectify himself with God
- (3) Anything short of Jesus is futile – Jn.14:6; Col.2:8

3) **The church must create an atmosphere in which the Word of God is submitted to and honored.**

- a) Where human opinion is never used to judge or qualify revelation.
- b) As far as the things of God are concerned, Christians must be totally under the teachings of Scripture and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Only then can we be open to God's wisdom and truly **become wise**.

4) **Comment from John MacArthur's commentary on 1 Corinthians**

“The liberal Bible scholars and theologians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were brilliant men, highly learned in many areas. They often disagreed with one another on doctrines and interpretations, but the one belief in which they were unanimous was that the Bible was essentially a human book. Because they considered it to be primarily human, though perhaps influenced by divine guidance of some sort, they felt perfectly free to reject or modify whatever part of Scripture did not fit their own understanding. Because they did not believe that writing had been developed by Moses' time, they concluded that he could not have written the Pentateuch. Because they did not believe in supernatural predictions, they did not believe that the man Daniel could possibly have written the book of Daniel, which tells of events hundreds of years after he lived. When Scripture reported that God said or did something that was contrary to their self-invented view of God, they denied that He said or did it. In the name of intellectualism they decimated God's Word, leaving only that which suited their personal biases. They also decimated a great part of His church, causing unimaginable confusion, doubt, unbelief, and spiritual division. The legacy of those men is still polluting seminaries, colleges, and churches throughout the world”

2. **The proper view of men**

a. **Don't boast about men**

- 1) **Idea** = to look upon them as the answer & source of life & blessings
- 2) Rom.3:23 – all fall short of the glory of God

b. **Only God is to be exalted, praised & worshiped**

3. **The proper view of possessions**

- a. As believers we are “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17).
- b. We have even inherited Christ's glory (John 17:22).
- c. God causes all things to work together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

4. The proper view of Jesus

- a. Believers all belong to the same Lord, and are thus one with each other.
Therefore anything that denies our oneness with each other denies our oneness in Him (cf. Phil. 2:1-4).
- b. We are one with Jesus & with God Jn.17:9,10,21,23

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

1. Ministers are servants of Jesus

- a. **Servant** = under rower (a slave who sat in belly of ship & rowed)
 - 1) Most menial & despised of slaves
 - 2) Galley slaves were not exalted one above the other.
 - a) They had a common rank, the lowest.
 - b) They had the hardest labor, the cruelest punishment, the least appreciation, and in general the most hopeless existence of all slaves.
 - 3) Word came to refer to subordinates of any sort, to those under the authority of another.

b. They are entrusted with the secret things of God

- 1) Must be trustworthy & responsible
 - a) 1 Thess.2:4
 - b) 1 Tim.1:11,12
 - c) 2 Tim.4:2-5
- 2) Entrusted with proclaiming **the mysteries of God**.
 - a) Mystery ($\circ \blacklozenge \blacklozenge \mathcal{M} \otimes \square \neq \square \blacksquare$), as used in the New Testament,

is that

which was hidden and can be known only by divine revelation.

- b) As a steward of God's mysteries, a minister is to take God's revealed Word and dispense it to God's household. He is to dispense all of God's Word, holding nothing back.

Acts 20:20,21,27

- c) The reason so many Christians have spiritual malnutrition is that so many preachers dispense an unbalanced diet of biblical truth. What they preach may be scriptural, but they do not preach the full counsel, the whole purpose, of God.

2. Criticism or praise from men should be insignificant to God's minister

a. Paul was totally unconcerned

- 1) We can benefit greatly from the counsel of a wise, spiritual friend, and sometimes even from the criticisms of unbelievers.
- 2) But no human being is qualified to determine the legitimacy, quality, or faithfulness of our work for the Lord.
- 3) Matters of outward sin are to be judged as 1Tim5:19-21 indicates.

- 4) But apart from this discipline, we can make no absolutely accurate judgment as to the faithfulness of heart, mind, & body of anyone.

4

b. **Examined** and **examine** are from *ἑρεσκω*, which means “to investigate,

question or evaluate.”

- 1) It does not mean to determine guilt or innocence, as the KJV (“judged, judge”) suggests.
- 2) **Human court** (*ἡμετέριον δικαστήριον*) literally means “human day,” that is, a day in a human court.
- 3) No human being, or group of human beings, is qualified to examine and evaluate God’s servants. No Christian, and in this context especially God’s ministers, should be concerned about any such evaluation. Only God knows the truth.

c. **Thought**

- 1) A caring minister of Christ cannot be insensitive to the feelings, needs, and opinions of his congregation.
 - a) He should not try to be. A sincere word of appreciation after a sermon is encouraging, and reflects spiritual concern and growth in the listeners life.
 - b) In addition, a word of helpful criticism can be a needed corrective and even a blessing.
- 2) But no minister can remain faithful to his calling if he lets his congregation, or any other human beings, decide how true his motives are or whether he is working within the Lord’s will.
 - a) Their knowledge and understanding of the facts are imperfect, their criticisms and compliments are imperfect.
 - b) In humility and love, God’s minister must not allow himself to care about other people’s evaluations of his ministry.

d. **Paul knew of no sin or deficiency in his own life**

- 1) His conscience was clean – 2 Cor.1:12
 - a) Yet he knew he could be wrong
 - b) 1 Cor.10:12
- 2) The only evaluation that really mattered was the Lord’s
 - a) 2 Tim.2:15
 - b) A minister serves his people spiritually only when he is a faithful servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God. And God alone is the judge of the true spiritual value of that service.

The Corinthian Conceit

Introduction

Humility seemed to be a common characteristic among God's chosen ministers. They seemed to sense their unworthiness in being chosen by God for a specific ministry. What was it about them that made them so special that God would choose them to do His work through? Even Jesus came to accomplish His work for God with a sense of deep humility, humbling Himself completely before the will of God. The Corinthians had not learned that virtue; instead they were conceited & boastful which has led them into division.

1 Corinthians 4:6-21

1. Misplaced loyalty

a. Corinthians were elevating men beyond what scripture teaches

1) Are to respect our leaders

1 Thess.5:12 – respect those who are over you

1 Tim.5:17 – faithful elders consider with double honor

Heb.13:17 – obey leaders & submit to their authority

2) They had taken these admonitions too far

What God had intended for unity Satan had turned into division

Their respect for these ministers had developed into factions

3) Misplaced loyalty will inevitably bring hostility

Num.11:28,29 – Joshua's loyalty to Moses

Mk.9:38 – man driving out demons not one of us

b. World glories in superior gifts & wisdom

1) Acts 14:8-18 – wanted to sacrifice to Paul & Barnabus

2) Exalts men of superior intellect & talents

c. Such an exaltation of men leads to division & apostasy

1) 2 Tim.4:1-5 – exalt teachers that focus on their desires

2) 2 Tim.3:6-9 – sin makes one vulnerable to these false teachers

d. God's word needs to be exalted in our lives

1) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – inspired word of God

2) James 1:19-25 – humbly submit to God's word

2. What reason is there to exalt men?

a. Who makes you different?

1) Why do you see yourselves as superior?

2) You are made of the same stuff as others

b. What do you have that you did not receive?

1) Life, food, education, talent, country live in etc

2) No matter how hard we may have studied or worked we would have nothing or be nothing without the Lord & others.

3. Paul's sarcasm

a. Their elevated position

- 1) Have all they want; are rich & have become kings
- 2) You are already so much more than we are

b. Apostles dilemma

- 1) On display at the end of the procession
(picture of victory march = condemned at end of procession)
- 2) Considered as worthless, contributing nothing to mankind

c. Spectacles

- 1) When a Roman general won a major victory it was celebrated by what was called a triumph.
 - a) The general would enter the city in great military splendor, leading his officers and troops.
 - b) Behind those would come a group of prisoners in chains, with the conquered king and his officers prominently displayed for all to see and mock.
 - c) The prisoners were under the sentence of death and would be taken to the arena to fight wild beasts.
- 2) That is the **spectacle** to which Paul refers.
 - a) In the spiritual warfare he was fighting he was considered to be that sort of captive, that sort of conquered prisoner, **condemned to death**.
 - b) James Moffatt translates, "God means us apostles to come in at the very end like doomed gladiators in the arena."

d. Fools

- 1) "You still really think of the gospel as foolish and of its ministers as foolish. You are ashamed of being Christ's servant. You want glory, honor, and worldly recognition."
- 2) The Corinthians still loved human wisdom. They were still tempted to look on preachers of the gospel as babblers, just as the Athenian philosophers had done (Acts 17:18).
- 3) They could not bear to be **fools for Christ's sake**, and thought of themselves as **prudent, strong, and distinguished**.

e. Sufferers

- 1) While the Corinthian believers were living like kings, the apostles were living like slaves
- 2) Apostles understood first hand Mt.8:20 - "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head
- 3) Apostles lived on the lowest level of society
2 Cor.11:23-28
Toiled with their own hands like slaves
- 4) Yet they were not resentful or bitter

f. Scum of the earth

- 1) **Scum** and **dregs** are synonyms and refer to scrapings cleaned from a dirty dish or pot and then thrown away.
- 2) The words were commonly used figuratively of the lowest, most degraded criminals, who often were sacrificed in pagan ceremonies.
- 3) That is the way the world looked at the apostles. They were religious scum and dregs, and no better than the criminals like whom they were often treated.

4. Marks of a spiritual father

- a. Why Paul has been so harsh – he loves them as a father
- b. He could not bear for them to stray from the truth
 - 1) **Admonishes them** – not want to shame them
 - a) **Admonish** = means literally “to put in mind,” with the purpose of warning and reproving.
 - (1) Eli the priest failed to do this – 1 Sam.2-4
 - (2) Leaders must admonish spiritual children too
 - (3) 1 Thess.2:10-12
 - b) **It is possible for a parent to correct a child in a way that tears down rather than builds up - Eph.6:4**
 - (1) In the name of discipline, even Christian discipline, children can be provoked and abused in ways that leave permanent scars.
 - (2) They are often put down with criticism and punishment but seldom lifted up with admonition and encouragement.
 - 2) **Loved them**
 - a) My dear children (2 Cor.12:14,15)
 - b) Paul did not want to be a burden upon them
 - 3) **He set them an example**
 - a) He not only said, “Do as I say,” but also, “Do as I do.” The Greek term is equivalent to our word *mimic*
 - b) Making disciples is more than just teaching right principles; it is also involves living those principles before the ones being discipled (1 Tim. 4:12).

5. Timothy sent as a teacher & model

- a. His task - to remind them of Paul’s teachings
- b. What Paul taught in one church he taught in all churches
- c. Paul is hopeful the erring would repent before he came to visit them. If not he would deal with their arrogance.

Immorality In The Church

Introduction

The city of Corinth in Paul's day was like much of western society today. People were strongly intent on having their own ways. Sexual permissiveness was rampant; and the church was deeply affected. As serious as the immorality itself was, the church's tolerance of it was even more serious. They were rationalizing the immoral behavior & were not inclined to take corrective measures. This chapter is not so much directed at the believers, (or "so-called" believers - vs 11), who were committing the sins, but at the rest of the church who stood by doing nothing about it—in fact, they seem to be arrogantly *refusing* to do anything about it.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

1. The need for discipline

a. They were rationalizing or minimizing the immorality

- 1) Not seeing it as a serious problem to them spiritually
 - a) This sin was widely known – in & out of the church
 - b) Yet it involved someone else – why should they be bothered
 - c) Was a sin that even the world couldn't tolerate
- 2) The Corinthian church had a general reputation for immorality, and word of it had come to Paul more than once. (vs.9)
 - a) **Immorality** is the Greek **πορνεία**, from which we get *pornography*, and **refers to any illicit sexual activity**.
 - b) **In this case it was a form of incest**, because a man was living with his father's wife, that is, his stepmother.
 - c) The term **father's wife** indicates that the woman was not his natural mother but had married his father after his mother had died or been divorced.

b. Terrible sin

- 1) That God considers such a relationship incestuous is clear from the OT.
 - a) Sexual relations between a man and his stepmother was in the same category as relations between him and his natural mother.
 - b) Anyone guilty of those or other sexual "abominations" was to be cut off from his people (Lev.18:7-8, 29; Deut. 22:30)
 - c) From Cicero and others we know that such incest was also strictly forbidden under Roman law.
- 2) **The present tense has** indicates - that the sinful activity had been going on for some time and was still going on.
 - a) It was not a one-time or short-term affair but was continuous and an open one.
 - b) They may have been living together as if man and wife.
- 3) Because Paul calls for no discipline of the woman, perhaps she was not a Christian.

- 4) More shocking than the sin itself was the church's toleration of it
- 5) Perhaps they looked on the incest as an expression of their Christian liberty, or perhaps they looked on their toleration of it as an expression of Christian love. In any case their arrogance blinded them to the clear truth of God's standards.

2. They should have mourned

a. A church that does not mourn over sin, especially sin within its own fellowship, is on the edge of spiritual disaster.

- 1) When we cease to be shocked by sin we lose a strong defense against it
- 2) Vice is a monster so frightful,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.
- 3) Corinth arrogantly followed their feelings & rationalizations rather than God's Word, and found themselves ignoring & justifying flagrant sin in their midst.

b. Rev.2:19,20 – church at Thyatira

- 1) One who claimed to speak for God openly taught immorality was OK
- 2) God takes the purity of His church seriously
- 3) Consequently she, and all who participated in immorality with her, became subject to God's severe judgment.

c. Because the Corinthians refused to mourn, they caused Paul to mourn and the Holy Spirit to grieve (Eph. 4:30).

1) **Christians are not to tolerate sin within the church any more than they are to tolerate it within their own lives.**

- a) Eph.5:3 - "But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints"
- b) Eph.5:11 – "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them"

2) **It is the responsibility of all church members, not simply the leaders, to expose sinful practices in the fellowship.**

- a) Without being self-righteous or prying, we are required to be continually on the lookout for any sort of immorality or sin that threatens the purity of our Lord's church.
- b) We must recognize the need for identifying and cleansing sin within the church. When it is found we should be in spiritual mourning until it is cleansed.

3. The method of discipline – deliver such a one to Satan

a. Remove them from your midst – Mt.18:15-17

- 1) Discipline is not inconsistent with love.
 - a) The lack of discipline, is inconsistent with love,
 - b) Heb.12:6
 - c) If we truly love our brothers & sisters we will discipline them

2) Mt.18:18-20

- a) If we have followed His instruction to be sure that “every fact may be confirmed” (v. 16), we know that our decision about guilt or innocence (binding or loosing) will be in accordance with heaven’s.
- b) When we meet in His name He is always with us—doing the discipline Himself (cf. Eph. 5:25–27).

b. **Deliver such a one over to Satan**

1) The word **deliver** (ἀποδοῦναι) is a strong term indicating the judicial

act of sentencing, of handing one over for punishment.

- 2) The result or purpose of such discipline is the destruction of the flesh
- 3) Physical weakness, sickness, & even death can result from persistent sin
 - a) 1Cor.11:30
 - b) Acts 5:1-11
- 4) Destruction of the flesh indicates the man would eventually die unless he repented
 - a) Perhaps the man did repent – 2 Cor.2:5-11
 - b) A disciplined brother is still a brother and is never to be despised, even when unrepentant (2 Thess. 3:14–15). And if he repents, he is to be forgiven and restored in love (Gal. 6:1–2).
- 5) Examples of those given over to Satan
 - a) 1 Sam.16:14,15 – king Saul
 - b) Lk.22:3; Jn.13:27 – Judas
 - c) 1 Tim.1:18-20 – Hymenaeus & Alexander

4. **The reason for the discipline**

a. **Sin is a spiritual cancer** & unless removed effects the whole fellowship

1) **Your boasting is not good.**

- a) “Look where your arrogance and your boasting have brought you. Because you still love human wisdom and human recognition and the things of this world, you are completely blinded to the blatant sin that will destroy your church if you don’t remove it.”
- b) The believers there had been under the ministry of Paul, Apollos, & Peter. They were “enriched in [Christ], in all speech and all knowledge,” the “testimony concerning Christ was confirmed” in them, and they were “not lacking in any gift” (1:5–7). Yet they were proud, arrogant, boastful, and immoral—even tolerant of sins, including a sin that pagans condemned.
- c) When sin is willingly, or even neglectfully, allowed to go unchallenged and undisciplined, the church is in danger of a greater malignancy.

2) **As Christians we are to separate ourselves from sin**

- a) 2 Cor.6:17-7:1
- b) Eph.4:17-5:16
- c) Col.3:1-14

5. **The sphere of our discipline – among believers – Vs.9-13**

a. **Not to associate with immoral people**

- 1) Literally means “to mix up with.” **In this compound form it is more intense and means** “to keep intimate, close company with.”
- 2) Faithful believers are not to keep close company with any fellow believers who persistently practice serious sins such as those mentioned here.
 - a) If the offenders will not listen to the counsel and warning of two or three other believers and not even of the whole church, they are to be put out of the fellowship.
 - b) They should not be allowed to participate in any activities of the church—worship services, Sunday school, Bible studies, or even social events.
 - c) Obviously, and most importantly, they should not be allowed to have any leadership role.
 - d) They should be totally cut off both from individual and corporate fellowship with other Christians, including that of eating together (v. 11; cf. 2 Thess. 3:6–15).
- 3) No exceptions are made.
 - a) Even if the unrepentant person is a close friend or family member, he is to be put out.
 - b) They are to lose contact with fellow believers, in order to not corrupt others with this wickedness and to suffer the consequences of their sin.
 - c) The goal of such isolation is to drive the person to repentance.
- 4) A church that does not discipline a sinning member is like a person who has good reason to believe he has cancer but who refuses to go to a doctor—because he either does not want to face the problem or does not want to face the treatment.
 - a) If he waits too long his whole body will be permeated with the disease and it will be too late for treatment to do any good.
 - b) No church is healthy enough to resist contamination from persistent sin in its midst, any more than the healthiest and most nutritious bushel of apples can withstand contamination from even a single bad one. The only solution in both cases is separation.

b. **Church had misunderstood Paul’s point**

- 1) Apparently the church had stopped having contact with unbelievers instead of with unrepentant believers.

- a) To do so is impossible without leaving the planet.
 - b) Besides, sin outside the church is not nearly as dangerous to the church as sin within its own membership.
 - c) Perhaps their wrong response also reflected their wanting to tolerate sin in the church.
- 2) We are not to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2), but we must be in the world and have contact with unsaved people or we could never evangelize them.
- a) Jn.17:15-18
 - b) Phil.2:15
 - c) Mt.5:13-16
- 3) **It is the so-called brother that is the threat**
- a) **The Greek terms used here** to identify the sins are substantives, indicating patterns of behavior.
 - b) Rom.6:1-7 – power of sin is broken so the sin is voluntary
 - c) Believers who choose to sin will develop sinful patterns
 - d) 2 Pet.1:5-11
- 4) **We have no responsibility for judging outsiders.**
- a) We are to witness to outsiders, but not judge them.
 - b) We cannot chasten them, and no remedial steps will alter the sin of the ungodly.
 - c) **Those who are outside, God judges.** But we do have a responsibility to **judge those who are within the church.** We must **remove the wicked man from among us**
- 5) **Point** - Discipline is difficult, painful, and often heartrending.
- a) It is not that we do not love the offenders, but that we love Christ, His church, and His Word even more.
 - b) Our love for the offenders is not to be a sentimental tolerance but a correcting love (cf. Prov. 27:6)

Taking Discipline Seriously

Introduction

Last week we discussed the need to discipline the brother who was living immorally. The problem Paul was dealing with was not so much the sin of the man, but the negligence of the church to seriously deal with the problem. Their attitude of live & let live was damaging to the whole congregation. Instead of allowing it to go on unchallenged they needed to as a group face the sin & challenge the man to repent. Our discussion focused on the need for this to be handled properly for the good of the sinner. Tonight our focus will be on doing what is necessary for the good of the church.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

1. Attitudes

a. Negative

- 1) Prov.1:7 – fools **despise** discipline (disrespect; have contempt for)
- 2) Prov.15:32 – **ignoring** (avoid; make as nothing) discipline = **despise** yourself (look down on; hold in contempt)
- 3) Prov.5:20-23 – **lack of** discipline **brings** sin & death
- 4) Prov.10:17 – **lack of** discipline **leads** others astray
- 5) Prov.13:18 – **lack of** discipline **leads** to poverty & shame

b. Positive

- 1) Prov.3:11,12 - My son, **do not despise** the Lord's discipline and **do not resent** (be disgusted in; anxious about; loath; abhor) his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.
- 2) Prov.12:1 - Whoever **loves** (have an affection for like a friend) discipline loves knowledge, but he who **hates** (see as an enemy) correction is stupid.
- 3) Prov.19:18 - Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.

2. In our society there is an aversion (**hatred for; distaste**) to discipline

- a. See it in the negative (harmful; damaging)
- b. This attitude has permeated the church (choose to ignore its importance)

3. Seriousness of Paul's instructions

a. Deliver them over to Satan

- 1) **Means** – to hand one over for the purpose of punishment (indicates a judicial act of sentencing)
- 2) **Purpose** = to **destroy** (the ruin of; death of) the flesh (man eventually die unless he repents)

b. Realize physical weakness, sickness & death can result from persistent sin

- 1) Acts 5:1-11 – Anais & Saphria

2) 1 Cor.11:30 - That is why many among you are **weak** (diseased) & **sick** (frail), & a number of you have **fallen asleep** (deceased; dead) But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

3) **Other examples**

- a) **King Saul** given an evil spirit **to torment him** – 1 Sam.16:14,15
- b) **Judas** – Satan allowed to enter him Lk.22:3; Jn.13:27 (**death**)
- c) **Hymenaeus & Alexander** – to teach them **not to blaspheme** (defame; revile; speak evil) (1 Tim.1:19,20)

c. **Realize what this does to the church**

- 1) **Leaven** = symbolizes corruption (the influence of evil)
 - a) If given opportunity, sin will permeate a whole church just as leaven permeates a whole loaf.
 - b) Sin's nature is to ferment, corrupt, and spread.
- 2) God diagnoses the spiritual health of a church only by the standards of His righteousness.
 - a) Sin is a spiritual malignancy and it will not stay isolated long.
 - b) Unless removed it will spread its infection until the whole fellowship of believers is diseased.
- 3) **Christians are to be separated from the old life**
 - a) Rom.6:1-18
 - b) **Get rid of** = (to purge; cleanse thoroughly) (emphasis is complete cleansing)
 - c) We are to remove everything from the old life that would taint and permeate the new
 - d) Eph.4:17-5:16
- 4) **Look around & see results when we don't**
 - a) Child molestation ignored & hidden in the Catholic church
 - b) Acceptance of homosexual leaders in some denominations

4. **Jesus takes discipline seriously too**

a. Gal.5:26-6:2

- 1) **Sin is a reality in every believers life**
 - a) 1 Jn.1:8,10; James 3:2
 - b) If we were not subject to sin we would not need the full armor of God – Eph.6:10-18
- 2) **Sin brings repercussions**
 - a) Sin **results in** a loss of confidence & a loss of inner joy, peace, & all the other fruit of the Spirit.
 - b) **Also weakens** our anticipation of Christ's second coming. 1 Jn.2:28 - And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.
 - c) **Also defeats** and sometimes destroys a believer's usefulness and inhibits the ministry of his spiritual gifts.

Mt.7:18 - A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

2 Tim.2:21 - **If a man cleanses himself** from the latter, he **will be** an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

d) Our sin **also affects God** – 1 Cor.6:15-17; 10:14-22

e) Our sin **affects other people** (believers & unbelievers)

Our sin cannot be prevented from infecting fellow believers, because we are all one as Christ's own body.

3) Therefore the most important pursuit for all Christians, individually & corporately, is holiness.

a) God can accomplish whatever He desires through a believer or a church that is holy, but can do little through one that is not.

b) Although evangelism is the cutting edge of the church's ministry, holiness is the only foundation on which effective evangelism or any other ministry can be built.

4) **Let us not become boastful, challenging one another**

(by being combative)

a) Look at your own life and stop boasting, provoking arguments, and being envious

b) These attitudes are **marks of immature, sinful Christians** who place their own interests above the interests of fellow believers (Phil. 2:1-4).

c) Such attitudes preclude (prevent; disqualify you from) helpful discipline of one another.

5) **Just as it easy to ignore sin within the church it also is easy to discipline in the wrong way & in the wrong spirit.**

a) There is always temptation to deal with sinning members out of a self-righteous, judgmental attitude **rather than** from a genuinely humble and righteous concern for the purity of the Lord's Body.

b) **When a sinning brother is disciplined, the spiritual members should pick him up, hold him up, and build him up**

(1) **First responsibility** of a spiritual believer is helping a fallen brother get back on his feet spiritually and morally.

(2) **Caught** – not premeditated

(3) **Jesus' attitude was to help sinners** not destroy them – ours should be the same

(4) **Restore** - literally means **to mend or repair** and was sometimes used metaphorically of restoring harmony among quarreling factions in a dispute.

(a) It was **also used of setting a broken bone** or putting a dislocated limb back in place.

(b) figure used by the writer in Heb.12:12

(5) After a church has exercised proper discipline, the members should “forgive and comfort” the one who has been disciplined,

(a) “lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow” (2Cor. 2:7).

(b) He should not be regarded “as an enemy, but [admonished] as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:15).

b. Mt.18:15-19

1) **Seek restoration with a sinning brother**

a) Go privately with attitude of restoration

b) Not listen take others – every word established

c) Still refuses listen take it to the church

d) Refuses listen to church – treat as a pagan

2) Whatever bound on earth **has been bound** in heaven (**serious**)

a) God is a part of what is happening

b) Some just see men = say I will just go to another church
(ignore the discipline – stay in same lifestyle)

c) When church is in agreement God is present too

Legal Disputes

Introduction

The Corinthian believers were so taken with human philosophy and so insistent on believing and doing what they wanted, that they were divided, bickering, and exceptionally immoral and it would have been difficult to have distinguished many of them from their pagan neighbors. Their old ways of thinking and acting had reinvaded their lives. This text reveals that they were envious & critical of fellow Christians, and took business and financial advantage of each other. They carried these things so far as to take each other to court—and secular, pagan courts at that. They hung out their dirty laundry for the entire world to see.

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

1. Settling matters between brothers

a. The problem

- 1) Corinthian believers had been so used to arguing, disputing, and taking one another to court before they were saved that they carried those selfish attitudes and habits over into their new lives as Christians.
 - a) Litigation was a part of everyday life.
 - b) It had become a form of challenge and even entertainment.
- 2) For centuries Jews had settled all their disputes either privately or in a synagogue court.
 - a) They refused to take their problems before a pagan court, believing that to do so would imply that God, through His own people using His own scriptural principles, was not competent to solve every problem.
 - b) It was considered a form of blasphemy to go to court before Gentiles.
- 3) Because Christians were considered by the Romans to be a Jewish sect, the Corinthian believers were probably free to settle their disputes among themselves.
 - a) Possibly because they were not able to get as favorable settlements from their fellow Christians, however, many of them chose to sue each other in synagogues before Jewish judges, or in pagan public courts.
 - b) Public litigation was a manifestation of their fleshly attitudes that they had carried over into their new lives in Christ.

b. Questions

- 1) **Do you dare take such matters before the ungodly?**
 - a) **Dare** = present tense means a continuing reality
 - b) **Ungodly** = refers to spiritual standing not moral character
 - c) **Paul's concern** – not that they would get an unfair hearing
 - d) **Concerned about their attitudes** = having little or no respect for the church's ability to settle it's own disputes

e) **Paul asks**, “How can you think of taking your problems outside of the family to be settled?”

(1) All the resources of truth, wisdom, equity, justice, love, kindness, generosity, and understanding reside in the people of God.

(2) Christians are members of Christ’s own Body and are indwelt by His own Spirit. Christians are **saints**, the holy ones of God, who are “enriched in Him” and “not lacking in any gift” (1:2–7).

f) **Apply**

(1) Christians are not to take other Christians to worldly courts.

(a) When we put ourselves under the authority of the world in this way, we are confessing that we do not have the right attitudes.

(b) Disputes between Christians should be settled by and among Christians.

(2) Believers who go to court with believers are more concerned with revenge or gain than with the unity of the Body and the glory of Jesus Christ.

(3) If we as Christians, with our wonderful gifts and resources in Christ, cannot settle a dispute, how can we expect unbelievers to do it? James 1:5

2) **Do you not know that saints will judge the world?**

a) Matt. 19:28 - The apostles will have special authority, ruling from “twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”

b) Rev.2:26,27 – over comer given authority over the nations

c) Those who believe in a millennial reign say this is when Christians will judge the world – Rev.20:4

d) The Corinthian Christians were making a spectacle of themselves before unbelievers, airing their pride, carnality, greed, and bitterness before the whole world.

3) **Do you not know that we will judge angels?**

a) Scripture is not clear as to which angels we will judge.

(1) The fallen angels will be judged by the Lord
2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6

(2) We are not told if believers will participate in that judgment.

b) The Greek (ἡγεμονεύω) for **judge** can also mean, “to rule or govern.”

(1) That certainly would be the meaning if we are to have authority over the holy angels, for they will have no sin for which to be condemned.

(2) One cannot be dogmatic, but I am inclined to think that glorified believers will help judge the fallen angels

and exercise some rule over the holy angels.

3

(a) If Christ is exalted above all the angels
Eph. 1:20–23, & if we are in Him & are like
Him, & if we are to reign with Him, it must
be that somehow we will share in His
authority.

(b) Whatever the sphere & extent of that heavenly
judgment or ruling, **Paul's point is**
If we are to judge and rule over the
world over angels in the age to come,
we are surely able, under the
guidance of Scripture & the Holy
Spirit, to settle any matters of
disagreement among us today

2. Christians should ask fellow Christians to help settle matters of dispute

- a. The poorest equipped believer, who seeks the counsel of God's Word & His Spirit, is much more competent to settle disagreements between fellow believers than the most highly trained and experienced unbelieving judge who is devoid of divine truth.
- b. Paul was ashamed of their behavior
 - 1) They were acting like the unredeemed
 - 2) Is there nobody among you wise enough to make such judgments?
- c. **The general rule** - Do not go to court with fellow Christians, but settle matters among yourselves.
 - 1) Sometimes in our society a quarrel between Christians over rights & property cannot help coming before a secular court.
 - a) When, for instance, a Christian is being divorced by his or her spouse, the law requires a secular court to be involved.
 - b) Also in the case of child abuse or neglect, a Christian parent may be forced to seek court protection from a backslidden former spouse.
 - 2) But even in those kinds of exceptions, when for some reason a Christian finds himself unavoidably in court with a fellow believer, his purpose should be to glorify God, & never for selfish advantage.

3. Why not rather be wronged?

- a. Christians who take fellow Christians to court lose spiritually even before the case is heard.
 - 1) The fact that they have **lawsuits** at all is a sign of moral and spiritual **defeat** (☞☞☞☞☞☞☞☞☞☞, a word used of defeat in court).
 - 2) A believer who takes a fellow believer to court for any reason always loses the case in God's sight, has already suffered a spiritual defeat
 - 3) He is selfish, & discredits the power, wisdom, and work of God, when he tries to get what he wants through the judgment of unbelievers

- b. It is far better to lose financially than to lose spiritually.
- 1) Even when we are clearly in the legal right, we do not have the moral and spiritual right to insist on our legal right in a public court.
 - a) If the brother has wronged us in any way, our response should be to forgive him and to leave the outcome of the matter in God's hands.
 - b) The Lord may give or take away. He is sovereign and has His will and purpose both in what we gain and in what we lose. We should gratefully accept that. 1 Pet.3:8-12
 - 2) Mt.18:21-35
 - a) Put no limits on forgiveness of another brother
 - b) If we won't – will be turned over to be tormented until repent
 - c) If we cannot convince the brother to make things right, and if he will not listen to fellow believers, we are better off to suffer the loss or the injustice than to bring a lawsuit against him.
 - 3) Mt.5:39,40
 - a) Contrary to the world's standard, it is better to be sued and lose than to sue and win.
 - (1) Spiritually, it is impossible for a Christian to sue a Christian & win.
 - (2) When we are deprived wrongfully we are to cast ourselves on the care of God, who is able to work that for our good and His glory. Heb.13:5,6
 - b) A Christian attorney said:
 - (1) Over the years he has counseled dozens of Christians to drop lawsuits against each other.
 - (2) In some ninety percent of the cases he has been successful, and he reports that, without exception, those believers have been blessed.
 - (3) Also without exception, those who insisted on resolving their disputes in court became bitter and resentful—whether they won or lost their cases. If they went to court they always lost spiritually.
- c. The Lord knows the needs of His children
- 1) He will see that we have what we need.
 - 2) We are to “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added” (Matt. 6:33).
 - 3) A Christian's primary concern should not be to protect his possessions or his rights but to protect his relationship with His Lord and with his fellow believers.

4. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God

- a. To be accepted by God – a righteous life is required
- 1) Can't practice sin & be acceptable – 1Jn.3:6-10

2) Eph.4:17-24 – no longer live as the gentiles

5

b. **Fornicators** – refers to sexual immorality in general

- 1) Unmarried persons in particular.
- 2) Although scripture continually condemns it, this sin is characteristic of our own western society today.
 - a) It is portrayed and exalted in books, magazines, movies, and television as the norm of human living.
 - b) But fornication in any form is an abomination to God and should be an abomination to His people.
- 3) Those who habitually practice and defend it cannot possibly belong to God, for the heirs of His **kingdom** do not habitually practice and defend sexual immorality.
- 4) True believers may do it, but no matter how involved and weak they are, deep within them they recognize it is evil.

c. **Idolaters** - refers to those who worship any false gods or false religious systems, not simply to those who bow down to images.

- 1) Our society has never been so engulfed by and enamored of false religions and cults as in our day. No belief, claim, or practice seems to be too bizarre to get a following.
- 2) Idolatry is basically two things
 - a) Making up concepts & ideas about God that are not true
 - (1) Ideas that do not agree with scripture
 - (2) Jn.1:18 – Jesus is the full revelation of God
 - b) Putting something before God
 - (1) Col.3:5 – greed is idolatry
 - (2) Idolatry is a sin of the mind & body against God

d. **Adulterers** - refers specifically to married persons who indulge in sexual acts outside the marriage partnership.

- 1) Mt.5:28 – look to lust
- 2) Imagining the lust in the mind is the same as the act itself
- 3) James 4:4 – friendship with the world is adultery against God

e. **Effeminate** and **homosexuals** - both refer to those who exchange and corrupt normal male–female sexual roles and relations.

- 1) Transvestism, sex change, homosexuality, and other gender perversions are included.
 - a) God’s unique creation, those created in His own image, were created “male and female” (Gen. 1:27), and the Lord strictly forbids the two roles to be blurred, much less exchanged.
 - b) Rom.1:26,27
- 2) In Paul’s day homosexuality had been rampant in Greece and Rome for centuries.
 - a) In his commentary on this passage, William Barclay reports that Socrates was a homosexual and Plato probably was.
 - b) Plato’s *Symposium on Love* is a treatise glorifying

c) It is likely that fourteen of the first fifteen Roman emperors were homosexuals.

f. **Thieves** and **covetous** - relate to the same basic sin of greed.

- 1) The covetous person desires that which belongs to others; the thief actually takes it.
- 2) Greed is a manifestation of selfishness and, like all selfishness, is never satisfied. The greedy demand more and more.
- 3) **Sadly** - in our day it is difficult to find a person, even a Christian, who is satisfied with his income and possessions. But greed is not to characterize the heirs of God's kingdom. It has no place in the Christian life.

g. **Drunkards** - is self-explanatory.

- 1) Like the other sins listed here, it is almost inevitably found to be a serious problem where God's name and His word are disregarded or despised.
- 2) Prov.20:1

h. **Slanderers** – those who destroy with the tongue

- 1) People who abuse others through scolding, ranting & raving
- 2) People who are abusive & insolent with their language
- 3) Lk.16:14 – Pharisees disagreed with Jesus & were slanderous

i. **Swindlers** - thieves who steal indirectly.

- 1) People who take unfair advantage of others to promote their own financial gain.
- 2) Extortionists, embezzlers, confidence men, promoters of defective merchandise and services, false advertisers, and many other types of swindlers are as common to our day as to Paul's.

5. Such were some of you

a. The Corinthian church, as churches today, had ex-fornicators, ex-adulterers, ex-thieves, and so on.

- 1) Though many Christians have never been guilty of the particular sins just discussed, every Christian was sinful before he was saved.
- 2) Every Christian is an ex-sinner. Rom.3:10-18

b. It made no difference what they were before they were saved. But it makes a great deal of difference what a believer is like after salvation.

- 1) **Washed** - speaks of new life, of regeneration. Titus 3:5; 2 Cor.5:17
- 2) **Sanctified** - is to be made holy inwardly and to be able, in the Spirit's power, to live a righteous life outwardly.
 - a) Before a person is saved he has no holy nature and no capacity for holy living.
 - b) But in Christ we are given a new nature and can live out the new kind of life. Sin's total domination is broken and is replaced by a life of holiness. Rom.6:1-7
- 3) **Justified** - speaks of a new standing before God. Rom.4:22-25

c. A transformed life should produce transformed living.

Christian Liberty & Sexual Freedom

Introduction

There is more abuse to the human body than perhaps any other thing upon the face of the earth. Most of the resources man has are spent on machines & things that damage & kill the human body. In comparison, man spends a much smaller amount on saving & nurturing the body. In this passage Paul speaks against the indulgence of the human body.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

1. Principle – Christ has set us free

- a. Gal.5:1- It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.
- b. Rom.6:6,7 - For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.
- c. Rom.6:14 - For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.
- d. Rom.7:6 - But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

2. Problem – ignored truth - our freedom is not to be an opportunity for the flesh

- a. Gal.5:13 - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love
- b. **Christian freedom has to do with works of righteousness**
 - 1) We do not earn our salvation by works of righteousness or law keeping
 - 2) Eph.2:8-10
 - a) Are saved by grace not works
 - b) Were created to do good works (not earn salvation)
- c. Greek philosophy considered everything physical as basically evil & therefore of little value. What was done with the human body did not matter. Sex was just a biological function like eating. You eat to satisfy your hunger & you have sexual relationships to satisfy your sexual desires.
- d. The Corinthian Christians were rationalizing their sinful thinking & habits.
 - 1) Society accepted & glorified promiscuous sex
 - 2) As Christians they were free, therefore free to do whatever they wanted

3. Sexual sin harms everyone

- a. **All things are lawful, but sin is never right or good**
 - 1) Sin produces nothing worthwhile or profitable
 - 2) The price for sin is always too high – always brings us a loss

b. Sexual sins are especially unprofitable

- 1) Broken more marriages, shattered more homes
- 2) Causes heartache, disease, lying, stealing, cheating, killing
- 3) Brings on bitterness, hatred, slander, gossip & unforgiving ness
- 4) Prov.5:1-23

c. Sexual allurements are extremely enticing & powerful

- 1) Seems nice, enjoyable & promises nothing but pleasure & satisfaction
- 2) Never delivers what it promises – is a way of death
- 3) Only offers temporary & impersonal gratification

d. God's advise = flee

- 1) Keep as far away from it as possible
- 2) Gen.39:10-12 – run like Joseph
- 3) Passion is neither rational nor sensible. All immoral sexual situations should be avoided not debated.
 - a) Leads to a loss of health, possessions, honor & respect
 - b) Sexual sin is a no win situation
- 4) 1 Cor.10:8 – 23,000 died in one day
- 5) David & Bath Sheba
 - a) Although forgiven they suffered greatly
 - b) Baby died
 - c) Sword never depart from their house
 - d) Daughter raped
 - e) Sons were revengeful, rebellious & jealous

4. Sexual sins control

- a. Paul would not allow himself to be mastered by anything or anyone but Jesus
- b. No sin is more enslaving than sexual sins
 - 1) The more they are indulged in they more they enslave
 - 2) Corrupts & destroys the innocent, not just those involved
- c. 1 Thess.4:3-8

5. Sexual sins pervert God's purpose for the body

- a. Our body is for the Lord – a member of Christ – a temple of the Holy Spirit
 - 1) Food is for the stomach – created for each other
 - 2) Our bodies were not made for sex
 - 3) Our bodies designed for more than just biological functions
 - 4) They belong to the Lord – Phil.3:20,21
- b. Our bodies are members of Christ
 - 1) We are His body on the earth
 - 2) We are one spirit with Him
 - 3) Thus to be joined to a prostitute profanes Jesus - His reputation smeared
(**prostitute** = anyone who uses body for immoral sex)
- c. **Flee immorality** – present imperative (keep on fleeing till danger is past)
 - 1) Never consider it a spiritual challenge (always a spiritual trap)
 - 2) Don't argue, debate or rationalize – get away as fast as you can

d. One who sins sexually sins against their own body

1) John McArthur commentary

“Paul does not elucidate on what he means by **Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body**. I believe he is saying that, although sexual sin is not necessarily the worst sin, it is the most unique in its character. It rises from within the body bent on personal gratification. It drives like no other impulse and when fulfilled affects the body like no other sin. It has a way of internally destroying a person that no other sin has. Because sexual intimacy is the deepest uniting of two persons, its misuse corrupts on the deepest human level. That is not a psychological analysis but a divinely revealed fact. Sexual immorality is far more destructive than alcohol, far more destructive than drugs, far more destructive than crime’.

“Some years ago a sixteen-year-old girl came to my office in complete despair. She had committed so many sex sins that she felt utterly worthless. She had not looked in a mirror for months, because she could not stand to look at herself; and to me she looked nearer 40 than 16. She was on the verge of suicide, not wanting to live another day”.

- 2) It lowers one to the level of an animal – lives on instinct & passion
- 3) Sees others as only instruments to satisfy urges & passions
- 4) Deeply affects the virtues of man’s basic nature
 - a) To love & be loved
 - b) To be loyal & trustworthy
 - c) To give & receive
 - d) From then on they will struggle focusing on one person
(being completely loving & loyal to one)

6. The body is the temple of The Holy Spirit

a. The Spirit dwells within our body

- 1) Jn.14:17,20
- 2) Rom.8:9
- 3) 2 Cor.6:16

b. Our body & spirit are designed to glorify God

- 1) A temple is a place of worship
- 2) Temple exists to house God’s presence
- 3) God created our body to glorify Him

Celibacy & Marriage

Introduction

Corinth was a cesspool of immorality. All forms of sexual deviation ran rampant & were openly displayed. Practically everyone dressed to attract attention & their conversations were filled with insinuation to let people know you were available. A decent person could not walk down the street without being eyed & thought about sexually. Remember, sex was one of their goddesses & her influence permeated every part of their society. Because of this, the Corinthian brethren searched for ways to handle their situation & asked Paul to help them with some of their questions.

1 Corinthians 7:1-7

1. It is good for a man not to touch a woman (to marry)

a. Surest way for a man to stay pure & conquer temptation

- 1) Eventually become so disciplined - temptations have no effect on him
- 2) Idea caught on & eventually some began to practice celibacy
- 3) Indication - that some who were married were practicing celibacy

b. Problem

- 1) Some felt that living in celibacy was more spiritual than marriage – that sex was unspiritual & should be altogether forsaken
- 2) Some were just living together (slaves with no rights)
- 3) Some had been married & divorced many times - Divorce was so common & it was possible for men & women to have been married 20 times or more.

c. Situation was perplexing especially for immature believers

- 1) Should we stay together as man & wife?
- 2) Should we divorce if spouse is an unbeliever?
- 3) Should we remain single?

2. Special situations for not marrying

a. **Good** = advisable, advantageous, expedient, profitable, wholesome

b. **Not to touch a woman** - common Jewish euphemism for sexual intercourse

- 1) Gen. 20:6; Ruth 2:9; Prov.6:29
- 2) Paul's use - to state that it is a good thing for Christians not to have sexual intercourse, that is, to be single, unmarried.
- 3) Not say - that singleness is the only good condition or that marriage is in any way wrong or inferior to singleness. He says only that singleness, as long as it is celibate, can be good.
- 3) Gen.2:18 – not good for a man to be alone

c. **Present distress** = so much immorality; wars; economic collapse etc

- 1) Much of their marital trouble reflected the pagan and morally corrupt society in which they lived & from which they had not fully separated. Society tolerated fornication, adultery, homosexuality, polygamy, and concubines.

- 2) Juvenal (60–140 A.D.), the Roman poet, wrote about women who rejected their own sex: they wore helmets, delighted in feats of strength, and with exposed breasts hunted pigs with spears. He also said they wore out their bridal veils with so many marriages.
- 3) Danger was fornication for those who were single
 - a) Unfulfilled sexual desire can be very strong
 - b) With added pressure of immoral society – extremely dangerous

3. Each man to have his own wife & each woman her own husband

a. Marriage not simply God's escape valve for the sex drive.

- 1) Paul not suggesting that Christians go out and find another Christian to marry only to keep from getting into moral sin.
- 2) His purpose here is to stress the reality of the sexual temptations of singleness and to acknowledge that they have a legitimate outlet in marriage.

b. Are numerous reasons for marriage

- 1) **Procreation** - God commanded Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply” Gen. 1:28
- 2) **Pleasure.** Prov.5:18–19 - “exhilarated always” with the wife of his youth and the Song of Solomon centers around the physical attractions and pleasures of marital love.
- 3) **Partnership** - Woman was created for man to be “a helper suitable for him” Gen. 2:18. Friendship between husband and wife is one of the key ingredients of a good marriage.
- 4) **Marriage is a picture of the church** - Eph. 5:22–26
- 5) **Marriage is for purity** - It protects from sexual immorality by meeting the need for physical fulfillment

4. Celibacy is wrong for married persons

a. Sexual abstinence does not make one spiritually superior

- 1) **No exceptions** - physical relations within marriage are not simply a privilege and a pleasure but a responsibility. Husbands and wives have a **duty** to give sexual satisfaction to each other.
- 2) Sexual relations between husband and wife not only to be sacred but proper and even obligatory

b. **Fact** - failure for Christian husbands and wives to submit sexually to the authority of their spouses brings dishonor to God because it dishonors marriage.

- 1) Have authority over (belong to her alone; him alone) – present tense
- 2) **Point** - Spouses' mutual authority over each other's bodies is continuous; it lasts throughout marriage.
- 3) Sexual expression within marriage is not an option, an extra or even a necessary evil. It is far more than a physical act. God created it to be the expression & experience of love on the deepest human level and to be a beautiful and powerful bond between husband & wife.

c. Stop depriving one another

- 1) Sexual relations in marriage are God ordained & commanded
- 2) **Exception** – by agreement for a time
 - a) To devote yourselves to prayer
 - b) Both partners must agree & time period must be brief
 - c) Should be agreed upon in advance
- 3) Illustration – Ex.19:9-15; Joel 2:12-16; Zech.12:10-12

d. Reason for coming together is explicit – Satan’s temptations

- 1) When the time of concentrated prayer is over, normal desires and temptations will return, often with greater intensity.
- 2) Satan knows that Christians can be especially vulnerable after a mountaintop experience. Our defenses are apt to be down and our pride may be up. Or, because of the experience, we may simply not have the desire for sex for a while afterward.
- 3) Our spouse, on the other hand, especially if he or she has not shared in the prayer, may have developed a particularly strong desire during the separation.
- 4) As a guard against falling into temptation ourselves, or of causing our marriage partner to fall into temptation, sexual relations are to resume immediately

e. Summary - Unless it is by mutual consent, for a specific prayer need and for a brief period of time, sexual abstinence can become a tool of Satan. It is never to be used as pretense for spiritual superiority or as a means of intimidating or manipulating one’s spouse. Physical love is to be a normal and regular experience shared by both marriage partners alike, as a gift from God.

5. A concession – I wish all men were as I am

a. Means – to think the same thing; have the same opinion or understanding

- 1) Paul saw the advantage of remaining single – especially for him
- 2) Marriage was instituted by God and is the norm for man–woman relationships, and it is a great blessing to mankind. But it is not required for believers
- 3) Not a command

b. Each man has his own gift

- 1) Just as it is wrong to misuse a gift, it is also wrong to try to use a gift we do not have.
 - a) For those who do not have the gift of celibacy, trying to practice it brings moral and spiritual frustration.
 - b) But for those who have it, singleness, is a great blessing.
- 2) Obviously, singleness has many practical advantages.
 - a) It allows much greater freedom in where and how a person serves the Lord. Freer to move around & set own schedule.
 - b) Paul says later - married persons have many cares & concerns that the unmarried do not have - 1 Cor.7:32–34

Questions Concerning Marriage & Divorce

Introduction

Marriage problems are not unique to modern times. They have occurred throughout history, and were rampant in the 1st century Roman Empire. As would have been expected, the church in Corinth was severely afflicted. In chapter 7 Paul deals with the serious misconceptions and misbehavior of the Corinthian believers in regard to singleness, celibacy, and marriage. This chapter is very relevant because in the United States today about every other marriage ends in divorce. There are nearly as many divorces as marriages each year, Love today is loudly acclaimed and sought after but it is not much evident—even within marriages.

1 Corinthians 7:8-11

1. Guidelines for singles

a. Categories of single people

1. **Widows** – people who were married but their spouse died
2. **Virgins** – single people who have never been married
3. **Unmarried** – persons not married **but also** not a virgin or a widow
 - a. Would they be the divorced? Would the divorced be included?
 - b. The clearest insight comes in the use of the term in verses 10,11 “the wife should not leave [divorce] her husband but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried.”
 - c. **Point** - unmarried indicates those who were previously married, people who are now single, but are not widows or virgins.
 - d. **The unmarried person**, therefore, is a divorced person.

b. It is good for them to stay unmarried as I am

1. Is Paul including himself in this category - unmarried or widow?

- a. Some assume that Paul was once married, because marriage seems to have been required for membership in the Sanhedrin.
- b. Paul may once have belonged to this group, because he had been so devoutly committed to Pharisaic tradition.
Gal. 1:14; Acts 26:9-11
- c. Paul’s wife may have divorced him or he may have been a widower (Note - he does not identify with the virgins)

2. Paul’s point - those who are single when converted to Christ should

- know that it is good for them to stay that way.
- a. There is no need to rush into marriage.
 - b. Many well-meaning Christians are not content to let people remain single. The urge to play cupid and matchmaker can be strong, but mature believers must resist it.
 - c. Marriage is not necessary or superior to singleness, and it limits some potential for service to Christ - vv. 32–34

c. If, however, a single believer did not have self-control

1. That person should seek to marry.

- a. When a Christian is single but does not have the gift of singleness and is being strongly tempted sexually, he or she should pursue marriage.
- b. **Greek** - aorist imperative, indicating a strong command.
“Get married,”

2. Better to marry than to burn with passion

- a. **Means** – be inflamed referring to strong passion
 - b. A person cannot live a happy life; much less serve the Lord, if they are continually burning with sexual desire—even if the desire never results in actual immorality.
 - c. In a society such as Corinth’s, or ours, in which immorality is so prevalent and accepted, it is especially difficult not to succumb to temptation.
- 3. Warning** - Deciding about marriage obviously is more difficult for the person who has strong sexual desires but who has no immediate prospect for a husband or wife.
- a. It is never God’s will for Christians to marry unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14), but neither is it right just to marry the first believer who will say yes.
 - b. Though we may want very much to be married, we should be careful. Strong feelings of any sort tend to dull judgment and make one vulnerable and careless. - 1 Pet.5:8

4. Suggestions

- a. Do not simply seek to be married, but should seek a person you can love, trust, and respect, letting marriage come as a response to that commitment of love. People who simply want to get married for the sake of getting married run a great risk of marrying the wrong person.
- b. It is fine to be on the lookout for the “right person,” but the best way to *find* the right person is to be the right person. If believers are right with God and it is His will for them to be married He will send the right person—and never too late.
- c. Until the right person is found, your energy should be redirected in ways that will be the most helpful in keeping your mind off the temptation.
 - 1) Two of the best ways are spiritual service and physical activity.
 - 2) You should also avoid listening to, looking at, or being around anything that strengthens the temptation.
 - 3) Program your mind to focus only on that, which is good and helpful. Take special care to follow Paul’s instruction in Philippians 4:8

- d. Realize that, until God gives us the right person, He will provide strength to resist temptation. “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13)
- e. Be thankful to the Lord for your situation and be content in it. Salvation brings the dawning of a new day, in which marriage “in the Lord” (v. 39) is an option.

2. Guidelines for the married

- a. **Both partners in the marriage are Christians** – see 7:12-16
- b. **Source of the teaching** – The Lord
 - 1) Jesus taught this truth in Mt.19
 - 2) God hates divorce – Mal.2:16
- c. **We do not know why some of the Corinthians Christians wanted to divorce their partners.**
 - 1) In light of verses 1–7 it is likely some church members thought they could live holier and more dedicated lives as celibates and wanted to divorce for that reason.
 - 2) Some probably wanted to leave their mates because they saw someone more desirable, or simply because they felt unfulfilled with them.
 - 3) Whatever the reasons, however, they were not to divorce.
- d. **Paul is not discussing divorce based upon fornication but divorce for other reasons, even supposedly spiritual ones.**
 - 1) Some of the believers in Corinth had already divorced each other or were in motion to that end.
 - 2) To those persons the apostle says, **but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband.**
 - 3) If a Christian does divorce another Christian, except for fornication, neither partner is free to marry another.
 - a) They must stay single or rejoin their former mate.
 - b) In God’s eyes that union has never been broken.
 - c) This is not a counselor’s suggestion, but the Lord’s command.
- e. **What if a Christian does not listen to The Lord? Can they be forgiven?**

Divorce & Remarriage

Introduction

In our last lesson we saw that divorce for Christians was wrong. God wants those Christians who divorce to remain unmarried or else be reconciled to one another. He does not want the marriage bond to be broken, but wants them to be faithful to the vows they made to one another. God hates divorce. But what about those who ignore this command or openly violate it & get married again? Can they be forgiven? Must they now divorce the one to whom they are now married? In this lesson we will discuss what Jesus taught about divorce & remarriage & other related scriptures.

1. Consequences of divorce

a. We expose ourselves to Satan's power & influence.

- 1) When we willfully violate God's commands we are in rebellion to God & the consequences are the same as when we become involved in witchcraft - 1 Sam.15:23
- 2) The opposite of submission to God is not freedom, but defeat by Satan Eph.2:1-3; 6:10-12; Rom.6:15,16

b. We allow Satan to destroy others through our influence in their lives.

- 1) We are sowing the seeds of destruction in the lives of our children & grandchildren – Deut.5:9,10
- 2) We cause others to sin by taking sides – sowing the seeds of bitterness Ps.15:3; Mt.6:24; Prov.6:16-19
- 3) Expose our children to unnecessary temptations & deny them vital training (they need both mother & father)

c. We prove that we have a hard heart – Mt.19:8

- 1) Being unable to forgive others we are unable to be forgiven – Mt.6:12
- 2) We open ourselves to Satan's tormentors – Mt.18:21-35

d. We destroy our witness & allow others to justify their sins

- 1) We allow the word of God to be blasphemed because of our lifestyle 1 Tim.6:1; Titus 2:5
- 2) People see us as hypocrites - thus there is no conviction for them to change there lifestyle. Rom.2:17-29
- 3) We are showing people by our actions that God has no power to change or influence our lives. 1 Cor.10:13

e. We will suffer leanness to our souls. Ps.106:15

- 1) Causes God to destroy the work of our hands – Eccles.5:1-6
- 2) Proves we lack genuine love – 1 Cor.13:1-8
- 3) Show that we are not disciples - Jn.13:34,35
- 4) Will have no desire to comprehend the meat of the word or become conformed to the image of Jesus. Heb.5:12-14; 6:1-6; 10:26-31
- 5) Bring judgment upon ourselves because we fail to be people of our word - Mt.12:36,37; 1Jn.2:3-6; 2 Thess.1:8-10

2. Danger of setting aside God's word for traditions

a. Example of Scribes & Pharisees

- 1) Mt.15:8 – honor me with lips but heart far from me
 - a) Realize these men were dogmatic & zealous for the Law
 - b) Mt.23:24 – strain out gnats (tedious attention to minor things)
- 2) **Problem**
 - a) Mk.7:8 – let go of God's commands to keep their traditions
 - b) Mt.15:6 – nullify word of God for the sake of your tradition
 - c) So committed to their doctrinal conclusions that any scripture that contradicted this doctrine had no affect on their thinking = ignored (already had mind made up)

b. Application

- 1) **Most people who claim to be Christians claim loyalty to the Bible**
 - a) Yet some hold concepts that are contrary to biblical statements
 - b) **Examples**
 - (1) Eph.2:8-10 conclude grace is only thing involved in salvation
 - (2) 1 Pet.3:21 – conclude baptism can be traded for salvation (baptism saves)
 - c) Yet each considers themselves loyal to scripture
- 2) **Truth** – not really loyal to God until our thinking is responsive to any statement of God in scripture
 - a) **Must ask self** – how much of what we believe comes from scripture & how much comes from tradition.
 - b) **Realize** - All of us are vulnerable to deception
 - c) Satan can quote scripture but he doesn't reveal all the truth (half truths convey a false message)
 - d) Different passages will give us added insight therefore all related passages need to be considered.
- 3) **Our loyalty ought to be (must be) to the Lord not our traditions**

3. Apostles words are authoritative

a. Question – 1 Cor.7:10,12

- 1) To the married I command (not I but the Lord)
- 2) To the rest I say (I not the Lord)
- 3) Is Paul just stating his opinion or does he have the authority to speak?

b. Scriptures

- 1) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – all scripture is inspired (not just the red letters)
- 2) Mt.10:40-42 (Apostles)
- 3) Lk.10:16 – whoever listens to you listens to me (the 72)
- 4) 1 Jn.4:6 – whoever knows God listens to us

The time-honored (established) teaching on marriage, divorce & remarriage

1. Mt.19:1-9; Mt.5:31,32; Rom.7:1-3

- a. The only scriptural reason for divorce is when one party of the marriage is guilty of committing fornication.
- b. When fornication has been committed the innocent party is free to remarry
- c. However the guilty party is not permitted to remarry – to do so means they will be living in adultery
- d. Anyone who marries the guilty party is also guilty of living in adultery
- e. When two people are joined together in marriage, God binds them together & they become one flesh. What God joins, man cannot divide. The union can only be terminated by death or the sin of fornication.
- f. God does not recognize divorce for any other reason, regardless of the opinion of men - what the court recognizes doesn't matter.
- g. Any Christian who has an unscriptural divorce & remarries another, must repent for doing so & get out of that marriage to be forgiven & accepted by God. In God's eyes they are still married to their first mate.

2. Questions concerning the texts

- a. Mt.5:31,32 - "It has been said, Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce. But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.
 - 1) **When** does she become an adulteress?
 - 2) How does the man who divorced his wife **cause her** to become an adulterous?
 - KJV - causes her to commit adultery
 - NASB - makes her commit adultery
 - ASV - maketh her an adulteress
 - NLT - causes her to commit adultery
 - Young's Literal translation - doth make her to commit adultery
 - 3) **Does she bear any of the blame** for becoming an adulteress?
 - 4) **Does she even have a choice** in the matter?
- b. Mt.19:3-9 - Some Pharisees came to him **to test him.** They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." **"Why then," they asked,** "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

- 1) **What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus?**
 - 2) **Why was this important to them?**
 - 3) **Does Jesus answer their question?**
 - 4) What was that answer?
 - 5) Does Jesus say that **man cannot separate** (get a divorce) a marriage?
 - KJV - what God has joined together, let not man separate."
 - NASB – what God has joined together, let no man separate
 - ASV - what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
 - NLT - let no one separate them
 - Young's literal - God did join together, let no man put asunder
 - 6) Does Jesus say that **God does not recognize divorce** for any cause?
 - 7) **How does God see divorce** according to Jesus?
 - 8) Did the Pharisees ask another question? What was it?
 - 9) According to Jesus **why did Moses permit divorce?**
 - 10) **Why was this important?**
 - 11) According to Jesus was the man divorced **only in the eyes of man?**
 - 12) According to Jesus was the man married **only in the eyes of man?**
 - 13) According to Jesus **what constitutes committing adultery?**
 - 14) **When** is this adultery committed?
 - 15) Does Jesus say that whoever so divorces his wife will commit adultery **only when & if he has sex; or that he commits adultery now?**
 - 16) Does Jesus say that one divorced & remarried is **living in adultery?**
 - 17) Does Jesus say that the one guilty of fornication is **still bound** to the marriage covenant?
- c. Deut.24:1-4 - If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and **if after she leaves** his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, **then her first husband**, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. **That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD.** Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance
- 1) **Why was a man allowed to give his wife a certificate of divorce?**
 - NIV – she becomes displeasing to him
 - NKJV - she finds no favor in his eyes
 - NLT - later discovers something about her that is shameful
 - Young's literal - if she doth not find grace in his eyes
 - 2) **If she marries again can she return to her original husband?**
 - NIV – he is not allowed to marry her again
 - NKJV - must not take her back to be his wife
 - NASB - not allowed to take her again to be his wife
 - KJV - may not take her again to be his wife
 - Young's literal - not able to turn back to take her to be to him for a
Wife

3) **How does God see her returning to her 1st husband?**

NIV – detestable

KJV – an abomination

NLT - be detestable to the LORD.

Young's literal - an abomination

4) **How has she become defiled?**

d. Mark 10:2-11- Some Pharisees came and **tested him** by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" "**What did Moses command you?**" he replied **They said**, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law." **Jesus replied**. "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." When they were in the house again, the **disciples asked Jesus** about this. He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

1) What were the **Pharisees intentions**?

2) Why did Moses permit divorce?

3) **How does the man who divorces his wife & marries another commit adultery against her?** (sexual relations?)

4) **When** is the adultery committed?

4. **Other texts to consider in the discussion**

a. Mal.3:16 - Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not [the LORD] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "**I hate divorce**," says the LORD God of Israel, "**and I hate a man's covering himself with violence** as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

1) Why were the people upset?

2) Why was God ignoring their prayers?

3) God's goal in marriage

4) What does God hate?

- b. 1 Tim.4:1-4 - The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.
- 1) What do demons teach?
 - 2) Why would this be important to them?
 - 3) Why should marriage not be forbidden?
- c. Mt.19:10-12 - The disciples said to him, "**If this is the situation** between a husband and wife, **it is better not to marry**." Jesus replied, "**Not everyone can accept this word**, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. **The one who can accept this should accept it.**"
- 1) What word can some people not accept?
 - 2) Who should accept the words "it is better not to marry"?
 - 3) To whom is the decision to remarry left?

4. Adultery word study

- a. **Dictionary** – sex act involving a married person with someone who is not their spouse.

Traditional view sees the divorced as entering an adulterous union in which they **will** commit adultery some time later (sex act)

b. Problems

1) Disagrees with the scriptures

- a) Mt.5 – divorce wife without marital unfaithfulness as cause **makes her** an adulteress (no mention of sex act)
- (1) **Makes** = passive voice is action received
 - (2) **Action was done to the wife** & she has no part in it
 - (3) **Was something the husband did** at the time of divorce
 - (4) **Also** – passage says nothing about husband who divorces his wife marrying again
- b) Mt.19 – put away wife without fornication as cause & marries another commits adultery (no mention of sex act)
- (1) **Tense** = present indicative passive (sometimes translated point action & sometimes translated continuous action)
 - (2) **Context decides**
 - (a) Of the 719 uses in Matthew; 45 were definitely continuous action & 226 were not continuous action

- (b) Adultery is committed in the marrying **not in** the activity after the marriage (sex act)
- c) Lk.16:18 – divorces & marries another commits adultery
- (1) Words divorces & marries are **participles**
 - (2) **Verb** with which the participles are used is adultery
 - (3) **Rules of Greek** = actions of participle takes place **at the same time** as the action of the verb
 - (4) **Point** - The action of adultery takes place at the same time as the divorce & remarriage
- d) **Adultery refers to many things that are not sexual**
- (1) **Idolatry** – Jer.3:6-13
 - (2) **Seeking a sign** – Mt.12:38,39
 - (3) **Friendship with the world** – James 4:4
 - (4) **Point** – to many non-sexual uses of word to hold that the word only has the meaning of sexual activity
Idea is the violation of the covenant
- e) Ezek.16:38 – KJV – Hebrew word equivalent for Greek word translated adultery is translated “break wedlock”
- f) **Point** – if you commit fornication you are guilty of adultery & if you divorce a faithful spouse with the intention of marrying another you have committed adultery (broken the covenant)
- 2) **Early English translations did not use the word “adultery”** because word did not yet exist.
- a) William Tyndale translation = “”breaketh wedlock”
 - b) In part “b” of the verse he uses the word “advourty” referring to the vow breaking that was involved.
- 3) **Translators of the Geneva Bible – 1560AD**
- a) Took Latin word “adulterio” & coined the word “adulterie” & used it in the divorce passages
 - b) Bishops Bible followed suit & spelled it with a “y” instead of an “ie”
 - c) KJV translators were told to follow the Bishops Bible wherever possible
 - d) Subsequent translations followed the same course & so a new word was added to the English language
(like baptizo became baptize (all new meaning given)
 - e) **At 1st new word did little damage**, meant simply to adulterate, meaning adding another element to the mixture, **but over time** the word adultery became associated with a sex act.
- 4) **Dictionaries define words according to current usage not original meanings** (evolve into different meanings)
- 5) **Greek scholars did essentially the same thing** with the definition of the Greek word
- a) Give the sexual idea as the 1st meaning
 - b) Lists also “breaketh wedlock”

5. Does God recognize divorce?

- a. Phrase “except for fornication” **determines who is guilty** of the unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant; but **does not say** that a person cannot get a divorce except for fornication.
 - 1) The **person who destroys the marriage** through unfaithfulness or divorce is the adulterer
 - 2) **God does not approve** of fornication, adultery or divorce but He does recognize that they exist
 - 3) **If we used the same reasoning about sin** as is used about divorce we **would say that sin does not exist** because God does not approve of sin.
 - b. **The idea that God’s laws are higher than man’s laws & man cannot break the laws of God is contrary to biblical truth.**
 - 1) The **only part of that statement that is true** is that God’s laws are higher than man’s laws
 - 2) **Throughout scripture we see man violating God’s laws**; what is different about marriage & divorce?
 - 3) **Jesus didn’t say** dividing marriage was impossible; **He said it was not God’s will.**
 - 4) **Are no passages that teach that God does not recognize divorce**
 - c. **Source of the teaching that God doesn’t recognize divorce**
 - 1) Began as early as Tertullian & came to fruition in the Council of Trent in the year 1563
 - 2) Was determined that marriage was a sacrament which cannot be dissolved
 - 3) Also taught that the church is who decides if marriage is acceptable
 - d. **Thus to teach that God doesn’t recognize divorce is to hold to the traditions of men & ignore the words of God**
- 6) **In conclusion Mt.5; Mt.19; Mk.10 – Jesus is forbidding divorce for the married; not marriage to the divorced**
- a. Mal.2:16 – God hates divorce
 - b. Gen.2:18 – not good man be alone
 - c. 1 Tim.4:1-4 – forbidding marriage is teaching of Satan
 - d. 1 Cor.7:8,9 – unable control self – better marry than to burn
 - e. 1 Cor.7:1-6 – marriage is God’s appointed way of escape
 - f. Deut.24:1-4 – detestable to God for those divorced & married again to go back to 1st spouse
 - g. 1 Cor.7:10,11 – if Married – stay married; if you divorce remain unmarried or be reconciled to your mate

Christianity & Social Revolution

Introduction

What is the responsibility of Christians & the church in regard to social situations? Throughout history some Christians have strongly advocated that Christians are to be social reformers even to the point of revolution if necessary. Many sensitive believers have wondered how and to what extent they should be involved, if at all, in promoting social, economic, and political change. All human institutions and forms of government are imperfect; some are obviously corrupt, cruel, and unjust. But what are Christians, individually or collectively, to do about wrongs and abuses in civil systems and social practices? Paul plainly teaches the basic principle by which Christians should look at and respond to the civil and social conditions in which they live. The principle is this: Christians should willingly accept the situation into which God has placed them and be content to serve Him there. It is a principle against which human nature rebels, and Paul states it three times in these 8 verses, so that his readers could not miss his point. We should not be preoccupied with changing our outward circumstances.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

1. The principle stated – vs.17-19

a. Christians can individually & corporately minister in many ways

- 1) Feeding the hungry; healing the sick & injured
- 2) Christians have long been leaders in building hospitals, orphanages, visiting prisons, helping the poor etc
- 3) But these are ministries that Christians do as Christians, not services that are designed to persuade society to perform.

b. Jesus made it clear – He did not come to instigate social reform

- 1) **His kingdom is not of this world** – if his followers would fight
- 2) **He came to seek & save the lost** – spiritual focus not physical one

c. Realize - When Christianity becomes too closely identified with a social movement, the message of the gospel is in danger of being lost.

- 1) **The primary purpose of the gospel is to change people**, not change a society. Its focus is on inward change, not outward.
- 2) **We are to be satisfied** to be wherever God puts us, **to accept what the Lord has assigned us, and to be faithful in whatever condition God has called us.**

d. Paul is not telling believers to stay in occupations, professions, or habits that are inherently immoral or illegal.

- 1) A thief was not to keep stealing, a temple priestess was not to continue in prostitution, or a drunkard was not to keep getting drunk.
- 2) Everything sinful is to be forsaken.
- 3) The issue has to do with believers being content in the social conditions and situations they are in when they are saved.

2. The situation in Corinth

a. Several areas of discontent were prevalent in the Corinthian church

- 1) Some believers wanted to change their marital status
- 2) Some were slaves & wanted to be free

b. Concept of Christian freedom was being abused – focus was freedom to do as they pleased instead of freedom to do what pleased God

- 1) Although the gospel is the antithesis of the standards and values of the world, it does not disdain or seek to destroy governments, societies, or families. Rom.13:1-7; 1 Pet.2:13-21
- 2) Rather where the gospel is believed and obeyed, some of the most obvious by-products are - better government, better societies, and better families.

c. Truth – Whatever we are and wherever we are, we can be Christians

- 1) Christians can be Christians in a dictatorship, a democracy, or even under anarchy.
- 2) We can be Christians whether we are a man, a woman, a child, married, single, divorced, Jew, Gentile, slave, or free.
- 3) We can be Christians in Russia or the United States, in Cuba or China, in France or Japan.
- 4) The purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not to revolutionize social institutions but to revolutionize hearts. The gospel is directed at the human heart, not at human society.
- 5) We are to bloom where we are planted.

d. God's primary purpose for His church in every nation is for them to evangelize, to change the world through spiritual regeneration, not social revolution.

3. Paul's illustrations

a. Jew & gentile

- 1) When a Jew is saved - not try to become like a Gentile & vice versa.
- 2) Ok to still be Jewish & gentile & keep their customs
- 3) In that world – was an embarrassment to be circumcised
According to the Maccabees, some Jewish men “made themselves uncircumcised.” Josephus tells us that during the Greek rule of the eastern Mediterranean several centuries before Christ, some Jewish men who wanted to be accepted into Greek society had surgery performed to make themselves appear uncircumcised when they bathed or exercised at the gymnasiums.
- 4) Perhaps some Jewish Christians thought this was a way to demonstrate their break with Judaism.
- 5) Circumcision or uncircumcision has no spiritual significance or value for Christians. What matters is keeping of the commands of God.

b. Slaves

- 1) **Paul is not approving of slavery or even suggesting that it is as good a condition to live under as freedom.**

- a) His point is - if a person is a slave, he is still able to live a Christian life. He is every bit as able to obey and serve Christ in slavery as in freedom.
- b) No circumstance, no matter how terrible, painful, or unjust, can keep us from being in every sense a Christian.
- 2) Eph.6:5-8 – serve honestly & sincerely
- 3) Col.3:22-25 – working for the Lord not men
- 4) **Slaves had a unique opportunity to witness for the Lord.**
 - a) Could show their human masters that they worked hard and honestly not because they were forced to but because they wanted to, out of love for and obedience to their true Lord and Master.
 - b) To demonstrate true contentment and peace in the midst of slavery, thus showing the inner provision of salvation.
- c. **Only sin can keep us from obeying & serving the Lord; not circumstances**
 - 1) Therefore if we are in a difficult, uncomfortable, and restricting situation, we should **not worry about it**, but should determine to be faithful as long as the Lord leaves us there.
 - 2) Paul was content to be in jail and to serve the Lord as long as he was jailed. In fact he carried on much of his ministry from a jail cell.
 - 3) It does not matter whether we are physically bound or free, only that we are both spiritually bound and free in Christ

4. Conclusion – Each should remain in the situation God called him

- a. God allows us to be where we are and to stay where we are for a purpose.
- b. Conversion is not the signal for a person to leave his social condition, his marriage or his singleness, his human master, or his other circumstances.
- c. We are to leave sin and anything that encourages sin; but otherwise we are to stay where we are until God moves us.

To Marry Or Not

Introduction

In his discussion of marriage and singleness, Paul has made it clear that neither state is spiritually better than the other. The Roman Catholic idea that celibate priests and nuns are necessarily more devoted to God is contrary to biblical teaching. Being married or single has nothing in itself to do with spirituality. A married person for whom it is the Lord's will to be married is no more or less spiritual than a single person for whom it is the Lord's will to be single. Spirituality is based on obedience to God not marital status. What matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Admittedly, many who are single have difficulty because sin has brought on the singleness, and they have to lie in the empty bed they made for themselves. But for the person to whom God has given the gift of singleness (7:7) that state has many practical advantages. In these verses Paul gives five reasons for remaining single.

1 Corinthians 7:25-40

1. In view of the present crisis – vs.25-28

- a. Jesus gave no direct teaching about this
- b. Paul's opinion or conviction – better to remain single if given that gift
 - 1) Not a command or an absolute – his suggestion
 - 2) There are times singleness makes good sense
- c. **Present crisis**
 - 1) **Means** “a stress, a calamity,” or sometimes “the means of calamity” (such as torture or violence).
 - 2) Some suggest that the reference is to the violent conflict between the new creation in Christ and the world system. When a person becomes a Christian he immediately gets into some degree of conflict with the ungodly system around him.
 - 3) Paul seemed to sense the coming terrible Roman persecutions, the first of which would begin under Nero some ten years after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Nero refined torture to a diabolical art, and his name became synonymous with sadistic cruelty.
 - a) Countless Christians were arrested, beaten, imprisoned, and even killed because of the gospel. Jesus had warned the disciples that they would be made “outcasts from the synagogue,” & that “an hour is coming when all who kill you to think that he is offering service to God” (John 16:2)
 - b) Nero had Christians sewn into animal skins and thrown before wild dogs to be torn apart and eaten. Other were dressed in clothes soaked in wax, tied to trees, and set on fire as human candles for his garden

d. **Point** - Persecution is difficult enough for a single person, but the problems & pain are multiplied for someone who is married.

- 1) If Paul had a family, his suffering would have been greatly magnified by his concern about his family.
 - a) Who would have taken care of them in his absence?
 - b) Who would have taught his children and comforted his wife?
 - c) His suffering and his practical problems would have increased & the effectiveness of his ministry decreased.
 - d) In addition they would have suffered every time he was beaten or stoned or imprisoned and would have been constantly fearful for his life.
- 2) Married believers who go through social turmoil and persecution cannot escape carrying a much heavier load than those who are single.

e. **Admonitions**

- 1) **Are you married – don't seek a divorce**
 - a) Marriage is a lifelong bond that is to be broken only by death, fornication, or divorce by an unbelieving spouse.
 - b) Other problems, no matter how severe, are never grounds for divorce.
- 2) **Are you unmarried** – KJV = loosed - literally divorced
 - a) Cherish your singleness as a blessing from God
 - b) Take advantage of its many advantages
- 3) **If you marry you have not sinned**
 - a) Marriage is a legitimate option
 - b) It just brings problems & I want to spare you these concerns.

2. **The time is short** – vs.29-31

a. **Means** - “fashion, manner of life, way of doing things, or mode of existence.”

b. Human life at its longest is brief & in times of persecution life is often made even more brief.

- 1) James 4:14 - “a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes”.
- 2) 1 Pet. 1:24 - “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower fails”

c. **Live as though they had none**

- 1) Not teaching that marriage is no longer binding on believers or that their marital responsibilities are now reduced
- 2) Paul is teaching that marriage does not reduce a Christian's obligation and devotion to the Lord and His work. The responsibilities of marriage are no excuse for slacking in the Lord's work.
- 3) Today it has become increasingly difficult, to get Christians - including missionaries - to be strongly dedicated to serving the Lord.
 - a) Reason - the close attachment to families
 - b) In many cases men do not want to be separated from their wives for more than a week or two at most, even though an important ministry may need more time than that.

- c) There needs to be a balance, a scriptural balance, between fulfilling marriage needs and serving the Lord.
- d) The primary affections of all Christians, whether married or single, should be set “on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth” (Col. 3:2)

d. Emotions – mourning & happiness

- 1) As Christians we are to control our emotions
- 2) It is easy for people, even believers to get carried away with rejoicing or mourning over those things that pass away.
 - a) A personal success, an inheritance, or a business promotion sometimes excites us more than a spiritual victory.
 - b) Even when we give the Lord credit for the blessing, we can lose our perspective and be controlled more by our emotions than by our good judgment and spiritual priorities
 - c) When a husband, wife, child, or dear friend dies or becomes crippled or diseased, we do not laugh or celebrate. In addition, the mature Christian does not fall apart and lose all hope or purpose and motivation.

e. As if it were not theirs to keep

- 1) The accumulation of money and of the things it can buy is a preoccupation of many Christians today.
- 2) Many are more concerned about their bank accounts, houses, and cars than about their spirituality
 - a) In times of affluence, ease, permissiveness, and inordinate self-acceptance it is easy to live for pleasure.
 - b) More leisure, more vacation time, earlier retirement, more comfortable homes, and such things can so occupy our interest and time that the things of the Spirit are neglected.

f. Point - None of these areas about which Paul warns is inherently bad.

- 1) Marriage, sorrow, rejoicing, possessions, and pleasure all have a proper place in the Christian life
- 2) But human relationships, emotions, possessions, and pleasures become sinful when they dominate thought and behavior, and especially when they detract us from the Lord’s work.

3. Marriage preoccupations - vs.32-35

a. Both husbands & wives are concerned about the pleasures of their mates.

- 1) Their interests are divided between heaven & earth
- 2) The things of this world have a greater attraction = needs of mate (one thing to sacrifice for yourself – another to make mate sacrifice too)
- 3) Unmarried – easier to focus upon what pleases the Lord

b. Unmarried woman or virgin

- 1) Unmarried = divorced
- 2) Virgin = one n ever married
- 3) Able to be more devoted because of fewer family demands

c. I say this for your own good

- 1) Married Christians should not feel guilty about being married and unmarried Christians should not feel guilty about getting married.
- 2) The apostle is not trying to add to the burdens and cares that married persons already have, and he is not trying to force single believers into the permanent mold of singleness

d. Point - Marriage does not prevent great devotion to the Lord, and singleness does not guarantee it.

- 1) But singleness has fewer hindrances and more advantages.
 - a) It is easier for a single person to be single-minded in the things of the Lord.
 - b) The married Christian has no choice. His interests must be divided. He cannot be faithful to the Lord if he is unfaithful to his family. 1 Tim. 5:8
- 2) The single person, however, has a choice. He is free to marry or not. He is not under restraint to remain single. His choice is not between right and wrong but between good and better.

4. Fathers & their daughters – vs.36-38

a. In Jewish culture, parents, and particularly fathers, had long had a dominant role in deciding whom their children would marry

- 1) In New Testament times the arranged marriage, especially for young people, was the norm.
- 2) Seemingly some fathers had decided to dedicate their daughters to the Lord as permanent virgins.

b. However, when these daughters became of marriageable age, many no doubt wanted to be married.

- 1) Fathers had a dilemma – should they break their vow?
- 2) These women may be struggling with their desires – 1 Cor.7:1

c. Marriage is always permissible.

- 1) A father who had vowed his daughter's remaining single in order to serve the Lord more devotedly was free to change his mind and allow her to marry if she were insistent.
- 2) After all, it was a vow made for someone else, and was therefore subject to that person's spiritual needs
- 3) His making the vow was good; but if his daughter is not able or inclined to follow it, both she and her father are free to do as they wish

d. If the father is under no compulsion

- 1) If he is deeply committed & his daughter is also willing
- 2) Only the daughter's unwillingness to keep the vow should cause the father to change his mind
- 3) The choice is not between right and wrong but between good & better

5. **The permanency of marriage** – vs.39,40

a. **The relationship is binding as long as both partners are alive**

1) Mal.2:16 – God hates divorce

2) Matt.19:6 – man not to separate what God joins together

b. **Widows are free to marry believers**

1) See also 1 Cor.9:5

2) **Opinion** – happier if she stays as she is

a) Remarriage is **not the ideal**; it is **not God's best** for everyone

b. **I think I have God's Spirit too** - His command was God's command and his advice was God's advice

Placing Limits On Christian Liberty

Introduction

In the next three chapters Paul deals with the problem of questionable practices. In Corinth much of this will center on food that has been offered to idols. At issue is - how far does Christian freedom go in regard to behavior not specifically forbidden in scripture? Some of the strongest debates among Christians are around questionable practices – practices many feel to be wrong but are not specifically forbidden in scripture. Christian liberty is a central truth in scripture, but it is not unbridled license. It is never freedom to sin & should exclude things that in themselves are not sin but may become sin or lead others into sin. 1 Pet.2:16 - Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. In verse 9 Paul gives us a principle to apply to all doubtful behavior “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.” That principle will be illustrated & applied in chapters 9 & 10.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

1. Background remarks

a. Two common extremes are often followed in regard to doubtful things

- 1) **Legalism** – everything is black or white – are no gray areas
 - a) Legalists live by rules not the spirit
 - b) Everything is classified good or bad – lists of do’s & don’ts
 - c) Spirituality is doing the things on the good list & not doing the things on the bad list.
 - d) Inner person not seem to matter, just outward action
- 2) **License** – everything is acceptable as long as it is not strictly forbidden in scripture
 - a) As long as your own conscience is clean (blameless) you can do as you please
 - b) Believe Christian freedom is virtually absolute & unqualified

b. Seems the philosophy at Corinth was more license than legalism

- 1) They wanted no restrictions
- 2) Paul first responds to reasons given to act as one pleased

c. The Romans & Greeks were a polytheistic people – worshiped many gods

- 1) Had a god or group of gods for every circumstance, need & activity
- 2) Were also polydemonistic – believing in many evil spirits
- 3) Sacrificed meat was of great importance regarding both of these beliefs
 - a) Believed evil spirits constantly trying to invade humans
 - b) Believed they attached selves to food before was eaten
 - c) Only way remove them – sacrifice it to a god
 - d) This way gained favor with the god & cleansed meat of evil
- 4) Priests sold meat in marketplace – best meat

d. Problem for some Christians - Meat was associated with pagan gods & also associated with superstition

2. The myth about knowledge

- a. **Know** - Pagan gods are not real & food sacrificed to them is still food
 - 1) Know food not contaminate us spiritually
 - 2) Are free to eat whatever want no matter what others think
- b. **Knowledge alone breeds arrogance**
 - 1) Knowledge is extremely important – Hos.4:6
 - 2) Yet knowledge is by itself not enough – makes one arrogant
 - 3) Knowledge without love is devastating to us spiritually – 1 Cor.13:1-3
- c. **Well rounded Christians think & act both conceptually & relationally**
 - 1) Understand both biblical truth & how they should relate to others
 - 2) Knowledge alone breeds arrogance not spiritual maturity
 - 3) Phil.2:4 - look not only to own interests, but also the interests of others

3. Idols are nothing

- a. **Although the image is real, there is no god behind it**
 - 1) Just a figment of the imagination of the maker or designer
 - 2) Used by demons to deceive mankind – 1 Cor.10:20
 - 3) Ps.115:2-8
- b. **Problem** – not all men have this knowledge
 - 1) Some were probably freshly out of paganism – still thought these gods were real
 - 2) **Accepted** - was only one right God, but not fact of only one real God
 - 3) To participate in any way in eating food sacrificed to idols would be a temptation to go back to their former idolatrous activity
- c. **Even though act not wrong in itself would defile their conscience**
 - 1) Defiled conscience is one that is being ignored & violated
 - 2) Brings confusion & feelings of guilt
 - 3) In their mind they have sinned & until they fully understand that the act is not a sin in God's eyes it must be avoided
 - 4) Rom.14:23 – “he who doubts is condemned if he eats”
- d. **Point** – anyone who causes a weaker brother to defile his or her conscience or their faith is leading another into sin. Knowledge may tell us that something is perfectly acceptable, but love leads us to not to take advantage of our freedom at the expense of another's conscience.

4. Food is not an issue with God

- a. **Food has no spiritual significance in itself**
 - 1) Vs.8 (KJV – commend) – to bring us near, or beside; closer; approved
 - 2) Is spiritually neutral
 - 3) May be harmful to us physically (allergic; overeat)
 - 4) Mk.7:15 – nothing outside a man defiles him – what in heart matters
 - 5) 1 Tim.4:4 – receive all food with thanksgiving
- b. **Food can be an issue with a weak brother**
 - 1) Never encourage another to violate their conscience
 - 2) Concern yourself with the weaknesses of others

3) One's conscience is God's doorkeeper to keep them out of places where they will be harmed.

c. **Another illustration** – a small child is not allowed to play with sharp tools or go where there are dangerous machines. These restrictions are gradually lifted as they mature & learn what is dangerous & how to behave around them.

- 1) God uses the conscience to help control us – so flesh not dominate
- 2) As we mature the limits of the conscience are expanded

5. Wounding another's conscience is a sin against Christ

a. We are harming the body of Jesus – Mt.18:6-9

b. **Principles to follow when deciding to participate or not to participate**

- 1) Is it necessary or merely an extra that is not really important? Heb.12:1
- 2) Is it helpful & useful or just desirable? 1 Cor.6:12
- 3) Are we doing what Jesus would do? 1 Jn.2:6
- 4) Are we setting the right example? 1 Tim.4:12
- 5) Will this help or hinder my testimony? Col.4:5
- 6) Will this help me mature spiritually? 1 Cor.10:23
- 7) Will this bring glory to God? 1 Cor.10:31

Supporting The Man Of God

Introduction

In our last lesson our focus was on limiting Christian liberty for the benefit of weaker brothers & sisters in Christ. Paul's principle was "be careful that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak". In chapter 9 Paul will illustrate how he has followed this principle in his personal life. He presents two illustrations in this chapter – how he set aside his right to financial support & his giving up everything to win men to Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9:1-15

1. Paul's rights as an apostle

a. Am I not free?

- 1) In their letter to Paul (see 7:1) the Corinthians must have made much of their liberty in Christ—a liberty they had been taught largely by Paul himself.
- 2) Paul now states his own freedom and his own rights.
 - a) "I have no less freedom than you do,"
 - b) "And I cherish my freedom no less than you do."
- 3) **But I cherish some other things even more.**

b. Am I not an apostle?

- 1) As an apostle he would, if anything, have greater freedom than the average Christian?
- 2) Paul was called by Jesus Himself to be an apostle – Acts 9:15,16

c. Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

- 1) An apostle had to be an eyewitness of Christ and of His resurrection (Acts 1:21–22).
- 2) Paul was not among the original disciples who were with Jesus during His earthly ministry, but he had seen the resurrected Christ on at least three occasions.
 - a) The Lord appeared to Paul at his conversion (Acts 9:4–5)
 - b) Also in two visions that we know of (Acts 18:9–10; 22:17–18).

d. Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?

- 1) Others may not recognize my apostleship, but you should
- 2) They were a seal of the genuineness of his apostleship

2. Paul's defense to those who sit in judgment of him in this matter

a. Being supported by those he ministered to

- 1) Right to expect at least food & drink – 1 Tim.5:17,18; Gal.6:6
- 2) Right to take along a believing wife
 - a) To marry a Christian & have her assist in my ministry
 - b) Other apostles were married – so were Jesus' brothers
- 3) Sarcasm – "Or is it only Barnabas & I who must support ourselves"?

- b. **It is customary to pay workers** – vs.7
 - 1) Solders don't serve at their own expense
 - 2) Farmers don't plant & cultivate for others without pay = paid with money or a share of the crop
 - 3) Shepherds don't work for free
- c. **God's Law requires one to pay workers** –vs 8-11
 - 1) Deut.25:4 – not muzzle ox as treads grain
 - 2) Comment “not concerned about the ox”
 - a) Not mean that God cares nothing about animals – Job 38:41; Ps.147:9; Mt.6:26
 - b) Saying – ultimate concern is not animals but people
 - 3) If we sowed spiritual seed – not to much to expect material payment
 - a) God's children ought to reflect their heavenly Father's generosity – Phil.4:19
 - b) God blesses Christians who give generously – 2 Cor.9:6-11
- d. **It is done for others** – vs.12
 - 1) Those they now supported or had supported = Peter; Apollos etc
 - 2) We brought the gospel to you first – Acts 18
 - 3) Though Paul had more right than others to be supported, he did not claim this right

3. We endure all things that we cause no hindrance to the gospel

- a. **Endure** – to bear or pass over in silence
- b. **Paul uses the present tense here**
 - 1) Indicating that throughout his ministry he continued to bear uncomplainingly whatever was necessary to fulfill his work.
 - 2) His customary way of life was self-denial
 - 3) See Acts 18:3; 20:34; 2 Thess.3:8
- c. **Hindrance to gospel**
 - 1) Some might think he preached with selfish motives – an easy living
 - 2) Paul worked among gentiles with no OT background – Jews were accustomed to supporting their ministers

4. Lord's principle – those who preach gospel to receive living from gospel

- a. OT – Num.18:18-24
- b. NT – Mt.10:9,10 – instruction to the 12; Lk.10:7 – instructions to the 70

5. Paul restates – he has used none of these rights & doesn't intend too – vs.15

- a. Not writing in hopes they start supporting him
 - 1) He was not using subterfuge, hoping that, despite his protest, they would begin to pay him.
 - 2) He had never taken pay from those he served and he never intended to. Nor was he now asking for that in a disguised way
- b. Wants no one take away his boast – joy in restricting his freedoms
1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess.3:8; 2 Cor.11:8,9; Acts 18:33-35

All Things To All Men

Introduction

Paul has been discussing the principle of self-denial, especially of doing anything that would cause another to stumble. It has come up in his answer to their question about meat that has been sacrificed to idols. Paul wanted them to understand that just because they could eat without violating their conscience was not all that needed to be considered. The weaker brother's conscience must also not be violated. Therefore Paul would limit himself for the benefit of others. Last week we saw how Paul personally applied this principle to his receiving a living from preaching the gospel. In this lesson we will focus on the second of his personal illustrations concerning this principle – becoming all things to all men.

1 Corinthians 9:15-27

1. Necessity of preaching the gospel

- a. **Paul's policy** – to support himself as he preached the gospel
 - 1) 1 Thess. 2:9 – worked day & night not to burden you
 - 2) 2 Thess.3:8 – not eat without paying for it
 - 3) Only accepted support after he left a church – 2 Cor.11:8,9
 - 4) Acts 20:33-35 – by own hands met his own needs
 - 5) Rather be dead than have people think he preached for money
- b. **Boast** – rejoice, to revel in = not prideful but joyously
 - 1) Glad for the spiritual privilege
 - 2) Receiving his joy from exercising his privilege to restrict his freedoms rather than from using them
 - 3) Paul's boasting was always in the Lord not himself – accomplishments
1 Cor.1:31; Rom.15:17
- c. **I am compelled to preach**
 - 1) God had set him apart (purpose) – Acts 26:13-16; Col.1:25
 - 2) Like Jeremiah – he had to preach – Jer.20:9
 - 3) God's calling could not be ignored slighted or neglected
 - 4) Failure to obey would result in serious chastisement – James 3:1
 - 5) **Voluntarily** = his will had nothing to do with it – a stewardship
 - a) His calling = preach the gospel
 - b) God's treasured gospel given to him to preach to others
- d. **His reward** – privilege to preach without charge
 - 1) Was free to expect support from those he preached to
 - 2) Not compelled to receive payment (free to support himself)
 - 3) He chose to not make full use of his right to payment
 - 4) With great happiness and satisfaction Paul forsook a liberty; refusing to take advantage of a right, in order to make a contribution of his very own to the work of Christ.

2. Two ways in which Paul sought to enhance his preaching – vs.19-27

a. Self denial

- 1) I make myself a slave to everyone
 - a) He would modify his habits, his preferences, his entire life–style if any of those things caused someone to stumble, to be offended, or to be hindered from faith in the Lord
 - b) Although free to do whatever his conscience allowed, his love for others would not allow it.
 - c) He put every questionable thing in his life under the control of love
 - d) Ex.21:2-6 – made himself a voluntary slave
 - e) Mk.10:44 – want be 1st must be slave to all
 - f) Saw this as a way of helping many unbelievers to listen to the gospel and to be more open to receiving it.
- 2) **To the Jews I become a Jew**
 - a) Be as Jewish as necessary while working with Jews
 - b) Not bound to ceremonies, rituals or traditions – yet keep them
 - c) If following them opened a door to witness – gladly do them
 - d) Voluntarily observe special days; abstain from certain foods etc
 - e) **Desire** – Rom.9:3; 10:1; 11:14
 - f) Acts 16:3 – had Timothy circumcised
 - g) Acts 21:20-26 – willingly paid for purification rites
 - h) Acts 18:18 – special vow for Jews – cut off hair
- 3) **Lived like a gentile when working with gentiles**
 - a) Not speaking of violating God’s moral laws – Rom.13:8-10
 - b) Paul identified as closely as possible with Gentile customs.
 - (1) He ate what they ate, went where they went, and dressed as they dressed.
 - (2) The purpose again was to **win** the Gentiles to Christ
- 4) **To the weak I become weak**
 - a) **Weak** – Those who did not have the power of understanding to grasp the gospel
 - b) He stooped to the level of their weakness of comprehension. To those who needed simple or repeated presentations, that is what he gave them.
- 5) **Paul did not compromise the gospel.**
 - a) He would not change the least truth in the least way in order to satisfy anyone.
 - b) But he would condescend in any way for anyone if that would in any way help bring him to Christ.
 - c) He would gladly restrict his liberty in the gospel. He would not offend Jew, Gentile, or those weak in understanding
- 6) **If a person is offended by God’s Word, that is his problem**
 - a) If offended by our behavior – his problem becomes ours
 - b) Not a problem of law – a problem of love – 1 Cor.13:1-8

b. Self-control

1) **Run that you may get the prize**

- a) Run to win, not to just be in the game
- b) Paul was serious about his calling – wanted to win as many as he could.
 - (1) Not enough to just be an apostle – start some churches
 - (2) Goal was to be the best - 1st
 - (3) Phil.3:12 – I press for the prize
 - (4) Heb.12:1 – lay aside everything that hinders

2) **To accomplish this – must discipline body**

- a) Strict training – body, mind, spirit
- b) Many limit their testimony for Jesus because they will not limit their liberties – discipline themselves
- c) Paul was willing to limit himself in anything so that he might win people to Jesus

3) **Paul didn't do things aimlessly**

- a) Everything was for God's purpose – to please God
- b) Not swinging wildly hoping might he hit the mark – deliberate
- c) **I beat my body** (KJV buffet) – literally to hit under the eye
 - (1) To deliver a knock out blow
 - (2) Make it my slave so that I can win souls

4) **So I myself will not be disqualified**

- a) In ancient Greece - a contestant who failed to meet the training requirements was disqualified.
 - (1) He could not even run, much less win.
 - (2) Paul did not want to spend his life preaching the requirements to others and then be disqualified for not meeting the requirements himself
- b) Many believers start the Christian life with great enthusiasm and devotion.
 - (1) They train carefully for a while but soon tire of the effort and begin to “break training.”
 - (2) Before long they are disqualified from being effective witnesses.
 - (a) They do not have what it takes, because they are unwilling to pay the price.
 - (b) The flesh, the world, everyday affairs, personal interests, and often simple laziness hinder spiritual growth and preparation for service

c) Scriptures

- (1) Lk.9:23 – must deny himself
- (2) Lk.21:34 – take heed to yourselves
- (3) Rom.6:12 – let not sin reign
- (4) Rom.13:14 – make no provision for the flesh
- (5) Gal.5:24 – they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh

d) Disqualified

- (1) The Lord does not tolerate hypocrisy
Rom.2:21-24 – teach yourself
Mt.7:21-23 – must do the will of the Father
Titus 1:16 – by their works they deny Him
- (2) **Means** – rejected; disapproved; unfit
- (3) **Paul goal** - to fully fulfill God's purpose for him

5) Application

- a) To be effective in reaching others we must disciple ourselves
 - (1) Must practice what we preach
 - (2) Willingly limit your freedoms to help others believe
- b) The Christian life is a life-long struggle with the flesh
 - (1) 2 Cor.13:5 – examine yourselves
 - (2) Phil.3:12-14 – press toward the prize
 - (3) Jn.15:2 – not bear fruit taken away
 - (4) James 2:16-24 – faith without works is dead

The Danger Of Overconfidence

Introduction

In chapter 8 Paul set forth the principle that, although Christians are free to do whatever Scripture does not forbid as being morally wrong, if we love as God calls us to love, we will limit our liberty for the sake of weaker believers. In chapter 9 he illustrated that limitation from his own life and ministry in two ways. First to keep from giving them reason to think he was preaching for the money, he accepted no wages from those to whom he was ministering. Secondly, he also modified and adapted his life-style in whatever ways were permissible scripturally in order to witness more effectively. In chapter 10, Paul illustrates how our use of freedom affects our own lives personally. Our misuse of liberty can disqualify us from effective service to Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

1. **One of the surest ways to fall into temptation and sin is to become overconfident.**
 - a. Many of the Corinthian believers thought, and perhaps had said in the letter to Paul (7:1), that they felt perfectly secure in their Christian lives, that they had arrived.
 - b. Paul surely had that attitude in mind in the sarcastic rebuke of 1 Cor.4:8-14.
 - 1) They were baptized, well taught, lacking in no gift, and presumably mature.
 - 2) They thought they were strong enough to freely associate with pagans in their ceremonies and social activities and not be affected morally or spiritually, as long as they did not participate in outright idolatry or immorality.
 - c. Paul wants them to realize that abusing their liberty not only harms weaker believers whose consciences were offended but also endangered their own spiritual lives.
 - 1) They could not live long on the far edge of freedom without falling into temptation and then into sin.
 - 2) The mature, loving Christian does not try to stretch his liberty to the extreme, to see how close to evil he can come without being harmed.
 - 3) When a Christian becomes so confident of his strength that he thinks he can handle any situation, he is overconfident and in great danger of falling.
 - a) The warning is summarized in verse 12: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
 - b) The danger is not so much of failing from salvation but of falling from holiness and usefulness in service to the Lord.
 - c) It is a serious danger and one the Lord does not take lightly.
 - d. Israel provided Paul with some sobering illustrations – 40 yr wanderings
 - 1) Israel’s lack of faith made them useless for God’s purposes
 - 2) A whole generation had to die off before God could use them

2. New insights into old stories

a. Paul sharing a new insight into the wilderness wanderings

- 1) Vs.1-4 – Israel’s common experiences
 - a) Liberation from Egypt
 - b) Baptism into Moses
 - c) Spiritual sustenance
- 2) Point – to recount the privileges of Israel – their assets

b. **They abused their situation with God**

- 1) God not pleased with most of them
 - a) Only two (Joshua & Caleb) allowed enter Promised Land
 - b) Even Moses & Aaron disqualified & unable to enter
- 2) Bodies scattered over desert = to strew
 - a) In that race most were disqualified
 - b) God was testing their obedience & service & they failed
- 3) Their self-centeredness & self-will brought them to ruin
 - a) Misused their blessings
 - b) Lived on the edge & fell into temptation
 - c) Overconfidence was their undoing

c. **These are examples** for us

- 1) Never brought their bodies under control
- 2) Lust & craving ruled

d. **Disqualified because of four major sins**

1) **Idolatry**

- a) Barely out of Egypt before defeated – Ex.32
No pagan temples etc to lure them
Improvised own idols
- b) Felt could use an idol to worship the true God
- c) So long around pagans - seemed natural
- d) Aaron unable resist temptation – suggested use jewelry
- e) **In Corinth** – reverting to old ways = idols natural
1 Cor.10:20,21 – cup of Lord & cup of demons
- f) **Apply** – worshiping anyone or anything besides God is idolatry
 - (1) Virgin Mary; saints, icons; angels etc
 - (2) No matter how sincerely mean to honor God
 - (3) Strictly forbidden – Ex.20:3; 1 Jn.5:21
 - (4) Some make gods of love; social service; self-image etc
Anything that takes our 1st loyalty = idol
Sacrifice anything to achieve recognition want
Ezek.14:1-11 – idol in their heart

2) **Sexual Immorality**

- a) Num.25:1-9 – sin with women of Moab
- b) Idolatry & sexual immorality go together in ancient religions
 - (1) Corinth – Temple of Aphrodite (1000’s of prostitutes)
 - (2) Living carelessly around corruption is dangerous
- c) Flee from immorality don’t flirt with it

3) Trying or tempting God

- a) Num.21:1-9
- b) God was providing everything for them – safety, food, water etc
 - (1) Not satisfied – grew impatient with God
 - (2) Wanted more variety; more spice in life
 - (3) Complained & questioned God’s goodness, patience
- c) No concern for pleasing God – just pleasing selves
- d) Not using freedom to serve Him better – demand more for self
- e) **Apply** – pushing God to the limit
 - See how much we can get from Him
 - See how much we can get by with
 - See how much of flesh can indulge in; enjoy in world
 - God is forgiving so why not get all can out of life

4) Complaining

- a) Num.16:1-50 – sin of Korah
- b) Murmuring & dissatisfaction with God’s will is sin
 - (1) Lord does not take such sin lightly
 - (2) Questioning & complaining is challenging His wisdom; His grace; His goodness; righteousness & His love
- c) Phil.2:14; 4:11-13

e. What happened to them is a warning for all ages

- 1) Like them we can forfeit blessings, rewards & effectiveness
- 2) In our overconfidence & presumption we can take liberty too far
 - a) Lose our virtue & usefulness
 - b) Become disqualified for service to the Lord
- 3) Prov.16:18 – pride goes before a fall
- 4) Can become so enamored of our freedom in Christ that we forget we are His, bought with a price and called to obedience to His Word and to His service.
- 5) Overconfidence has brought down many in scripture
 - a) Haman in book of Esther
 - b) Sennacherib king of Assyria
 - c) Apostle Peter
 - d) Church at Sardis
 - e) Church at Laodecia
- 6) Christians who become self–confident become less dependent on God’s Word and God’s Spirit and become careless in their living.
 - a) As carelessness increases, openness to temptation increases and resistance to sin decreases.
 - b) When we feel most secure in ourselves—when we think our spiritual life is the strongest, our doctrine the soundest, and our morals the purest—we should be most on our guard and most dependent on the Lord.
 - c) 1 Peter 5:8 – Satan is always looking for someone to devour

3. Encouragement when tempted – Vs.13

a. None of us have temptations that are unique

- 1) Victory is always available
- 2) Never face a temptation that can't get away from
- 3) **Temptation** – to test or prove (no negative connotation to word)
 - a) Our response is what matters
 - b) Can be a proof of righteousness or an enticement to evil
 - c) If we resist it in God's power, it is a test that proves our faithfulness. If we do not resist, it becomes a solicitation to sin Mt.4:1-11 (To God a test; to Satan an enticement)
- 4) **Common to man** – all of us are in the same boat

b. God's tests are never a solicitation to do evil

- 1) James 1:13
- 2) Becomes an enticement to evil because of our desires – James 1:14,15
- 3) James 1:2-4
 - a) God often brings circumstances into our lives to test us.
 - 1) Like Job we usually do not at the time recognize them as tests, certainly not from God.
 - 2) But our response to them proves our faithfulness or unfaithfulness.
 - 3) How we react to financial difficulty, school problems, health trouble, or business setbacks will always test our faith, our reliance on our heavenly Father.
 - b) If we do not turn to Him, however, the same circumstances can make us bitter, resentful, and angry.
 - 1) Rather than thanking God for the test, as James advises, we may even accuse Him.
 - 2) An opportunity to cheat on our income tax or take unfair advantage in a business deal will either prove our righteousness or prove our weakness.
 - c) The circumstance or the opportunity is only a test, neither good nor evil in itself.
 - 1) Whether it results in good or evil, spiritual growth or spiritual decline, depends entirely on our response.
 - 2) In the Lord's Prayer Jesus says that we should ask God not to "lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13). "Evil" is better translated "the evil one," referring to Satan. In other words we should pray that God will not allow tests to become temptations, in the sense of inducement to evil. **The idea is, "Lord, stop us before Satan can turn your test into his temptation."**

c. God is faithful

- 1) Never so overwhelmed – able say "devil made me do it"
- 2) No temptation is stronger than our spiritual resources

- 3) No one can make us sin – not even Satan
- 4) **God will not allow us to experience any test that we can't overcome**
 When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, He asked them twice whom they had come for, who was designated on their arrest order. After they answered for the second time, "Jesus the Nazarene," He said, "If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:4-9). **John explains** that Jesus prevented the disciples from being arrested with Him in order "that the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, 'Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one' " (v. 9). **The disciples were not yet ready for such a test.** Had they been arrested, they would have been devastated, and Jesus would not permit it. As best we know from church history, most of those eleven disciples died a martyr's death. The other, John, was exiled for life on the island of Patmos. All of them went through persecution, imprisonment, and countless hardships for the sake of the gospel. **But they did not go though those things until they were ready to handle them**
- 5) God will provide a way of escape
- a) The way of escape is always **through** the temptation
 - (1) We escape temptation not by getting out of the temptation, but by passing through it.
 - (2) God does not take us out of the world; He sees us through temptation by making us **able to endure it.**
 - b) We are to meet temptation head on & escape by enduring them in God's power - Phil.4:11-13
 - c) **Three ways God helps us endure**
 - (1) Prayer – James 5:13-18; Mk.14:38
 - (2) Trust – Rom.8:28 - God has a purpose
 - (3) Focus on Jesus – Heb. 4:14-16; 12:1-4

The Truth About Idols

Introduction

Throughout scripture idolatry is condemned. God has never allowed His people to be idolatrous; in fact it is such an abomination to Him that He has had His religious leaders demanding the death of those who would participate in it. Why is idolatry so hideous to God? It is not a moral issue to eat meat sacrificed to idols, but it is a sin to participate in any form of worship to idols. It seems that some of the Corinthians had taken their liberty too far & were participating in idol worship. They may be free to attend such pagan functions but not to participate in their false worship. In these verses Paul strongly rebukes those who would do this.

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

1. Listen carefully so you may judge correctly

a. Flee idolatry

- 1) 1 Jn.5:21
- 2) Get as far away from the danger as possible
- 3) As long as you associate with this practice it will taint your thinking
 - a) 1 Cor.15:33 – evil corrupts
 - b) Rom.13:14 – make no provision to gratify desires of the flesh
 - c) Eph.5:3-17 – have nothing to do with deeds of darkness

b. Idolatry strikes at the very character of God

- 1) There is but one God – not many gods
- 2) Worshiping an idol is saying that there are many gods
- 3) Saying that other gods are worthy to share in His honor & glory
- 4) Isa.48:11 – I will not give My glory to another

c. Since the fall of man, men have been trying to make God into their image

- 1) Rom.1:18-23
- 2) Has terrible consequences – Rom.1:24-32
- 3) **Everyone worships** – even atheists (worship themselves)
When God is rejected man worships false gods
- 4) False gods can be mythical or material objects & can be worshiped without conscious thought that they are deities
- 5) Job 31:24-28 - "If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.

d. Idolatry comes in many forms

- 1) Some worship power or military might – Hab.1:12-17
- 2) Some formulate supernatural beings – 1 Cor.10:20 (demons)
- 3) Some see God as gold, silver & stone – Acts 17:29

- 4) We are guilty of libeling God when we doubt Him - His word, His promises, His love or His power
- 5) Worshipping angels is idolatry – Col.2:18; Rev.19:10
- 6) Worshipping human beings is idolatry – even great heroes of scripture - Abraham; Moses; David; Mary; the prophets; the apostles etc
- 7) Supreme loyalty in our heart to anything other than God is idolatry – ambitions; possessions; recognition – Mt.6:21; Eph.5:5; Col.3:5
- 8) Worshipping the true God the wrong way also is idolatry
 - a) Non scriptural forms & rituals – Col.2:16-23
 - b) Failing to worship from the heart – Jn.4:23,24
 - c) Anytime we adopt worldly practices in our worship services, we are setting up idols that detract us from true worship
 - d) Israel's intentions were right when they worshiped the calf Ex.32:1-9 – corrupted themselves
Deut.4:14-19 – watch yourselves carefully
- 9) **Remember** – God does not want to be reduced to an image & no idolater will enter God's kingdom – Rev.21:8; 22:15
 - a) Not only that, but also no idol can help men. A carved image cannot forgive, save, give peace of mind, or solve problems; nor can money, fame, education, social prestige, or any other such thing that men come to trust in.
 - b) Every idol is man-made, and every idol is helpless to help.
 - c) Idols only defile. They never glorify God but always dishonor Him.
 - d) Since no good can come of idolatry, the only response to it should be to **flee**.

2. Idolatry & communion with Christ are inconsistent

- a. **Notice** – taking the Lord's Supper is spoken of as a regular occurrence
 - 1) Commanded - Lk.22:19; 1 Cor.11:24,25
 - 2) A reminder of His sacrifice for us & our oneness in Him
- b. **Sharing** = to have in common; participate with; have fellowship or partnership
 - 1) When we properly share in Communion we spiritually participate in fellowship with Jesus Christ and with other believers.
 - 2) It is much more than a symbol; it is a profound celebration of common spiritual experience.
- c. **Sacrificing to an idol is identifying with it**
 - 1) OT – Jewish sacrifices participated (shared) in altar
 - 2) Sacrifices to an idol is to participate (share) with demons
- d. Religious ceremonies, whether Christian or pagan, involve participation of the worshipers with the object of their worship and with each other. Thus it is completely inconsistent for believers to participate in any expression of worship that is apart from and contrary to their Lord.

3. Idolatry is demonic

a. Demons are the spiritual force behind idolatry

- 1) There is never a god behind an idol, but there is always a spiritual force & that force is always evil & demonic
- 2) Demons can exhibit considerable power
 - a) Many cultic & pagan religious claims are faked & exaggerated; but some are true – evil, but true.
 - b) Much of what goes on in the name of astrology is simply exploitation of the gullible. But some of the predictions come true through the work of demons
- 3) Demons are not unlimited in power
 - a) They have power to perform enough wonders & make enough predictions come true to keep superstitious worshipers deceived & loyal
 - b) 2 Thess.2:9-11
- 4) Deut.32:16,17; Ps.106:34-39

b. Truth – you cannot serve two masters

- 1) Mt.6:24
- 2) 2 Cor.6:14-7:1
- 3) Can't fellowship with the Lord & with demons too

c. Christians are not immune from the influence of demons

- 1) When we willingly ignore the Lord's way & flirt with the things of Satan by setting up idols of any kind, we open ourselves up to his demonic influence.
- 2) Acts 5:3 – Satan filled their heart to lie to God
 - a) Their idol of greed allowed them to be corrupted by the chief of demons
 - b) Eph.6:10-12 – clearly there is some intimate contact between believers & demons
- 3) 1 Tim.4:1-3 – some will follow the doctrines of demons

4. Idolatry is offensive to God – He will punish all idolaters

a. It provokes Him to jealousy

- 1) He will have no competition
- 2) Israel faced His wrath because they refused to give up their idols
- 3) Rev.21:8 – all idolaters will be thrown into the lake of fire

b. Are we stronger than He?

- 1) God never allowed idolatry to go unpunished
- 2) Even those in Christ will not escape His chastisement if they persist in worshiping any sort of idol.
- 3) 1 Cor.11:30 – some lost their health & perhaps even their lives

Using Our Freedom For God's Glory

Introduction

God will be glorified no matter what. Even Pharaoh, who did not seek to glorify God, ended up glorifying God. Ex.14:17,18 says – “I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.” As the redeemed, we are to glorify God by living faithfully before Him. In this section Paul shares how we are to live so that God is glorified through the exercise of our spiritual freedom.

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

1. Glory

- a. **Means** – something that is worthy of praise or exaltation; brilliance; beauty or renown.
- b. **God's glory has two aspects**
 - 1) **Inherent or intrinsic glory** – glory that belongs to Him by virtue of who & what He is.
 - a) God is the only being said to possess inherent glory
 - b) If no one ever gave God praise – still be glorious
 - c) Was fully glorious before He created anything to worship Him
 - 2) **Ascribed glory** – to recognize & acclaim glory to Him
 - a) Ps.29:1,2 - Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.
 - b) **Unable to add to His glory** – simply recognizing & acclaiming the glory He already has.
- c. **Practical ways God is glorified**
 - 1) Confession of sin – Josh.7:19
 - 2) Trusting God – Rom.4:20
 - 3) Bearing fruit – Jn.15:8
 - 4) Expressing thankfulness to Him – Ps.50:23
 - 5) Suffering for Christ – 1 Pet.4:14-16
 - 6) Being content – Phil.4:10-20
 - 7) Praying – Jn.14:13
 - 8) Spreading His word – 2 Thess.3:1
 - 9) Everything we do should be to God's glory – 1 Cor.10:31

2. Basic principles for using Christian freedom

a. Edification is more important than personal gratification – vs.23

1) All things are lawful

- a) Some take this to justify any action
- b) Means – anything not specifically identified in scripture as sinful – 1 Cor.6:12
- c) Refers to questionable practices – gray areas – things not specifically forbidden in scripture

2) Edify – literal or figurative building of anything

- a) Used to describe spiritual growth – building up of believers
- b) 1 Cor.6:12 – profitable = beneficial; helpful; advantageous or useful
- c) Things that are profitable are able to edify = convey the same truth

3) Tools of edification

- a) God's word – Acts 20:32; 2 Tim.3:16,17
- b) Preaching & teaching – 1 Cor.14:3,4
- c) Love – 1 Cor.8:1
- d) Obedient service – Eph.4:12

4) Importance of edification

- a) Acts 20:20 – Paul's withheld nothing that was profitable
- b) 1 Cor.14:26 – all in worship to be edifying
- c) 2 Cor.12:19 – Paul's emphasis in ministering
- d) Eph.4:29; 1 Thess.5:11 – speech to always edify

5) Apply – when faced with a decision we should 1st ask “is it right”. If scripture doesn't forbid it, our next question should be “is it profitable & edifying for ourselves & others?” If the answer to both is yes, then we can do it to God's glory. If the answer to either question is no, we cannot do it to God's glory. God will not be glorified through our action.

b. Others are more important than self – vs.24

1) Even if something build us up, we should not do it if it does not also build up others.

- a) Primary concern – good of our neighbor
- b) Principle is contrary to basic human nature

2) Phil.2:1-4

- a) **Illustration** = preacher asked class to share an experience of giving up something for the sake of someone else. Only one man responded. After the class someone responded “for the first time in my life I realized I don't really give up anything for the sake of others”.
- b) **Reject selfishness** – the root of all sin
Selfish ambition = persistently seeking personal advantage and gain, regardless of the effect on others.

- c) **Reject vain conceit** – refers to a highly exaggerated self view
Seeks personal glory & fame; always considers himself right & expects others to agree
- d) **In humility** (opposite of pride) consider others better
- e) **Don't just pay attention to your own interests** – focus on the interests of others

c. **Liberty verses legalism – vs.25-27**

- 1) **The true welfare of others is our 1st concern**
 - a) **However, their standards should not rule everything we do**
 - b) As much as possible we seek to not offend – Rom.12:17,18
 - c) Don't go to extremes by making a big deal of everything we do
- 2) **Don't ask – don't tell**
 - a) After meat has been sacrificed to an idol it's just meat
 - b) Not bother your conscience – eat it
 - c) Why give up your liberty unless for the building up of another?
 - d) Don't refrain from questionable things because of legalistic compulsion – do voluntarily for the edification of another.

d. **Don't insist on your freedom – Vs.28-30**

- 1) Don't argue or condemn – give up liberty so brother not offended
- 2) Modify your actions (not your conscience) for the benefit of others
- 3) Legalism of the weaker brother should not make you legalistic
- 4) Better to offend the host than the weaker brother
- 5) Arguing harms our witness

3. **The purpose of Christian freedom – vs.31,32**

a. **To glorify God**

- 1) His glory is to be our life commitment
- 2) 1 Cor.7:23 – you were bought with a price, do not become the slaves of men – 1 Cor.6:19,20

b. **God is dishonored when we sin – honored when we are obedient**

- 1) No action of ours should hinder an unbeliever from coming to Jesus
- 2) No action of ours should cause a weaker brother to stumble

4. **The pattern of Christian freedom – 10:33-11:1**

- a. Follow my example – 1 Cor.9:19-23
- b. Follow as I follow Christ – Phil.2:5-7 (emptied Himself & became a servant)

The Role Of Women & The Head Covering

Introduction

In the last several decades there has been a battle in society & the church about the role of women. Women's rights movements have done much to escalate the struggle both in society & in the church. Some leaders & writers in Christianity are attempting to redefine or even altar biblical truth. Their intentions are to accommodate the standards of contemporary thinking in the world & make them a reality in the church. To accomplish that, some seek to teach that this scripture & others are just the opinions of Paul, Peter & others. This leaves open the door for man to just pick & choose whatever he wants when he comes to scripture. Therefore scripture is no longer the authoritative word of God. In this lesson we will seek to understand Paul's teaching about the subordination of women & the head covering.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

1. Paul's praise of their actions

a. Remember me in everything

- 1) **Remember** – perfect tense = continually remembering
- 2) In spite of their immaturity & problems they had a deep respect for Paul's apostolic authority & godly wisdom

b. Teachings just as I passed them on to you

- 1) KJV – traditions
- 2) **Literally** – that which was passed along by teaching
 - a) Negatively – Mt.15:2-6; Gal.1:14; Col.2:8
 - b) Positively – 2 Thess.2:15 (divinely revealed teachings)

c. The struggle in Corinth was not so much doctrinal, but moral – lifestyle

- 1) Were orthodox but not pure
- 2) Accepted truth about God's nature & work – not living right

2. Principle - Head of man is Christ & the head of woman is man

a. Principle of subordination & authority are universal

- 1) Christ submitted to the will of God – salvation possible
- 2) Women submit to their husbands – family & society able to function
- 3) Rom.13:1-2 – submission to authority ordained by God – good of man
- 4) Mt.6:24 – unable serve 2 masters = good of family (Isa.3:12)

b. Head = ruling & sovereign part of body

- 1) **Christ the head of every man** – Eph.1:22,23; 4:15; Col.1:18
 - a) Jesus given all authority – Mt.28:18; Phil.2:10,11
 - b) Heb.2:8 –all things put under His feet
- 2) **Man is the head of the woman**
 - a) Not a matter of importance – Gal.3:28; 1 Peter 3:7 (coheir)
 - b) Spiritually they are equal – positionally submissive (for order)
 - c) Not a matter of ability, intellect, maturity or even spirituality
 - d) Women to submit to male leadership because is God's design

- 3) **God is the head of Christ**
 - a) Jn.4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 1 Cor.15:24-28
 - b) Jesus is not inferior to God – Phil.2:5-7
 - c) He willingly submitted Himself
- 4) **As Jesus submitted Himself to God; the church is to submit to Jesus & women are to submit to the men**
 - a) This authority & submission is to be based upon love not compulsion
 - b) Jesus loved the church so much He willingly submitted to His Father
 - c) Women are to so love Jesus that they willingly submit to men

3. The head covering

- a. **Is Paul speaking about the worship assembly?**
 - 1) Chuck Gambill paper on subject (not worship service)
 - a) No occasion in scripture where women prayed or prophesied in a public worship setting or service
 - b) 1 Cor.14:34,35 – told not to speak
 - 2) Covering was not a divine requirement – was a local custom
 - a) Gen.24:61-67 – Rebecca covered herself as approached Isaac
 - b) Gen.38:12-19 – covering a sign of harlotry
 - c) No commandment in scripture for women to wear covering
- b. **Understanding of this difficult because of the scarcity of historical data**
 - 1) Seems to be a local Corinthian custom
 - 2) Disgraces her head = her husband
 - 3) Covering used to symbolize her submissive state
- c. **Problem** – some women were in a state of rebellion - casting off the covering
 - 1) Demanding to be treated like men – unjust restriction
 - 2) Asserting their independence – discarding all signs of femininity
 - 3) Wearing covering or not wearing covering not the problem – problem was in their rebellion against God ordained roles
- d. **Point** = men are to come before God as men & women are to come before God as women

4. Man is the image & glory of God

- a. Created in the image of God – given a sphere of sovereignty (rule earth)
- b. Woman created from man - Gen.2:21,22
- c. After the fall of man – curse – Gen.3:16,17 (man rule)
- d. **Jewish practice of men covering** – misinterpretation of Ex.34:33-35
 - 1) Moses put veil over face
 - 2) Did so in presence of people not in God's presence – 2 Cor.3:13

5. Woman is the glory of man

- a. **Made to manifest man's authority** (rules in the stead of man)
 - 1) Carries out the mans will as man carries out God's will on earth
 - 2) Man shows how magnificent a creature God can create from Himself
 - 3) Woman shows how magnificent a creature God can make from man
- b. **Woman is the glory of man** – the indirect outshining of man's glory of God
 - 1) Her role is to submit to the authority & leadership of the man
 - 2) She is not inferior; her role is unique (suitable helper Gen.2:20)

6. In that culture, women wore a head covering

- a. **A symbol of their submissiveness**
- b. **Because of angels**
 - 1) Powerful creatures that derived their power from God
(totally & immediately obedient to God)
 - 2) Satan & his angels sought to use their power for own selfish reasons –
to glorify themselves not God
- c. **Man's authority over woman is delegated authority** – given by God to accomplish His purposes
 - 1) No innate superiority – no right to use authority selfishly
 - 2) Male chauvinism is no more biblical than feminism – both are a
perversion of God's plan
 - 3) Men & women are complementary in every way – function as a team
 - 4) We have differing roles but not differing importance spiritually
 - a) 1 Tim.2:15 – not teachers of men but shapers of men
 - b) Man is the head, the leader, the provider; women are mans
helper, the supporter & companion

7. Judge for yourself

- a. **Look at the natural order of things**
 - 1) Women's hair naturally longer – rarely bald
 - 2) Most cultures – women wear hair longer than men
 - 3) Beautifully dressed hair is a glory for women (softness & tenderness)
 - 4) Her hair is a natural covering
- b. **In our culture - wearing of a veil or a hat does not symbolize subordination**
 - 1) Should not be required of Christian women
 - 2) Women's hair & dress should be distinctly feminine
 - 3) God made the sexes distinct – ought observe His plan & purposes
 - a. He wants men to be men – responsible, loving & authoritative
 - b. He wants women to be feminine, loving & submissive

Abuses Of The Lord's Supper

Introduction

The early church developed special fellowship meals that came to be called love feasts (Jude 12) in which they usually observed Communion. These were congregational meals stressing fellowship, affection, and mutual caring among the believers. This emphasis on oneness led very readily into a celebration of the unifying accomplishment of Jesus on the cross. The church at Corinth followed this custom but, like those whom Peter condemns (2 Pet. 2:13), they had allowed this meal to be turned into times of gluttonous, drunken revelry. Since this meal was connected to the bread and cup of remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus, it was also a flagrant desecration of the holy ordinance. It would have been better for the Corinthians never to have such a love feast than to so abuse it.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

1. Your meetings do more harm than good

- a. **In the following directive** = specifically to give a charge or an order
 - 1) What follows is not just Paul giving them personal advice
 - 2) Was apostolic instruction they were commanded to accept & follow
 - 3) Use of word – military commander passing along orders to subordinates
- b. **Gatherings did more harm than good**
 - 1) **Harm** (worse KJV) = represents moral evil
 - 2) Instead of the celebrations being times of loving fellowship & spiritual enrichment their selfish indulgence; shaming the poorer brethren; mocking the Lord's sacrificial death was scandalizing the church before the unbelieving world around them.

2. The perversion of the Lord's Supper

- a. **They allowed divisions to flourish among them**
 - 1) **Divisions** – Greek word from which we get our word “schisms”
 - a) **Literally** – refers to tearing or cutting
 - b) **Metaphorically** – division or dissension
 - c) **Factions** are not merely disruptive; they are destructive
Titus 3:10,11- factious people are perverted (don't tolerate)
 - 2) **Were not in agreement nor were they seeking to be**
 - a) Instead of sharing they spent their time in selfish indulgence, arguing & disputing
 - b) Already rebuked them for their spirit of party loyalty – 1:10-17
 - (1) Ought have same outlook, attitude, opinions
 - (2) Reasons for division – carnality; selfishness & worldliness – 3:1
 - (3) Were walking in the flesh not in the Spirit

- 3) **I partly believe it** – trying to give them the benefit of the doubt
- a) **Knew division can't be entirely avoided**
 - (1) Always be tares among the wheat
 - (2) Have to be differences = of a necessity
 - (3) Mt.18:7 – inevitable that stumbling blocks come
 - b) **Shows**, which (who) has God's approval
 - (1) The worldliness and fleshly disobedience of those who caused the divisions would expose and highlight the love, harmony, and spirituality of those who are approved.
 - (2) **Truth** - Church division, as ungodly and sinful as it is, is used by the Lord to prove the worth of His faithful saints. - 1 Pet.1:3-5
 - (a) In the midst of bickering and divisiveness they are separated out - as pure gold is from the dross.
 - (b) Evil helps manifest good. Trouble in the church creates a situation in which true spiritual strength, wisdom, and leadership can be manifested.

b. Focal point of the evil = The Lord's Supper

- 1) **In the early church**, it seems that the love feast and Communion customarily were held together, but abuses such as those in Corinth eventually forced the two to be separated in order to protect the Communion. As a result the love feast soon disappeared altogether
- 2) **These factious members had so perverted the congregation that the celebration of communion had become a mockery**
 - a) **No longer the Lord's Supper** – no longer honored Him
 - b) Ceremony had lost its substance – no longer a reality
 - c) **Mere form** – broke bread & passed the cup, repeated words – Lord was not there among them
- 3) **Poor were neglected**
 - a) **Expected a share** –left hungry (spiritually & physically)
 - b) Those who brought food gorged themselves – mocked the very purpose of the feast
- 4) **Paul's reaction** – disgust (could you not do that at home?)
 - a) Are you trying to destroy the church?
 - b) Are you so contemptuous of the poor that you purposely embarrass & shame them?
 - c) If you can't show love, why have a love feast?
- 5) **Point** - A Christian's attitudes and motives should be pure at all times. When believers come to the table of the Lord, it is absolutely necessary that they leave behind all sin, all bitterness, all racial prejudice, all class pride, and all feelings of superiority. These attitudes are out place at the Lord's Supper

3. The purpose of the Lord's Supper

a. Initiated at the Passover meal with Jesus' disciples

1) Four cups were passed around during this meal

- a) 1st – when host pronounced a blessing
- b) Bitter herbs dipped in fruit sauce were eaten as message of meaning of Passover shared Psalms of praise were sung
- c) 2nd cup passed & bread broken & passed around
- d) Meal proper is shared – roasted lamb
- e) After prayer the 3rd cup is passed & rest of the Psalms sung
- f) 4th cup celebrated coming kingdom & drunk before leaving

2) Was during time of 3rd cup – Lord's Supper initiated

- a) The bread that represented the exodus from Egypt now came to represent His body
 - (1) **Jewish thinking** – represented whole person – all He was & did – not just His physical body
 - (2) **Broken** (KJV) – not in best original manuscripts or in most modern translations.
Jn.19:33,36 – no bones broken on Jesus
 - (3) **For you** – Everything He did was for believers
- b) The cup that represented the lamb's blood now represented Christ's blood – the Lamb of God that was slain for the sins of man.
 - (1) Old covenant ratified by blood – New covenant was to be ratified by Christ's blood
 - (2) The old deliverance was from Egypt; the new deliverance was from sin & death

3) Do this in remembrance of Me

- a) Communion was to be done on a regular basis – Acts 20:7
- b) To not partake regularly is disobedience & sin
- c) **For the Hebrew** - to remember meant much more than simply to bring something to mind; merely to recall what happened
 - (1) To truly remember is to go back in one's mind and recapture as much of the reality and significance of an event or experience as one possibly can.
 - (2) To remember Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross is to relive with Him His life, agony, suffering, and death as much as is humanly possible.
 - (3) When we partake of the Lord's Supper we do not offer a sacrifice again; we remember His once-for-all sacrifice for us and rededicate ourselves to His obedient service.

4) As often as you do this – expected regular observance

- a) Reminds us of what He did & that He is coming again
- b) Keeps us looking forward – spirit of expectation

b. There is much involved in this remembrance.

- 1) When a believer comes to the Lord's Table, he remembers Christ's work on the cross (11:25)
- 2) He partakes of Christ's spiritual presence in the fellowship, not just the elements themselves (10:16)
- 3) He communes with the saints (10:17)
- 4) He worships in holiness (10:20–22)
- 5) He proclaims salvation in Christ (11:24–25)
- 6) He anticipates the return of the Lord (11:26)

4. Preparation for the Lord's Supper

a. **Warning** – because of all that is involved in the observance, participating in an unworthy manner is a serious sin

- 1) **Are sinning against the body & blood of the Lord**
 - a) Not simply dishonoring ceremony – are dishonoring the one whose honor is being celebrated
 - b) Are dishonoring His total life & work – all He accomplished
- 2) **Are mocking & treating with indifference the very person of Jesus Christ** - Acts 7:52; Heb.6:6; 10:29

b. Examine yourself

- 1) **Every time you come to partake** – do a thorough examination
 - a) **One can come to His table unworthily in many ways.**
 - (1) **Ritualistically**, without participating with their minds and hearts. They can go through the motions without going through any emotions, and treat it lightly rather than seriously.
 - (2) **Believing it imparts grace or merit** - that the ceremony itself, rather than the sacrifice it represents, can save or keep one saved.
 - (3) **Come with a spirit of bitterness or hatred** toward another believer
 - (4) **Come with a sin of which they will not repent.**
 - b) **If a believer comes with anything less than the loftiest thoughts of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and anything less than total love for his brothers and sisters in Christ, he comes unworthily**
- 2) **Before we partake we are to give ourselves a thorough self-examination, looking honestly at our hearts for anything that should not be there and sifting out all evil.**
 - a) Our motives, our attitudes toward the Lord and His Word, toward His people, and toward the Communion service itself should all come under private scrutiny before the Lord.
 - b) The table thus becomes a special place for the purifying of the church.

- c. **Partaking in (or with) the wrong spirit** – brings judgment upon himself
 - 1) **Judgment** = idea of chastisement not condemnation – Rom.8:1
 - 2) **Recognizing the body of the Lord** – context includes the church
 - 3) **Types of chastening**
 - a) **Severe illness**
 - b) **Sleep** = metaphorically death – Jn.11:1; Acts 7:60
As He did Ananias & Sapphira – Acts 5:1-11
- d. **Hope** – Judge selves rightly & not be judged
 - 1) Confess wrongs attitudes & motives – 1 Jn.1:9
 - 2) God disciplines us for our salvation not our condemnation
- e. When you come together – wait for one another
 - 1) If only attending to satisfy hunger – do that at home
 - 2) Don't pervert the love feast – come to satisfy your spiritual hunger

Testing Counterfeit Spiritual Gifts

Introduction

Chapters 12 through 14 will focus on spiritual gifts; their use & misuse. This subject seems to have been a controversial subject in the past as well as it is today. Perhaps no other area of biblical doctrine is as misunderstood & abused, and yet is as vital in the spiritual health & effectiveness of the church. Every Christian has been endowed with a spiritual gift for the purpose of edifying believers & evangelizing the world. Satan seeks to destroy God's kingdom & so produces counterfeit gifts to confuse & divide God's people. It is therefore important that we understand spiritual gifts & their purpose in the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

1. Now about spiritual gifts

- a. Paul is answering specific questions from believers – 1 Cor.7:1
- b. These questions must have included
 - 1) What are spiritual gifts?
 - 2) How many gifts are there?
 - 3) Does every believer have them?
 - 4) How can a person know which gift or gifts they have?
 - 5) Are all the gifts given for every age of the church?
 - 6) Were some gifts given for a special purpose & limited time?
 - 7) Can the gifts be counterfeited?
 - 8) How can believers tell the true gifts from the false?
- c. The nature, purpose & use of these gifts was being perverted
 - 1) Ideas & practices from paganism were being accepted in the church
 - 2) They were not separating themselves from former lifestyles

2. Background of pagan religions

- a. **Commonly called** mystery religions
 - 1) Many of them dominated society for thousands of years
 - 2) Some still exist even today
- b. **Some of their beliefs & practices came to be accepted** among Christians
 - 1) Celebration of Lent (fasting & mourning 40 days) (cult of Istar)
 - 2) Practice of mutilation & flagellation to atone for sin
 - 3) Custom of pilgrimages & paying penance to forgive sin of others & self
- c. **In Corinth church influenced by the practice of ecstasy**
 - 1) Considered to be the highest expression of religious experience
 - a) Seemed supernatural because it was dramatic & often bazaar
 - b) Practice readily appealed to the natural man
 - c) Because the Holy Spirit performed miraculously in the apostolic age - some Christians confused true wonders & signs with these pagan ecstasies

- 2) **Ecstasy** = supernatural sensuous communion with a deity
 - a) Consisted of frenzied hypnotic chants
 - b) During them worshipers experienced semiconscious euphoric feelings of oneness with god
 - c) Often these experiences were preceded by fasting & some seem to even include drunkenness (Eph.5:18)
 - d) Meditation on sacred objects; whirling dances; incense; chants & other such physical & psychological stimuli were used.
 - e) Worshipers would experience an out of body trance or some other unrestrained (uncontrolled) experiences
- d. **Corinth was filled with** priests, priestesses, religious prostitutes, soothsayers, and diviners of the mystery religions who **claimed to represent a god or gods and to have supernatural powers that proved their claims.**
 - 1) Church had heard of the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost
 - a) Amazing signs & events accompanied believers – Mk.16:17,18
 - b) Determined to experience these wonders themselves
 - 2) From the beginning of the church – Satan sought to counterfeit the gospel & its wonders & gullible, worldly, self-centered, thrill seeking believers coming from pagan backgrounds were prime targets
 - 3) Satan knows if he can get God’s people to become confused about God’s gifts or abuse them, he can undermine & corrupt the worship & work of the church.
 - 4) One of the chief evidences of the spiritual immaturity of the Corinthian Christians was their lack of discernment.
 - a) If an occult practice seemed to have supernatural effect, they assumed it was of God.
 - b) If a priest or soothsayer performed a miracle, they assumed it was by God’s power.
 - c) Like many Christians today, they believed that if something “works” it must be right and good.

3. About spiritual gifts – not want you to be ignorant

a. Gifts

- 1) Word “gifts” added by translators (idea - is implied in original text)
- 2) Spiritual = that which has spiritual qualities or characteristics
 - a) Something that is under spiritual control – not natural
 - b) Can indicate either spiritual persons or spiritual things
 - c) Word always used in NT of that which is in some way related to the Holy Spirit

b. Ignorant

- 1) Paul wants no ignorance, doubt or uncertainty about identifying & using spiritual gifts
- 2) Eph.4:11-16 – gifts given for the maturity of God’s people

- c. **Before became a Christian** – led astray after mute idols
- 1) **Astray** = used of prisoners under armed guard
 - a) Eph.2:1-3 – a captive of Satan
 - b) Spiritually blind & helpless – 2 Cor.4:4
 - 2) **Misconception about living an ungodly life**
 - a) That one is free & that Christians are restricted & hemmed in by rigid restrictions & commands
 - b) **Reality** – the opposite is true
 - 1) Outside Christ - no choice as to whether or not to sin
 - 2) Unbelievers are captive to Satan & sin
 - c) There being led into idolatry – couldn't help it (natural)
 - d) Eph.4:17-19 – deceived, unknowingly enslaved to lust
 - 3) **Mute idols** – unable to respond to man's needs
 - a) Totally helpless, unable to benefit the one who worships it
 - b) Offer no answers; no revelation; unable to forgive etc.
4. **Test of spiritual gifts – vs.3**
- a. **Evidently church had become so perverted** - allowed Christ to be cursed
 - 1) So confused & fleshly – in their frenzy cursed the Lord
 - a) **Some claimed to speak by the Spirit** – yet cursed Jesus
 - (1) Manifested some gift of prophecy or teaching
 - (2) Condemned His nature, character, work, glory, holiness
 - b) **Problem** – judged use of gift on experience not content
 - (1) Impressed by the showy, the unusual & bazaar
 - (2) As long as it took place in the assembly - by someone who claimed to be a Christian – any teaching or practice was accepted without question
 - (3) Content was ignored – even though obviously wrong
 - 2) **1st test of spiritual gift is doctrinal**
 - a) Person holds a derogatory view of Jesus – not of God
 - b) What they say & do is not of God
 - c) Must agree with revealed truth – scripture
 - b. **2nd test – sincere confession of Jesus**
 - 1) Unbelievers can easily utter the words – Mt.7:21
 - 2) Confession is based on true faith – faith marked by obedience
 - a) James 2:14-22
 - b) 1 Jn.2:3-6
 - c) Lk.6:46
 - 3) Lord implies sovereign authority - ruler ship
 - 4) The Holy Spirit always leads men to ascribe lord ship to Jesus
 - a) He is divine, to be obeyed completely
 - b) Mt.28:18 – given all authority in heaven & on earth

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

1. Different kinds of gifts “Charisma”

- a. **Gifts** - essentially a “gift of grace” or “a free gift”
 - 1) Salvation – Rom.5:15,16; 6:23
 - 2) Blessing of God – Rom.1:1; 11:29
 - 3) Divine enabling to minister – Rom.12:6; 1 Pet.4:10
- b. **More than natural talents** – these come from the Holy Spirit
 - 1) Given only to believers – 1 Cor.12:7; Acts 5:32
 - 2) Given to equip us to minister to others (the common good)
- c. **Different** = apportionments; allotments; distributions
 - 1) Many forms or varieties
 - 2) Two different types or categories – speaking & serving 1 Pet.4:11
 - 3) Scholars don’t agree on the exact number
 - a) Various lists not all agree (Rom.12:6-8; 1 Cor.12:8-10)
 - b) God gave us general categories not rigid precise listing
- d. **Problem** – trying to determine one’s gift
 - 1) **Are tests** that try to help us determine our gift
 - 2) **Leave us wanting** – our gifts can be an overlapping combination – strong in one area but having some measure of 3 or 4 other gifts
 - 3) Best to see one’s gift as a unique blend - granted to us in connection with our abilities & experiences & the needs of the local church

2. Different kinds of service

- a. **Gifts can be utilized in different ways**
 - 1) **Teachers**
 - a) Young children; different languages; printed page
 - b) Address large crowds; one on one teaching
 - c) Exhortation; doctrine; comfort & mercy
 - 2) **Serving**
 - a) Physical needs; emotional & mental needs
 - b) Spiritual needs – anger management; alcohol & drug abuse
- b. **Gifts not given for personal self-edification**
 - 1) Teachers don’t study just for own benefit
 - 2) Discernment – not to keep insights to oneself
 - 3) Must be involved in serving others
 - 4) Anything less is a perversion of the gift – useless – Mt.25:14-30
 - 5) We are stewards of God’s gifts – loaned to us for good of kingdom

3. Different kinds of working

- a. Rom.12:3-6
 - 1) God has given each a measure of faith to function in His kingdom
 - 2) Are to approach gift with proper attitudes
 - a) Not proud or boastful – 1 Cor.12:21
 - b) Downgrading ourselves – belittling what God given, is doing

- c) Claiming the more impressive gifts – 1 Cor.12:29,30
- d) Failing to use an inconspicuous gift because of jealousy, resentment or shame – 1 Cor.12:15,16
- e) Failing to use God's gift to the fullest – Mt.25:16-30

b. Working = what is worked out or energized

- 1) The one who provides the gift also provides the energy
 - a) Our gifts are not to be used in our strength
 - b) Phil.4:13; Col.1:28
- 2) God uses His gifts in countless ways – many manifestations
 - a) Not always see the same result
 - b) Not always produce the same quantity of fruit
- 3) **Man is looking for appearance not substance**
 - a) **Seek to copy** the most successful, most popular & powerful
 - b) **Like formulas** – to solve problems; achieve success; even to do the Lord's work
 - c) Want to be successful not submissive; to be noticed & praised not obedient & faithful.
 - d) **Value the dramatic gifts** – speaking in tongues; healing
- 4) **Our concern ought to be discovering & faithfully using our gift**
 - a) **Being grateful** & using it to the best of our ability
 - b) **God has perfectly gifted us** to function in His kingdom

4. Manifestation of the Spirit is for the common good (always)

- a. **Manifestation** = make known, clear or evident (opposite of hidden or private)
 - 1) Gifts are to make the Spirit known, clear & evident
 - 2) Given to put Him on display
- b. **Given for the common good**
 - 1) Literally – to bring together; help; confer a benefit
 - 2) Context = mutually beneficial or advantageous; edifying or helpful
 - 3) Eph.4:12 – equip saints for works of service

5. Blessings when each utilizes their gift

- a. **Receive a great blessing themselves** – church not to be carried on by professionals or the specially talented while others sit & watch
- b. **Church becomes a powerful & effective witness** – Acts 2:41-47
- c. **Leaders will start to stand out** – not made by attending seminars
- d. **Church will experience great joy, unity, love & fellowship**

Varieties Of Gifts

Introduction

A thorough examination of scripture shows that spiritual gifts were given to fulfill two major purposes – edify the church & confirm the word of God. Those gifts included speaking & verbal gifts – prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, teaching & exhortation; and serving or nonverbal gifts – leadership, helps, giving, mercy, faith & discernment. Some of these were temporary gifts (miracles, healing, languages & interpretation of languages) & were limited to apostolic times & have therefore ceased. The purpose of these temporary gifts were to confirm the word of God (Mk.16:20) until the written word was completed & thus became self-authenticating. In these passages Paul wants emphasize the unity & oneness of the Spirit & how that oneness should build up the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

1. Variety & source of spiritual gifts

a. **Different** – many forms & varieties

- 1) Gifts = gift of grace; free gift
- 2) Services = ways to utilize gift (ministries KJV)
- 3) Working = what is worked out or produced

b. **Oneness** – unity of the source

- 1) Same Spirit
- 2) Same Lord
- 3) Same God

c. **Given for the common good**

- 1) However the working of God is manifested it is always for the common good of the body of Christ.
- 2) Never given for the personal self-edification of recipient
 - a) Given to share
 - b) Given to accomplish God's purpose in His kingdom

2. List of representative spiritual gifts

a. **Wisdom**

- 1) **Message of** – indicates this is a speaking gift or ability
- 2) **In Apostolic times** – may have been a revelation of God's will
- 3) **Wisdom** = discovering & applying truth; the ability to make skillful & practical applications of truth
- 4) 1 Cor.2:9-12

b. **Knowledge**

- 1) **Message of** = also a speaking gift
- 2) A broad term that refers to perceiving & understanding truth
 - a) Ability to communicate insights concerning mysteries of God
 - b) Ability to discover the meaning of scripture & also help others understand (1 Cor.13:2 – “know All mysteries”)
 - c) Natural mind doesn't understand the things of God (1 Cor.2:14)

c. Faith

- 1) Obviously this is not saving faith (all Christians have saving faith)
- 2) Has to do with an intensive ability to fully trust God in difficult & demanding situations.
 - a) Trusting God to do that, which is beyond His normal provision
 - b) To trust Him in the face of overwhelming obstacles
 - c) Mt.17:20; 1 Cor.13:2 (KJV “all faith”)
- 3) **Example** – Acts 27:22-24 (Paul’s confidence took special faith)
(George Mueller trusted God & 1000’s of orphans cared for)

d. Healings

- 1) Used by Jesus (Mt.8:16,17); the apostles (Mt.10:1); the seventy (Lk.10:1); Phillip (Acts 8:5-7)
- 2) God may still heal directly today in response to prayers, but this was a temporary gift.
 - a) Jesus & the apostles healed with a word or a touch instantly & totally healed all who came to them.
 - b) The great commission calls on us to heal people spiritually through the preaching of the gospel
 - c) Healings were to confirm God’s word
 - (1) Never used to solely bring physical health
 - (2) Paul was sick & never healed himself nor asked others with the gift to heal him.
 - (3) Epaphroditus was terribly ill & almost died (Phil.2:27)
 - (4) Timothy told to drink wine for his stomach (1Tim.5:23)
 - (5) Trophimus was left sick at Miletus (2 Tim.4:20)
- 3) God may choose to heal today to accomplish His purpose & glorify Himself, but He is under no obligation to heal because we ask.
 - a) Deut.28:15-24 – God sent disease among His people
 - b) 2 Chron.26:5,21 – Uzziah stricken with leprosy
 - c) 1 Cor.11:30 – take Lord’s Supper unworthily

e. Miracles

- 1) Supernatural intrusion explained only by divine intervention
 - a) A miracle is an act of God that is contrary to the ordinary laws & workings of nature – an act that only He could accomplish by overruling nature
 - b) Jn.20:30,31 – purpose so believe Jesus is the Christ
- 2) God often leads, helps &, warns through other Christians, natural laws & even natural circumstances
 - a) This is referred to as God’s providence – not a miracle
 - b) Miracles were to prove that God was being revealed in Jesus
- 3) Miracles were a mark of God’s messenger (2 Cor.12:12; Heb.2:3,4)
 - a) Only Jesus did miracles of nature – water to wine; walked on water; coin from fish’s mouth; disappeared & reappeared; ascended etc
 - b) Apostles were given powers

f. Prophecy

- 1) Both a permanent & a temporary gift (1 Cor.13:8; Rom.12:6)
- 2) **Means** - to speak forth or to proclaim (speak publicly)
 - a) Idea of predicting the future added in Middle ages
 - b) Not all prophets predicted the future – God revealed His word through some of His prophets, but much of their ministry was proclaiming, expounding & exhorting with the revelation that had already been given.
 - c) The gift of prophecy is the Spirit given ability to proclaim God's word effectively
 - d) 1 Cor.14:3 – speaks for edification, exhortation & consolation

g. Distinguishing between spirits

- 1) Ability to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit
 - a) Satan is a great deceiver – Jn.8:44
 - b) His followers are also good at deceiving – 2 Cor.11:13-15
 - c) 1 Jn.4:1 – warned to test the spirits to see if they are of God
- 2) All teaching is to be judged by scripture – 1 Cor.4:6

h. Tongues & the interpretation of tongues

- 1) Tongue = languages – Acts 2:5-11
- 2) Tongues are temporary – 1 Cor.13:8

3. God's sovereignty over spiritual gifts

- a. Though the gifts may be different they all have the same source
 - 1) Given as God decides – not our choice who gets what
 - 2) All are gifted – Rom.12:3-8 – not just the spiritually elite
- b. Evidence of God's Spirit among His people – Gal.5:22-24
 - 1) Unity – a unity that does not crush individuality
 - 2) Fellowship – honest & intimate that includes & cares for all believers
 - 3) Genuine God centered lifestyle
 - 4) Evangelistic – wins souls spontaneously & joyfully – top priority
 - 5) Loving - truly cares; selflessness & sacrifice are normal
 - 6) Obedient – seeks to walk only in the path God prescribes
 - 7) Submissive – gladly from the heart
 - 8) Serving – gladly using the gifts given them

4. The oneness of the redeemed

- a. Human body illustrates the unity & interrelationship of the church
 - 1) Marvelously complex yet unified
 - 2) Can't be subdivided into several bodies (divided it dies)
 - 3) Same is true with the church – only one church
- b. Baptized by one Spirit
 - 1) Church is formed of believers who are baptized into Christ – Acts 2:47
 - 2) Paul's emphasis here is the baptizing of all Christians into one body
 - a) This oneness he speaks of is accomplished by The Spirit
 - b) He is not discussing water baptism – is a spiritual baptism

- 3) Term “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not a correct translation of any passage in the NT
- a) Greek word can mean “by or with one Spirit”
 - b) Jesus is the one who baptizes with The Spirit – Mt.3:11
 - c) Acts 2:32,33 – Spirit was poured forth by Jesus
 - (1) The Father sent The Son & The Son sent The Spirit
 - (2) The Son is the baptizer & the Spirit is the agent of baptism (immersed in The Spirit)
 - (3) We enter into a new environment, a new relationship, a new union with Jesus by His Spirit
 - (4) Acts 2:38,39 – when we obey Jesus (repent & baptized) we receive this gift of The Holy Spirit (Gal.3:26,27)
- 4) **Notice** - those who seek the “baptism of the Spirit” can’t seem to agree on how it is done
- a) Are no scriptures that tell us how – no command to; no suggestion we ought to; no method suggested
 - b) Even the believers in Acts 8 were not told to seek Him – had to wait for the apostles, but not told to seek the Spirit
 - c) Some have brought great confusion, frustration & disappointment by teaching a doctrine about a 2nd working of grace
 - (1) When we obey we receive God’s Spirit – Acts 2:38,39
 - (2) Now our goal is to allow Him full reign in our lives
- c. All given one Spirit to drink**
- 1) We are in Christ’s body & the Spirit is in us
 - a) No partially indwelt Christians
 - b) Spirit not parceled out - Jn.3:34 (Spirit not given in measure)
 - 2) Rom.8:9 – not have The Spirit = none of His
 - 3) 2 Pet.1:3,4 – are partakers of His divine nature
 - 4) 1 Cor.6:19 – body is a temple of The Holy Spirit

Both Unified & Diversified

Introduction

Corinth's struggle with fleshly desires is reflected in their misuse of the spiritual gifts. They had allowed their previous worldly religious practices to come into their assemblies & the result was chaotic. In our last lesson Paul repeatedly stressed that God alone was the source of spiritual gifts & that He gives them as He desires & His goal is always for the common good of the church. God's sole purpose is to reveal the Spirit's work & power so that the church might be edified. In this lesson, Paul will stress both the unity of the spiritual gifts as well as the diversity of those that are gifted. Unless we understand this concept we will become divided rather than united, be destroyed rather than built up.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

1. God's goal – we be unified in one body

a. Our body is a unit

- 1) Can't be subdivided & live
- 2) Part that is cut off ceases to exist – dies & the rest of the body loses some of its' function & effectiveness.
- 3) Has many parts but those parts all work as a team – unit – a whole

b. In Christ we are to all be one

1) Baptized by one Spirit into one body

- a) One church – Eph.4:4-6 – one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith
- b) Church referred to as united in NT (different assemblies)
- c) Acts 2:47 – Lord adds the saved to the church daily
- d) **This is not Holy Spirit baptism**

- (1) Baptism **of** the Holy Spirit not a correct translation of any passage in NT (better translation - **with or by**)
- (2) Jesus is the one who baptizes & The Spirit is the agent of that baptism – Mt.3:11
 - (a) We are immersed in His Spirit into one body – Acts 2:38; 5:32
 - (b) Believers are placed in a new environment – a spiritual realm – new relationship
- (3) Jesus poured forth His Spirit on the day of Pentecost Acts 1:5 – promised to His disciples (Jn.7:37-39)
Acts 2:17-21 – Joel's prophecy
Acts 2:33 – now exalted & poured forth
Acts 10:44,45 – Spirit poured out on gentiles
Acts 11:15-17 – gentiles given same gift
- (4) No command or example of how one is to be baptized by the Spirit in the NT – also we never told to seek it – something that Jesus did & was done only once for all time

- 2) **The church is now His body here on the earth**
 - a) Gal.2:20 – Christ lives in me
 - b) Eph.1:22,23 – head over everything for church - His body
- 3) **All given one Spirit to drink**
 - a) Spirit not given to only a few – the spiritually elite
 - Jn.3:34 – Spirit not given by measure
 - Rom.8:9 – not have Spirit = none of His
 - 2 Pet.1:3,4 – we all partake of that divine nature
 - b) Focus on being filled with God’s Spirit – allow Him to rule
 - 1 Cor.6:19,20 – our body is His temple
 - Phil.2:12,13 – God desires to work through us

2. One body yet many parts

a. Diversity is essential

- 1) Don’t be unhappy or dissatisfied with your gift
 - a) Ungratefulness is a sin – see Eve
 - b) God always has our good (of kingdom) in mind – Rom.8:28
 - c) If gifts changed – still be dissatisfied – selfishness & envy are never content
- 2) Everyone has something to offer
 - a) Because gifted differently – still part of body
 - b) Have a responsibility to function within the body (Eph.4:14-16)
- 3) Primary reasons some never get involved
 - a) Feel we have no gifts or abilities that are worthwhile
 - b) Sit back & allow others to do the work

b. God gifts us as He desires

- 1) God doesn’t make mistakes
 - a) To question His wisdom opens us to demonic counterfeits
 - b) God is sovereign – we are His servants
- 2) God made us to be mutually dependent upon one another
 - a) Rugged individualism appeals to the natural man
 - Want to rely on no one
 - Glorify the nonconformist – single-handedly does it
 - Is a doctrine of Satan
 - b) God made us to need one another
 - Gen.2:18 – not good that man is alone
 - Heb.12:24,25 – same is true spiritually

c. Everyone is important in the body of Christ

- 1) Two types of individualists – both wrong
 - a) Those who feel “they don’t need me”
 - b) Those who feel “I don’t need them”
- 2) Rom.14:1-15:7
- 3) Most vital ministries are often not obvious – neglected & unappreciated
 - Those who faithfully pray
 - Those who faithfully work behind the scenes

- 4) Mutual support & encouragement are vital
Phil.2:1-4 – see every person & ministry as vital
 Have the same care for all – one suffer = all suffer etc

3. God's perfect provision for the church

a. 1st apostles; 2nd prophets; 3rd teachers

- 1) Three basic responsibilities
 - Lay a foundation – Eph.2:20
 - Declare God's revealed word – Eph.3:1-6
 - Confirm that word through signs, wonders & miracles
2 Cor.12:12; Heb.2:3,4
- 2) Apostle = one sent on a mission
 - Qualifications - chosen by Jesus & witnessed resurrection
 - No apostles in church today
- 3) Prophets = specifically gifted men with God's message
 - Paul listed among prophets & teachers at Antioch – Acts 13:1
- 4) Teachers = one gifted to teach

b. Temporary gifts – miracles; healings

- 1) Seen in the ministry of Jesus; apostles; the 70 & Philip
- 2) Used to accomplish God's purpose & glory

c. Helps – service, helping & supporting others

- 1) Means to take the burden off others & carry it yourself
- 2) Not a glamorous or showy gift but is greatly needed & appreciated

d. Administrations – leadership

- 1) Literally to steer or pilot a ship
- 2) Ability to motivate & mobilize others to a common goal

e. Tongues = ability to use languages

f. Are all

Apostles? Prophets? Teachers? Work miracles? Heal? Tongues? Interpret?

Answer = No

Goal = eagerly desire the greater gifts – faith; hope; love

The Most Excellent Way

Introduction

In chapter 12 Paul shows us that every believer is perfectly gifted to function in the body of Christ. He also pointed out that we should be content with God's gifting & learn to live in harmony with one another sensing the importance of all gifts & functions in Christ. Later in chapter 14 he will discuss the proper use of these gifts, especially the gifts of prophecy & tongues. Here in chapter 13 his emphasis is the proper atmosphere & attitude needed for the gifts to be utilized to the fullest.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1. Simplest, yet most profound way to describe God & the Christian character – love

- a. 1 Jn.4:16 – God is love (abide in love = abide in God)
- b. Jn.13:34,35 – by this shall all know you are My disciples
- c. Rom.13:8,9 – love neighbor = fulfilled Law
- d. **Nothing substitutes for love**
 - 1) Not right doctrine
 - 2) Not religious good works
- e. **Tragic** – man throughout the centuries has struggled with love
 - 1) Not natural (man doesn't naturally love as God calls us to love)
 - 2) Easier to be orthodox (traditional) than loving
 - 3) Easier to be active in church work than to be loving
- f. **Only realm spiritual gifts are effective** = atmosphere of love
 - 1) To be effective spiritually one must walk in the Spirit – Gal.5:16,25
 - a) Having spiritual gifts does not make one spiritual
 - b) One must walk in the Spirit = day-to-day obedience & total submission to Jesus as Lord
 - 2) In these verses Paul will use extreme hyperboles to illustrate this

2. Agape love

- a. **One of the rarest words in ancient Greek literature**
 - 1) Very seldom run across this word outside scripture
 - 2) Yet is one of the most common words found in the New Testament
- b. **Most have a mistaken concept about its meaning**
 - 1) Many see it as having nice feelings & warm affection for others
 - 2) Meaning has nothing to do with sexual feelings or romantic desire
 - a) Nor does it refer to pleasant feelings toward someone
 - b) Does not mean friendship
 - c) Does not mean charity as KJV translates it (giving to the needy)
- c. **Means**
 - 1) A self giving & a sacrificial love
 - 2) A love that demands something of the lover
 - 3) A love that is more concerned with giving than receiving

d. The supreme measure of this love = God

- 1) Jn.3:16,17 – so loved He gave
- 2) Rom.5:10 – while we were yet sinners Christ died
- 3) Phil.2:3-7 – consider other more important than self
- 4) Mt.5:44,45 – love enemies & pray for your persecutors
- 5) Jesus expressed this love to the fullest
 - a) Jn.13 – washed disciples feet
He agonizing over Calvary
Disciples concerned with who is the greatest
 - b) Disciples unattractive, undeserving, selfish & insensitive
 - c) Taught them to love not in mere words but in actions

3. Everything a Christian does must be done in love or it is meaningless

a. Christians have no excuse to not be loving

- 1) Rom.5:5 – God has poured out His love into our hearts
- 2) 1 Jn.4:11 – since God so loved us we ought to love
- 3) We don't have to manufacture love – only share the love given to us

b. Scriptures

- 1) 1 Thess.4:9 – taught by God to love
- 2) 1 Cor.14:1 – are to pursue love
- 3) Col.3:14 – put on love
- 4) 1 Thess.3:12; Phil.1:9 – increase & abound in love
- 5) 2 Cor.8:8 – be sincere in love
- 6) Phil.2:2 – be unified in love
- 7) 1 Pet.4:8 – be fervent in love
- 8) Heb.10:24 – spur one another on in love

c. Eloquence without love is just noise – vs.1

- 1) **Idea** – one who speaks with the greatest amount of eloquence
 - a) Tongues of men or angels – languages
(able to speak in all sorts of languages)
 - b) Angels – scriptures don't reveal that angels have a unique language or dialect – no heavenly language man can learn
 - c) Angels always spoke in the language of the one speaking to
- 2) **In NT times** – worship to pagan gods Cybele; Bacchus; Dionysus included ecstatic utterances accompanied with smashing gongs; clanging cymbals & blaring trumpets (meaningless gibberish)

d. Prophecy; knowledge & faith - useless without love – vs.2

- 1) **Prophecy is greatly valued in chapter 14 – vs.1-5**
 - a) Proclaiming God's truth so people can know & understand
 - b) Is worthless unless ministered in an atmosphere of love
 - (1) Eph.4:15 – speak the truth in love
 - (2) Example – Balaam – knew & spoke God's truth but had no love for God or His people

- 2) **Motivation behind our words & actions must be love**
- a) If our motivation is self – own praise; self-interests; self promotion – influence for the Lord diminished
 - b) Not matter how relevant, truthful or persuasive it is
 - c) As far as God is concerned – leads only to confusion
 - d) See Paul – Acts 20:19; Rom.9:1-3
- 3) **Understand all mysteries & knowledge**
- a) **Mysteries** = divine hidden spiritual understanding in OT
 - b) **Knowledge** = factual human understanding
 - c) **Without love** – produces spiritual snobbery; pride & arrogance
1 Cor.8:1 is ugly & unproductive (see Pharisees)
 - d) 2 Tim.2:24-26
- 4) **Faith without love – nothing**
- a) Not talking about saving faith – refers to trusting God to accomplish impossible things
 - b) Mt.17:20 – no hurdle to great
 - c) Jonah had great faith – no love – Jonah 4:1-3
Knew God’s word be effective – not want them saved
Not afraid of failure – feared success
Even though they repented – not want them saved
- e. **Without love – no profit in martyrdom or benevolence**
- 1) **Agape love is always self-sacrificing; but self-sacrifice is not always motivated by love**
- a) Self denial; self affliction & self humiliation have been practiced throughout history
 - b) All sorts of religions have placed great emphasis on giving up possessions & depriving oneself for religious gain
 - c) Doing them for praise or some imagined blessing is fruitless – of no value at all (Muslim extremists)
- 2) **Even benevolence without love is useless**
- a) No matter how great the sacrifice or how many people it helped
 - b) All they got was a full stomach & you are left with nothing
 - c) Giving from legalistic obligation – worthless – 2 Cor.9:6,7
 - d) Giving for recognition or praise or to salve a guilty conscience is worthless (billionaires giving to foundations)
- 3) **Even martyrdom is worthless without love**
- a) Some seek martyrdom to achieve fame – gain heavenly credit
 - b) If self-interest & pride are the motivation = worthless
 - c) Mt.5:11,12 – because of Me
 - d) 1 Pet.2:18-25 – Christ’s example

A Portrait Of Love

Introduction

Paul has just shown us how empty religion & good works are without love. Now Paul will give us a comprehensive description & allows us to see the various facets of love's character. As we examine these facets remember that in the original language all these words are verbs not adjectives. They do not focus on what love is as much as on what love does. Love is active, not abstract or passive. It does not just simple feel it acts. Love is only love when it acts. Paul is not just interested in teaching, but in changing lives.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

1. Love is patient

a. Literally - long tempered

- 1) Used almost exclusively in NT as patience with people not circumstances or events
- 2) **Idea** - the willingness & ability to be taken advantage of or to be inconvenienced over & over & not be upset or angry.
- 3) Word is used of a man who easily has the power to avenge himself but will never do it. Patience never retaliates.

b. Only among Christians is this character really a virtue.

- 1) To the Greeks non-avenging patience was considered weakness, unworthy of the noble
- 2) Most refuse to tolerate insult or injury & strike back in retaliation at the slightest offense. To them, vengeance is a virtue not patience.
- 3) The world has always made heroes of those who fight back, who stand up for their own welfare & rights above all else.

c. Loves primary concern is the welfare of others not itself.

- 1) More willing to be taken advantage of than to take advantage of another, much less avenge itself.
- 2) Jesus never retaliated for the hurt, abuse or insult He received.

1 Pet.2:21-25

3) Examples

God – 2 Pet.3:9

Jesus – Lk.23:34

Stephen – Acts 7:60

2. Love is kind

a. Means – to be useful, serving & gracious

- 1) Active good will, not only feels generous but is generous
- 2) Not only desires good for others but works for it.
- 3) Mt.5:40,41
- 4) More than kind feelings it's doing kind & helpful things

b. God is the supreme example

- 1) Rom.2:4
- 2) Titus 3:4-6
- 3) 1 Pet.2:2,3

c. Mt.11:30 – My yoke is easy

- 1) Same word that is used here = kind
- 2) Jesus makes His yoke “kind” or mild – what we are called to bear for Him is bearable (easy)

3. Love does not envy

a. Love & envy can’t exist together

- 1) Not an insignificant sin
 - a) Eve’s envy of God was Satan’s inroad to her destruction wanted to be like God – have what He had – know what He knew
 - b) Cain was envious of his brother – motivated to commit murder
 - c) Joseph’s brothers were envious of Joseph & sold him as a slave
 - d) Envious officials had Daniel put in a lions den
 - e) Envy caused the older brother to resent his father’s action toward the prodigal son.
- 2) James 3:14-16 – is demonic; of the world

b. Envy comes in two forms

- 1) **I want what someone else has** for myself
- 2) **I wish they didn’t have** – desiring evil for another
- 3) 1 Kings 3:16-27 – Solomon & the two mothers

c. When love sees someone who is popular; successful; beautiful or talented –

- 1) It rejoices for them
- 2) Phil.1:15-17 – others envious & jealous – Paul rejoices Jesus preached; he know the message was more powerful than the messenger
- 3) Jonathan’s love for David – 1 Sam.20:17
David’s success meant his demise
David’s popularity threatened his throne
Was willing to sacrifice everything for David

d. One of the hardest battles we fight – against envy

- 1) Always someone who is better; has more etc
- 2) 1st reaction of the flesh to the success of another is to wish them ill

4. Love does not boast

a. Means - to talk conceitedly

- 1) Love does not parade its accomplishments
- 2) Boasting is trying to make others feel envious of what we have
- 3) Most of us dislike boasting in others but are inclined to do it ourselves

b. Corinthians struggled with being spiritual showoffs

- 1) Wanted public attention – the showy exuberant gifts
- 2) Wanted to flaunt themselves – no concern with order or edification
- 3) Each did his own thing – as prominently as possible

c. Boasting put us first

- 1) Everyone else & everything else must be less
- 2) Impossible to boast of ourselves without putting others down
- 3) So easy to flaunt our knowledge; accomplishments & abilities – be they real or imagined

d. Jesus never exalted Himself

- 1) Jn.7:16-18
- 2) Phil.2:5-7
- 3) Jesus had everything to boast about & never boasted. Man has nothing to boast about & is prone to boast

5. Love is not proud

a. Pride has a big head – love has a big heart

- 1) 1 Cor.:7 – what have that you did not receive?
- 2) All we have is from the Lord – why be prideful?
- 3) 1 Tim.6:6-10 – brought nothing in = take nothing out

b. Attitude of John the Baptist

- 1) Jn.1:27 – not worthy untie shoes
- 2) Jn.3:30 – He must increase, I must decrease

c. God hates pride

- 1) Prov.6:16-19
- 2) Prov.8:1
- 3) Prov.11:2
- 4) Prov.16:18
- 5) James 4:7

6. Love is not rude

a. Principle has to do with manners

- 1) Caring enough about others to be polite
- 2) Being sensitive of the feelings & opinions of others

b. Many have forfeited the opportunity to witness by being rude

- 1) Reacting in disgust or anger to an unbeliever who offends us or has a habit we feel is improper
- 2) Lk.7:36-47 – if knew what kind of woman she was
- 3) Self-righteous rudeness has prevented many from hearing the gospel
- 4) The messenger can become one of the greatest barriers to truth

7. Love is not self-seeking

a. Self-seeking – the root evil of fallen man

- 1) Adam & Eve wanted their own way
- 2) Cure selfishness & we replant the Garden of Eden (R.C.H. Lenski)

b. Phil.2:3,4 – don't be preoccupied with self but with others

- 1) Mt.20:28 – Jesus came to serve not be served
- 2) More blessed to give than to receive

8. Love is not easily angered

a. Means – sudden outbursts of emotion & actions

- 1) **Idea** – when others do things to us that are personally offensive we don't react violently
- 2) 1 Pet.3:8-12
- 3) Love doesn't react in self-defense when prevented from having its way
- 4) Person who is intent on having their way is easily angered

b. **Number one problem in society** – preoccupation with personal rights

- 1) Everyone focused on his own rights, needs, wants
- 2) Angered when another gets recognition or a privilege

9. Love keeps no record of wrongs

a. A bookkeeping term that means to calculate or reckon

- 1) Purpose of the entry is to make a permanent record
- 2) So that it might be consulted & evaluated in the future

b. **Love does not record offenses for later reference**

- 1) Resentment is careful to keep books & always hoping for an opportunity to get even
- 2) Love quenches wrongs rather than remember them
- 3) Mt.18:21-35; Eph.4:32; 2 Cor.5:19
- 4) Only record after the name of the redeemed is “righteous”

10. Love does not delight in evil

a. **Love never takes satisfaction from sin** – its own or others

- 1) To rejoice in evil is to justify it – make wrongdoing appear right
- 2) Isa.5:20; Rom.1:28-32

b. **The world glorifies sin**

- 1) What is right to them is doing what you want
- 2) The natural man is attracted to violence, crime, immorality etc

c. **Another way to be guilty of this** is to hope someone makes a mistake or falls into sin so that you can get the advantage

- 1) Want out of a marriage – hope spouse commits adultery
- 2) Gossip is also a common form of rejoicing in evil
 - a) Uncaringly revealing the weaknesses & sins of others
 - b) The essence of gossip is gloating over the sins & shortcomings of others
 - c) No one is ever helped by the spreading of the news of their sin

d. **Rejoicing in evil is an affront to God**

- 1) Are delighting in that, which offends & grieves God
- 2) When we enjoy sin either directly or vicariously we prove our lack of love for God
- 3) To love someone one must hate sin – Rom.12:9
- 4) Love can't tolerate evil or rejoice in it in any way

11. Love rejoices in the truth

a. Not just factual truth but God's truth

- 1) Love can't tolerate wrong doctrine – Gal.1:6-9
- 2) What people believe affects their soul – eternal destiny
- 3) 2 Jn.6 - this is love – walk according to His commandments

b. Love does not discard falsehood & unrighteousness

- 1) Does not parade the faults of others for all to see
- 2) Not focus on wrongs, but as much as possible on what is right & true
- 3) It looks for good; hopes for good & emphasizes the good

c. Loves primary business is to build up not tear down

- 1) To strengthen not weaken
- 2) Phil.2:19-24

12. Paul sums up with four exaggerated qualities

a. All things = all within God's tolerances; His will

- 1) Never protects sin, but is anxious to protect the sinner
- 2) Tries to correct with the least possible hurt or harm

b. Love always protects

- 1) **Means** – to cover, support & protect
- 2) **World takes pleasure in exposing the faults & failures of others**
 - a) What makes gossip so appealing
 - b) Is what sells magazines, TV shows etc
- 3) **Love does not expose or exploit; gloat or condemn**
 - a) It “bears” not bares
 - b) Prov.10:12 – hatred stirs up strife
 - c) The measure of our love - how quick we are to cover their faults
 - d) Love warns, corrects, disciplines & rebukes, but love doesn't expose or broadcast failure & faults.
 - e) Love feels the pain & helps carry the burden
 - (1) Isa.53:4,5
 - (2) 1 Pet.4:8

c. Love always trusts

- 1) **Not suspicious or cynical**
 - a) Believes in the best; ops for the most favorable outcome
 - b) Considers others innocent until proven guilty
 - c) When one does wrong – desires to help make things right
 - d) Gal.6:1
- 2) **Jobs friends did not show love for Job**
 - a) Quick to believe the worst
 - b) Convinced his problems were a result of his sin
 - c) Gave Job no benefit of the doubt
- 3) **Religious leaders of Jesus' day** - predisposition to see the worst
 - a) Lk.5:21 – Jesus blaspheming
 - b) Crowds marveled – they remained convinced Jesus was evil
 - c) Hatred believes the worst – love believes the best

d. Love always hopes

- 1) As long as God's grace is operative – human failure is never final
 - a) God not take Israel's failure as final
 - b) Jesus did not take Peter's failure as final
 - c) Paul did not take the Corinthians failure as final
- 2) Love refuses to take failure as final
 - a) Backsliding children
 - b) Unbelieving spouse
 - c) As long as there is life, love doesn't lose hope

e. Love always perseveres

- 1) **Military term used of an army holding a vital position**
 - a) Love holds fast at all cost
 - b) Refuses to give up regardless how difficult the opposition
- 2) Rom.8:31-39

The Permanence Of Love

Introduction

Satan had deceived the Christians at Corinth into focusing on temporary things instead of things that are eternal. This resulted in many problems within the church. They were divided & selfish acting more like the world than Jesus. Even when they tried to focus on spiritual things the world had a greater influence on them than God's Spirit. They wanted the showy, flashy gifts that would get them the most attention & despised those who were not like them. Paul has shown them the importance of love & has also tried to help them understand how love acts. In these verses Paul shares that love is the greatest manifestation of God's Spirit, the only really lasting gift of the Spirit.

1 Cor.13:8-13

1. Gifts are temporary – vs.8

a. Love never fails

- 1) **Means** – falling (idea of final falling)
 - a) Used of a flower or leaf that falls to the ground & then withers & decays
 - b) **Never** - refers to time not frequency – meaning that at no time will love ever fall wither & decay.
 - c) By its very nature love is permanent; is never abolished
- 2) **Not referring to the idea of success** – like being a magic pill or key to unlock every opportunity or guarantee every success
 - a) Not a spiritual formula that when applied produces success – does not always win – see Jesus etc
 - b) Yet no godly work can ever be accomplished without love
 - c) Success will not always be a part of love, but love will always be a part of spiritual success
- 3) Love outlasts any failures – supreme characteristic of the life God gives
- 4) All other spiritual gifts will fall & eventually disappear

b. Prophecy, tongues & knowledge will fall & disappear

- 1) Prophecy & knowledge will be “**done away**” (KJV)
 - a) Reduced to inactivity, abolished; to be rendered entirely idle
 - b) One day they will become inoperative
 - c) **Passive** = someone or something will cause them to cease
- 2) Tongues will be “**stilled**” (cease KJV)
 - a) **Means** to stop or come to an end
 - b) God intends for tongues to cease – limited life span
 - c) **Why?**
 - (1) Tongues were a “sign” gift – 2 Cor.12:12
 - (2) Purpose - a judicial sign, not of salvation – Isa.28:11,12
 - (3) Never intended to be a sign to believers - 1 Cor.14:22

- 2
- (4) Tongues are limited & inferior & could not accomplish God's purposes in the church
 - (a) An inferior means of communication
1 Cor.14:1-12
 - (b) An inferior means of praise – 1 Cor.14:13-19
 - (c) Inferior means of evangelism – 1 Cor.14:20-25
 - (5) Tongues required interpretation & translation – often the speaker did not even know what he was saying.
1 Cor.14:27,28
 - (6) With the coming of the NT, God's word had been confirmed & nothing was to be added or taken away
 - d) Tongues are only mentioned in the early NT books
 - (1) Most of the books do not even mention tongues
 - (2) After Acts 19:6 not even mentioned – as if they ceased to be practiced
 - (3) Paul only mentions it in one of his books
 - (4) No where is it commanded for believers as a responsibility or spiritual exercise
 - (5) Not even alluded to or found in the writings of the early church leaders
 - (a) Origen who lived in the 3rd century states that the “sign gifts” were temporary & not exercised by Christians of his day
 - (b) Of all the early church leaders & writers only Montanus (a 2nd century heretic) taught that Signs were still valid - claimed God was still revealing His word through him
 - e) Not practiced in Christianity until 17th & 18th centuries
 - (1) 1st appeared in Catholic groups in Europe
 - (2) Also appeared among the shakers in New England
 - (3) Early 20th century tongues became a major emphasis of the holiness movement which evolved into the modern Pentecostal movement
 - (4) During the charismatic movement of the 1960's it began to be practiced in many denominations both Catholic & Protestant filling the void in true spiritual living with false experiences

2. Gifts are partial – vs. 9,10

a. Know & prophesy in part

- 1) 1 Cor.8:2 – think know = not yet know
- 2) Phil.3:8-16 – constantly striving to know Jesus better

b. Unable to fully fathom God

- 1) Job 11:7-9
- 2) Ps.139:1-6
- 3) Rom.11:33,34

c. God has provided all the truth that we need to know in Jesus

- 1) Col.2:1-3
- 2) 1 Jn.5:20
- 3) 2 Pet.1:3,4
- 4) Yet even His word does not contain all that is true about Him
Jn.20:31,32
- 5) One day we will fully know as we have been fully known vs.12

d. “When perfection comes”

1) Some say this means the completion of scripture

- a) Nowhere in Paul’s writings does he even allude to this
- b) Statement “see face to face”
 - (1) Scripture reveals God but not to this degree
 - (2) No Christian before or after the completion of the NT has fully know God
- c) Statement “the imperfect disappears” = abolish completely & finally
 - (1) Knowledge & prophecy still exist
 - (2) Prophecy is more speaking God’s message than foretelling the future etc

2) Not the 2nd coming - word is neuter eliminating the possibility that it relates to a person

3) The eternal state of the believer

- a) Spiritual gifts are only for time
- b) Beyond this life there is no need for them

e. In this life we see in a mirror dimly

- 1) In the flesh we are not capable of seeing more
- 2) When we enter the Lord’s presence we will see face to face – everything will be fully understandable

f. As we mature we are to put away childish ways

- 1) Focusing the temporary is childish
- 2) Focusing on love is maturity
- 3) Love is eternal

The Usefulness Of Tongues To The Church

Introduction

Paul has been confronting the Corinthian church about their misunderstandings & misuse of spiritual gifts in chapters 12 & 13. He continues this discussion in chapter 14, pointing out that much of what the church was calling “speaking in tongues” had turned into something that more resembled paganism than the Holy Spirit. Their assemblies had become times when everyone wanted to do & say his own thing, & that, at the same time. Their meetings were more chaos than worship, with very little, if any edification-taking place. In this lesson we will examine what Paul has to say about the usefulness of speaking in tongues within the church.

1 Cor.14:1-19

1. The practice of ecstatic utterances in Paul’s day

a. Many of the pagan religions of both Greece & Rome practiced ecstatic utterances

- 1) Devotes of a god would drink & dance themselves into a frenzy until they went into a state of semi consciousness.
 - a) They considered this experience the highest form of communication with their god.
 - b) They believed that in such a state, their spirits would leave their bodies & commune directly with their god.
 - c) Perhaps this is the practice Paul is alluding to in - Eph.5:18
- 2) The ecstatic speaking that accompanied such experiences was thought to be - the language of the god.

b. The word for “speaking in tongues, or a tongue” which Paul uses in this chapter was a word that was commonly used in that day to describe pagan ecstatic speech.

- 1) They also used the word “eros” to describe this experience.
- 2) Though commonly used of “sexual love”, “eros” was also used for any strong sexual feeling or activity. Pagan ecstatic experiences were often followed by sexual orgies & other perversions.

2. Prophecy, not tongues edifies the church – vs.1-6

a. Follow the way of love = hunt for, chase after with intensity

- 1) All the spiritual problems we have are related to a lack of love
- 2) The only strong affection they had was for themselves.

b. Eagerly desire spiritual gifts

- 1) Love is not a substitute for other virtues or even good works
- 2) Needed to be concerned with using the gifts they had, not enviously wanting other gifts so they could show off.

c. Especially to prophesy

- 1) **Prophecy is more significant than tongues** – able to accomplish what tongues could never do

- 2) **Prophecy edifies** – thus the whole church should desire this gift
- a) What Corinthians were doing had no value to man
 - b) Not speaking to man but to “a god”
 - (1) Better translation of vs.2 is “a god” not “the God”
 - (2) The Greek has no definite article – is same form of the word used in Acts 17:23 where Paul speaks of “the unknown god”
 - (3) Bible records no instance of believers speaking to God in anything but normal, indelible language.
 - (4) Mt.6:7 – Jesus warns against using “meaningless repetitions as the Gentiles do”
 - c) These Christians didn’t seem to care if others understood what they were saying – their interest was in the excitement & self-gratification which they got from speaking – “mysteries with his spirit”
 - (1) Pagan mysteries were intentionally left mysterious – unknown truths that only the “initiated elite” were privileged to know.
 - (2) God’s mysteries are revelations of things previously hidden – Mt.13:11; Eph.3:9
 - d) Spiritual gifts are for the good of others – 1 Cor.12:7
 - (1) Prophecy edifies, exhorts & consoles
 - (2) Spiritual gifts are always meant to benefit others
 - e) Tongues have no benefit unless someone interprets
 - (1) Even the speaker doesn’t understand
 - (2) Not even good for private devotional use – not edify

3. Tongues don’t benefit the church – vs.6-12

a. Unless interpreted there is no revelation or edification in them

- 1) Any message they might contain is useless (no one understands)
- 2) Even musical instruments must make sensible sounds
 - a) If not – all it is - is noise
 - b) Must be variation, order & distinction the of notes
 - c) Soldier gets the message of the bugle **only if** he understands the musical call being played
- 3) A language without meaning is useless – both the speaker & the hearer must understand

b. The purpose of a language is to communicate

- 1) Acts 2 – each heart them speak in own native tongue = understood
- 2) God did not give two kinds of tongues – one intelligible & the other unintelligible.

4. **The effect of tongues is emotional, not rational – vs.13-19**
- a. **Pagan ecstatic utterances were intended to bypass the mind**
 - 1) People were not supposed to understand them
 - 2) Were communicating with gods not men
 - 3) Their mysteries were meant to remain mysterious
 - b. **The indwelling Spirit of God does not bypass man's mind**
 - 1) Praying & singing in the Spirit must be accompanied with the mind
 - 2) Edification doesn't exist apart from the mind
 - c. **Speaking in tongues had a proper place in God's working**
 - 1) Intended as a sign to unbelievers
 - 2) Edified when interpreted – unless interpreted = absolutely useless
 - 3) Five words people could understand were of more value than 1,000's of unintelligible words
 - d. **Paul knew tongues would cease in a few years – don't focus on them**

1 Cor.14:20-28

1. **The purpose of tongues - were a sign**
 - a. **Stop thinking like children**
 - 1) Unable to be taught because they were not interested in learning
 - 2) Like children their focus was selfish – living for good feelings
 - 3) Experiencing fun won over reason – like Israel in times of the judges – “each did what was right in his own eyes” – Judges 17:6; 21:25
 - b. Isa.28:11,12 – tongues a sign to unbelieving Jews
 - 1) Context – 15 or so years before Isaiah prophesied this
 - a) Northern kingdom enslaved by Assyria – 722BC
 - b) Now God was warning Judah – same fate awaited them
 - c) Babylon would be their captors – leaders not listen
 - 2) Deut.28:49 – Moses warned same thing – sign of God's judgment
 - 3) Jer.5:15 – sign of God's judgment = language not know
 - 4) God's judgment was coming again in AD70 through Rome
 - a) Peter warned the Jews – Jesus make enemies His footstool
 - b) After destruction of Jerusalem – no more need of the sign
 - 5) Now all nations are called – Gal.3:26-28
 - c. **Also a sign of apostles authority** – 2 Cor.12:12; Rom.15:17-19
 - 1) Purpose was not to teach but to point
 - 2) Not new revelations, simply expressions of old truths – Acts 2:11
2. **Purpose of prophecy is not to be a sign but to enlighten & encourage**
 - a. Prophecy doesn't point to something else – is the revealing of God's word
 - b. Prophecy intends to convict & draw people to Jesus
 - 1) If everyone spoke in tongues – unbelievers say you all mad (Be nothing but chaos – wild & meaningless ritual)
 - 2) If everyone prophesied – convicted = see self as he really is
 - c. Most powerful thing a church can do = clearly present God's word

3. Procedure when you assemble

- a. Let all be done for edification
 - 1) Literally house building (growing, improving, maturing)
 - 2) Eph.4:11,12; 1 Thess.5:11; Heb.10:24,25
- b. Regulations for tongue speaking
 - 1) Only 2 or 3 speak
 - 2) Each speak in turn
 - 3) What say must be interpreted
 - 4) No interpreter - they should not speak
- c. **Orderliness, understandability & courtesy are the rule**

The strongest indictment against the modern charismatic movement is the common practice of many people speaking, singing & praying at the same time with no one paying attention to what others are saying & doing. It's everyone for himself, just like the pagans.

1 Cor.14:29-40

1. Rules for prophets during the assembly

- a. **Prophets played an important part in the early church**
 - 1) Along with the apostles they were a part of establishing the foundation
Eph.2:20; 4:11-13
 - 2) Acts 13:1 – seemed to have been key leaders
 - 3) They quickly disappeared & elders & deacons appeared
 - a) No mention of elders or overseers in 1 Corinthians
 - b) No mention of prophets in Paul's remarks about leadership in the books of 1 Timothy & Titus
 - c) Task – reveal new revelation from God & proclaim what had previously been revealed
- b. **Guidelines**
 - 1) Only two or three to speak at any given assembly
 - 2) When one spoke, the others were to weigh carefully what was said
 - a) Measure what said against their knowledge of God's word
 - b) Collectively to evaluate the validity of the spoken message
 - c) 1 Jn.4:1 – test the spirits to see if they are from God
 - d) Everything they taught had to be absolutely true & consistent with God's previous message – laying a foundation
 - e) No prophet acted unilaterally – held accountable – Gal.2:1-5
 - 3) When a revelation came to another – the first kept silent
 - a) New revelation always took precedence
 - b) Not an issue today – since the completion of the NT all God's revelation has been given to His people. Heb.1:1-3
 - 4) Each was to speak in turn – one at a time
 - a) Purpose of their speaking was learning & exhortation
 - b) The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets

- (1) Prophets not always understand message bringing, but were in control of their own mind & spirit
- (2) God did not bypass their mind & spirit
- (3) Did not have erratic, bizarre, trancelike experiences – that kind of activity was associated with demons & paganism

c. Key to proper worship – God is not the author of confusion

- 1) The worship of God should reflect His character & His nature
 - a) He is a God of peace & harmony
 - b) He is not a God of strife & confusion
 - c) God cannot be honored where there is
 - (1) Disharmony & confusion
 - (2) Competition & agitation
 - (3) Self-serving & self-glorying
- 2) Chaos & discord in an assembly proves that God's Spirit is not in control – James 3:14-18

2. Women are to keep silence in the assemblies

- a. **As in all the churches** = no just a local, geographical or cultural principle
- b. **Universal principle** – women didn't exercise their gifts in the assembly
 - 1) Women were to subject themselves – taught in OT & NT
 - 2) A design of the creation & a consequence of the fall
 - 3) 1 Tim.2:11-14
 - 4) God intended for men to have the leadership role
- c. **When women usurp man's God-ordained role other unbiblical practices & delusions will follow** – 2 Tim.4:1,2
 - 1) Women may be highly gifted, but those gifts are not to be exercised over men
 - 2) It is shameful & disgraceful for a woman to usurp such authority
- d. **If they desire to learn – ask their husbands at home**
 - 1) The assembly was no place for them to express their questions or their opinions
 - 2) This puts a great deal of responsibility upon men – Heb.5:11-14
 - a) Need to be knowledgeable of God's word
 - b) Satan easily tempts women to go beyond their God ordained roles because they are frustrated by lazy & apathetic Christian men who will not fulfill their leadership role.
 - 3) God has used women to do work men have refused to do, but He does not lead women to accomplish that work through roles He has restricted to men.
- e. **From the text it seems that some contended with Paul about this principle**
 - 1) Strong challenges – did word originate with you? You are not the sole receivers of God's word
 - 2) No believer has the right to overrule, ignore, alter or disobey the word of God

1 Corinthians Study
Lesson # 33

The Resurrection – The Heart Of The Gospel

Introduction

Chapter 15 is devoted entirely to an extensive discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection. All of Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection. If there is no resurrection then the teachings of Jesus become like the teachings of all the other great philosophies & religions of the world – mere speculation. Without the resurrection Christianity becomes just wishful thinking. The resurrection is so important a doctrine that whether or not Jesus is the Messiah stands or falls with it. Eliminate the resurrection & the power of the gospel is eliminated, as is salvation & eternal life. The problem at Corinth was not so much the resurrection of Jesus, but man's resurrection - that was what was in question.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1. The problem

a. Some were spiritualizing the resurrection

- 1) 2 Tim.2:17,18 – already taken place
- 2) Rom.6:1-11 – spiritual resurrection that takes place at baptism

b. Some rebelled against such an idea

- 1) Gnostics believed physical body totally corrupt – never raised
- 2) Scientifically impossible maimed, scattered & decomposed bodies to be resurrected
- 3) Acts17:32 – intellectuals mocked idea

2. The gospel that Paul preached

a. The resurrection was at the heart of Paul's message

- 1) Previously they had accepted it wholeheartedly
- 2) At the very heart of their own salvation
- 3) How could they come to question it now?

b. To question the resurrection is to question their own salvation

- 1) No basis for salvation apart from the gospel they received
- 2) Everything they stood for in Christ hinged upon this

c. Saved if you hold firmly to word preached

- 1) **Warning them** – must hold firmly to word proclaimed
- 2) Only hope they had - based on the gospel of Jesus – Jn.14:6
- 3) Is no other gospel – no other hope – 1 Cor.15:2
- 4) Any & all doubts must be dealt with – nowhere else to turn

d. Saved = present or continuous action

- 1) **Idea** = are being saved
- 2) Salvation is a progressive thing & is conditional (hold onto)
- 3) Scriptures
 - Mt.10:22 – endures unto end saved
 - Heb.10:23 – holdfast & not waver
 - Jn.8:30-32 – abide in My word truly My disciples

e. **Resurrection is at the heart of Christianity**

- 1) Celebrated at every baptism – Rom.6:1-7
- 2) Memorialized in taking of the Lord's Supper – 1 Cor.11

3. **Of first importance – vs.3**

a. **Death, burial & resurrection must be preached & accepted**

- 1) To not do so is to proclaim a false gospel
- 2) Rom.10:9 – believe & confess God raised Him from dead
- 3) 1 Cor.2:2 – determined to know nothing but

b. **His death** – for our sins

- 1) For our benefit, our sake; in our stead
- 2) A sacrifice for us
 - 1 Cor.5:7 – our Passover
 - 2 Cor.5:15 – He died for all
 - 2 Cor.5:21 – made to be sin on our behalf
 - Eph.5:2 – gave Himself as a sacrifice & offering to God
- 3) Without His blood there is no salvation
 - Col.1:14 – redemption through His blood
 - Titus 2:14 – gave Himself that He might redeem us from all sin
 - Heb.9:12 – by His blood obtained eternal redemption for us
 - Rev.5:9 – now worthy to open the book

c. **His death spoken of in the scriptures**

- 1) Ps.22:13,16,18
- 2) Isa.53:3-12
- 3) Zech.12:10
- 4) Lk.24:25-27 – opened minds so understand
- 5) Mt.12:39,40 – sign of Jonah
- 6) Acts 26:22,23 – preached only what taught by Moses & the prophets

d. **Jesus' resurrection speaks volumes about God**

- 1) That God is & that He cares about man
- 2) That Jesus is the Son of God – Rom.1:4
- 3) That God sent Jesus to save mankind – Rom.4:15

4. **Testimony of eyewitnesses**

a. **Most reliable form of evidence in a court of law**

b. **Paul's list** – not all who witnessed resurrected Jesus just enough to make point

- 1) Peter – sometime after His appearance to Mary – Lk.24:34
- 2) The 12 – the foundation of the church
- 3) To more than 500 at one time (many were still alive when Paul wrote)
- 4) James – most likely the Lord's brother (originally a skeptic - Jn.7:5)
- 5) All the apostles – Acts 1:3

c. **Paul was the last to see the resurrected Jesus**

- 1) Acts 9:1-8

- 2) One abnormally born – totally undeserving
 - a) Came to late to be one of the 12
 - b) Persecuted the church – only by God's grace did this happened
 - c) Saw self as the least of the apostles (Unfit to be one)
 - d) Never ceased to be amazed that God would choose him

5. Paul's attitude – driven to serve Jesus

- a. **Forgiven** although he was undeserving - Totally by God's grace
- b. **Labored more** than others – again by God's graciousness
- c. **Continually sensitive to Lord's leading** – all depends upon Him
- d. **See the power of the resurrection in Paul's life**
 - 1) Deep conviction of sin (an enemy of God)
 - 2) Total character change – an oppressor of the church to a servant
(self-righteous hatred to a self-sacrificing love)
 - 3) Dramatic redirection of his energy (Zeal redirected)
 - 3)

1 Corinthians Study
Lesson # 34

The Consequences If There Is No Resurrection

Introduction

The resurrection is absolutely essential to Christianity. Without the resurrection everything we believe in about Jesus is challenged & the gospel loses its power. The foundation of apostolic teaching was that Christ rose from the dead & all who believed in Him would also be raised to live with Him forever. In the following verses Paul gives several arguments showing the disastrous results of denying the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

1. Possible sources of the confusion about the resurrection

a. Various teachings concerning the resurrection

1) **Soul sleep** – body dies & disintegrates while the soul or the spirit rests

2) **Materialists** – believe in utter extinction or total annihilation

a) Nothing human, physical or otherwise survives death

b) Death ends everything

3) **Reincarnation** – soul or spirit is continually recycled

a) Go from one form to another

b) From human to animal or animal to human

4) **Absorption** – spirit or a part of the spirit returns back to its source

a) Are absorbed back into the ultimate divine mind or being

b) Philosopher Leslie Weatherhead

“Would it really matter if I were lost like a drop of water in the ocean, if I could be a shining particle in some glorious wave that broke in utter splendor in perfect beauty on the shores of an eternal sea?”

5) **Results if these views**

a) Human person-hood & individuality are forever lost in death.

b) Whatever survives – is no longer a person, an individual, or a unique being

b. Greek philosophy taught dualism

1) **Everything spiritual was considered to be intrinsically good**

a) Everything physical was considered to be intrinsically evil

b) To them a resurrected body would be repugnant

2) **To them the reason for entering the afterlife was to escape the body**

a) Saw the body as a tomb or corpse in which soul was shackled

b) A body was the last thing the Greek wanted to take into next life

c) Acts 17:32 – sneered at idea

c. Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection

1) Any Jews who previously held this belief would inherently doubt

2) Easily accept the teaching that resurrection was a myth

2. The resurrection in scripture

- a. Job 19:26 – After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God”
- b. Dan.12:2 – “multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake”
- c. Jn.6:44 – “I will raise him up in the last day”
- d. Jn.11:25 – “he who believes in Me will live even if he dies”
- e. Acts 4:1,2 – “proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead”
- f. 1 Thess.4:16 – “dead in Christ shall rise first”
- g. 2 Cor.4:14 – “He who raised Jesus will raise us also”

3. The consequences of no resurrection

a. Christ would not have been raised

- 1) If no such thing as a resurrection = then even Christ was not raised
- 2) Some believed that the Christ was not really a man – fully man
 - a) Dualism – because was divine could not be human
 - b) Therefore He did not really die, only appeared to die
 - c) Appearances after crucifixion were simply manifestations that seemed bodily
- 3) Scripture is clear that Jesus was a person – entirely human & raised
 - a) Born to a mother
 - b) Ate, drank, became tired & slept
 - c) Lk.24:39-43 – made a point for disciples to touch Him to prove He was not a spirit
 - d) Acts 2:22-32 – Peter’s sermon
 - e) Rom.1:4 – declared to be the Son of God with power
 - f) Rev.1:17,18 – “I was dead & behold I am alive forevermore”
 - g) Antichrist denies that Jesus came in the flesh – 2 Jn.7

b. Preaching of the gospel becomes meaningless – vs.14

- 1) The good news would be just more bad news
- 2) Would be nothing worth proclaiming – empty hopeless message
- 3) Unless Jesus had conquered sin & death, there was no way made for man to follow & have victory too – sin & death would still reign

c. Your faith in Jesus would also be worthless

- 1) What was there to believe in – a dead savior could not give life
- 2) All we seek to do & be is in vain – Ps.73:13; Isa.49:4

d. Witnesses & preachers of the resurrection would be liars

- 1) Be falsely claiming to have a message from God
- 2) Would be willfully mistaken, not just mistaken = liar
 - a) No way they be innocent or naïve
 - b) Not be honest men – had to conspire together so lie be consistent & believable (harmonize)
- 3) Why should these apostles be believed about anything else?
 - a) Moral teachings just be opinions of men – NT be a worthless document that no reasonable person would trust
 - b) Why allow themselves to be beaten, imprisoned & often martyred? People don’t die to protect a lie.

e. You are still in your sins – vs.17

- 1) Believers be no better off than unbelievers – Rom.3:23; 6:23
- 2) Jesus' death was in vain – 1 Cor.15:3,4
- 3) Be no forgiveness of sin; no reconciliation with God – 2 Cor.5:21

f. All former believers are eternally lost

- 1) Spend eternity without God – without hope
- 2) Sins would be unforgiven & their destiny would be damnation

g. Christians would be the most pitiable people on face of the earth

- 1) Christianity & the worship of God be pointless
 - a) No forgiveness
 - b) No savior
 - c) No gospel
 - d) No eternal life – no hope
- 2) A dead Jesus can't help us
 - a) Can't intercede
 - b) Can't work out circumstances for our good
 - c) Can't grant us peace; joy or satisfaction now
 - d) Christian life be a joke
- 3) All strive to accomplish be meaningless – just eat, drink & be merry for tomorrow we die

The Resurrection In God's Plan

Introduction

In the previous verses Paul has reminded the Corinthians of the importance of the resurrection in the gospel message & also it's importance in their salvation. Now Paul will share the place of the resurrection in God's scheme of things & how the resurrection is a tremendous motivation for both service to God & man's sanctification.

1 Corinthians 15:20-34

1. Christ the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- a. **First fruits** = representative sample of harvest offered to God
 - 1) Lev.23:10-14 – sheaf of 1st grain you harvest
 - 2) **Purpose** – an acknowledgment that the land & all its products are a gift from God.
 - a) An expression of thankfulness for His bounty
 - b) After such an offering, the people were at liberty to use the rest at their discretion.
 - 3) Term may have meant 1st ripe or the choicest of the harvest
 - 4) **Paul's point** – Jesus was the 1st of the harvest indicating that the rest of the harvest would follow.
 - a) Jesus' resurrection was not an isolated incident
 - b. His resurrection points to a larger resurrection of the redeemed
- b. **Fallen asleep** = the dead
 - 1) 1 Cor.15:6 – in contrast to those still living
 - 2) Acts 7:60 – Stephen's death

2. Contrasting Adam & Jesus

- a. **Death came through a man – Adam**
 - 1) The consequences of Adam's sin (death) is applied to every person identified with him.
 - a) Every human being is subject to death because of Adam's sin
 - b) Through Adam all inherit a sin nature
 - c) Through Adam's disobedience we all become subject to sin
 - 2) Every human being is a descendent of Adam Therefore all die
- b. **In Jesus all will be made alive**
 - 1) Part of God's plan was Jesus becoming the 1st fruits of all who will be raised to eternal life
 - 2) All who are identified with Jesus (born again) will be a part of that resurrection harvest
 - a) Not all humanity(universal salvation), just those who accept Jesus as their Lord
 - b) Those referred to as children of God – Gal.3:26,27

3. God's scheme – Jesus resurrected 1st, then those in Christ at His coming

a. Our resurrection will follow His coming

- 1) 1 Thess.4:13-18
- 2) Each in it's own time – not know when that will be

b. Then comes the end

- 1) Jesus will hand over the kingdom to His Father
- 2) **End** = that which is completed, consummated or fulfilled – the final culmination of the ages
 - a) Then all things will be restored as they were designed & created
 - b) Things will be as they were in the beginning
 - c) Sin will be no more – God will reign supreme – no enemies, no challenges to His rule & authority
- 3) **Jesus' final act will be to conquer death permanently**
 - a) **All His enemies will be defeated**
 - b) **Under His feet** – Common practice when enemy defeated
 - 1) Ruler enthroned above subjects – when bow are literally lower than their feet
 - 2) Literally put foot on neck of conquered king or general symbolizing their total submission
 - c) **Death is last enemy**
 - 1) Satan held power of death – Heb.2:14,15
 - 2) Jesus broke Satan's hold at the cross – death will be permanently abolished at His coming

c. Everything will be turned over to God

- 1) Until then Jesus fulfills the role of a servant – fulfilling tasks assigned
- 2) When His final work is completed – He will assume His former glorious place in perfect harmony with The Father & The Spirit

4. The resurrection – a powerful incentive for service & sanctification

a. Incentive for salvation – vs.29

- 1) **Difficult passage** with several possible interpretations
 - a) Used for some strange & heretical concepts
 - b) History does not give us much information to glean from
- 2) **Does not mean** – proxy baptism (Gnostics & Mormons)
 - a) Goes against clear scripture – Heb.9:27
 - b) Nowhere in the NT does it teach that a person who has died can be saved or helped in any other way by the actions of the living
 - c) **Baptism in & of itself does not save us**
 - (1) Eph.2:8-10 – by grace through faith
 - (2) Col.2:9-12 – through faith in the power of God
 - (3) **Baptism is an act of faith** – does not earn us salvation
 - d) Being baptized for another who has died accomplishes nothing – their fate has been sealed at death

- (1) Only way to come to God is through a personal faith
- (2) Like infant baptism = man's solution or idea for the consequences of sin (we do it for selves)
- (3) One cannot believe for another or be baptized for another – it is a personal thing

3) **Possible meaning** – deceased believers life that led another to Jesus

a) **Greek word “for”** – dozen or so meanings

- (1) For; above; about; across; beyond; on behalf of; instead of; because of; in reference to etc.
- (2) Depends upon the grammatical structure & context
- (3) **“Because of”** is also a proper rendering of the text

b) **Saying** – people were being baptized “because of” the exemplary lives & witness of believers that had died

- (1) Their desire was to follow their faith in Jesus
- (2) Christians who face death with joy & hope leave behind a powerful witness
- (3) Also - the prospect of the reunion with a loved one can be & is a strong motivation for people to listen to & accept Jesus as Lord.

b. An incentive for service & sanctification

- 1) Why endure hardship for Jesus if there is no resurrection
- 2) If this life is all there is – why even try to live righteously?
 - a) Suffering & dying for a cause becomes meaningless
 - b) Be masochistic – suffering for sufferings sake
- 3) Why work or serve Jesus – why preach the gospel?
- 4) Why bother being pure – get all you can now

c. Evil companions corrupt

- 1) Wrong behavior comes from wrong thinking – wrong beliefs & standards
- 2) Associate with wicked people = be corrupted – their ideas & habits will contaminate you.
- 3) Without the prospect of a resurrection & the accountability that it brings there is no incentive to do anything but what we feel like doing here & now – no reward or no condemnation = uncontrollable

The Resurrected Body

Introduction

Paul has addressed several problems in this chapter concerning the resurrection. Some were denying the resurrection & Paul showed that the resurrection was an integral part of the gospel message from the beginning. Others accepted the resurrection of Jesus but questioned their own resurrection. In the previous lesson Paul shared some of the dangers of such beliefs. In this lesson we will examine Paul's thoughts concerning the possibility of such a resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

1. Root of the doubts about the resurrection

a. Gnostic philosophy

- 1) Considered the body to be inherently evil – only the spirit was good
- 2) Saw the resurrected body as undesirable
- 3) Some rabbis taught that the resurrected body would be just like the earthly body in every way.
- 4) This made idea of resurrection even less desirable.

b. Why do people who believe in a creator question the bodily resurrection?

- 1) Because a body is lost at sea, or blown up or cremated makes no difference
- 2) Every dead body no matter how well embalmed disintegrates

2. What kind of body?

a. Foolish question

1) Roots in the skepticism of pagan philosophy

- a) **Foolish** = used mockingly of one who has no understanding
- b) Mocking of one who thought they already knew
- c) Question is to entrap or embarrass – not to discover truth

2) Resurrection occurs on a small scale everyday

a) Seeds disintegrate before the plant comes forth

- (1) Dies & decomposes
- (2) Ceases to exist in its original form
- (3) Must 1st cease to exist in its original form before comes back in its final form

b) Jn.12:24

- (1) Before Jesus could bear fruit of salvation for us = die
- (2) Before we participate in a new life must die – 2Cor.5:17

c) Difference between original & final body

- (1) Seed loses its identity – becomes like mature plant
- (2) Seed looks nothing like the mature plant
- (3) Jesus' body different after resurrection

Before – limited by time, space & material substance

After – appear & disappear at will; go thru walls etc

d) **Although seed changes it continues in same life form**

- (1) What sown is what grows
- (2) Once revealed Jesus was recognizable – Apostles knew His face; recognized His wounds etc.

b. **Tremendous variety in creation – everything is different**

1) **All flesh is not the same**

- a) Biological world – difference in man; beasts; birds & fish
- b) Told there are 10 to the 108th combinations of amino acids
 - (1) 1 with 108 zeros after it
 - (2) Amino acids are the building blocks of life
- c) Each plant & animal life has a different pattern of amino acids
 - (1) Each individual plant, animal & human have own unique grouping of these amino acids
 - (2) No 2 of anything are identical = exactly alike
 - (3) Yet each is completely identified with its own species

2) **One of the most powerful arguments against theory of evolution**

- a) No matter what you eat or what your environment is – can't change into another form of life
- b) May be healthier, or more sickly – heavier or lighter
 - (1) Still be same person – same human being
 - (2) The biological codes are unique & binding
- c) Absolutely no scientific evidence that one form of life has ever changed into another form of life.

3) **All heavenly bodies are different in nature & form**

- a) Sun different from moon
- b) Stars different in light emitted

4) **Point – God has an infinite capacity for creativity**

- a) Has made an infinite variety – each unique
- b) Why think be so hard to recreate & resurrect a body?

3. **Contrasts of the resurrection – vs.42-44**

a. **Perishable & imperishable**

- 1) All life on earth is subject to deterioration & death
 - a) Even the healthiest get older, weaker, and more prone to disease
 - b) From the fall all are irreversibly mortal & subject to death
- 2) Will be imperishable – 1 Pet.1:3,4

b. **Value & potential**

- 1) Since fall our potential to please God dramatically reduced
 - a) Unable to perfectly do what designed to do
 - b) Created to honor God – now dishonor Him
- 2) In eternity our new bodies will be honorable bodies
 - a) Perfect for pleasing, praising & enjoying God
 - b) Able to perfectly do what designed to do

- c. **Weakness & power**
 - 1) Physically weak
 - a) Endurance limited
 - b) In our resistance to disease & harm
 - 2) New body be powerful
 - a) Not told specifics
 - b) No longer have to say, “spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”
 - d. **Natural & spiritual**
 - 1) We are strictly natural – only realm we can live & function in
 - 2) New body be perfectly suited for the spiritual realm
 - a) Lk.20:34-36 – be like the angels
 - b) Not the same as angels but like them – perfectly suited for the spiritual realm
4. **The prototype (model) of the resurrection**
- a. **Quotes Gen.2:7 – “the first man Adam became a living soul”**
 - 1) Created with a natural body – not glorified but perfect & good
 - 2) Given a probationary period in garden
 - a) Had they proved themselves faithful – glorified
 - b) Could have eaten the fruit of the tree of life – Gen.2:9
 - 3) Put out of garden so not eat of tree of life & live forever in a state of sin
 - 4) Through Adam we have inherited a mortal body
 - 5) Adam was the prototype of natural man
 - b. **Jesus is the prototype of spiritual man**
 - 1) All descendents of Jesus have spiritual bodies
 - 2) Adam was tied to the earth – Jesus is tied to heaven

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

1.A great transformation is coming

- a. **Earthly body is wonderfully suited for earth**, but not for the heavenly realm
 - 1) Body renewed every 7 years – still ages & dies
 - 2) Is perishable
- b. **Heavenly body** – like a seed retains identity but radically changed
- c. **If alive when Jesus returns** – changed instantaneously
 - 1) **Mystery** – something hidden but now revealed
 - 2) Not all die but will be changed
 - 3) A flash, a twinkling of an eye = instantaneously

2. Death no longer the master

- a. **Jesus took away Satan’s power of death** – Heb.2:14,15
- b. **No longer need to fear death**
 - 1) Jesus bore the sting of death
 - 2) Sting is sin – taken away by His blood
 - 3) Have consequences for sin but are not permanently fatal

c. Power of sin is in the Law

- 1) Law reveals sin – Rom.3:19,20
- 2) Jesus fulfilled the Law – was totally righteous
- 3) That righteousness has been imputed to us – 2 Cor.5:21
- 4) We are not under Law but are under grace
 - a) Rom.6:14; 7:6
 - b) We can't live sinlessly & thereby fulfill the Law, nor can we remove the consequences of our sin
 - c) Jesus paid that price for us – His righteousness imputed to us
- d. Therefore death has been declawed, disarmed – rendered powerless

3. Great exhortation – be steadfast & unmovable in your faith

- a. **If you really believe & are truly thankful** – show it
- b. **Stand firm** = settled & firmly situated; allow nothing to move you away from God's will – Eph.4:14
- c. **Don't allow yourself to become discouraged** – multiply your good works
- d. **Abounding** = exceeding the requirements; overflowing
 - 1) Since God has done so much for you – He deserves this from you
 - 2) Determine to overdo yourself in service to Him
- e. Until the Lord returns every Christian should work uncompromisingly as the Lord has gifted them. Our money, time, energy & spirits should be invested in nothing that does not in some way contribute to the work of the Lord.

Concerning The Collection

Introduction

In this last chapter Paul makes a radical change from his previous thoughts. In the previous chapters Paul has been dealing with doctrinal matters but now he turns his attention to practical matters. He deals with subjects such as giving; doing the Lord's work; faithful living & practicing love within the fellowship. In this lesson we will concentrate on Paul's thoughts concerning giving.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1. The collection

a. Something the Corinthian Christians were already familiar with

- 1) Had solicited funds from many churches
- 2) From Galatia; Macedonia & Achaia
- 3) See Rom.15:26; 2 Cor.8:1-5
- 4) Would be presented to Jerusalem church – Acts 24:17

b. The need

- 1) **Extreme poverty** was common in 1st century
- 2) **Especially among Christians** in Jerusalem
 - a) **Early convert were pilgrims** – Acts 2:5 (many stayed)
 - b) **Jerusalem often overpopulated** (Feasts & celebrations)
 - (1) What resources had were strained continually
 - (2) Had a famine – Acts 11:28
 - c) **Were persecuted** – Acts 8:1-3; 1 Thess.2:14
 - (1) Though were Jews not benefit from synagogue welfare
 - (2) Even though shared all, resources would run out
- 3) **Giving was a way to unite Christians**
 - a) Christians in Jerusalem predominately Jews
 - b) Christians doing the contributing were predominately Gentiles
 - c) Sharing in love forms a bond between giver & receiver
 - d) Mt.6:21 – where treasure is – heart is

c. Primary purpose of giving – support saints

- 1) **Our 1st obligation is to support fellow believers**
 - a) 2 Cor.8:1-5 – in keeping with God's will
 - b) 2 Cor.9:12-15 – obedience that accompanies your confession
 - c) Phil.4:14-17 – be credited to your account
 - d) 1 Jn.3:17 – see brother in need
- 2) **Are to be willing to share with all**
 - a) Lk.10:25-37 – good Samaritan
 - b) Gal.6:10 – do good to all – especially believers

2. Principles of giving

a. Weekly – on 1st day of week

- 1) Shows church met on Sunday & giving was a regular part of worship

- 2) Giving should not be spasmodic (just done when we feel generous)
 - 3) Don't take this legalistically (parcel out money so do it every week)
 - 4) **Point** – each should be sensitive to needs of church & do our part
 - a) Giving to be regular – showing commitment to Lord & His work
 - b) Each is a steward of what God entrusts them with
- b. Each one** – no one is exempt
- 1) Not matter how little or how much we have – Mk.12:41-44
 - 2) Lk.16:10 – looking for faithfulness regardless of how much
- c. The place** - primarily to & through the church
- 1) 1st Christians shared directly – Acts 2:44,45
 - 2) Later brought to Apostles – Acts 4:35-37; 5:2
 - 3) Later in hands of godly men to distribute – Acts 6:1-7
 - 4) **Set aside a sum** – idea is a storehouse or a treasury
 - a) If hold onto yourself – verse not make sense = no collections make when I come
 - b) Offering was to be ready when he comes
 - 5) How we handle money relates to our faithfulness to God & the depth of our worship – Lk.16:10,11
- d. The amount** – in keeping with income
- 1) **Are many opinions**
 - a) **Many say 10% based on OT tithe**
 - (1) Abraham gave a 10th; Jacob promised a 10th
 - (2) Before Moses – no indication a 10th required
 - b) **Giving under the Law**
 - (1) Lev.27:30 – give a 10th
 - (2) Num.18:26 - Levite to give a 10th of the Tithe received
 - (3) Deut.14:22-27 – a 2nd 10th is required
 - (4) Deut.14:28-29 – a 3rd tithe every 3 years for needy
 - (5) Total is about 23% that is essentially a tax
 - (6) On top of this is the freewill spontaneous giving to God
 - c) **Basic principal for spontaneous giving in OT**
 - (1) Prov.3:9,10 – honor God – 1st & generously
 - (2) Prov.11:24 – to increase wealth = share it; to lose it = hoard it
 - (3) Ex.25:1,2; 35:5,21 – each who is willing = generosity is based on thankfulness
 - (4) **Point** – required giving was taxation; freewill giving amount was left up to the worshiper
 - 2) **NT principal for spontaneous giving**
 - a) Required to pay taxes – Rom.13:6
 - b) Give cheerfully – 2 Cor.9:6,7
 - (1) No amount or percentage is required – from the heart is
 - (2) Blessings associated with giving
 - (a) Lk.6:38 – as give = given same measure
 - (b) 2 Cor.9:6 – give sparingly receive sparingly

e. What is given is to be handled properly

- 1) **Several respected people** will distribute funds
- 2) **God's funds should be put in hands of most godly men** – Acts 6:2,3

3. God made all His creation to give

- a. Sun; moon; stars; clouds; plants etc
- b. Fallen man is the one most reluctant to give
- c. Sign of a truly regenerated person is their generosity

Quote of Aristides an Athenian statesman about Christians in 2nd century

They walk in humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. They despise not the widow and they grieve not the orphan. He that has, distributes liberally to him that has not. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof and they rejoice over him as if he were their brother. For they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh but after the Spirit and in God. But when one of their poor passes away from the world and any of them see him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability. And if they hear that any of their number is in prison or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs. And if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy and they have not an abundance of necessity, they will fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with his necessary food.

“But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?” 1 John 3:17

Doing The Lord's Work The Lord's Way

Introduction

In this lesson the verses we will cover do not explicitly teach us or exhort us about anything. They are merely informative concerning the plans that Paul has for the future. However, implied in these verses are some basic principles concerning doing the work of the Lord. How does God want us to approach His work, are there ways that ought to be followed. All these questions & more are answered as we look closely at Paul & his approach in doing God's work.

1 Corinthians 16:5-12

1. Paul's vision & plans for the future

- a. It seems that Paul originally intended for Timothy to deliver this epistle & that he would come shortly after Timothy had arrived.
 - 1) 1 Cor.16:10,11 – instructions on how to treat Timothy
 - 2) 1 Cor.4:17-21 – will be coming soon
 - 3) 2 Cor.1:15-17 – changed original intentions (after Macedonia)
- b. Paul also shares his plans for the future in Romans
 - 1) Rom.15:24,28 – Spain
 - 2) Spain was a flourishing & influential province
- c. We too need to have a vision for the future
 - 1) Strategize with a sense of expectancy
 - 2) Constantly looking on the horizon for open doors of opportunity
 - 3) Jn.5:17-19 – closeness to His Father
 - a) Busy doing as His Father does
 - b) Concentrates where He sees His Father working
 - 4) Nehemiah had a specific purpose & plan in mind
 - a) Prepared plan before approached the king
 - b) Then prayed for God to allow the plans to work
 - 5) Need to be analyzing needs & getting prepared now so that when the opportunity presents itself – can be successful.

2. Paul was flexible

- a. Vs.6 – words perhaps; even; wherever
 - 1) Indicate an uncertainty & flexibility
 - 2) Future does not always come together as we would like it to or even as we think it will
 - a) Original understanding of God's will may not be right
 - b) God's plans may change & we need to be flexible too
 - c) As the Spirit prompts us through our gifts & desires, we still only have clues (not clear cut direction) & the Spirit may want us involved in ways we have not even imagined yet.
 - 3) Our plans & vision - no matter how sincere & carefully thought out are not infallible

- b. Being inflexible is a great barrier to doing God's work
 - 1) Flexibility is a sign of humility
 - 2) Prov.16:9 – we make plans but the Lord determines everything
 - 3) Some see flexibility as weakness & insincerity
 - a) 2 Cor.1:17 – plan in a worldly manner – insincere or lightly
 - b) Truth – too many things in life are out of our control
 - 4) God is sovereign & has the right to make changes
 - 5) See Paul change as situation merited it
 - a) Acts 15:36 – revisit churches started
 - b) Acts 16:6,7 Spirit forbids them to go into Asia or Bithynia
 - c) God wanted them to go into Macedonia – Acts 16:9,10
 - 6) Rom.9:21 – God is the potter we are the clay

3. Commitment & diligence to the task at hand

- a. Vs.7 – not want to just pass through = wants spend time there
 - 1) Knows that the task will take time to be done right
 - 2) Knows his letter will not be enough
 - 3) Disciplining takes time – can't be done quickly
- b. We must seek to be thorough in all we do
 - 1) Col.1:28,29 – struggled to present everyone perfect in Christ
 - 2) 1 Thess.3:10 – pray night & day supply what is lacking
 - 3) Acts 20:27 – sought to declare whole purpose of God
 - 4) Eph.5:16 – make the most of the time given
 - 5) Plans are worthless unless they are executed properly
- c. Stephen & Philip started out serving tables but ended up as powerful evangelists – Acts 6
 - 1) Their mundane (lesser work) allowed the Apostles to function properly
 - 2) It also prepared them for their future work for the Lord
 - 3) Because they were diligent to the task at hand God was able to open door of opportunity to them.
 - 4) Don't expect God to open doors of opportunity for us unless we are willing to diligently do the work He has given us to do now.
- d. Lk.16:10 – must be trustworthy with little – given more
- e. Mt.25:23 – faithful with little = in charge of more
- f. Mt.25:14-30 – eternal service is determined by our dedication now

4. Accept opposition as a spiritual challenge

- a. Vs.9 – door opened but many who oppose him
 - 1) Paul never allowed opposition to stop him
 - 2) Phil.1:12-20 – opposition while in prison (positive)
- b. Need to see opposition as a challenge not a hindrance
 - 1) No such thing as ministry for Jesus without opposition
 - 2) Little opposition means we are doing little for the Lord
 - 3) **Saying** – if there is no opposition in place you serve, then you are in the wrong place

- c. Ephesus was a cesspool of idolatry & immorality
 - 1) Temple of Diana; ritual prostitution & sexual perversion tolerated & promoted in the name of religion
 - 2) City was full of the occult & superstition
 - 3) 2 Cor.1:8-11 – felt overwhelmed
 - a) Was to teach them not to rely on self
 - b) Now knows God’s deliverance is real
- d. 2 Cor.4:7-12 – not crushed; in despair; abandoned or destroyed
- e. 2 Cor.4:16-18 – outwardly wasting away yet inwardly renewed
- f. **When looking for a place to serve Jesus = look for problems**
 - 1) Look for discouragement & bring encouragement
 - 2) Look for misunderstanding & bring understanding
 - 3) Eph.3:20,21 – God’s is able (is at work in us)

5. Always maintain a team spirit

- a. Paul worked closely with other Christians in everything he did
 - 1) Not seek to be a superstar – lording it over others
 - 2) Book of Acts – always in a joint ministry
 - a) Paul & Barnabas
 - b) Paul & Silas
 - c) Paul & Luke
 - d) Paul & Aristarchus
 - e) Paul & Mark
 - f) Paul & Timothy
 - 3) Rom.16 – 24 individuals mentioned who worked with Paul
- b. None of us should see ourselves as self-sufficient
 - 1) Rom.12:3-8 – each gifted differently
 - 2) Every part needed – 1 Cor.12

6. Sensitivity concerning the Lord’s leading of others

- a. God works differently in different people
 - 1) Wanted Apollos to go to Corinth – vs.12
 - 2) Realized God was using him differently at the moment
 - 3) Respected Apollos’ convictions
- b. Everyone doesn’t have to be involved in the work we are doing for the Lord
 - 1) Paul knew Apollos would be of benefit to Timothy
 - 2) Yet Apollos saw the Lord leading him differently at the moment
 - 3) When the timing is right – God will lead them
- c. We are not in competition with one another
 - 1) Because we feel led to do something doesn’t mean others are too
 - 2) Respect the convictions & sincerity of others

Principles For Powerful Christian Living

Introduction

Most of Paul's letter to the Corinthians has dealt with rebuke & correction. The Christians at Corinth have been living in ways that have been contrary to the ways of Jesus & Paul wants that corrected. However as Paul closes his book, his emphasis has changed & has been more practical than doctrinal in this last chapter. In these verses Paul shares five commands for them to live powerful Christian lives.

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

1. Be on your guard

- a. **Means** – to be awake; be alert; to watch & be vigilant
 - 1) Used about 22 times in NT both literally & figuratively
 - 2) Idea is to being alert as opposed to being apathetic & lethargic
- b. **It often appears as if these Christians were in a stupor or a spiritual trance**
 - 1) 1 Cor.11:21 – drunk at the Lord's table
 - 2) 1 Cor.1:18-2:16 – substituted human wisdom for God's word
 - 3) 1 Cor.5:1-13 – allowed immorality even world condemned
 - 4) 1 Cor.6:1-8 – taking fellow Christians to court
 - 5) 1 Cor.7:1-40 – perverted ideas about marriage, divorce & celibacy
 - 6) 1 Cor.12-14 – misused spiritual gifts
- c. **Areas we need to be on guard about**
 - 1) Satan & his strategies – 1 Pet.5:8,9; 1 Jn.2:16
 - 2) Temptation & God's way of escape – Mk.14:38; 1 Cor.10:13
 - 3) Apathy & indifference (spiritual insensitivity) – Rev.3:1-3
 - 4) False teachers – 2 Tim.4:1-5; 2 Pet.2:1
 - 5) Diligence in prayer – Mk.14:38; Eph.6:18
 - 6) Remembering what Jesus has done & His return – 2 Cor.5:14,15

2. Stand firm in the faith

- a. **The faith** – the truth, the gospel
 - 1) Jude 3 – once for all delivered
 - 2) 1 Cor.15:1 – gospel you received
 - 3) Phil.1:27 – the faith of the gospel
- b. **Satan can't take away our belief, but he does try to pervert it**
 - 1) Col.2:6-8 – deceptive philosophy (focus on human traditions)
 - 2) 1 Cor.12:3 – called Jesus accursed
 - 3) 2 Pet.2:1 – denying sovereignty of Jesus
- c. **Must examine & judge everything by God's truth**
 - 1) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – complete spiritually
 - 2) Col.4:12 – Epaphras' prayer

3. Be men of courage

a. **Means** – to act manly or mature

b. **Corinthians were acting like children**

1) 1 Cor.3:1,2 – had to feed them milk

2) 1 Cor.4:21 – threatens to discipline them like children

3) 1 Cor.14:20 – challenges them to mature thinking

b. **How do we mature spiritually?**

1) 1 Pet.2:1,2 – taking in the pure milk of the word

2) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – be complete

4. Be strong

a. **Refers to an inner spiritual growth**

1) **Passive voice** = be strengthened (not something we do ourselves)

2) We submit & He strengthens us – Eph.6:10; 2 Tim.2:1

b. **Only those who are strong spiritually can overcome the flesh**

1) **Corinthians had deceived themselves**

a) Thought they were strong – 1 Cor.3:18

b) Yet acted like mere men – 1 Cor.3:3

c) Were weak & sickly spiritually – 1 Cor.11:30

2) **Takes discipline**

a) 1 Cor.9:24-27

b) Lk.14:25-33

3) **Takes prayer** – Col.1:9-14

5. Do everything in love

a. 1 Pet.4:8 – above all be fervent in love

b. Marks of love in the Christian fellowship

1) **Evangelism** – love never stops reaching out to the lost

a) Paul suffered persecution wherever he went but never stopped preaching Jesus

b) Stephanas & his house were among the 1st convert at Corinth

2) **Devoted service**

a) Stephanas & his house served entirely on their own initiative

b) One becomes a leader by doing not by just being appointed

3) **Submission**

a) Eph.5:21 – out of reverence to Jesus

b) Mt.20:26-28 – become servant of all

c) Goal is not to fight for our rights, privileges or respect but to seek to be submissive not only to Jesus but to one another.

4) **Companionship**

a) Vs.17,18 – People came personally to meet Paul's needs

b) They helped lighten his burden by just being there

c) God's comfort often comes through fellow believers

(1) 2 Cor.7:6 – Titus came

(2) 2 Cor.1:10,11 – prayer brought deliverance

5) Respect & hospitality

- a) Respecting people for the work they do
- b) Churches in Asia greet you – loved by strangers

6) Affection

- a) Holy kiss – a visible sign of affection
- b) Not romantic kiss – is between men & men & women & women
 - (1) On cheek or forehead
 - (2) Like giving a hug or a warm embrace
 - (3) A pure & meaningful expression of brotherly love
- c) In later centuries it came to be abused & was therefore dropped
 - (1) Today much of the church is in danger of showing too little affection rather than too much affection
 - (2) Too easy to allow strangers to remain strangers

A People of the Book

Where Truth and Love Abound



Our Service Schedule

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sunday: | 10:00 a.m. | Bible Study (classes for all ages) |
| | 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. | Worship |
| Wednesday: | 7:00 p.m. | Bible Study (classes for all ages) |

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