

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

LEARNING HOW TO BE A HEAVENLY CHURCH IN A GODLESS WORLD

1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 16:1-24

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

BEHIND THE SCENES MINISTRY

DISCOVERING THE WILL OF GOD FOR OUR EVERYDAY LIFE

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Church, Goodbyes, Friends, Ministry

I WOULD HAVE ENDED THE BOOK IN CHAPTER 15.

But the reality is – ministry!

And like any other letter, phone call, email or communication; we've got things to do. The glory and grandeur of planning a trip – that big day begins with securing the house and the fish and the dog and the mail – the issues of life.

BEHIND THE SCENES MINISTRY

WHAT MAKES YOU A TRUE BELIEVER!

1.) Yielding to the Lord

v. 1-8

The Christianity of Paul's was a deeply personal thing.

But deeply personal things shape and form who we are and how we behave. Paul was not ashamed to express his love and care toward others. He was unapologetic about his emotions and his burdens. Paul was real about living his life and there was no room for showmanship.

1a.) For the needs of His people

v. 1-2

Now concerning the **collection** for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: **:2** On the ***first day of the week*** let each one of you **lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper**, that there be no collections when I come.

Verse 3 tells us it's for the saints at Jerusalem

The Background Needed:

Circumstantial Trouble

The Situation in Israel, Syria and Jordan during this writing.

A great drought had hammered the crops and water supply in the region. Many of the church were suffering and relief was needed. Europe on the other hand was under no such strain and the churches were physically blessed and prospering even while being persecuted for being Christians.

A Consequential Trouble

But the church in Jerusalem had compounded their woes. In acts 1:8 Jesus had given the church their marching orders to;

The Commission was Given in Acts 1:8 by Jesus Christ Himself – go!

Consequential Trouble

Acts 8:1b

...At that time a great persecution arose against **the church which was at Jerusalem;**

Verse 2

storing up as he may prosper,

(What God has given to you – you're to respond accordingly)

Giving. The Practicality of Christianity, Worship.

Jesus Defined His Economic Plan for His Servants.

Matthew 10:8-10

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. **:9** Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, **:10** nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

Money-Tools

Christians – More than any other, all other people should know that money is nothing but a necessary tool for building the kingdom of God.

God gives us the ability to make money so we can feed our kids and have a roof over our heads and forward the message of salvation.

Luke 21:1-4

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, **:2** and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. **:3** So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow **has put in more** than all; **:4** for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, **but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.**"

Is God blessing your income?

Then give more to God and watch what happens.

(Rather than tithing – **proportionate giving** is what God expects)

The more the LORD blesses you, the more you're to give. The more you wisely invest in the kingdom, the more He will entrust you with - more.

Jesus Said

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Malachi 3:8-10

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. :9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, *Even* this whole nation. :10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you *such* blessing That *there will not be room* enough to receive it.

This is pure fact.

People who are thankful are generous. Greedy people are grumpy tightwads.

YIELDED TO THE LORD

1b.) In the labor with His people

v. 3-5

:3 And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. :4 But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me. :5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia).

Paul's Wise Handling of Funds = It's God's so Let's Keep Our Hands Off

1c.) Open to His leading

v. 6-8

:6 And ***it may be*** that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. :7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but ***I hope*** to stay a while with you, ***if the Lord permits.*** :8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.

There are a lot of people who have relegated their lives down to a 3 x 5 space. If it's not on the card, on the calendar, it just can't happen.

"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken."

Pastor Chuck Smith

This brings me comfort and confidence.

BEHIND THE SCENES MINISTRY

WHAT MAKES YOU A TRUE BELIEVER!

2.) Growing with every opportunity

v. 9-14

2a.) Ministry produces faithfulness

v. 9-11

For a **great** and **effective** door has opened to me,
and *there are many adversaries.*

You can't have effectiveness without enemies.

(I thank God for my enemies because they add to our effectiveness as a church)

Acts 14:21-22

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, **:22** strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Know That If a Ministry is Making a Difference

Then that ministry and its people will be misrepresented, lied about, discredited, slandered, - - The Lord must be our defense.

2 Corinthians 2:15-16

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. **:16** To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

This "Open Door" was the ministry that took place in Acts 19 while Paul was under house arrest. There he taught Bible studies and from those messages churches were eventually planted in places like Colosse, Laodicea, Sardis, Philadelphia and many other cities.

Verse 10

And if **Timothy** comes, see that he may be with you without fear;
for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

2b.) Humility keeps us usable

v. 12

:12 Now concerning *our* brother **Apollos**, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

Paul acknowledges Apollos

What I love about this is that the apostles were clearly not rude or abusive in their authority. **Paul told Apollos you ought to go to Corinth, and Apollos said, “I really don’t sense the Lord calling me at this time”.** – What a sweet reality this is.

“When men have come to me saying the LORD told me to _____
What do you think?... I refuse to answer them about it.

Paul was Sure of His Calling and So He Could Honor the Calling of Others

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; :6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

GROWING WITH EVERY OPPORTUNITY

2c.) Preparedness makes us ready

v. 13-14

:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
:14 Let all that you do be done with love.

Listen to How a Godly Leader is to be Talking and Serving These Days.

Watch

This is a word of warning. This word means to be “watching out” for danger and pitfalls. As long as we are alive in this world we are in peril. As Christians we are not yet home. We are in enemy occupied territory and soon we will be called home to headquarters. Until then, things are dangerous.

Mark 14:38

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.
The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

**The Christian who is able to fight off temptation
is the Christian who is prepared to meet the temptation.**

Stand fast

To not move. To stay put. To stay under or to be pressed into being stationary. Immovable. Anchored. – in heart, mind, and spirit

Be brave

This is a very rare thing these days. This word to be “brave” or to “quit (kjb)” means to be a man about it. To man up. Don’t be effeminate or soft or sensitive about the Christian life. In the Jack version, it’s “Don’t be a wimpy, whining, pathetic Christian”

Be strong

This is an increasing strength. To wax stronger and stronger over time and experience (seeing God’s word at work with you and within you)

Psalm 28:7

The LORD *is* my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;

The issue is not my strength but my willingness.

BEHIND THE SCENES MINISTRY

WHAT MAKES YOU A TRUE BELIEVER!

3.) Surrounded by faithful friends

v. 15-24

3a.) Lovers of the church

v. 15-18

:15 I urge you, brethren - you know the household of **Stephanas**, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, (*Greece*) and *that* they have **devoted** themselves to the ministry of the saints - :16 that you also **submit** to such, and to everyone who **works** and **labors** with *us*. :17 I am glad about the coming of **Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Ac-hai-cus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied.** :18 For they **refreshed my spirit** and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

Verse 15

:15 I urge you, brethren - you know the household of **Stephanas**, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have **devoted** (*addicted kjv*) themselves to the ministry of the saints -

devoted grk: *taçssw tasso, tas'-so*; to be arranged for service or to position yourself to be used. Ordained to a task or need. To present your person, abilities, wealth, influence in the aid of others. To appoint yourself and what is under your care to God's service.

3b.) Encouraging partners

v. 19-21

:19 The churches of Asia **greet** you. **Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily** in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. :20 All the brethren **greet** you. **Greet** one another with a holy kiss. :21 The salutation with my own hand - - Paul's

Local Churches Come in All Shapes and Sizes BUT.

(the qualifier to any church are these 3 inseparable realities) (#1) – the authority of the Bible. (#2) – the presence of the Holy Spirit. (#3) – the love of the brethren.

3c.) Authentic Christianity

v. 22-24

:22 If anyone does not love (*phleo*) the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be **accursed.** O Lord, come! :23 The **grace** of our **Lord Jesus Christ** be with you. :24 My love be with you all in **Christ Jesus.** Amen.

What a powerful farewell.

(1) Don't be fooled. If you don't show the affection of Jesus toward others, then you're damned. (2) Lord Jesus please come now. (3) All of you be blessed (4) I have so much affection for you guys too.

Verse 22

If anyone does not love the **Lord Jesus Christ**, let him be **accursed**. (*Anathema Maranatha - kjv*) **O Lord, come!**

*There will always be those final words
that we make sure that we share.*

Verse 23

The **grace** of our **Lord Jesus Christ** be with you.

Verse 24

My love be with you all in **Christ Jesus**. Amen.

>>> The Cross, The Christ, The Call <<<

Come Forward for Prayer

Will You Agree with God That

Rom. 3:23 you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,

Rom. 6:23a That you understand that the wages of sin *is* death,

Rom. 6:23b but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. 5:8 Believing today that God demonstrates His own love toward you, in that while you were still a sinner, Christ died for you.

Rom. 10:13 But He now says to you that "*if you would call on the name of the LORD you shall be saved.*"

Rom. 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. :10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

End of Study

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