

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 1

Introduction

The city of Corinth was the hub of Greece during the first century. Corinth won many admirers with impressive temples; all-inclusive, trendy philosophies; pervasive prostitution and notorious drinking parties. Understandably, the Corinthian church struggled with how to flourish spiritually in such a permissive culture.

Sound a lot like America today?

Corinth was one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire (maybe third after Rome and Alexandria). It was situated about 60 miles west of Athens, on an 4.5 mile isthmus between the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. Since sailors preferred to have their ships dragged overland here rather than go around the more treacherous waters south of Greece, Corinth controlled the naval trade between Italy and Asia.

With all of the people and money flowing through Corinth, it became infamous for its **intellectual debate** ("They do nothing but speak and hear new ideas all day long"), **religious agitation** (APHRODITE: priestess/prostitutes; ASCLEPIUS: clay genitals for healing from venereal diseases; BACCHUS: drunken orgy worship; MYSTERY CULTS: occultic initiation rites), and **moral debauchery** "All of this evidence suggests that Corinth was the New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world. (Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 3.)

Paul brought the message of Christ to this city in 51 AD, about three years earlier (Acts 18:1-17), and a large number of people came to Christ.

Since then, things hadn't gone so well in the Corinthian church. A casual reading of this letter will reveal that some were involved in **sexual immorality** (religious prostitution [6] & even incest [5]), some had serious **drinking problems** (11:21), some were falling into **religious syncretism** (10:21,22), some were **embarrassed about key elements of the gospel** (cross [1] & resurrection [15]), and they were racked by **division** (1,3,6,11). To put it mildly, the church was a mess! They weren't transforming Corinthian culture; Corinthian culture was conforming them!

Now you might think is it strange to be starting our study in 1 Corinthians by reading in Acts, but Acts 18:1-11 gives us the background information about Paul's first contact with the people of Corinth and what the city was like.

Acts 18:1-11 **1** After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. **2** There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, **3** and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. **4** Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. **5** When Silas and Timothy came from

Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. 8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. 9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." 11 So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

So Paul went to Corinth where he met Aquila and Priscilla who were Jews and who made tents like Paul. Paul would work on tents in the mornings and in the afternoons would preach the Gospel. On the Sabbath he would go to the synagogue and preach the Gospel there, but that was not when the Church worshipped it was simply an occasion to preach the Gospel in a system under the Law that had been trumped by the new Law of Christ. The early church worshipped on the first day of the week, Sunday. We will study that later. When Silas and Timothy came he stopped making tents and was supported by those believers. But then some of the Jews began to oppose the fact that Paul proclaimed Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Paul became disgusted with them and shook his clothes off at them, declaring that he was no longer going to try to convince the Jews but rather the Gentiles. This was the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles. Remember what the Lord told the disciples in Mark 6:11:

11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."

This is what Paul did, so he was following what Jesus told his disciples to do. When people do not accept Jesus Christ as Messiah they remain under a curse, a curse of judgment and hell. This applies to Jews and Gentiles, but especially the Jews who should have known better. Paul then went right next door to a Gentile who believed and started a church there. Because of this testimony the leader of the synagogue, a Jew, and his whole household believed in the Lord, and many others. This was the start of the small Corinthian church. So Paul was able to stay for a year and a half in Corinth and the Lord told him that he would protect him there. God enables His Gospel to be preached and nothing can stop it. Christians may be persecuted and even put to death, but when God decides to do something like spreading the Good News among the Gentiles we can thank Him that He will not let anything stop that.

The city of Corinth

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, an important city for trade. They also had an important Olympic style games there second only to the original Olympics in Greece. Ships and their cargos were often transported across the "diolkos," a stone tramway across the isthmus. This allowed traders to shorten their journey and avoid the often-stormy waters off southern Achaia. Corinth was a city which had, not unlike our cities today, many things going on and many ways to be enticed into a life of the seeking of pleasure, which is why the Corinthian church struggled with many issues, like our churches today. Paul had to address these things and was praying that the church at Corinth would correct them. The problem today is that there is very little correction from the same types of errors of the church at Corinth.

Corinth contained at least twelve temples at one time, the most infamous to the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite. The temple priestesses practiced religious prostitution with worshipers. These practices gave rise to the Greek verb translated “to Corinthianize” meaning to practice sexual immorality.

Paul in Corinth

As previously stated in Acts 18:1-11 Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue and supported himself financially as a tentmaker or leatherworker. He soon faced opposition from local Jewish leaders. After being banished from the synagogue, Paul preached and taught next door at the house of the Gentile convert Gaius. When the new Roman proconsul Gallo arrived in Corinth in A.D. 51 or 52, the Jewish leaders went before Gallo and accused Paul of “propagating illegal religion.” Gallo reasoned the complaint was over differences of Jewish law interpretation—an area he was not responsible to pronounce judgment. This ruling provided a legal precedent for other Roman magistrates, allowing Paul to continue his apostolic mission for several years.

Paul's Letter to the Corinthians

Paul stayed in Corinth for approximately 18 months before journeying to Ephesus and Jerusalem, and then returning to Ephesus for another two years. It is believed Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians while in Ephesus sometime between A.D. 53-55. This letter exhorts the church to seek Christian wisdom and unity of church life, addresses specific problems in the Corinthian church life and divisions, and responds to questions posed to him in a letter from the Corinthians.

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was the last of the foundational apostles of the Church. There are apostles today who are church planting missionaries, but we do not call them apostles so that people do not become confused. There are many churches calling people apostles today and they believe that they have the same or greater authority as the original apostles. But they do not. Paul stated that those who claim to be equal in authority to the apostles are by definition false apostles. 2 Corinthians 11:12-14:

12 And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Notice that Jesus Christ Himself called the foundational apostles, such as Paul. Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and called Paul, who was a persecutor of Christians, to be an apostle for Him. No one can be follower of Christ unless they are called by God, and this especially concerns the foundational apostles.

Sosthenes was the head of the synagogue in Corinth and was a believer. He was one of the sanctified in Jesus Christ, those who have believed and therefore are justified and set apart to belong to Jesus Christ.

*1Co 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, **you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.***

Those who are justified and sanctified are also to be holy. We are to live a life that is in keeping with the life given to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

*Re 22:11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; **let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.**"*

*1Pe 1:15 But just as he who called you is holy, so **be holy in all you do**; 1Pe 1:16 for it is written: "**Be holy, because I am holy.**" {Lev. 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7}*

*Heb 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to **be holy**; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

We cannot be holy without (1) being born again and (2) submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit.

*Jas 4:7 **Submit yourselves, then, to God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

Our enemy will only "flee" if we are living our lives in submission to the Lord. To submit means to yield. When we yield to the Lord we shut the door on the devil. When we yield to the flesh we can allow the devil a foothold.

*Ph 4:27 and **do not give the devil a foothold.***

Finally, those who are set apart to the Lord as holy because of the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross have the grace and thereby the peace of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. We may create an atmosphere of unrest without peace by our actions when we are not living in submission to Jesus Christ, but living a life fully submitted to Jesus Christ brings grace and peace.

Thanksgiving

4 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 5 For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge— 6 because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. 7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

We, with Paul, should be thankful always for the grace of Jesus Christ because of His love for us. He gave His life to pay the penalty for our sins.

*Mr 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, **but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**"*

Jesus Christ came to make those who believe rich in Him. This is not talking about material riches, money, but is talking about being made rich because of the Good News we have to share, giving us the ability to

speaking it and understanding it, and giving us knowledge and wisdom to understand His Word so that we can enlighten others. Paul's testimony of the Gospel bore fruit and the evidence of that fruit was born out in the Christians of Corinth testifying to Jesus Christ being the Messiah themselves. This will always be the case with those who are truly born again and obeying the Word and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives Christians spiritual gifts in order to proclaim the gospel and disciple those who are born again. Notice that spiritual gifts are especially given for "speaking" and "knowledge". Paul is not talking about natural gifts. A number of churches today are teaching that God created people with gifts to be used in the Church. But natural gifts are not spiritual gifts. An unregenerate person cannot have spiritual gifts, unlike what teachers like Rick Warren taught in his book "Purpose Driven Life". Spiritual gifts are reserved for those who are born again as opposed to those who are only born once.

The Lord is the one who strengthens us. He will keep those who love Him and obey Him strong to the end, and of course blameless because of the blood of Jesus Christ shed for us. The problem with many in the Corinthian church is that they were weak and in danger of wandering away from the Truth.

1Co 3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

1Co 11:30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

If you do not believe me that some of those in Corinth were weak, we will study one case later. That is the case of the man who was being boasted about who was actually sleeping with his father's wife. Paul had to tell them to excommunicate this man and hand him over to the enemy so that somehow he might repent and stop what he was doing.

1 Cor. 5:5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature {Or that his body; or that the flesh} may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

So we need the strength of the Lord because we are all weak. We will also study that later.

Ro 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

Though we are often weak and unfaithful, yet God is faithful. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But what does the first part of that verse say? "If we confess our sins". So we must remain humble and ready to admit our weaknesses and sins and God is faithful to treat us as sons and forgive us. This is because He is the One who has called us. He not only called us out of the world, the flesh and the devil but "into fellowship". We have unity of the Spirit with God Himself. We keep the unity of the Faith by continuing to believe and commit our lives to Him. Where once we were lost and lonely in our sinful ways, now those of us who belong to the Lord have fellowship with Him. When times are hard, when we lack wisdom, when we are weak, Jesus is there as our Savior, Lord and friend. "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so, little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so."

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Divisions in the Church

10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"^[a]; still another, "I follow Christ."

We have unity in the Spirit but often we act like we do not.

*Eph 4:3 Make every effort to keep **the unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace.*

So though Christians are given one Spirit at the new birth, we have to “make every effort” to keep that unity of the Spirit or else what? That unity can be broken. One way it can be broken is to allow that spiritual unity to be broken by following false teachers, believing in false doctrines, and through other sins that can divide. We should have unity in the Faith but many Christians run after false teachers.

*Eph 4:13 until we **all reach unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.*

So we must strive for unity in the Spirit and unity in doctrine. That is what Paul taught in Ephesians as becoming mature. We cannot remain as babies in the Faith or we will end up fodder for the enemy.

But Christians can even have division over claiming to follow biblical teachers like Paul, Apollos and Cephas. We will delve into this a little deeper later but this would be like saying today “I am of Chuck Smith” or “I am of John MacArthur” or “I am of” whoever is the head of your church or whatever island group you are from. But Paul says this is a worthless argument.

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into^[b] the name of Paul? 14 I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. 16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Is Christ divided? No. There is one second birth, one Spirit, one Church.

*Eph. 4:4-6 **There is one body and one Spirit**—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Sure there are different local churches as there were in the first century. There are different denominations for Christians who stress certain doctrines. But overall we are one body. Those who begin to argue that one

teacher is better than another, or one denomination is better than another (I am speaking of good biblical denominations, not bad ones), are on the verge of denying the unity of the Spirit. We can empty the cross of Christ of its power to free us from sin if we sin by making divisions where the Bible tells us not to. There is a time and a place for Biblical division with false teachers, false prophets, false apostles, false Christs—but there is also a good kind of unity that we need to continue to strive to uphold. If we do not then we give the enemy an entrance into our lives and our churches. Many churches and Christian lives have been destroyed by bad church splits. A spirit of unforgiveness and pride comes in and will not leave until people forgive one another.

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."¹⁴ 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

Did you ever wonder why people look down on Christians sometimes? It is because the relationship we have with Jesus Christ looks like foolishness to them. But Christians know where their power to live and face tomorrow comes from. They have realized they have no power in themselves but their power lies in their relationship to the all-powerful One.

*Is. 29:14-15 Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, **the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.**" Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?"*

Compared to the Almighty even the wisdom of the wise is foolishness. The message of the Gospel is foolishness, not only to a few, but to the whole world. Don't let people fool you into thinking that the world and its cultures knew about God and His Gospel plan through the stars or through their cultures. The Bible is very clear that the world "did not know Him".

*Eph 2:12 remember that at that time **you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.** Isa 53:6 **We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

But the amazing fact is that, all the way from the beginning of the world, God had a plan to redeem those who would make a choice to follow Him. Every human being has gone astray, but God sent His Son in order that our sin might be laid on Him so that His shed blood could wash away our sins. *"What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh! precious is the flow that makes me white as snow; no other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus."*

There is no way to have a restored relationship with God without the blood of Jesus. We must believe to be saved. We must believe that Jesus Christ is God and that He has the power to forgive sins on the basis of His shed blood on the cross.

22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

The Jews of Paul's time looked for signs and wonders to bring them to faith. Greeks looked for sound arguments that would convince them to believe. But many of both nations would not accept the simple Gospel message of Christ crucified because signs do not convince and logic will not convince if a person is not ready to accept the simplicity of the Gospel message (which looks like foolishness to some).

1Co 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

What they fail to realize is that it is God who calls men to salvation. Ours is not a seeker sensitive religion but a seeker sought religion. God knows, God seeks and calls, we must answer, if we chose to believe God justifies and glorifies. Since God is all knowing He already knows what our choice will be, but we do not until the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to our sinful condition, we confess it, God saves, and we begin a new life of following the Lord. But the world cannot be convinced by signs and wonders or logic. They must accept as a child Jesus Christ and trust in Him.

Lu 18:17 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."^d

All we have to do is think about ourselves. When God called on our hearts and lives we were nothing. We were dead in our sins and miserable. But God made us something. He continues to use us, fools that we are, to confound the wise. The Gospel message is a stumbling block to Jews and Greeks (Gentiles). We shame the strong by our simple effective message.

Saipan

In WWII when the marines captured the island of Saipan, the Japanese ordered the inhabitants to kill themselves by jumping off a cliff. Hundreds of feet below were the rocks and waters of the beach. American translators yelled through bullhorns that if the inhabitants would come to the U.

S. side, they would be spared. A few did. Most jumped. Many respond in the same way to the gospel today.

Source unknown

The Gospel message can break the heart of the strongest man, the wisest man, and the most important man. We have been brought low so that our boast will not be in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ. He is the strong One who is our “righteousness, holiness and redemption”. Those who rely on their own wisdom, their own experiences with signs and wonders, their own strength, their own righteousness will come to ruin in the end. Those who become like a child, relying on their Father for everything, will come to be the strongest and brightest in the end.

But we must spread that Gospel message. Once we know it we must pass it on. Why?

The Impact of Coca Cola

91% of the world's population has heard of coke.

74% have seen coke

51% have tasted coke

10% of the world's population has heard the Gospel.

Source unknown

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 1:12](#) That is, Peter

[1 Corinthians 1:13](#) Or in; also in verse 15

[1 Corinthians 1:19](#) Isaiah 29:14

[1 Corinthians 1:31](#) Jer. 9:24

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1 Corinthians 2

Paul began to correct some of the problems of the church at Corinth in Chapter 1. You will remember that he told them to stop being divided on the basis of whom they said they are following since the all should be following Jesus Christ. This is the same problem we have today. What some might call “divisions” due to region, ethnicity, culture or doctrinal issue which true believers can debate yet still remain in unity are unavoidable. But divisions over favorite teachers are not. We must all defer to Jesus Christ as our Teacher. Paul uses himself as an example of someone who is not looking for a following, but whose focus is on preaching the Gospel

1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.^[a] 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Paul may have not considered himself to be eloquent or to have superior wisdom but he was the most qualified by human standards out of most of the disciples to teach. He had formerly sat under the teaching of one of the most famous Jewish teachers of that time, Gamaliel. Yet he did not consider his training to be of real use in proclaiming the Gospel. Today it has become the standard in Christendom to favor those who have a college degree over those who do not. Yet the Holy Spirit is our teacher and having a college degree is not a qualification to understand and teach.

Joh 14:26 But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

1Jo 2:27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Paul was showing that, even though later he would tell them to follow his example, he is not the One they are to follow. He shows that he is a humble man who came with one goal ... to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul was not going to rely on his training but on the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. He was not going to get off-topic on to other subject but to stay with what Jesus had commissioned him to do. Our problem is that we often get off our main purpose, which is to share the Good News. We often think of Paul being very bold, but we learn from his testimony that he first began to proclaim the Gospel in weakness and fear. He trembled at the thought of sharing the Gospel message, not because I think he was afraid of being persecuted (though there may have been an element of that) but rather because of the seriousness of the message. Paul wanted to get it right. Paul relied on the power of God to persuade people through the indwelling Holy Spirit. When a Christian shares the Gospel, God will empower them to do so and will bring the Word of Scripture to remembrance, which contain the power to save.

Ro 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Joh 14:26 But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Men can make clever arguments for the Gospel, but it is the Holy Spirit that moves men's hearts. Paul did not rely on his oratory ability, but on the Holy Spirit to give him the words that would move people to believe in Jesus Christ. Yes, God did some healing and other miracles through Paul, but I don't believe the context of this passage is talking about signs and wonders. It is talking about human wisdom versus God's wisdom and power.

Wisdom From the Spirit

6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"^[b]— 10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.^[c] 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"^[d] But we have the mind of Christ.

God must reveal God's wisdom to the believer through His Word. Paul made sure that the Corinthians understood that he was not just talking about proclaiming the simple Gospel message but he was also talking about mature teaching. Neither the simple Gospel nor mature topics come from the wisdom of this age. The wisdom of this age and our age as well will come to nothing. God has had an unfolding plan of revelation that was hidden in times past. The hidden mystery that Paul proclaimed was that God had a Son and sent Him to redeem those who would believe.

Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Col. 1:26-27 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Not only is the mystery about Christ coming to save but that He would dwell in those who believe, thereby assuring them the hope of glory. The Holy Spirit was sent to indwell the believer so that we could learn of God and what He expects of us. The Holy Spirit brings light to the Scriptures, which before we were saved, were not understood. The spirit of the world cannot enlighten the Bible to our minds. There is a spirit of

the world. It is the antichrist spirit that has a hold over anyone who has not been saved. We often do not consider this when we are dealing with unbelievers, but they are actually in chains to the spirit of this world. They are living in darkness.

Ps 143:3 The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

Joh 12:46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no-one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

Paul makes a distinction again between worldly wisdom and spiritual wisdom. Those who are born again have the Holy Spirit who speaks through them not with worldly wisdom but “expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.” There are those in the churches today who claim that there is truth in every religion. There may be conventional wisdom or moral truth but not spiritual truth. Spiritual truth can only be discerned and taught by those who are regenerate. To say that there is truth in other religions is simply a way to try to bring Christians into a false unity with them. We can have no real unity with false religion.

Brian McLaren of the new Emerging Church movement said this:

"It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts," ... "Is our religion the only one that understands the true meaning of life? Or does God place his truth in others too? ... The gospel is not our gospel, but the gospel of the kingdom of God, and what belongs to the kingdom of God cannot be hijacked by Christianity" (p. 194). (Brian McLaren, An Emergent Manifesto, Baker Books, referenced http://simplyagape.blogspot.com/2007_06_01_archive.html)

Others have taught this same false idea.

"I love all religions. ... If people become better Hindus, better Muslims, better Buddhists by our acts of love, then there is something else growing there." ... "All is God--Buddists, Hindus, Christians, etc., all have access to the same God." (Mother Teresa) 12/4/89 Time, pp. 11, 13, <http://www.letusreason.org/Current34.htm>)

They (unbelievers) may not even know the name of Jesus but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved and that they're going to be with us in heaven. (Billy Graham interview with Robert Schuller on May 31, 1997.

"Messianic Muslims, who continue to read the Koran, visit the mosque and say their daily prayers but accept Christ as their Savior, are the products of the strategy which is being tried in several countries." One particular church planter in Asia related how 50 members of a Muslim family accepted Christ as Savior and formed their own fellowship. He writes in YWAM's staff newsletter, "They continued a life of following the Islamic requirements, including mosque attendance, fasting and Koranic reading, besides getting together as a fellowship of Muslims who acknowledge Christ as the source of God's mercy for them." ... The Charisma report added that "YWAM is also adopting the approach in India, where a team is working with a Hindu holy man." (<http://www.fundamentalbiblechurch.org/WTrumpet/fbcwt004.htm#Youth With>)

I could read you many more quotes. Suffice it to say this type of teaching has permeated many churches today. But Paul states that the man without the Spirit cannot understand the things of God. The things of God seem like foolishness to him. He cannot accept them. He cannot understand them. There is worldly, false religious “truth” then there is spiritual truth. There is only one way to spiritual truth that that is by the Spirit. There is only one way to have the indwelling Spirit and that is to be born again. There is only one way to be born again and that is to repent of our sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian is also not subject to the judgments of unbelievers. The Christian is subject to Christ. This does not mean we do not obey the laws of our land and live a life that reflects God’s grace among the unregenerate. But we are the ones to judge ourselves ultimately. We will get into this subject later, but Paul points out two things: (1) we are to judge and (2) that those who do not have the mind of Christ cannot really instruct us. First of all, today many Christians have been taught not to judge in all things. But when someone teaches that Christians are never to judge based on Matt. 7:1 they haven’t read their Bible. In fact in Matt 7:15, right in the context of Jesus teaching that men should not be hypocritical judges, Jesus tells us to beware of false prophets.

*Matt. 7:1 & 15 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ..." **Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.***

In order to watch out for false prophets we have to judge between those who are speaking spiritual truth and those who are not. We are to test all prophecy and teaching by the Word of God.

*1Jo 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

Christians have the mind of Christ because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That does not mean that we are not tempted and fall to sin sometimes. But if we continue to walk with Christ the Holy Spirit instructs us on every aspect of life. He does that for our own benefit but also so that we will be able to instruct others. That might mean our families, our co-workers, our fellow believers, and even the world. We need the mind of Christ in order to proclaim truth, otherwise we will be proclaiming things that have no validity or spiritual use. Only the Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God. In the believer the Spirit instructs us through the written word so that we will know spiritual truth and be able to communicate that, both in the Gospel message to unbelievers and in discipling those who are believers.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 2:1](#) Some manuscripts as I proclaimed to you God's mystery

[1 Corinthians 2:9](#) Isaiah 64:4

[1 Corinthians 2:13](#) Or Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual men

[1 Corinthians 2:16](#) Isaiah 40:13

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 3

On Divisions in the Church

1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Christian maturity is defined in the Bible as the ability to discern good from evil so that we will not be tossed about by the waves of false teaching and the deceitful scheming of men.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Eph. 4:13-14 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

But the Christians at Corinth were not ready for solid food. They were still acting like baby Christians even though I am sure they thought they were mature in the Faith. What is the sign of immaturity in Christians? That they are still worldly. They have not truly crucified the flesh but are still acting like they did when they were in and of the world.

Ga 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Those who are worldly exhibit some of the sins of nonbelievers such as jealousy and arguing among themselves. These were not the only problems in the church at Corinth and Paul addresses a number of issues in this letter. But this first one is a problem that we still have today among Christians. Christians in our modern times still argue among themselves as to which teacher they are following is superior. Back in Paul's day the Corinthians had been causing division among themselves. One person would say "I follow Paul", one would say "I follow Apollos", etc. Today many false teachers are out there trying to get followers to themselves. Notice the difference between them and Paul. True apostles like Paul and missionaries like Apollos were humble men. They often reminded the church that they were simply servants of God who brought the Gospel message and were about the business of discipling people. But

they were not discipling people to themselves, nor were they the ones to cause Christians to grow in Christ. Men may plant and water but it is God who makes things grow.

Joh 14:26 But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

It is the Holy Spirit living in us that teaches us and causes us to grow up into maturity in Christ. He does so through the Word of God.

*Eph 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

The Spirit uses the Word of God not only to defend us from evil but to build us up in the faith. The Word of God is not some dead book. It is living and active and able to make us discerning people. The Holy Spirit is the One who opens our understanding to the Word of God so that it can be applied to our lives.

Eph 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit {Or a spirit} of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Paul's goal was to pray that those whom he was teaching would be given wisdom so that they might know God better. As it was they were evidencing that they did not know God very well and were in danger of not growing if they kept disobeying the Lord.

Paul makes a clear distinction. Paul and the leaders of the churches are God's servants. They will be rewarded according to their works in Christ, but it is God who builds the building, not the servants. We often forget this today. We see ministries with people's names on them and assume that they are the ones building the building. But it is God who builds His church and we are called to be unified in Him. Those who have chosen to go their way unrepentant are one thing, and we are to avoid those. But those who are called according to His purpose, the most important of which is to build the spiritual building of the Church, must submit to the Lord, not be jealous of one another, not try to be the greatest, but be the lowest servant and allow God to do the real work.

We are simply God's workers in His field and on His building. We have to remember that it is not our field or building but His. God is the One who is building His Church. We are simply called to preach the Gospel and disciple people, but it is the Holy Spirit that brings the increase and is our teacher Who builds us up to maturity in the Faith. There are many men out there who are trying to build their own building. When they do that it is no longer God's building but theirs. They may build big buildings but it will not have the blessing of God on it or in it. This is why it is so important to submit to God in the building of His Church. Otherwise we can actually be against God.

10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light.

It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Paul laid the foundation for the Gentile Church by preaching the Gospel and discipling. But he was not building a building unto himself trying to get followers to Paul. He always remembered Who is the foundation. We can lay a foundation of a church in terms of preaching and teaching but that church has to be laid on the foundation of Christ. This is why I often tell people to find a Bible-believing Christ-centered church. When the foundation gets off the center of Jesus Christ and the cross, and gets away from Bible teaching, that church will not grow. Those who use the wood, hay or straw of popular psychology, postmodern thought, false teachings, and new revelation will have their work judged in the end. Those who build on the gold, silver and precious stones of Jesus Christ and His Word will be rewarded. On the Day of the judgment seat of Christ those who were the leadership of churches will either gain a reward or have their efforts burned up. Now this is talking about true believers, not false teachers, false prophets and heretics. Those will be sent to hell. The people Paul is talking about are true believers. Those who do not center of Christ and teach through the Bible will have their works burnt up and they will be saved but only just barely as a person escaping a burning house. We should be laying up our treasure in heaven by teaching and doing what the Lord asked us to do.

1Ti 6:19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Lu 12:34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Those who teach the truth and lead many to righteousness will be rewarded on the day of judgment of the believers.

Da 12:3 Those who are wise {Or who impart wisdom} will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Those who are Christian leaders who do not help people by focusing on Christ and His Word will have their works burnt up and will not receive a reward other than eternal life. Again, this is not talking about false teachers who will end up in hell.

Re 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."

Those who overcome by the power of the Spirit and by wearing the armor will not suffer the second death but will take part in the resurrection to life eternal.

Re 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. 18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become

a "fool" so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"^[a]; 20and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."^[b] 21 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas^[c] or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

I believe that God's temple is both in His Church and in each believer. The temple is no longer in Jerusalem but within His universal Church and within every believer. Christ paid the final penalty for our sins on the cross. Therefore there is no more need for a physical temple. The current temple of God is in every believer and in His Church. We must not allow ourselves or the Church to be destroyed. Of course God protects His Church and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

*Matt. 16: 18 (NIV) And I tell you that you are Peter, {Peter means rock.} and on this rock I will build my church, and **the gates of Hades {Or hell} will not overcome it. {Or not prove stronger than it}***

Again it is God Who builds His Church and the devil cannot destroy that. But people can destroy the faith of others and corrupt whole churches with false doctrines, false prophecies, false anointings, lying signs and wonders, immorality, etc. Paul is jumping now to addressing false teachers and leaders who lead people astray because He says that those who cause others to stumble will be destroyed. This is not the case with believers who show little works. Destruction is reserved for those who are not really born again and who are leading people astray in various ways.

Paul admonishes us to get God's wisdom, not the false wisdom of the world. Those who lead others astray may sound wise but they are really teaching the foolish wisdom of the world that leads to destruction. How can we avoid that trap? We need to be studying God's Word and asking the Lord for wisdom to understand it through the Holy Spirit. If we are relying on our own understanding we will fail and possibly mislead others.

*Pr 3:5 -6 **Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. {Or will direct your paths.}***

One of the signs that our time is full of foolishness is that people who claim to be Christians end up following and defending a teacher they admire. But Paul has revealed and will continue to reveal in these lessons that doing that is wrong. We are "of Christ" not of John MacArthur, Chuck Smith, etc. The benefits of being a believers are that they are "in Christ" and therefore all the promises He has made them will be fulfilled.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 3:19](#) Job 5:13

[1 Corinthians 3:20](#) Psalm 94:11

[1 Corinthians 3:22](#) That is, Peter

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 4

Apostles of Christ

1 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God. 6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

We are all bound to follow one Lord and one Word. Those who make factions regarding teachers, such as those today who say "I am of Chuck Smith, I am of John MacArthur, I am of John Robert, I am of Billy Kuartei, I am of Tol, I am of Palau Evangelical Church of Hawaii, etc. should not be saying those things but should be saying "I am of Jesus Christ". I remember a former missionary with Liebenzell telling me once that when he fills out forms and it asks what is your religion, he would write "I love Jesus Christ". In the same way we cannot claim we are in unity if we are not unified by the Word. That is our last word on every subject of life. Those who say they have new revelation apart from the Word are false teachers. Be aware that I am not saying that those who say "I am of Chuck Smith" and are wrong to do so are the same as those who say "I am of Benny Hinn". Notice that Paul mentions true apostles like himself, missionary apologists like Apollos, and elders like Cephus. He does not say that those who say "I am of Simon the Sorcerer" or "I am of Alexander the Copersmith" or "I am of Hymeneus" are those who simply need correction. These would be those who are labeled as false apostles, false prophets and false teachers. We are to rebuke them and if they do not return to the Faith we are to reject them (Titus 3:10).

7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! 9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. 10 We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! 11 To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. 12 We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; 13 when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

Paul is using "apostles" in the church planting missionary sense here. But he is also referring not just to Apollos and Cephas but to the 12 disciples who were being persecuted and some had already been martyred for the Faith. Those who have received the teaching of the Apostles are complete in that teaching. Yet some

in the church at Corinth were arguing over whose teaching was superior. Paul is saying that those who the Lord had sent out were all teaching what they needed and yet they were acting as non-believers in their arguments. They had been given the riches of God's Word and the revelation given to Paul and the other Apostles. Their arguments were not honoring to the Apostles like you would honor a king. Paul wonders if they have indeed become kings due to the riches that had been given them while they argued about who was greater. Then Paul continues to give them examples of how blessed they are compared to the Apostles. The difference between true apostles and false ones is apparent. True apostles are truly humble and know their place. They knew that they were scheduled to be persecuted and die. Only John did not die as a martyr, but he was certainly persecuted and sent away to prison on Patmos for a time. False apostles want to make a name for themselves and be equal to or greater than the true foundational apostles.

2 Cor. 11:12-15 And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

I will be covering this later on in our study of Corinthians, but Paul was contrasting those who argue over who is better, such as the false apostles, with those who are true apostles. True apostles like Paul had made fools of themselves publicly in order to bring the Gospel and sound doctrine to the new churches they planted. They realized full well that they were weak, but the Lord is strong, and the Church was strengthened and expanded by their sacrifice.

2Co 13:4 For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.
1Co 1:27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

Paul rebuked the Corinthians by showing them how much grace they had while the Apostles made themselves fools for the Gospel, viewed themselves as weak while relying on the strength of the Lord, and by being dishonored and persecuted. The Corinthians had lapsed, as so many churches do, into internal arguments while forgetting the sacrifices of those whom they should be emulating, and whose teachings laid the basis for their belief.

Paul then lays out what life is like for the Apostles. It is not easy. They went hungry and thirsty. They were clothed in rags. This is a rebuke to those who preach a message of health and wealth. Jesus Christ had nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58), and his disciples were clothed in rags. They were brutally treated and homeless. Yet they worked hard with their own hands to support the ministry God had called them to. This does not mean that pastors have to have a second or third job, but it does mean that they should be busy and do real work to help support themselves, not only relying on the donations of church members. Paul goes on to say that when they are cursed, they bless.

Mt. 5:43-44 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour {Lev. 19:18} and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Paul says that when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. This is the way of the true Christian witness. We don't insult those who insult us and pay back hurt for hurt. We practice forgiveness and forgive those who sin against us as Jesus Christ has forgiven us.

*Col 3:13 Bear with each other and **forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.***

Finally Paul makes an amazing statement. "Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world." In the cause of Christ, Paul and the Apostles even gave up their reputations. This was definitely the case for Paul by the end of his life. Most everyone deserted him because of his outspoken witness for Jesus Christ in the face of mounting persecution from the Roman Empire.

*2 Tim. 4:16-17 ¶ At my first defence, **no-one came to my support, but everyone deserted me.** May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.*

Are you willing to give up your reputation, your standing, and your place of honor for the cause of the Gospel? Let us also support those who are on the front lines of the fight and not desert them when persecution comes. Persecution is already happening around the world to true believers, and is also happening in the US. Discernment ministries are under many attacks in many ways for their stand for the truth. Pastors who teach the truth and will not back down are being persecuted and efforts are made to silence them. Missionaries are finding it harder to make exclusive claims about Jesus Christ and salvation in a growing number of countries. Paul and the Apostles had become the "scum of the earth" in the eyes of the world of that time. He goes even further to say that they had become the "refuse of the world". The word "refuse" in Greek is *peripsoma* meaning off-scrapings, scum, offscouring. It is like the stuff you don't eat on your plate and is only fit for the garbage. To the world the message of the Gospel and those who bring it are to be thrown away. When you see preachers who are popular you are likely not seeing preachers who are preaching the Gospel, because the Gospel is an offense to the world.

*Galatians 5:11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case **the offense of the cross has been abolished.***

The world does not accept the Gospel, only individuals who are convicted by the Holy Spirit, recognize and repent of their sin, and believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. But the reward for those who stand for the truth of God's Word will be great in heaven. Paul was laying up his treasure in heaven rather than on earth. Earthly treasure fades and disappears. Heavenly treasure endures for eternity.

*Lu 12:33b ... **a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted,** where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.*

*1 Pet. 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into **an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade— kept in heaven for you,***

14 I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. 15 Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father

through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul was not writing to the Corinthian church to shame them but to warn them not to make divisions over who they followed. He reminds them that they follow Jesus Christ and in Him they have many guardians. These are the guardian angels we often refer to. We cannot know who they are but we have unseen protectors in the heavenlies, just as we have unseen enemies. But though they have many protectors they have only a few fathers. Paul was one of only a few who had planted and raised the church at Corinth. Paul planted the church there through the preaching of the Gospel and teaching of sound doctrine. Paul assures them that if they want to imitate anyone they can imitate him. He is not taking the place of Christ but giving them a living person to emulate. Christian leaders should be living examples to those they teach of how to live. Paul was also sending them Timothy as an example and teacher. Timothy was like a son to Paul and he was a faithful man of God even though he was a younger man. Timothy was being sent to remind them of Paul's way of life so that they could imitate that. But notice that Paul's way of life was the way of life in Christ. What Paul was teaching them always agreed with what Christ taught and what was revealed in the Scriptures. Paul was also consistent in his teaching everywhere he went.

18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

It is the way of most of us to do what we would not normally do when the boss is not present. So it was with the Corinthian church. They had become arrogant and argumentative. They were causing divisions based on their following of certain teachers over others. This is why it is important for those who have planted churches to continue to come back to the churches to be sure they are still on the right track. Paul continued to visit the churches in Asia Minor or send trusted teachers there to help them. He continued to write letters to them and ask that his letter be circulated to all the churches. Unfortunately, in the case of the church at Corinth, they were in need of rebuke. Paul reminds them that he is coming to them soon and will find out who the arrogant ones are that are talking behind his back. He cautions them that he has the power of the Holy Spirit on his side and they will be found out. Talk is one thing; real power in the Spirit is another. Paul then gives them a choice to clear up these things before he comes or else he will have to discipline them. Paul did not want to have to face them down in rebuke but gives them a chance to understand what he has written and to make things right. Not only were people arguing over who was the better teacher, they were also tolerating a number of sins in their midst while they were boasting. We deal with one of those in the next lesson.

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 5

Expel the Immoral Brother!

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? 3 Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature^{al} may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

The problem in the churches today is that they do not stand for moral right. Instead they pander to the cultures of the world by allowing certain sins by members of their churches. These allowed sins are tied to the cultures. You would not see a church that allowed an unconfessed murderer or child molester to continue to fellowship with believers. But many churches allow people who are having adulterous relationship, both inside and outside marriage, to continue. Some even allow homosexuality, and even ordain ministers involved. Christians need to be careful that they are not being brainwashed by the world. Often we get so immune to sin in the world because we are exposed to it so much that we begin to justify it in our minds. The next step is always trying to find some Biblical justification for sin which is what a number of denominations have done with the homosexual issue. They say that Paul's words were just for some bygone era and not for today. But God's principles do not change, nor does His Word.

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.

Ps 119:89 Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

Apparently the Corinthian church was allowing one of the worst sins to go unchallenged, that of incest. This is a sin all over the world today as parents molest children. This man was sleeping with his mother! Apparently Paul had heard that the Corinthian Christians were actually bragging about this. What a way to spoil your witness. But many of those at Corinth were immature Christians, and this man was not a Christian at all. Why? Because he was flagrantly disobeying the Lord. So Paul stated that he had already judged the situation. Judged? Yes. We are to judge those inside the Church. God judges the unbelievers. We are set as judges over the body of Christ, Christ being the high judge.

So Paul gives the church at Corinth the direction to assemble in the name of the Lord. Paul would be there in spirit with them. The Holy Spirit is present when two or three gather together. Then they were to hand this man over to Satan so that his sin nature might be destroyed and he might come to repentance. This does not mean that Satan can save. It does not mean that the church can do this lightly. It means that when a serious sin is being committed and the person will not repent, they should be cast out or excommunicated so that Satan can bring them down to the lowest point. Many times it is only at our lowest point that we recognize our sin and return to the Lord. Sometimes churches have to practice this excommunication in order for a person to realize how desperately sinful they are. Sometimes we as parents have to let one of our

children go in order for them to have a chance at coming back. A case in point would be the parable of the prodigal son.

Luke 15:11-19 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them." Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no-one gave him anything. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'

The father could have held on to the son or told him he was not allowed to go. But he recognized in his son a rebelliousness that could only be brought to full fruition by allowing the child to go fully into the clutches of Satan. The father, I am sure, was praying for the salvation of his son everyday. But he had to reach the bottom before he made his journey back to the father. The case of this incestual man is the same. Those who live in sin should not be permitted the fellowship and tactic blessing of the Church. They should be put out if they have been warned once or twice. There are many types of ways to divide the church. Heresy is one, open sin is another. Paul's words to Titus cover anyone who is causing division in the churches because of their sin.

Tit 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

The trouble with our churches today is that we rarely practice this. But it is actually part of our witness to the world. The problem today is that we accept those living in sin and those teaching false doctrines in our churches and thus we ruin our witness to the world and many will follow these people, bringing the truth into disrepute.

2Pe 2:2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

Just a little bit of yeast can cause a bread dough to rise. It only takes a little bit of sin to effect a whole church, a whole community. The principle of Christ is to be unleavened. This is why the picture of the unleavened bread is so powerful in Judaism and in Christianity. This is why, if we were true to the picture, we serve the Lord's Supper with unleavened bread.

God hates the leaven of unrighteousness!

One example of leaven in the modern church is the Third Wave "New Apostolic Reformation" Latter Rain counterfeit revival movement that is leavening the church as never before. There are people out there who are deceived or deceivers who are leavening churches, families, and children before our very eyes. And yet most of us just stand there and watch, cowed into submission by those who would call us "God mockers" and "heresy hunters". This should rather be a clarion call for the true Body of believers to stand up and expel the wicked man from amongst you! God does not tolerate wickedness in His holy place, and we should not either. The Holy Spirit not only indwells each believer but also the body of Christ as a whole. I believe that this is a test for the Church to see if she can obey God, stand up for sound doctrine, stand firm in the faith, and do what is right. I know that what I am saying is very unpopular right now. I'm sure Paul was unpopular for judging a number of people and sending them away from the body of Christ. But he was entirely right and we must do the same thing before our friends, our families, our children, our neighbors and our fellow believers are hoodwinked with false doctrines, false prophecies, and a false anointing.

It is important that you see the correlation to what Paul talked about in 1 Cor. 5 with what is being said and done in the Third Wave before you expose yourself or your family to a great delusion. Ask the Father for wisdom in this matter. There is help for you out there, and there are many of us who are taking this stand now. But it must be done!

I did a study awhile ago on leaven and will share with you briefly what I found.

THE MEANING OF LEAVEN

Old Testament

Strong's Hebrew 07603 - sa'or means 1) leaven

Strong's Hebrew 04682 - matstzah means 1) unleavened (bread, cake), without leaven.

Strong's Hebrew 02557 - chametz means 1) a thing leavened 2) leaven

New Testament

Strong's Greek 2210 - zume means 1) leaven, 2) metaph. of inveterate mental and moral corruption, viewed in its tendency to infect others

Leaven is applied to that which, though small in quantity, yet by its influence thoroughly pervades a thing; either in a good sense as in the parable Mat. 13:33; or in a bad sense, of a pernicious influence, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"

The term "leaven" was primarily used as:

- 1) a remembrance to Israel of the haste of the Passover meal before fleeing Egypt
- 2) as a symbol of Israel being influenced to sin by surrounding nations
- 3) as a symbol of the body of Christ being influenced to sin by false doctrines
- 4) as a symbol of the kingdom of heaven which will leaven the whole until it is brought to the fullness of the will of the Father
- 5) thanksgiving and praise with leaven

The use of "unleavened bread" was primarily used as:

- 1) a symbol of Israel being set apart from the nations unto God
- 2) as a remembrance of the physical body of Christ being put to death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins
- 3) as a symbol used in the Lord's Supper of our separation unto God by the physical death on the Cross and our faith in Christ

VERSES ABOUT LEAVEN

Ex 12:15, Ex 12:19, Ex 13:7, Ex 34:25, Le 2:11, Le 6:17, Le 10:12, Le 23:17, Am 4:5, Mt 13:33, Mt 16:6, Mt 16:11, Mt 16:12, Mr 8:15, Lu 12:1, Lu 13:21, 1Co 5:6, 1Co 5:7, 1Co 5:8, Ga 5:9

VERSES CONTAINING THE WORD "LEAVENETH"

1Co 5:6, Ga 5:9

VERSES CONTAINING THE WORD "UNLEAVENED"

Ge 19:3, Ex 12:8, Ex 12:15, Ex 12:17, Ex 12:18, Ex 12:20, Ex 12:39, Ex 13:6, Ex 13:7, Ex 23:15, Ex 29:2, Ex 29:23, Ex 34:18, Le 2:4, Le 2:5, Le 6:16, Le 7:12, Le 8:2, Le 8:26, Le 23:6, Nu 6:15, Nu 6:17, Nu 6:19, Nu 9:11, Nu 28:17, De 16:3, De 16:8, De 16:16, Jos 5:11, Jud 6:19, Jud 6:20, Jud 6:21, 1Sa 28:24, 2Ki 23:9, 1Ch 23:29, 2Ch 8:13, 2Ch 30:13, 2Ch 30:21, 2Ch 35:17, Ezr 6:22, Eze 45:21, Mt 26:17, Mr 14:1, Mr 14:12, Lu 22:1, Lu 22:7, Ac 12:3, Ac 20:6, 1Co 5:7, 1Co 5:8

The main picture of leaven in the OT concerning the tabernacle and sacrifices was a picture of Israel being set apart to God, holy and without the leavening influences of the pagan nations around them. This is also a picture of the coming Messiah, who in 1 Cor. 5 is likened to the unleavened bread of the Passover. Though the picture of the unleavened bread of the Passover is also a picture of the haste to leave Egypt, it is also a picture of the haste to leave or expel the leaven from among first Israel, and as grafted in branches, the Gentile church -- the body of Christ. The body of Christ is to be without leavening influences such as idolatry, greed, sexual perversion, slander, drunkenness, covetousness, theft, false teaching and false prophecy.

Leaven was most often used in the NT to describe the influence of the hypocritical Pharisees who pretended to be examples of the truth but were living a lie. They burdened others with legalism but did not understand the freedom that Christ brought, nor did they truly understand Scripture. They used Scripture to lord themselves over people and put burdens on them they could not bear.

Today churches should, in celebrating the Lord's Supper with unleavened bread, be drawn a picture each time of being set apart for Christ, as well as the body of Christ broken on the cross as our "once for all" sacrifice for sin. It should also remind the church that those who would pretend to live a Christian life but are living in unconfessed sexual sin, teaching false doctrine, practicing **idolatry** in the form of ritualistic pragmatic "means to an end", **greedily** running for profit by using Christian whitewashed sorcery, **slandering** the saints, **drunk** in ANY way including "drunk in the spirit", are **covetous** especially of high standing in the church due to "greater anointing" -- should be rebuked and expelled if they do not repent and

change their ways. This is the only way the church will stand unleavened in the last days. God has hated leaven from the beginning, which is obvious by the multiple pictures in the OT. It is time to take the leaven out of the lump, deliver them over to "Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor. 5:5), and move on with strengthening the relationship of those who are truly one in the Spirit, obedient to the law of Christ and the Word of God, and are living according to His purposes.

9 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11 But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

The point of Paul's warnings to judge and expel sinners from the Church are not to stop us from witnessing to unbelievers. We are in the world. But we must be careful not to be of the world.

1Jo 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

If we continue to associate with unbelievers and do what they do, we prove that we love the world more than Christ. If we continue to fellowship with those who call us brothers but are still tied to the sins of the world, then we ruin our witness to the world. We are not to even associate or spend time around so-called brothers who are living in sin. This is not talking about a true believer who sins but repents of that sin. It is talking about someone who is "practicing" sin as John called it.

1 John 3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

"With such a man do not even eat" not only goes for a so-called brother who is really not regenerate and is living in continual sin, but also goes for false teachers who fall into the same category.

2Jo 1:10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.

12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."^[b]

Now we come to the crucial end of this section on expelling a false brother. Today many Christians are being told not to judge. But the Bible is clear that there are situations which we are called to judge, and if we do not we are not being faithful to the Lord. We are to judge those inside the Church. God will take care of judging the unrighteous sinners who are not part of the body of Christ. We are to expel the wicked man who calls himself a brother but is dividing the church and leading others astray. In the next chapter Paul elaborates on this argument.

*1 Cor. 6:1-3 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know **that the saints will judge the world?** And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? **Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!***

We will look that this further, but the point is that the Bible teaches how we must judge in various ways, as well as those areas we are to leave up to God. God is the final judge in all things. But He has appointed us to judge in many ways and we must apply righteous judgment in the things He has called us to judge.

*Rom. 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; **and avoid them***

*Eph. 5:11 **And have no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather **reprove them***
*2 Thess. 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh DISORDERLY, and not after the tradition which ye received of us***

*2 Tim. 3:5,7 Concerning the last days, he says that some will have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. **From such turn away**" for such people are "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"*

*2 John 10:11 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house**, neither bid him God speed For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds "*

*2 Cor. 6:17 Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch no the unclean thing; and I will receive you*

Jude 1:12 These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm-- shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted-- twice dead.

We are to expel the wicked man from among the fellowship of believers so that the enemy might bring them low and somehow they will repent. They will not repent if they are allowed to stay and think that basically what they are doing is ok.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 5:5](#) Or that his body; or that the flesh

[1 Corinthians 5:13](#) Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21,24; 24:7

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 6

Lawsuits Among Believers

Today we have the most litigious society ever in the history of the world. Taking people and organizations to court has become a way of life. Unfortunately this has begun to also take over in the churches. Threats of lawsuits from Christians against other Christians have become commonplace. But what does the Bible teach that those who say they are Christians should do about taking other Christians to court?

1 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4 Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!^[u] 5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6 But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers! 7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? 8 Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 definitely instructs believers to not go to court against one another. To demonstrate that Christians are not capable of forgiving each other and reconcile their own differences is to demonstrate spiritual defeat. Why would someone want to become a Christian if Christians have just as many problems and are just as incapable of solving them? However, there are likely some instances when a lawsuit might be the proper course of action. If the Biblical pattern for reconciliation has been followed (Matthew 18:15-17) and the offending party is still in the wrong, in some instances, a lawsuit might be the proper thing to do. This should only be done after much prayer for wisdom (James 1:5) and consultation with spiritual leadership.

1 Corinthians 6:4 states "If you then have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?" The whole context of 1 Corinthians 6:1-6 is dealing with disputes in the church, but Paul does reference the court system when he says judgments concerning things pertaining to this life. Paul means that in matters of this life that are outside the church, that is why the court system exists. Paul is saying that church problems should not be taken to the court system, but should be judged within the church.

Acts chapter 21 starting with verse 26 talks about Paul being arrested and wrongfully accused of something he did not do. Then the Romans took him and in Chapter 22 starting with verse 24 we read, "The commander brought Paul inside and ordered him lashed with whips to make him confess his crime. He wanted to find out why the crowd had become so furious. As they tied Paul down to lash him, Paul said to the officer standing there, "Is it legal for you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't even been tried?" Paul used the Roman law and his citizenship to protect himself. There is nothing wrong with using the court system as long as it is done with a right motive and a pure heart.

1 Corinthians 6:7 declares, "Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" The thing Paul is concerned with here is the testimony of the believer. It would be far better for us to be taken advantage of, or even abused, than it would be for us to push a person even further away from Christ by taking them to court. What is more important, a legal battle, or the battle for a person's eternal soul?

In summary, should Christians take each other to court over church matters? Absolutely not! Should Christians take each other to court over civil matters? If it can in any way be avoided, no. Should Christians take non-Christians to court over civil matters? Again, if it can be avoided, no. However, in some instances, such as the protection of our own rights (as in the example of the Apostle Paul), it may be appropriate to pursue a legal defense.

In verse 2-3 the passage we are looking at states: *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!* Those who claim we are not to judge based on Matt. 7:1 need to look at this passage because we absolutely are to judge things within the Church with righteous judgment. Why? Because someday in the Millennial Kingdom we will be set as judges over the world and even angels.

This means that not only are we to resolve matters between believers within the context of the Church, but we are to also test the spirits and expel the wicked men from the Church who cause division and do not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. We already covered this verse but it is good to read it again.

*1 Corinthians 5:12-13 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? **Are you not to judge those inside?** God will judge those outside. **"Expel the wicked man from among you."***

Even back in the Old Testament in Deut. 13:1-5 God commanded the Israelites to "purge the evil from among you." In the New Testament Christian are to follow the same course. We are to be unleavened, set apart to the Lord as holy. Therefore we are to rebuke and finally reject anyone who teaches and promotes heresy and false prophecy.

*Rom. 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; **and avoid them***

*Eph. 5:11 **And have no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather **reprove them***
*2 Thess. 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh DISORDERLY, and not after the tradition which ye received of us***

*Eph. 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.***

*Titus 3:10 **A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;** (KJV)*

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

We have to separate ourselves from the wicked, make a distinction. That is why those who live in sin should be avoided and disfellowshipped until they repent. They are to be kicked back into the world in order to shame them and allow the enemy to do his worst with them until they repent. They may or may not repent but to keep the Church clean we must follow what the Bible says. Why are we to practice excommunication? Because the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God. We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that just because a person says they are a Christian yet are living in unrepentant sin that they will be going to heaven. We need to be careful not to practice tolerance of sin where the Bible instructs us not to.

We are then given a list of some of the practiced lifestyle sins that God will judge. They include fornicators (sex outside of marriage), those who worship idols, adulterers (often referring to sex with someone other than your marriage partner), those who practice prostitution, those who practice homosexuality (both male and female), those who steal, are greedy, are drunks, slander people or swindlers (the word in Greek can mean those who extort money from the poor or from their work, or it can also mean those who rob). These will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Paul reminds his audience that they were practicing those things before they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved. If you are truly saved you will not longer practice these sins. Why? Because you are washed, justified and sanctified in Christ. If churches tolerate these sins then they are not true churches. They are playing church but are not really made up of born again people. Those churches that ordain homosexuals and tolerate people who are living in sexual sin are not really part of the true body of Christ.

Sexual Immorality

12 "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."^{1b} 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

There was a popular saying, apparently, in the Corinthian church. It was “everything is permissible for me”. This is the same saying in the modern church and has been carried to extremes as it was then. Just because we have freedom in Christ does not mean we have the freedom to abuse that freedom.

Ga 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.

Notice that Christ set us free so that we could have freedom. Freedom from what? Sin. But then we must stand firm so that we are not burdened again with a yoke of slavery to sin. If we allow ourselves to be enslaved by sin then we are practicing sin, living a lifestyle of sin.

1 John 3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

1 John 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in {Or through} Christ Jesus our Lord.

So Paul has to correct the saying “everything is permissible for me” which was primarily in reference to eating foods formerly banned by the Lord in the old covenant with Israel. Paul adds that not *everything is beneficial, that we must “not be mastered by anything.”* With reference to food specifically, the saying “*Food for the stomach and the stomach for food*” Paul adds to by reminding them that “*God will destroy them both*”. In other words, in the end food will no longer matter as the earth will be destroyed by fire and if a person is practicing the sin of gluttony and greed they too will be destroyed. He also reminds them that sexual immorality is really a sin against our relationship and marriage to God. We are the bride, Jesus Christ is the bridegroom. We are wed to Him when we believe that he is God and that only through His blood can He save us. The Holy Spirit then creates a new man in us and we are born again. We are then married to Christ, no longer married to sin and the devil. By virtue of our marriage to Christ we are guaranteed the resurrection to life eternal rather than resurrection to eternal hell.

Remember that our God is a jealous God. When we commit lifestyle sins and practice them we are denying Him, committing adultery against Him. God often spoke to the Jews when they sinned against Him in the terms of breaking a marriage and committing adultery.

Ho 1:2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."

Hosea was commanded by God to marry a prostitute in order to illustrate that Israel has committed adultery by departing from the Lord. This is not something we are commanded to do, in fact the Lord is clear that those who commit sexual immorality are departing from the Lord, Who has made them part of His body. When a person commits sexual sin, and does not repent and leave a relationship that causes lifestyle sin, they are actually leaving the Lord. If we say we are united with the Lord, then we are one in spirit with Him. If we are united in adultery and sexual sin, we are not of the Spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

So what are we to do? We are not just to avoid sexual immorality but flee from it. To flee means not to just walk away slowly but to run at top speed. The picture is not of one who is out for a leisurely walk but like someone who is running away from a burning building or a city under attack. One of the hardest sins to avoid are sexual sins because it involves our own body. The devil knows this and that is why he most often

tempts us with sexual sin. But we are reminded that when we are joined to Christ in marriage our body then becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are not our own but a bought with a price, that price being the death of the Son of God to pay for our sins in our place. This is the most important thing to remember when tempted with sexual sin. We belong to Him and He has done everything to marry us to Himself. We dare not defile the very temple of the Spirit in us and go down the road of ruining our relationship with Christ.

Footnotes: [1 Corinthians 6:4](#) Or matters, do you appoint as judges men of little account in the church? [1 Corinthians 6:16](#) Gen. 2:24

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 7

Marriage

Having dealt with the issue of sexual immorality and how the Church is not to tolerate it, Paul now launches into a definition of marriage.

1 Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.^[u] 2 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

The principle here is that if a man can dedicate himself exclusively to the Lord and ministry then that is the best situation. That is because there are no distractions and other responsibilities. But the Lord also created woman to be a helpmate for man.

Ge 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

How do we reconcile this verse with what Paul has stated about it being good for a man not to marry? Paul was addressing the fact that there were persecutions happening and trials which would best be endured by sticking to the course God had laid out for each person. If they were single and were not prone to fornication and “burning” for women, then it was better that they stay that way in view of the shortness of time for many. But Paul does not discourage marriage either. He affirms the reason why God had created females. Immorality is a problem for the majority of men, at the very least in their thought life. If a man was prone to immoral thoughts and behavior, it was best for him to be married. The husband was then to treat his wife as his own body, and vice versa. Sex is a good thing in marriage, Paul writes, and the only time marital sex is to be withheld is by mutual consent for the purpose, for example, of prayer. But married people are not to practice celibacy, as they do not want to give Satan a chance to tempt them. Paul makes it clear that marriage is more a concession than a command. Paul saw the benefit, for himself, of being able to travel and minister without the duties of marriage and family. He wishes that every man could do the same, but recognizes that many men cannot.

Then Paul states a very important statement. Each man has his own gift from God. Not all men have the same gifts or gifts. This is an important gift in refuting the claim by many Pentecostals that every one who is born again should speak in tongues as an initial sign that the Holy Spirit has indwelt him. That is false according to this verse and others.

1Co 12:30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? {Or other languages} Do all interpret?

The answer is no. The Lord has given us various spiritual gifts and not all are the same. In fact tongues is low on the list of gifts.

1Co 14:5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, {Or other languages; also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39} but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, {Or other languages; also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39} unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

Prophecy in the New Testament is not primarily talking about foretelling. It is talking about preaching and teaching. So it is more important to desire the greater gifts such as prophecy rather than speaking in tongues.

1Co 12:31 But eagerly desire {Or But you are eagerly desiring} the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

1Co 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

We will get into this later, but it is best to desire the greater gifts, and the most excellent way is the way of love. There are many gifts, but the greatest gift of all is love.

8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Paul repeats his advice to women as well as men. There are many problems with sexual immorality in Corinth as there were in all the major cities of the Middle East. The people had grown up with a skewed worldview, as we have today that immorality is a normal human function. But since they became believers they adopted another worldview, that of Jesus Christ. Paul is reminding them that the best calling is to remain single, married to the Lord alone. But it is also acceptable to the Lord, in fact provided for by the Lord, for men and women to marry and produce offspring. But we must remember at all times that we are first the bride of Christ and must obey Him.

10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

Marriage is a picture of our relationship to Christ. We become one in Christ when we are born again.

1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Ga 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Divorce is a picture of separation from God.

Jer 3:8 I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.

So too are marriage and divorce among men and women. When one is married they become one.

Ge 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Divorce is never in the plan of God for His Bride nor is it in His plan for men and women.

Mal 2:16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself {Or his wife} with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

It was only later that a few concessions were made.

Matt. 19:8-9 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."

There is also another exception that Paul talks about.

12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. 16 How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

A Christian is not to marry an unbeliever.

2Co 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

Sometimes a marriage took place before either have believes. In that case the believer should strive to keep the marriage together. Though there is an exception if an unbelieving spouse leaves, the goal is still to reconcile and hopefully sanctify the unbeliever to Jesus Christ. How do we know if our unbelieving spouse may yet be saved? This does not mean that a husband or wife can give eternal life and forgive sins. It means that by their influence they may still be able to help the spouse come to Christ Who can save them.

God's Call

17 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. 18 Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. 20 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. 21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

God has called each believer to a particular place in life and given him or her the gifts in order to be of service to the Lord. Paul then gives an illustration to show that no matter if one is a Jew or Gentile they are to serve the Lord as God has created them and in the place He has called them. There were certain Jews going around the churches calling for the Gentiles to be circumcised. They were essentially calling them to come back under part of the Law of Moses. But Christ had come to fulfill the Law for all people, including the Jews.

Mt 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.

Ga 3:25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Those who place their faith in Christ are no longer bound to keep the Law in order to be saved. The Jews could not keep the Law because the Law was there to point out their sins and need for repentance and faith in God.

Ro 3:20 Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Christians were to no longer have divisions based on whether they were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free, men or women.

Ro 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Ga 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This is why Christians were not to complain about their circumstance, even if they were slaves. This does not mean that the Bible condones slavery, as some have accused. It means that Christians are to serve the Lord in whatever circumstance because it is not their situation that enslaves them or frees them, but true freedom is to be found in Christ. They are all “freedmen” in Christ. We are freed from sin through believe and repentance and then become servants of Christ. Christ paid the price to buy us and, in a sense, make us His servants. So then we are no longer slaves to men but slaves to God. So then we are look to God as our Master and follow Him. That means that if He has called us to difficult circumstances here we are to obey

Him and remain where He has called us. Some Christians covet where God has placed other Christians. In fact false teachers on TV make people covetous of money, fame and power. But that is the opposite of what Paul is saying. He is teaching that Christians need to be content with how God has made them and where He has called them. We need to trust Him with our lives, not trust in our own dreams and ideas.

25 Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. 27 Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. 28 But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. 29 What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Addressing the crisis the church at Corinth is going through with regards to sexual immorality, Paul states that women who are virgins should remain that way. Those who are married should also remain married and not divorce. Paul's advice on remaining where the Lord has called you continues into the area of marriage or singleness. Paul obviously believes that being single is better. This is because he states that marriage brings "many troubles in life. It is true that marriage brings more obligations and has a tendency to limit ministry outside of the family. Paul is also preparing the church because he knows that trials are coming. Many would be led away into captivity, burned at the stake, given to the lions in the arenas. This would cause anxiety, care, solicitude, trials. Days of persecution were coming on and in those fiery trials, their families would be torn asunder, and a part be put to death. Or they may be poor, and oppressed, and driven from their homes, and made wanderers and exiles, for the sake of their faith. So Paul is trying to help them avoid all the extra grief that would come from being married and having future trials bring added problems. This is evidenced by the next verse. The time is short and those who have wives and other things need to be careful not to be hanging on to them and relying on them. They need to rely on the Lord alone because the things of this world pass away. Many of them would face death in the years to come from the Roman Empire. It is always better to lean on the Lord first. He is the one who can bring us through the trials of this world.

32 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. 33 But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— 34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

The tendency is for married people to be concerned more with the affairs of family than the things of the Lord. This tends to divide our attentions. This does not mean that married men and women cannot serve the Lord, but in these end times, since the time is also short, we need to devote as much of our time to the Lord as possible. Remember what the Lord told those who said they wanted to follow Him.

Mt. 8: 19-23 Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has

nowhere to lay his head." Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

These who said they wanted to follow the Lord would be unable to do so. That is because they first was not able to follow the Lord because of the lack of comfortable housing. The second want to go home and bury his father first. That would have meant he would have to go home and spend an extended period of time wrapping up the business of his father. But when we follow the Lord we have to jump in the boat and go with him. That is a lot harder to do if we are tied to many other obligations that are, in an eternal sense, not as important. The Lord wants our "undivided devotion". Today we put our families and other things above the Lord many times. But to be a true follower of Christ we need to be careful not to get weighed down by the things of this world.

Lu 21:34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.

This is a very real danger for many Christians. The emphasis is very much on the concerns of the world today and our own pleasures rather than obeying the Lord.

36 If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. 37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. 38 So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.^[b]

So both getting married and not getting married are good things, but being single and able to serve the Lord without obligations is best in the face of adversity. We need to devote ourselves to the Lord. The word "devote" means to consecrate or set ourselves aside for the Lord. That means that the Lord comes first in everything, even above family.

Tit 3:8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

1Co 7:35 I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. 40 In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Finally, Paul states that the Lord expects the bonds of marriage not to be broken while the spouse lives. If the spouse dies and the woman or man has been devoted to that marriage, then they are free to marry again keeping in mind that they belong first to the Lord. Paul states that in his experience a woman would be

better off to stay single after her husband dies because she will be happier. But we have to also remember the admonition from the Lord to marry rather than burn with lust (1 Cor. 7:9).

Marriage is a sacred thing. Devoting ourselves to the Lord is even greater. Remaining unmarried, if called by God to do so, is not better in the case of non-marriage being more right than marriage, but that the circumstances of the Lord will dictate which is right for which individual. Both should be devoted to the Lord, but those who can devote themselves entirely to the Lord outside of marriage are able to serve the Lord with no hindrances and less loss in the time of persecution.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 7:1](#) Or "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."

[1 Corinthians 7:38](#) Or ³⁶ If anyone thinks he is not treating his daughter properly, and if she is getting along in years, and he feels she ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. He should let her get married. ³⁷ But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind to keep the virgin unmarried-this man also does the right thing. ³⁸ So then, he who gives his virgin in marriage does right, but he who does not give her in marriage does even better.

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 8

Food Sacrificed to Idols

Paul changes the topic from marriage vs. singleness to the problem of eating food sacrificed to idols. In Corinth, as in other cities where there was major worship of false gods, there was always meat on sale in the marketplace that was part of animals that had been dedicated and sacrificed to idols. Paul sorts this dilemma out.

1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge.^[a] Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God.

There were apparently Christians in Corinth who were boasting that they knew what God wanted with regards to sacrificial meat to idols being consumed by Christians. Paul reminds them not to be puffed up but to build each other up in love.

1Th 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

2Jo 1:6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

Eph 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

The idea is that the Church is to build itself up in love, not in controversy over who has the most knowledge. It is always that case that those who profess to know much often “do not yet know as they ought” to know. The true humble believer will admit that they are still learning and not try to go beyond what they know, and especially not go beyond what is written.

1Co 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

Notice that it is those who claim knowledge that is beyond the Word often end up taking pride against their brothers in the Lord. This type of division is what Paul is trying to help the Corinthians to avoid. The man who loves God is known by God and therefore will seek God out through His Word for answers.

4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

First of all, idols are not only symbols of false gods (in fact idols themselves are worshipped as “God”) but Paul takes it a step further and states that idols are “nothing at all in the world”. They have no real power or influence beyond what God allows to test His followers and bring others to the point of hopelessness so that they might fully realize their sins and repent. There is no god but one God.

*De 6:4 Hear, O Israel: **The LORD our God, the LORD is one.** {Or The LORD our God is one LORD; or The LORD is our God, the LORD is one; or The LORD is our God, the LORD alone}*

But it is not enough to just recognize that there is only one God. The demons also recognize that.

*Jas 2:19 **You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.***

We must also recognize that God is One in Three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*1Ti 2:5 **For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,**
1Th 4:8 **Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.***

The demons and even men have been called “gods” by men. But they are not. There is only one God in reality.

Verse 6 is an amazing verse. Here Paul states quite clearly that there is no difference in God between the Father and the Son. Notice that the same thing is said of both the Father and the Son: *through whom all things came and through whom we live.* But there is one difference. To God the Father Paul writes: *from whom all things came and for whom we live.* In the case of God the Son he states: *through whom all things came and through whom we live.* God the Father is the source of all things and it is to Him that goes all the glory. Even the Son defers His glory to the Father.

*Mt 16:27 **For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.***

*Joh 8:54 Jesus replied, **"If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.***

Yet Christ also receives all the glory.

*Mr 8:38 **If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels."***

The difference in the two sentences is that God the Father is unseen, but Jesus Christ became a man and added human nature on to His Divine nature. He not only created us, but He came among us to rescue us and those of us who believe this are then living in Christ, through Christ.

*Isa 46:4 **Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.***

Col. 1: 13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, {A few late manuscripts redemption through his blood} the forgiveness of sins.

7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8 But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

This is a problem for those who have only recently come out of false religion. They don't fully know their freedom in Christ, so they are not able to fully exercise it and assume that by doing or not doing certain things, or by eating only certain foods they will be brought nearer to God. But food does not bring a person closer or further away from God. Fasting also has its place but we have to be careful of legalism. Humans love legalism even while they profess to hate it. They set rules on themselves that God has never done. We are free in Christ to do what God calls us to do. We are no longer bound by the legalism of false religion.

9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? 11 So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12 When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

We are to be witnesses to the world and to our brethren. We have to be careful that what we do does not cause another to sin. Paul states that eating meat taken from idol worship cannot harm a Christian, but if it causes someone else weaker in the Faith to stumble we should not do it. As Paul stated before a weaker Christian might be putting too much emphasis on the legalism of not eating meat sacrificed to idols, so if a more mature Christian eats that meat they can cause an infant Christian to stumble. So we have to be careful what we do as mature Christians around younger Christians. The Corinthians were just doing what each thought best, and apparently bragging about the superior knowledge they had in doing so. But this is not right and it is a sin against Christ. Better to never eat meat again than to make a brother stumble in their Faith. This goes over into many other issues. The Bible states that a little wine is good for the stomach, but if drinking wine will cause other Christians to stumble we should not do so. There is no rule in the Bible about chewing beetle nut but if chewing it causes a brother to stumble you had best stop doing it. We are to live our lives but what we wear, what we eat, what we drink in awareness of our witness. We have freedom in Christ but that freedom does not give us license to openly do things that would cause a weaker brother to sin.

1Pe 2:16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

Ga 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; {Or the flesh; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24} rather, serve one another in love.

Ga 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.

We need to exercise moderation in all things.

Php 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Footnotes: [1 Corinthians 8:1](#) Or "We all possess knowledge," as you say

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 9

The Rights of an Apostle

Here Paul lays down one of the marks of an apostle.

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? 2 Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Paul reminds them of what he taught in the last chapter. Paul also has the freedom of Christ because he is in Christ and is His apostle. He asks them whether or not they consider him to be an apostle. It is obvious from this verse that the early church had certain criteria for telling who a true apostle was. One of the more important criteria was whether or not a person claiming to be an apostle had actually seen Jesus Christ in the flesh. Had Paul? Yes. He likely may have seen Jesus Christ while still on earth during the time he was persecuting Christians, but it is certain that Paul saw Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father on the road to Damascus.

*Acts 22:6-11 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground **and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'** "Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. **My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.** "What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.*

Obviously this account tells of Paul seeing a bright light and hearing the voice of Jesus Christ. The people around him saw the light but did not hear the voice. Notice that even though this account does not say that Paul saw Jesus Christ, it is clear that Paul was listening to "him". But Paul did see Jesus and if it was Jesus who commissioned Paul, the last of the Apostles (1 Cor. 15:9 speaking of Paul being the "least" of the Apostles meaning least in numerical order, or last), then Paul is truly and Apostle, and likely the replacement for Judas instead of Matthias because only Jesus Christ could choose His twelve. Notice that Paul saw Jesus in a vision in the temple after his Damascus road experience.

*Acts 22:17-18 "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance **and saw the Lord speaking.** 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'*

In Paul's account to King Agrippa of the Damascus road experience, Paul indicates that he "saw" Jesus Christ.

*Acts 26:12-19 "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O King, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, {Or Hebrew} 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. **I have appeared to you** to appoint you as a servant and **as a witness of what you have seen of me** and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.*

Back before this was all recorded in Acts, it is told that Barnabas took Paul to the Apostles. It was there that he also related that Paul had seen Jesus.

*Ac 9:27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey **had seen the Lord** and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.*

So it is clear that Jesus Christ Himself had put his mark on Paul as the last foundational apostle. There are no more foundational apostles today, just as there were no more after Paul. Paul condemns those who claim to be a foundational Apostle.

*2 Cor. 11:12-15 And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from **under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. **It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.** Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

Another mark of a true apostle, and this can be true of foundational apostles or the type of apostles we have today, who are church planting missionaries, evangelists, is that they plant churches by preaching the Gospel and discipling believers. The mark or seal of an apostle is that they have born the fruit of discipleship.

3 This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. 4 Don't we have the right to food and drink? 5 Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas^{au}? 6 Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

Apparently there was some grumbling about church planters having the right to ask for food and help from wives. He uses Cephas as an example of one who was doing the Lord's work. He also reminds them that Paul and Barnabas didn't even ask for help because everywhere they went they did tent making to provide the means for their ministries.

*1Co 4:12 **We work hard with our own hands.** When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;*

*Ac 18:3 and **because he was a tentmaker as they were,** he stayed and worked with them.*

*Ac 20:34 You yourselves know **that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.***

Just like in the Old Testament, the Church should support those who have devoted themselves full time to the Lord's work even though it is also good for the leadership to earn what they can and not be idle.

*Thes. 3:7-9 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. **We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.***

*1Co 9:14 In the same way, **the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.***

*1Th 2:9 Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; **we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.***

They had no right to sit in judgment on Paul because he and Barnabas had gone beyond even what Christ allowed in order to be an example to both the Church and those sent out.

7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? 8 Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."^[b] Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10 Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.

Paul then gives a concrete example from real life. Do the farmers muzzle the ox when he is harvesting with the farmer? That would be stupid because the ox would grow hungry, slow down, and eventually stop and nothing would be harvested. Just so the minister of Christ deserves to share in the harvest, particularly in regards to his material needs. If money is being collected, and good distributed, then the minister should have his share. Apparently the Corinthian church had grown greedy and was not willing to share as was the custom of the early church. Also there were apparently others who came by the church as got material support, and when Paul showed up he was not given that support because he was working making tents while he was there. But that was not enough alone to sustain his needs for traveling, etc. Other churches were being very generous to Paul.

*Php 4:15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, **not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;***

This was a sad situation. Yet who deserved the most material support? Was it not Paul? This is true today. Churches that only focus on their own needs and their own local people are missing the mark. They need to give support to those sent out. But even though Paul was deserving of this type of material support, he did not ask for it in person. Paul states that he would put up with anything from them in order not to hinder the Gospel. This is a rebuke to the Corinthian church.

13 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

As mentioned above, this is a reminder that the body of Christ needs to help those who spend a lot of their time if not all of their time in ministry. This is why today we are supposed to help support pastors and missionaries. Yet many churches will only support the pastor and building projects and the staff and missionaries are given little help at all. This is not right. The pastor should also not receive the lion's share of what is given in offerings to the church. The money and goods that come in should be there to help whoever needs help, and those in ministry need help from those who have regular jobs and make money.

15 But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. 16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.

But Paul again states that he has not demanded that they support him. He is setting an example for those in ministry that they should follow him and support themselves if at all possible. He takes great pride in that fact, to the point that he would rather die than stop being an example for them. Then he goes on to make an important point. Those who are in ministry should NOT be in it to enrich them. They should be there because God has called them and they can do no other. Paul says "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel". Paul knows that his reward is in heaven and on earth for preaching voluntarily. His reward on earth is that he offers the message of freedom in Christ without charge. His reward in heaven is a crown of glory.

1 Pet. 5: 2-4 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

There are many today in Christendom who are making a lot of money off of something that should be offered for free. This is why all the articles on my website are free. I only charge for materials that cost me to produce so that I can continue to produce those materials and new projects. But when you go beyond providing for the ability to produce materials and providing for your own needs (not wants) then I would question if what you are doing is Biblical. Paul says we should be offering the Gospel and teaching for free. I know a number of Christian leaders who travel all over the world helping people and do not ask even for airfare. Yet the Lord provides for them through people who are led to help them. I admire this very much

and strive to do the same. When I find others in need I try to help them in observance of the New Testament mandate to help one another in the body of Christ.

Jas 2:16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

Acts 2: 44-45 All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

This does not mean you have to sell everything you own. But the early church did sell things they owned in order to provide for those who were in need, including the leaders.

19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

We are free in Christ, but we are also slaves of Christ. In being servants of Christ we also should be servants for our fellow believers. We should also give up our own agenda to reach others for Christ.

Verses 20-23 are often taken out of context by many today. Paul was not saying that he would give up the principles of the Word of God to reach people. He is stating that he will obey the laws of whoever he is with in order that he will not cause others to sin. When Paul was with the Jews he observed Jewish customs. When he was with Gentiles he did the same. But he would never do anything against the Word of God and a good conscience, because that too would not be a good witness. If you are a former alcoholic you don't go into bars to witness. That is because you may be dragged back into your addiction. But I know people who do that and think they are following in Paul's example. Paul did not do that kind of thing, nor should we. Paul did not go into the pagan temples and have sex with the temple prostitutes in order to win people to Christ. That would be attempting to do one thing while committing sin in order to do it. That would be useless. Paul would observe Jewish laws even though in Christ he was freed from them. He would do this in order to bring the Good News to the Jews to free them from the impossibility of observing the Law of Moses in order to be saved. He would observe the laws of the Gentiles to witness to them keeping in mind that he is under the law of Christ.

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

WHAT IS THE LAW OF CHRIST?

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). What is the law of Christ?

Jesus has assured us, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Paul told disciples, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God - not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8f). The grace of God appeared, teaching us (Titus 2:11f). The gospel is the message of grace to be believed for salvation (Mark 16:15f). We are saved by grace; however, under Moses' law, men had sought justification by law, and there was a great tendency for the disciples to seek righteousness through keeping of a supposed system of law also.

1. COULD ONE BE SAVED BY WORKS OF THE LAW? Paul gave a definite negative answer to this question. "For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 2:20). "By works of the law shall no one be justified" (Gal. 2:16). "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose" (Gal. 2:21). "Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the law" (Gal. 3:11).

The law had a weakness: it could bring death, but not life. It made nothing perfect (Heb 7:18f). It promised life but proved to be death (Rom 7:10) because a person was required to keep all the law or be cursed (Gal. 3:10f), and none could keep it all. So all had the sentence of death.

That same weakness prevents any law from saving. Law has no power to save. John assures us that all of us sin (1 John 1:8f). James adds, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). If we keep 99% of the law but fail in the remaining one percent, what happens? We are back to zero! So it is all by grace! If one is to be saved, it must be totally by grace. One cannot be saved partly by law keeping and partly by grace. If grace saves only to the extent that one is able to keep law, then none can be saved. If one could keep all the law, he would need no grace. Our traditional exhortation to the one who fails to keep all the law is "Try harder!" While giving lip-service to grace, we frustrate disciples by urging that they must attain it by keeping all the law - or making a passing score, whatever that may be. The claim of justification by law keeping was "another gospel" of Galatians 1:6-9. Any effort to be justified by legal means is a falling away from grace (Gal 5:4). Grace is not a quality of law.

One legal system did not replace another. The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus. Grace and truth were not a system of law to replace the old one. God did not send another law, but He sent His Son in whom we may be justified. To saved persons, Paul explained, "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:14). Please read Romans 3:20-28 and observe that justification apart from law is by grace as a free gift to those who believe. Righteousness is not attained by rule keeping, but it is a free gift (Rom. 5:17). Also please read another passage of length, Galatians 3:23 through 4:7, to learn that, now that faith has come, the custodian is no longer in charge and that God sent His Son instead of another legal custodian. Ours is a personal relationship in Him instead of a legal relationship.

2. *WHAT IS THE NATURE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD? The Spirit makes us new creatures in Christ. "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" (Rom 7:6). This new relationship is accomplished through the new birth (John 3:3f), by which we are all sons of God through faith (Gal 3:26f), and in which our life becomes hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). It is not a legal relationship, but a spiritual one.*

We enter into a covenant relationship. God made a covenant with Abraham and sealed it by circumcision (Gen. 17:9f). Later the law was given to guide the covenant people (Deut. 4:4f). The law was not the covenant of promise, nor did it make them covenant people.

The new covenant is sealed in us by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13f). This is done when we receive the Spirit at the time of our obedience to the gospel; the other teachings are given to guide those in covenant relationship.

The new covenant is not a written code. Paul wrote that God "has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Hebrews 8:7-8 further emphasizes that the new covenant would not be like the old one. His law is to be written on our hearts instead of stone or paper.

How can law be written on our hearts if we are not under law? To say that we are not under law is not to say that we are not under the lordship of Christ and the sovereignty of God. Law has a range of meanings. Law may be a legal system which demands perfect obedience. Law also can be a principle of action. We are justified through the principle of grace through faith (Eph. 2:8f; Rom. 3:27f; 8:1f). That grace activates our love.

3. *WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT RULE OF ACTION? It is love, which God in His grace infuses into our hearts. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). God initiates the principle of loving action, writing His law upon our hearts.*

The love which He has created in us is the master key to unlock the servile chain of any other law. "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:8f). Love fulfills God's requirements. It frees us. A legal code enslaves. "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).

Paul emphasizes these points again in Galatians 5:13f: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" What greater and more comprehensive law - principle of action - could we want? How would a listing of authoritative demands help a person show love?

God directs us into right relationship with Him and man. "And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets'" (Matt. 22:37f). All through the ages, God was trying to help us simply to love Him and one another. That was the purpose of the law and the message of the prophets. God has shown us how to express that love through commands, exhortations, teachings, principles, and examples. Man has tried consistently to interpret these as lawful requirements, but God gave them as directives to love. Men argue, fight, and divide over lawful interpretations and thereby defeat the love into which God was directing. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (legal hair-splitting: CH) is of any avail, but faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). As covenant people, we are guided by these but not justified by them. When we sin as disciples, we depend upon grace for our forgiveness rather than obeying more laws (1 John 1:5-10; 2:1-6).

Does this encourage sin, disobedience, and indifference? Anticipating such a question, Paul answers, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom. 6:1f). He warns against abuse of our freedom, then cautions, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:13-16). Freedom is not for unrestrained indulgence.

4. WHAT IS THE LAW OF CHRIST? Some would contend that the entirety of the New Testament writing is the law of Christ. Then, is the account of the birth and temptation of Jesus the law of Christ? What of the love chapter, the resurrection chapter, and Revelation? Are these all parts of the law of Christ? The law of Christ is not a book, a listing, or a code of laws. Where is such a catalog of laws? The Jews enumerated 613 laws in their legal code. How many laws has Christ given us? Since we are to keep the law of Christ, surely someone has counted and listed those laws so we will have a check-list! Where is such a list? Christ's law is love; yet He gives us commands, examples, exhortations, warnings, and principles as guidelines for the expression of love - our response to grace.

Christ's law is love. His laws (plural) are (1) love God and (2) love man. Love is the new commandment (John 13:34f) which John's readers had heard from the beginning of their discipleship (1 John 2:7f). "And now I beg you, lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have heard from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we follow his commandments; this is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you follow love" (2 John 5f). "And this commandment we have heard from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 John 4:21) is a re-emphasis of the first and second commandments. Love is the royal, kingly law (James 2:8).

Expressed love fulfills the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). Love is the perfect law, the law of liberty (James 1:25, 2:12) - liberty from a lifeless legal code and efforts for legal justification. It is the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12), that ageless law which conveys the intent and message of the law and the prophets. How beautiful this is! God initiates the response of love: "We love, because he first loved us." He begins the working of His law in our hearts. He wants us to express it. His directives guide us in expressing it: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). So, our expressions of love become God's expressions of love through us, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). No burden! "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love" (1 John 4:18). No fear! Keeping His law of love is neither fearful nor burdensome! We are justified by grace through faith in obeying the gospel. Efforts to be

justified by law would nullify the grace of Christ. Our response to God's grace is the love which God initiates in us. The New Testament writings guide our love into proper expression.

"Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). (Cecil Hook, Tigard, Oregon, November 11, 1995)

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

We are like runners in a race. We need to understand that each person will be judged for his or her service to the Lord. The object of a race is to win the prize. We don't run against others but keeping in mind the goals God has set out for us. We run against time. Therefore we must train to run.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)

Those who run the race will receive the crown, not an earthly one but a heavenly one. Those who run to receive the praise of men and money will not receive the crown of righteousness.

2 Tim. 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

We also need to train so that we will not be tempted along the way and miss the prize because we have given into the flesh. I think of so many pastors and church leaders who have fallen along the way to sexual immorality, drugs, alcohol, etc. Paul is not saying that we should literally beat ourselves, but that we need to train ourselves hard so that we will be prepared for the attacks of the enemy along the way. The enemy loves to attack church leaders because if he can get them to fall he knows that others will have their faith shipwrecked. Paul believes that you can run a good race then fall. You can lead others to Christ and then fall yourself. This is the great danger today which is why we need to train ourselves in discernment.

2Pe 1:10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall,

1Pe 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1Th 5:6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 9:5](#) That is, Peter

[1 Corinthians 9:9](#) Deut. 25:4

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 10

Warnings From Israel's History

Paul continues on the subject of running the race to the end without being disqualified.

1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

This is a dire warning. Those who claim a heritage in Christ without obedience can expect the same fate as most in Israel who disobeyed the Lord by not going into the Promised Land and had to pay the consequences by dying in the desert. Just like we are baptized into Jesus Christ, the Jews were baptized into the Lord by going through the sea and being surrounded by the glory cloud. They ate of manna from heaven and drank from Christ. Wait a second! They drank for Jesus Christ, the Rock?

Mt 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

*Ps 95:1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to **the Rock of our salvation.***

Jesus Christ is the Rock of our Salvation, but why doesn't the Bible mention that He was with Israel, guiding them? The Bible actually does!

Ex 3:2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.

Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

Jud 2:1 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you,

In the Bible there is a distinction made between "an angel of the Lord" and "the angel of the Lord" or "the angel of God". "An angel of the Lord" means one of the angels, created servants of God. "The angel of the Lord" refers to Christ, the Son of God. Jesus made many appearances in the Old Testament as "the angel of the Lord". Not only did the angel of the Lord appear in flames in the burning bush to Moses, but the angel of the Lord was in the glory cloud that accompanied Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Ex 14:19 Then the angel of God, who had been travelling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them,

Jude mentioned Jesus as being the One who delivered His people out of Egypt.

*Jude 1:5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you **that the Lord {Some early manuscripts Jesus} delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. (NIV)***

I believe that the reason some early manuscripts said that it was Jesus who delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptians is that they were referring to “the angel of the Lord” who was there in the cloud and pillar of fire (Judges 2:1, Ex. 14:19). But the point of what Paul is saying is that Jesus not only delivered Israel from Egypt but also destroyed those who did not believe. We demonstrate a lack of belief when we fail to obey the Lord. This is as true today as it was in millennia gone by.

6 Now these things occurred as examples^[a] to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry."^[b] 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

As I have said before you cannot just live in a lifestyle of practicing sin and expect to be saved. Here Paul puts it another way. You cannot set your hearts on evil and expect to escape judgment. He also says that we should not test the Lord. Be careful not to grumble against the Lord. These things can put you under judgment if you do not repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When Israel sinned by making a golden calf and worshipping it as their “God” they were drinking and indulging in pagan revelry. Part of that revelry was apparently indulging in sexual immorality. God had it in mind to wipe all of Israel out at that point but Moses prayed and God only put 23,000 to death. The Jews also tested the Lord over and over again by grumbling and asking for things of God when He was providing for their needs. God sent snakes at one point and a destroying angel at another. The Corinthians were living in the same kind of pagan society that we do today. And just like today, they had been so brainwashed by their culture that they did not even think about how they were disobeying the Lord. We would do well to learn a lesson from these things that God judges and avoid them. Just because God has provided us a Savior in His Son, we should not take that freedom lightly. The Jews did and were judged for it.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

So those things that happened to God’s people in the past are warnings for us who are in the times of the Gentiles. Today many are taught that once you say you are a Christian then everything will be fine. But Paul, writing to the Church, warns us that if we think we are standing firm we had better be careful that we don’t fall. God is gracious to us. He will not allow us to be tempted above that which He can provide a way out. But remember that any temptation that comes our way has been before and will be again. We are not exempt. We need to place our faith in the Lord, put on the armor, and stand against the temptations of the devil.

Eph 6:13 Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

So now Paul gives some practical examples from Corinth.

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

We are to run away from idolatry of all kinds. Even though the city of Corinth was full of the worship of idols, idolatry can take other forms. Paul does make allusion to the worship of idols or false gods in his recounting the incident of the golden calf, but he also talks about the idolatry of sexual temptation. Not many of us today are worshipping false gods, though our ancestors did. Today more often the temptation is to sin in the form of adultery, sexual immorality, homosexuality and lesbianism, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, fighting, vengeance, greed and many other sins. We are not just to avoid these things but run away from them. When people fled a city because it was being attacked they did not stand around and talk to their attackers. They left everything and ran as fast as they could and hid from their attackers. We can flee to Christ and hide in Him but we have to make the decision to run!

Vs. 15 is a good answer to the “judge not lest you be judged” argument of today applied to everything. That verse was never meant to be applied to every form of judging, only particularly as applied to hypocritical judging. We know that because of the context of both that verse and chapter. Later in verse 15 of that same sermon Jesus tells us to watch out for false prophets and avoid them. That is a form of judging the Lord not only allows but commands us to do. Even the Corinthians were to judge what Paul had to say. We have to make choices and judgment calls everyday. One of them is to check out what leaders teach, even the foundational apostles as in the case of Paul. We should all be Bereans.

Ac 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

In the Lord's Supper we reaffirm that we are one body in Christ. That means that we no longer belong to idolatrous worship of false gods, nor do our bodies belong to ourselves in order that we may sin. We are affirming that we are now one body in Christ, married to him who is the Bridegroom.

Joh 3:29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

So when we partake of the one cup representing His blood and the one loaf representing His body we are affirming that we are one in Christ. If we commit idolatry in following other gods and committing sin without repentance, are we affirming we are married to Him?

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Again we are given the example of Israel. If we participate in the altar as did the Jews (the altar in our time being pictured in the Lord's Supper) then we are saying that we belong to God in Christ Jesus. We cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons at the same time. If we try to do that we make the Lord jealous and He may have to judge us if we continue.

These verses also prove that behind idols are demons. It is not that those who made the idols created demons. Rather demons often attach themselves to idols being worshipped in order to fool people. But demons are not to be worshipped, are not even gods. They are fallen angels who are destined for hell. This is a good verse to give people who think they are just worshipping idols, or trees, or rocks, or the sun, or the moon, or other created things. When a person turns their worship to a created thing, a demon is coming behind to confuse and keep people away from the one True God. But neither we nor demons are stronger than God and all will have to face the judgment. If we are in Christ then we will not be judged, but we must stay there.

Ro 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 1Jo 2:24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

The Believer's Freedom

23 "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. 24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Now Paul moves to the subject of the definition of true freedom in Christ. There was a saying apparently at that time among Christians. "Everything is permissible". I'm sure the Corinthians loved this saying because it allowed them to do anything they wanted and still call themselves Christians.

Ga 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.

We tend to focus on the first part of this verse. There is even a song out there that says "it is for freedom that He set us free". That is not really stating the whole truth just as the Corinthians had a saying that did not go far enough. As in the verse from Galatians, we have to stand firm in the truth and not allow ourselves to be taken back into sin. So to we have freedom in Christ but not everything is beneficial or constructive. We have to remember that we live for the good of others, meaning we are a witness and to be a help to others. The Corinthians had the freedom to eat meat that was sacrificed to idols, but they were cautioned not to do so because it might make people stumble. We have to make the same choices today. Our conscience might allow us to do things other Christians cannot. If we are around them we need to not make them stumble by doing things that their consciences do not allow them to do.

25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."^u

27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake^u— 29 the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

We must be aware of with whom we are doing things and not cause them to sin.

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

The final point is that in everything we have in mind giving glory to God, not just proving that we have freedom in Christ. We must not cause others to stumble, no matter who they are. Our ultimate goal is that others may be saved. Our witness is of the utmost importance, not our pleasure or trying to prove some point. This goes for eating certain foods or abstaining from them. We are to draw men to the cross.

2Co 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 10:6](#) Or types; also in verse 11

[1 Corinthians 10:7](#) Exodus 32:6

[1 Corinthians 10:26](#) Psalm 24:1

[1 Corinthians 10:28](#) Some manuscripts conscience' sake, for "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it"

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 11

1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Paul is not ashamed to urge those in Corinth to follow his example as he follows Christ. Today we do not hear this much from church leadership. Perhaps it is because sometimes their example is not what you would want to follow. Paul was seeking the good of many, as he previously stated. He was careful to do everything to the glory of God and was a living witness of God's mercy. He was careful not to stumble people over his personal behavior. This is the example he wanted the Corinthians to follow in that he was committed to follow the example of Christ.

Propriety in Worship

2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings,^[a] just as I passed them on to you.

Paul starts this chapter out with praise. He praises the Corinthian church for remembering him in prayer and for holding on to his teachings. This is an important issue that continues today. We must uphold our leaders in prayer.

2Th 3:1 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you.

Heb 13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honourably in every way.

Heb 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

We are also to continue in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles just as they have been passed down to us in the written Word of God.

2Th 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings {Or traditions} we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

2Jo 1:9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 and every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. 6 if a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. 7 A man ought not to cover his head,^[b] since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but

woman for man. 10 For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

God instituted order in the universe. His order is of the highest importance and those who disrupt that order are destined to fail. The order God created is this: the Father is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, man is the head of woman. Jesus always submitted Himself to the Father even though Christ is part of the Triunity of God.

*Phl. 2:6-11 **Who, being in very nature {Or in the form of} God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature {Or the form} of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

Christ is the head of man. First we have to remember that Christ added humanity, specifically man, on to His Divine nature when he was born of a woman.

*1Ti 2:5 **For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,***

Christ, being the God-man is the head over men.

Ro 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Men are to take responsibility for their wives.

*Col 3:18 **Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.***

*Col 3:19 **Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.***

*Eph 5:24 **Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

We have to distinguish between what was cultural at the time of Paul's writing, and what is something we should practice today. What Paul is teaching has spiritual ramifications that do apply today. Men were not to cover their head because it would make them look down instead of up to their spiritual head, that is Christ. Women were to cover their heads as a sign of submission to their husbands. Though we do not wear head coverings today, the principle still applies. For a woman to prophesy or teach in the Church, they must be in submission to their husbands and the male leadership of the Church.

*1 Pet. 3:1-6 **Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great***

worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Women are not allowed to teach or prophesy in the churches without the permission of their husbands and the male leadership. We must realize that there is a reason why God created man first. The woman was created from man, but man was created first by God from the dust of the earth. This was to be a sign of the order God was instituting. Man is subject to Christ, woman is subject to man. Many of the terrible problems we have today are as a result of women not being subject to their husbands, and the husbands not obeying the Lord. Women were created to be helpers of men, not to have authority over men.

Ge 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

11 In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

Here is the great equalizer. Though men are to be the head of women the two, in marriage, are to be one. Neither man nor woman are to act independently. The woman is dependant on the man as head just as the man is dependant on the woman as helper. The paradox is that God created woman from man but man is born of woman. The point is that God is the head in everything.

Again we come to a cultural mandate that is not the case today but has spiritual applications. In Paul's day women were to cover their long hair as a sign of obedience to God and to their husbands. Men were to keep their heads uncovered and hair short as a sign of their obedience to God. To prove this was a cultural issue in the time of Paul all you have to do is look back to the time of the Nazirites.

Nu. 6:5 "During the entire period of his (a Nazirite's) vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the LORD is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long.

So what is the spiritual application of what Paul is mandating for the Church? Long hair is a shame unto him means; because it makes him appear like a woman. God has made the two sexes different, and placed them in different stations; and a proper regard to him and one another requires that this difference should be seen in apparel and deportment. The woman is to be submissive to the man, the man is to be a representative of Christ. Therefore men should not appear as women and women as men as apparently they were doing in temple prostitution. Today the application would be that men and women wear things that are appropriate to their nature and that wives show proper respect to their husbands and the male leadership of the churches. This is one reason why we have problems today in the churches. Women should not be wearing things that distract from men from worship. Women should not be leaders in the Church. I believe they can teach, but their authority to do so should come from the male leadership of the churches and from

their husbands. Men today are being affected by culture and are dressing and adorning themselves more and more like women. There is a saying that there is a feminization of men happening in the world today. But men need to dress like men and women like women, with modesty.

1 Tim. 2: 8-10 I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

We have a lot to work on in the churches today. We need to be sure that we maintain our witness to the world instead of becoming like the world.

The Lord's Supper

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

There were a number of ways in which the Corinthian church needed to be rebuked. One big issue was the way they were celebrating the Lord's Supper. The first problem was that they were coming to the Lord's supper with divisions instead of unity. Apparently there was jostling at the table for the Lord's Supper by those who thought they ought to be served first. Then apparently those who went first were taking too much food. Some were also drinking the wine provided and getting drunk. The Lord's Supper had become a disorganized potluck with alcohol. This had become a bad witness to those outside and a source of division inside. The point of the Lord's Supper is not supposed to be the meal but the remembrance of Christ. Paul has to remind them of the importance of respect for what Christ taught the Apostles about the Lord's Supper.

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

This is a familiar passage often quoted when churches serve the Lord's Supper or communion. It is to remind us of what it is all about. The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ broken for our sins, and the cup is a symbol of the blood of Christ shed for our sins. We are to remember these things when we do communion. We are proclaiming that we have taken part in Christ and the cross till He comes again.

27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the

Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

So Paul is saying to the Corinthian church that they are sinning against the Lord. We need to examine ourselves to be sure that we are not divided, not taking the Lord's Supper lightly, not jostling for position, not denying people access who are true believers, and certainly not getting drunk on wine, if wine is being served. I knew a Catholic priest in the islands who always ordered way more "communion wine" than was needed and drank most of it himself. The reason why many Corinthians were sick and some had died was because they were disrespecting the Lord's Supper.

Again Paul says another way we are to judge. We are to judge ourselves. If we truly looked at what we were doing, sometimes we could avoid judgment from the Lord by repenting. The Lord would rather discipline us than condemn us with the world. So it is wise for us to heed the discipline of the Lord in His Word rather than to continue in sin.

33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. 34 If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.

The Lord's Supper is not there to quench our hunger. We eat for physical nourishment at home. We are to conduct the Lord's Supper in order, waiting for each other. This and other things that Paul had to rebuke showed that the church at Corinth was full of immature Christians. It was Paul's hope that they would become mature in order to avoid judgment from the Lord. When we take and apply the rebukes and admonitions of Scripture we will grow. If not we will be judged.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 11:2](#) Or traditions

[1 Corinthians 11:7](#) Or ⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with long hair dishonors his head. ⁵ And every woman who prays or prophesies with no covering (of hair) on her head dishonors her head—she is just like one of the "shorn women." ⁶ If a woman has no covering, let her be for now with short hair, but since it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair shorn or shaved, she should grow it again. ⁷ A man ought not to have long hair

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 12

Now we move on to a section that many “Christians” use to justify all kinds of false doctrines being taught to day in the churches. The point of this section of Paul’s letter was to actually rebuke the Corinthians for doing things they ought not to be doing; thing that had their root sin pagan worship.

Spiritual Gifts

1 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. 2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

The point of this teaching by Paul is not to say that anyone who says, “Jesus is Lord” is a true believer. You have to be born again to have the Spirit of Truth and so when you affirm, “Jesus is Lord” you are speaking from your belief system. But if you are saying, “Jesus is Lord” like the Mormons say yet teach that He was the spirit brother of Lucifer, you are not really saying “Jesus is Lord”. If you are saying “Jesus is Lord” like Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn say, then teach that Satan took Jesus to hell and tortured Him there and Jesus Christ had to be born again in hell, you are not teaching the “Jesus is Lord”. So be careful of this statement by Paul to interpret it correctly because many false teachers use this statement to try to prove they are true Christians.

Paul’s point is that if a person has spiritual gifts they will no longer follow the patterns of the world but of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. This is because the Corinthian Christians were doing things in the name of the Lord claiming, “Jesus is Lord” that were pagan in origin. This is what we see today in the churches. People who call themselves Christians and claim to have spiritual gifts are teaching that a person can pass the Holy Spirit from himself to another by an act of his will. That is false doctrine. They claim that they are doing slain in the spirit, when the Bible not only does not teach slain in the Spirit but it is a practice imported into Christianity from Eastern Mysticism and Hinduism called “Shaktipat”. Slain in the spirit in churches and Shaktipat are virtually identical in their method and results.

This technique, touching one in order to impart a spirit or power, is very common in New Age circles and their eastern counterparts. For instance, Swami Baba Muktananda imparted “guru’s grace” to followers through touching foreheads. This Kundalini yoga technique is called “shaktipat,” and it produces various “physical and emotional awakenings” such as “laughing, roaring, barking, hissing, crying, shaking, etc.”¹¹ American New Age guru Mark Griffin claims shaktipat is “the transmission of spiritual power (Shakti) from the Guru to the disciple; a spiritual awakening by grace.” (Mark Griffin, “Center of Awakening” Web-site, <<http://www.mindspring.com/~coa/index.html>.”) Guru Shri Dhyanyogi Madhusudandasji, an expert on Kundalini yoga, says of shaktipat,

Another technique of great importance is Shaktipat, the transmission of energy. A powerful yogi can transmit energy to an aspirant and awaken the Kundalini [power in one’s body]. This is

accomplished in one of four ways: by touch, gaze, sound or thought. The yogi may touch the disciple and transmit energy through physical contact, or gaze at the disciple and energy flows from the yogi's eyes. The yogi may utter words which carry energy or, more subtly, energy can be transferred directly by the yogi's thought or will. (Shri Dhyanyogi Madhusudandasji, The Path of Kundalini Maha Yoga , On-line article, <http://www.dyc.org/path/index.html#Shaktipat>.)

Surprisingly, this occultic transmission of power from the leader to the disciple, is being embraced by the Christian community and guru Steve Hill is being heralded as a modern-day prophet. (COUNTERFEIT REVIVAL: THE DECEPTION OF THE ELECT (Part One) by Jeff Spencer, "Quarterly Journal of The Irenaeus Foundation; Volume 3, Issue 1: Winter 1998., <http://deceptioninthechurch.com/ditc14.htm>)

We must be careful as believers not to be led astray by idols and the religions that surround them as we were in the past. But this can happen if we are not obeying the Lord.

1Jo 3:7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

2Co 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Paul led off his teaching on spiritual gifts by stating something fundamental. There are all different kinds of gifts, true spiritual gifts, among those who are saved. There are whole denominations today who teach false doctrines stemming from not believing what Paul said. There are denominations that teach that you can be a Christian and not be filled with the Holy Spirit. There are denominations that teach that every Christian, upon the moment when the Holy Spirit baptizes them (which most of them say is separate from salvation) must speak in tongues as initial evidence that they are baptized in the Spirit. But though a few times in Acts those who were born again did speak in tongues (though on other occasions in Acts they did not) not everyone has the same spiritual gifts, therefore it would be going against God's Word for everyone to speak in tongues. To understand the gifts of the Spirit you first have to understand that God gives various spiritual gifts to His children for the purposes of serving Him. Notice that Paul calls the spiritual gifts "different kinds of service". This is the second point. Gifts are for service, not for show and not to prove that a person is holy. They are given to serve others within God's will.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b] 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Now Paul continues to teach that the gifts are given not only for service to God but for the common good, mainly. Now I am one who believes that the gifts of the Spirit are still in operation today. There are a number of denominations that teach that the gifts ceased after Pentecost and the early church because these gifts were to be sign to non-believers. They mainly use the following verses to shore up their argument.

*1 Cor. 13:8-12 Love never fails. **But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but **when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.** When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; **then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.***

This is another good example of not taking the Bible out of context. On the surface it looks like the gifts are said to disappear when “perfection comes”. Those who use this to claim there are no more gifts today claim that “perfection” is talking about when the written Word of God was finally put together in one canon (starting in 367 AD to 393 AD), and since the Word of God is perfect, this is the perfection 1 Cor. 13:8-12 is talking about and so the gifts ceased after that time. But in context these verses are not saying that the gifts listed ceased when the Bible was finally canonized, but when we see Him false to face. The second coming is when “perfection comes” in the person of Jesus Christ. When He comes there will be no more need for the spiritual gifts as it will be time for His Kingdom on earth and we will be there in our glorified bodies ministering with Christ and to Him.

Another argument is made that all the spiritual gifts were “sign gifts”. These were signs for the Apostles that they had authority from God and for believers that they were in Christ.

*Heb 2:4 **God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.***

Notice that God did testify to the salvation He had sent through signs, wonders, miracles and gifts. But God has not stopped doing that. However, today we have many false gifts and the idea that you have to have signs and wonders for people to believe. But that has never been true. Israel had some of the most spectacular signs and wonders done among them then rebelled against God (Acts 7:36-39). Jesus Christ did miracles but the leadership of Israel refused to believe He was the Messiah and few chose to follow Him.

*Mt 16:4 **A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.*** Jesus then left them and went away.

*Lu. 13: 23 –24 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, **"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.***

Another verse they use is the following:

*1Co 14:22 **Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers.***

Prophecy certainly continues today in the form of teaching the written Word in Spirit and in truth and through that God speaks to His Church. So it is logical to assume that the gifts of languages (tongues) would continue. However, as practiced today in many churches, tongues is not really in evidence today as most of it is learned behavior and babble instead of the real spiritual gifts of languages being used to spread the Gospel and communicate truth to people. So I believe that the gift of language is far broader than the

definition given it by Pentecostals and charismatics today, whom I believe are not practicing the true gift of tongues. One more verse used to try to claim that gifts have ceased today.

2Co 12:12 The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

The fact that there are no more foundational apostles today I agree with, and that is one of the gifts that has ceased, if you are going to call it a gift. But just because signs and wonders were done to verify who were true foundational apostles and who were not does not mean that all true Divine signs and wonders have ceased today. God is a God of miracles and still does them all over the world among true believers and as evidence of His power. God used signs and wonders to identify His foundational apostles. He still does them today in response to the prayers and obedience of His people. For instance, when we follow the Biblical mandate to bring a sick person before the elders of a church and pray for them we can expect that many times God will heal (Jam. 5:14). We always pray for Him to do His will with that person because sometimes it is His will that a person remain sick. I have seen many miraculous healings in my lifetime when we follow that pattern. But those who put on a show, do not have elders in their churches, etc. can not expect for God to hear their prayers, especially if they are allowing false doctrines and practices in their churches. God does not hear the prayers of heretics, false teachers and false prophets nor does He do Divine miracles through them.

According to Paul the gifts were for service to the Lord and for the common good. Why would God make those gifts cease on that basis? Do we not still have a need for service to God and to our fellow believers? Of course we do. Therefore those who believe the gifts have ceased have not really investigated the Bible. But we must be careful to follow what Paul is teaching here otherwise we end up in all kinds of errors on the pro-gifts area.

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by^[c] one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

This is one verse you can use to answer those who claim that you can be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit. That is impossible. Anyone who is born again has been baptized in the Spirit, otherwise they are not born again. That baptism is what makes us one body. If a person claims that you have to have a separate experience called the “Baptism of the Spirit” by the laying on of hands that is not Biblical. If a person does not have the Spirit they are not part of the one body, therefore they are not Christians. So that type of teaching is absurd. We have many gifts and many individuals from many places who make up the one body of Christ. Now, in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, slave and free are given the same Spirit then they have believed unto salvation in Christ.

14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need

you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

This whole illustration is to rebuke those who think that their gifts are greater than others or that they are more (or less) needed in the Church. We all ought to regard one another's gifts equally as God does. God is not a respecter of person, therefore we should not be. The current fad of "cult of personality" in the body of Christ is detestable. We are not to follow men who have some gift and forget about those who may have another gifts. In our fallen nature we regard those who are able to speak and teach much higher than those who are able to minister to the sick, to pray, to have faith, to have wisdom, etc. This is not how God sees it. He has given various gifts so that we may serve Him, minister to one another, and reach out to the world with the Gospel. We should have compassion and empathy for those who are weaker and are suffering instead of only rejoicing with those who are honored. We become part of the body of Christ when we are born again. We then begin to understand our place in that body and cannot act alone. We should depend on each other and the gifts we have from God rather than trying to do things by ourselves. Many pastors today, for instance, try to do everything in the church they pastor. But one pastor does not have the gifts required to make a church function properly. We want to avoid the systems of the world that tell us that you have to have a pyramidal system of leadership. In the body of Christ it functions in parallel, not in a top-down chain of command. Only Christ has the command. Those who are in His body will function correctly when they have the perspective to see that they are only a hand, or an eye, or an ear, or a foot.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues^u? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire^u the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

This list is not a numerical list, with the exception on apostles. Jesus Christ appointed the 12 disciples, including Paul, to be the apostolic foundation of the church. There are no more foundational apostles. But there are church planting missionary apostles today, prophets, teachers, etc. That this is not an numerical list of importance in the body of Christ (particularly after the illustration of the body given above) is proven by what James says about teachers, for instance.

Jas 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

So apparently teaching is just as important as the other gifts because it is an important position. Should we assume then that Paul's list is not correct and that teachers are really at the top? No. This proves that this list is not given not so much in the sense of order of importance, but in the sense of a list of gifts that God has appointed to take care of the body of Christ and for the body of Christ to function properly.

This is the second verse you can give to those who say that everyone should have the gift of tongues. It is clear that the answer to Paul's questions are "no". The point is that the Corinthians were majoring on gifts like tongues, just as many churches do today, when there are much more fruitful gifts. Paul talks later about desiring the gift of prophesy over tongues. Those who desire tongues often desire that gift for the wrong reasons, usually to try to prove that they are more spiritual than others. The Corinthian church is a picture of what we have going on today in the churches ... a lot of jockeying for position when they should desire to serve the Lord in humility and loving one another. That is what we will cover next lesson.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 12:10](#) Or languages; also in verse 28

[1 Corinthians 12:10](#) Or languages; also in verse 28

[1 Corinthians 12:13](#) Or with; or in

[1 Corinthians 12:30](#) Or other languages

[1 Corinthians 12:31](#) Or But you are eagerly desiring

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 13

Love

1 If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames,^[b] but have not love, I gain nothing.

The first part of this verse has been used by Pentecostals to try to prove that men who speak in tongues can also speak in the tongues of angels. Angels only spoke earthly languages that we know when they were sent by the Lord with a message for men. We do not know if angels speak languages or communicate in some spiritual way.

“And of angels”. The language of angels; such as they speak. Were I endowed with the faculty of eloquence and persuasion which we attribute to them; and the power of speaking to any of the human family with the power which they have. The language of angels here seems to be used to denote the highest power of using language, or of the most elevated faculty of eloquence and speech. It is evidently derived from the idea that the angels are superior, in all respects, to men; that they must have endowments in advance of all which man can have. It may possible have reference to the idea that they must have some mode of communicating their ideas one to another, and that this dialect or mode must be far superior to that which is employed by man. Man is imperfect. All his modes of communication are defective. We attribute to the angels the idea of perfection. (Barnes NT Notes)

Paul is not saying that men are given the ability to speak in angel languages because that would be of no benefit.

1Co 14:6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

There is no benefit to speak a language that has no earthly meaning. Tongues were spoken to communicate with men, and in particular to communicate the wonder of the Gospel.

Ac 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues {Or languages; also in verse 11} as the Spirit enabled them.

Ac. 2: 7-12 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs— we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Paul is using what is called “hyperbole”. That means he was exaggerating to make a point. The point is that even if men could speak the tongues of angels but do not have live their gift would be useless. He is not stating that men can speak the tongues of angels, only saying that the tongues of angels are considered even greater than the tongues of men but even if a person could speak them and they did not have love their words would be without coherency and meaning such as the sound of a gong or cymbal.

Paul teaches that the spiritual gifts mean nothing without being applied and used in love. Tongues, prophecy, wisdom, faith, and charity without love gain nothing. So, by inference, ALL of the gifts lack usefulness, in fact are useless, without love. The Corinthians were in a contest, of sorts, to see who had the greater gifts but were causing division over these things, proving they were not doing them in love. Love is the better way, the higher way. It should be love first, and then gifts will have meaning. Without love “I am nothing” and “I gain nothing”. We are back to square one if we claim to have spiritual gifts but do not have love. We are nothing and we do not advance. This is why Paul had to rebuke the Corinthians. But then he moves on to explain what love is in one of the most beautiful chapters in the Bible about love.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

This passage is so clear that there really needs to be no commentary and I am not really qualified to add anything important to this great statement on love.

The action of love is now described.

- *Love is patient and kind. Endures slights and wrongs patiently and long, and returns a kindly spirit. It is "slow to anger" (#Ps 103:8). Christ, "when he was reviled, reviled not again" (#1Pe 2:23). "The fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering" (#Ga 5:22). See also #Ro 2:4 and #2Co 6:6.*
- *Love does not envy. How miserable is that envy which is made unhappy by the good fortune of another. Cain is an example. Love excludes it. A mother does not envy her child.*
- *Does not boast, is not proud.. Does not ostentatiously boast of superiority, nor is it inflated.*
- *Is not rude. Discourteous in a way to shock good manners or morals.*
- *Is not self-seeking. Is unselfish and disinterested. See #Ro 12:10.*
- *Is not easily angered. Does not fly into a rage, but keeps the temper under control.*
- *Keeps no records of wrongs.. The idea of the Revision is that love does not keep a record of evil rendered so as to return it.*
- *Does not delight in evil. Instead of rejoicing, is filled with sadness by wrong doing of any kind, but does Rejoices in the truth. in its triumphs.*
- *Always protects. Bears up in spite of all things evil, and is not overcome. Love bears up against the tide of evil, as the rock against the waves.*
- *Always trusts. Is not distrustful and suspicious.*
- *Always hopes. Is hopeful instead of despondent, and hopes for the best. How hard for the loving mother to give up hope for her recreant son!*
- *Always preserves. Endures patiently persecution and suffering. The cardinal quality of fortitude, hardihood, unyielding persistence is meant. (Peoples New Testament Notes)*

These are the characteristics of love. If a person says they love anyone and is impatient, unkind, envious, boastful, proud, rude, self-seeking, easily angered, keeps a record of wrongs (unforgiving), delights in evil and does not rejoice in the truth, does not protect, trust, hope or preserve then you can tell that the person does not really have love. This is a good test to put to people who say they love but are really self-seeking.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

As mentioned before these verses do not prove that there are no gifts today because the “perfection” mentioned is not the Bible, though it is perfect and inerrant in the original manuscripts, but it is clearly talking about when Jesus Christ returns as it speaks of when we will see him face to face.

Love does not fail. Prophecies, tongues and knowledge will eventually fail ... cease to exist. But love is forever. That is because we live in space and time and only know a limited number of things. It is similar to our growing up. When we were children we spoke but our words were not always in line with knowledge and rarely with wisdom. But when we became mature we left those foolish ways behind. So it will be when we see the Lord. Whereas we saw things as though reflected in a mirror, upon being united with Him in the Rapture, resurrection and Millennial Kingdom, we will see Him face to face and will understand fully just as we are fully known by Him now. This is quite a promise. We will know fully! We will finally understand what God has done and is doing.

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

Why is the greatest of these three love? I propose it is because love endures forever.

Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

2Th 3:5 May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, {Or his only begotten Son} that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The love of God has endured for eternity, past to future. Love will endure for eternity. Faith and hope have their important place now and so remain, but in eternity there will no longer be a need for faith and hope. That is because our faith is placed in God and when we are finally with Him in the new heaven and new earth we will be with the object of our faith, therefore faith will no longer be needed. Our hope today is in Christ and His return, but when He returns our hope will no longer be needed. This is a reminder that those who teach that Faith is a force that God used to create the universe and can therefore be used by men to create reality is a lie. Jesus Christ is the object of our faith and hope. Faith is not a force but it is our trust in Him to do all He has promised. But there is one that remains forever ... love. God's love spans the ages and eternity and will never fail or cease to exist.

The excellency of love above the power of speaking the languages of men and of angels; above the power of understanding all mysteries; above all faith, even of the highest kind; and above the virtue of giving all one's goods to feed the poor, or one's body to be burned. All these endowments would be valueless without love. (Barnes NT Notes)

The conclusion: as if the apostle should say, "Such therefore will be our condition then: but now we have three things, and they remain sure if we are Christ's, without which, true religion cannot consist, that is, faith, hope, and charity. And among these, charity is the chiefest because it ceases not in the life to come as the rest do, but is perfected and accomplished. For seeing that faith and hope tend to things which are promised and are to come, when we have presently gotten them, to what purpose would we have faith and hope? But yet there at length we will truly and perfectly love both God and one another." (1599 Geneva Footnotes)

To sum up the excellences of charity, he prefers it not only to gifts, but to other graces, to faith and hope (#1Co 13:13): And now abide faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity. True grace is much more excellent than any spiritual gifts whatever. And faith, hope, and love, are the three principal graces, of which charity is the chief, being the end to which the other two are but means. This is the divine nature, the soul's felicity, or its complacential rest in God, and holy delight in all his saints. And it is everlasting work, when faith and hope shall be no more. Faith fixes on the divine revelation, and assents to that: hope fastens on future felicity, and waits for that: and in heaven faith well be swallowed up in vision, and hope in fruition. There is no room to believe and hope, when we see and enjoy. But love fastens on the divine perfections themselves, and the divine image on the creatures, and our mutual relation both to God and them. These will all shine forth in the most glorious splendours in another world, and there will love be made perfect; there we shall perfectly love God, because he will appear amiable for ever, and our hearts will kindle at the sight, and glow with perpetual devotion. And there shall we perfectly love one another, when all the saints meet there, when none but saints are there, and saints made perfect. O blessed state! How much surpassing the best below! O amiable and excellent grace of charity! How much does it exceed the most valuable gift, when it outshines every grace, and is the everlasting consummation of them! When faith and hope are at an end, true charity will burn for ever with the brightest flame. Note, Those border most upon the heavenly state and perfection whose hearts are fullest of this divine principle, and burn with the most fervent charity. It is the surest offspring of God, and bears his fairest impression. For God is love, #1Jo 4:8,16. And where God is to be seen as he is, and face to face, there charity is in its greatest height—there, and there only, will it be perfected. (Full Matthew Henry Commentary)

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 13:1](#) Or languages. [1 Corinthians 13:3](#) Some early manuscripts body that I may boast

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 14

Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues

Paul wrote on the topic of love in order to sandwich the topics of the spiritual gifts and the specific gifts of prophecy and tongues. He did this in order to give the proper emphasis to this discussion on gifts and their place in the Church.

1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. 2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue^[a] does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.^[b] 3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,^[c] but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues,^[d] unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

The very first sentence is a reminder of what Paul taught on love. The spiritual gifts cannot be exercised outside of love. That is the problem in most churches today that claim to be exercising the gifts of tongues. The issue addressed here is basically praying in another language to God alone as opposed to teaching or preaching to others publicly. The point is that to speak to God in another language is fine, but to speak to other believers and witness to the world one must possess the gift of prophecy. This proves that when prophecy is talked about by Paul he is not only addressing foretelling, as we think of prophecy today, but forthtelling, preaching, teaching. Paul stated that he would rather have people desire the gift of being able to correctly interpret the Word of God and teach it than to speak to God in a tongue. If a person is going to legitimately speak in another language, one given to him as a spiritual gift, then if he speaks to God alone it need not be interpreted as God needs no interpretation. But if that gift is used in front of others there must be an interpretation given in the tongue everyone else speaks. When a person speaks to God he “utters the mysteries of his spirit”. Have you ever talked to God about things that you almost cannot express? Be assured that the Holy Spirit will give meaning to the desires of your heart before God.

Rom. 8:22-32 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Ro 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

The problem with the Corinthian church is that they had elevated tongues above prophecy. This was a thing of pride, which it continues to be today in churches that practice tongues in their services. It becomes a badge of spirituality and allows people to think that they are superior over others. But tongues was supposed to be a witness to non-believer as well as practiced privately in their prayer life. Those who pray to impress others are self-righteous. Those who truly pray without pride are to do so in private before God.

Mt 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Don't get me wrong. There is a place for public prayer in the Church. But it is not to be done as a show, speaking in tongues to impress people without interpretation. Most Pentecostal and charismatic churches that claim to practice tongues (which are clearly not biblical) don't even bother to interpret tongues anymore. People can be heard loudly babbling in their church services without any interpretation. They have gone far away from the Bible and in so doing are now leading people astray. They actually teach people how to babble so they too can act like they are practicing a true spiritual gift when they are not.

6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? 7 Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? 8 Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? 9 So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. 10 Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. 11 If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. 12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

Paul was their example. He asks them what good it would have been for Paul to come to them and start babbling without interpretation. Instead he came with true teaching by the Word of God through the Spirit. There has to be a distinction in what we are speaking or else it is of no use to others, and in fact leads to mysticism and Gnosticism. There is a spiritual aspect to how God works in us, but we do not do so by disconnecting our minds.

*Mr 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and **with all your mind** and with all your strength.'*

We must worship God with everything He has given us, mind, body, spirit and all our strength. We don't just want to be speaking into the air. We want our words to count when it comes to either edification of the body of Christ or witness to unbelievers. In both cases the gift of prophecy, which include forthtelling as well as foretelling (based on God's Word) must be understandable in the common language of the country where we are. So then Paul admonishes Christian to excel in the gifts that build the Church, whether in the gift of prophecy in preaching and teaching, or in the gifts of prophecy in evangelism, preaching the Gospel. Remember that the gift of tongues at Pentecost was given not just as a sign to unbelievers but as a way to communicate the Gospel to them. Remember that those who stood by on Pentecost thought that the disciples were drunk but Peter explained to them that they were speaking their languages in order to communicate to them the plan of God.

*Acts 2:14-21 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, **I will pour out my Spirit in those***

days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. {Joel 2:28-32}

The gift of tongues at Pentecost was not just given as a simple sign, but a way to communicate that the Scripture was being fulfilled that day which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. So the gift of tongues would necessarily continue to be a gift that allowed people to understand what was being said, not a gift to impress people by itself. It is true that the gift of tongues during Pentecost had a specific purpose that is no longer the same today. I happen to believe that the gift of tongues is in evidence today, but not as practiced in apostate mystical churches. There are accounts of people who were scheduled to speak in a church who did not know much of the language but when they got up to speak the Holy Spirit gave them the gift of tongues so that they could speak well in the language of the area. Many missionaries have been given the gift of languages in order to translate the Bible, in some cases in a very short period of time.

13 For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. 16 If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand^u say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

Now it is interesting that Paul is telling the person who is speaking in tongues to interpret what he is saying himself. This is not to say that another person could not interpret for him, but this type of thing has been mishandled by many Pentecostal denominations. Because 99% of those who speak in “tongues” are actually babbling with no meaning, then those churches bring another person into the ruse by making someone come up with a mystical reading or interpretation of what has been babbled. There are a test done some years ago by James Randi (better known as the Amazing Randi). Randi is not a Christian and set out to debunk modern tongues. He brought a tape recorder to a meeting where people were allegedly speaking in tongues. He recorded both the tongues and the alleged interpretation. He then brought the recording to the pastor, who was the one who gave the interpretation on the recording. He asked him if he could interpret the tongues that were on the tape recording. He said he could. Randi then played it back for him and the pastor gave his interpretation of what was said. It was then that Randi revealed that he was already taped the interpretation the pastor had given earlier to the exact same tongues. It was completely different. The pastor was red-faced angry with Randi. But this shows that this is a game that is being played, just like it was in the Corinthian church, and not real tongues.

The point is that we don't just utter things we don't understand. That is because we may be blaspheming the Lord and not even know it. What we do is pray with our spirit, but also our mind. So praying in our own language we understand to God is desirable, not praying in words we do not. In the same way we are to sing in our spirit but sing words we understand. This is not talking about participating with others singing a song in their language which they do understand. It is talking about ecstatic sing, singing in tongues where you cannot understand (nor can anyone else) what you are saying. We need to be able to add our Amen or “so be it” or “let it be so” to what is being done in the churches, and to do that we have to understand what is going on. You cannot really say “Amen” to someone who is babbling. All you are doing is agreeing that you like their babbling, but they may even be cursing God without knowing it. I have been in churches

where “tongues” were encouraged, in fact required, where I got every bad feeling sometimes when a person was shouting something out. I got the feeling, which I could not prove, that they were cursing God in some way. I could not say and “Amen” to what they were shouting. No one is really edified by weird manifestations in the churches. They are edified by clear preaching and teaching from the written Word from which comes both the prophecies of the past and prophecy for the Church. Without the written word we cannot stay on the right path, and this is what has happened today where so much of what is expressed in the churches is the same old error of the Corinthian church. We would be well advised to let God give gifts where He will for however long He will and follow the Bible in terms of how those gifts are applied.

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Simply put, Paul spoke more languages than most people he met. This can be talking about both spiritual languages God had given him and also his great ability to speak many languages that God gave him to minister with. In any case Paul makes it clear that it is more important to speak five words than a thousand words no one can understand or interpret. Words like “God so loved the world” or “Believe in the Lord Jesus” are more important than a thousand words of gibberish. Speaking tongues means nothing with them being able to be understood by people.

20 Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. 21 In the Law it is written: "Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,"^[1] says the Lord.

Those who put speaking in tongues above prophecy, preaching and teaching are acting like children. We need to be like infants in understanding and participating in evil and like adults when it comes to the truth. Paul warns them again that speaking in tongues not only lead people to childish behavior but it often does no one any good, not believers or unbelievers. You can amaze people with all kinds of signs and wonders, but it is rarely through signs and wonders will they believe.

Ne 9:17 They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery.

Mt 11:20 Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

Joh 4:48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

Some false teachers like to use John 4:48 to try to prove that signs and wonders must be preformed as part of the Gospel message. But Jesus was actually mocking the religious leadership because they saw many signs and wonders and refused to repent. Most of them never did believe even though they had to Son of Man there doing miracles like the world had never seen. So signs and wonders do not save. They often lead to a hunger for more miracles without the people feeling the need to repent and believe.

22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. 23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand^[2] or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24

But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand^[B] comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, 25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

Tongues were for a sign to unbelievers so that they could see the power of God and, most importantly, hear the Gospel in their own language. Prophecy and teaching are to build up and disciple Christians. But prophecy is also better for unbelievers. Notice that Paul states that prophecy or preach the truth is better for unbelievers because a bunch of babble (not true tongues) does not help anyone. For a person to be born again they must hear that they are a sinner and what Christ has done to open up a path of forgiveness to the Father. Here we also see proof that a major part of the Gospel is to lay bare the sinful hearts of men. So then that repentant sinner, having seen the effect of God's grace and forgiveness on those in the Church, will come to humble himself before God and worship Him. I am sure Third Wave heretics use this verse about falling down to try to prove that their false sign & wonder of slain in the spirit is what this is talking about. Far from it. Those who recognize they are sinners humble themselves before God acknowledging their sin and accepting His forgiveness as Lord & Savior. They are not struck by some force onto their backsides and go into a trance. That is demonic. Christ brings people to their knees in repentance and worship.

Orderly Worship

26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

Things are to be done in order and for the edification of the believers in church. People are to share their gifts in song, in teaching, in showing others what the Lord has taught you in the Word, and in a language people can either understand or with interpretation. These kinds of things strengthen the church. Notice that it does not say to put on a show for unbelievers or to do slain in the spirit and create confusion. This is the kind of thing we see in apostate churches and in cults. Again Paul stresses that if anyone speaks in a language people cannot understand then only a few should speak and there should be interpretation for the churches. I have been to churches where everyone is speaking at the same time. That is disorder and not of the Holy Spirit. If there is no interpretation for someone who speaks in another language then they should keep silent and only speak to God.

29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,

The same idea applies to those who teach (prophecy). But another qualification is added to prophecy. There is to be testing and judging of what is taught and said in churches. People are also to speak in order, not at the same time. Everyone can be given a chance to share. The Corinthians were having disorganized church meetings very similar to what goes on in many churches today. But the Bible is clear that everything is to be done in order.

*Col 2:5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and **delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.***

We must test those who prophesy because we must know if it is coming from the Holy Spirit or another spirit.

*1Jo 4:1 **Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

A person who prophesies is either a true prophet who speaks the truth by the Spirit of truth, or a false prophet who speaks according to another spirit, either his own or that of the enemy. So the elders in a church, those who teach, preach and prophesy, are the one who have the main responsibility to judge and test any teaching that comes forth in the Church. Why? Because God is not a god of disorder as Satan is, but is a God of order who created the order of the universe.

34 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

This is a big subject. To boil it down this is not saying that women cannot speak in church if they have the permission of their husband and the male leadership of the church. What this is saying is that women should not speak in church if they do not have permission to do so. One of the problems in the Corinthian church was that women were speaking up in church asking a lot of questions and causing a commotion. Paul tells them to stop doing that and ask questions at home rather than disrupt the church. Men have the headship over women, as Christ is the head of His Church. Women have all the gifts of men, except that there were no foundational female apostles. The Bible specifically mentions women prophets, both good and bad.

*Exodus 15:20 Then **Miriam the prophetess**, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing.*

*Judges 4:4 **Deborah, a prophetess**, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.*

*2 Kings 22:14 Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achobor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to **the prophetess Huldah**, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District.*

*2 Chronicles 34:22 Hilkiah and those the king had sent with him went to speak to **the prophetess Huldah**, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District.*

*Nehemiah 6:14 Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, because of what they have done; remember also **the prophetess Noadiah** and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me.*

*Isaiah 8:3 Then **I went to the prophetess**, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.*

*Luke 2:36 There was also **a prophetess, Anna**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,*

*Revelation 2:20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate **that woman Jezebel, who calls***

herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

It also states that both men and women prophesy.

*Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.**

As we have already covered, God has given the various gifts to all believers, which includes men and women.

*1 Cor. 12:8-11 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, **to another prophecy**, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and **he gives them to each one**, just as he determines.*

But women are to take their appointed place under the leadership of men.

1 Corinthians 11:3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

For a full treatment of this subject read my article called "[The Role Of Women In The Church](#)" on my web site.

36 Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 37 If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38 If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.^[1]

Paul reminds them that the Word of God came to them through the Apostles, chiefly Paul himself. He puts those in their place who presume to be prophets when they are not. What is a mark of a false teacher or false prophet? It is that they consider their word to be equal to or superior to the word of the foundational apostles.

*2 Cor. 11:12-15 And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want **an opportunity to be considered equal with us** in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Paul reminds them again that Christians should be eager to prophesy, and tongues should not be forbidden, but all must be doing in a fitting and orderly way. Prophecy is to be tested, tongues is to be interpreted and

if there is prophecy by tongues that is to be tested as well. The point is the when Christian come together for fellowship it should not be a party, or a place for people to show off, or a place for people to run amok in all kinds of manifestations, or a place were false teaching is welcomed. It should be a place that reflect the character of God, which is that of order.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 14:2](#) Or another language; also in verses 4, 13, 14, 19, 26 and 27

[1 Corinthians 14:2](#) Or by the Spirit

[1 Corinthians 14:5](#) Or other languages; also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39

[1 Corinthians 14:5](#) Or other languages; also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39

[1 Corinthians 14:16](#) Or among the inquirers

[1 Corinthians 14:21](#) Isaiah 28:11,12

[1 Corinthians 14:23](#) Or some inquirers

[1 Corinthians 14:24](#) Or or some inquirer

[1 Corinthians 14:38](#) Some manuscripts If he is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 15

The Resurrection of Christ

1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

Paul, having rebuked the Corinthian church on many matters that were adversely affecting their witness to the world, now reminds them of the basis upon which those rebukes were based. They are based on the Gospel and that fact that they had received that Gospel and subsequently took their stand on it. If you stand for the Gospel then you will live according to it. Those who believe in the Gospel and the saving power of Jesus Christ will hold firmly to the word.

Tit 1:9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Heb 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

A person can believe in the wrong thing, in something that is useless.

2Co 11:4 For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

Believing in anything other than the Gospel as set forth by Jesus Christ and preached by the Apostles is useless. All other religions are useless. There is only one way to heaven.

Joh 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.

Ac 4:12 Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

The truth of the Gospel is the ultimate truth. If you believe it then you will live it and it will bear fruit in your life.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter,^[b] and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

The Gospel is more important than any other fact in life. Paul recognized that and made it his main goal in life to preach the Gospel. That Gospel is that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins, the wages of which are death. Jesus Christ died as the perfect once for all sacrifice for sin. He did so in fulfillment of all the prophecies of Scripture.

*Isa 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, {Or many} and he will divide the spoils with the strong, {Or numerous} because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. **For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.***

He died and was buried, proof of his true physical death. On the third day the Father raised him from the dead.

*Ga 1:1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and **God the Father, who raised him from the dead—***
2Co 4:14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

According to the Scriptures.

*Isa 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, {Or many} and he will divide the spoils with the strong, {Or numerous} **because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.***

The next part of Paul's statement is absolute proof that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Not only Peter saw him but all the disciples and over 500 believers. We know that what they saw was not a ghost.

*Joh 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "**Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.**"*
*John 21:12-14 **Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."** None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. **Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.***

At the time Paul wrote about the proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ most of those who had seen Him with their own eyes, eyewitnesses, were still alive. In a court of law, even today, the testimony of more than one witness who say the same thing is proof of the validity of their claims. But over 500 witnesses? There can be no doubt of the fact that Jesus Christ died and was resurrected.

Last of all Jesus Christ appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. He did not appear in his bedroom or wearing a fireman's hat. He appeared from where He is today, from heaven at the right hand of the Father in all his glory. This is likely why Paul was blinded for some days after he saw Christ.

Ac 22:11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

Paul was born again when He believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. He states that he was “abnormally born” because he was not one of those who followed Christ when he was alive. He had persecuted the followers of Jesus and Jesus was the One who came and rescued and recruited him to be His follower. He made him the last of the Apostles.

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1Co 15:8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Least, in 1 Cor. 15:9, is *elachus*, which means the least. Last, in 1 Cor. 15:8, is *eschatos*, which means the last numerically in a sequence. Therefore Paul was certainly the last of the foundational apostles and arguably God’s choice as the true twelfth disciple since Jesus had always been the one to choose His own disciples, not the other disciples who chose Matthias after the death of Judas.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

Paul says he did not deserve to be called an apostle because of his persecution of the Church. But this also proves that he was called an apostle. It was only by the grace of God that Paul was saved, and this is why Paul was such an effective witness to the grace of God. God knew this and picked the perfect man to be a witness to the Gentiles. Paul worked hard to spread the Gospel.

*2Co 6:5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in **hard work**, sleepless nights and hunger;*

But Paul does not credit his work but the grace of God for anything of value that came out of his work for the Lord. But the bottom line is that the Gospel was preached and that this is the Gospel the Corinthians believed. There were others who preached the Gospel to them as well. But they were to live this out and stop disobeying the Lord in so many ways.

The Resurrection of the Dead

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

There were apparently some in the Corinthian church who were trying to say that there was no such thing as resurrection from the dead. Obviously if there was no resurrection then Christ was not resurrected either which means that those who believed this believed in vain. That means they were believing the wrong thing and were not truly saved. This was an idea that was shared by the Sadducees as well as some early Gnostics. So it is clear that a number of false teachings had already begun to enter the early church. But even more serious than a faith that is no faith at all based on false teaching is that those who believe such things tend to spread them around themselves. They become false witnesses. Their faith is futile, in other words it is based on a lie and therefore has not effect. Those who believe and spread lies about God are “still in your sins”. If you are still in your sins then you are not born again. Paul goes on to say that those who are still in their sins and die are lost. Most men mock those who believe in the resurrection. But it is this life that is the only opportunity to believe the truth.

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet."^[c] Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

But Paul is an eyewitness to the fact the Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and is at the right hand of God. Those who have fallen asleep in Christ will certainly share in His resurrection.

Ro 6:5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

If we die with Him by believing on Him and confessing our sins, nailing the old man to the cross, then we will also share with Him in His resurrection. We will also reign with Him. The verse that states “he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” is proof that those who teach Preterism, Amilennialism, Postmillennialism and Dominionism are teaching false doctrine. Jesus Christ will come again to rule and judge the earth. He must reign from the throne of David on earth before He creates a new heaven and earth. The throne of David is an earthly throne. It is not talking about the throne of God in heaven.

Lu 1:32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

Jesus not only does this but he must do this so the dominion of the devil (Col. 1:13) can be handed over once for all to the Father after he has destroyed all opposing authority. Jesus defeated the devil on the cross (Heb. 2:14) but His final rule must happen when he defeats the armies of the Antichrist first (Rev. 19:20) and finally the armies of Satan who has been released at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10). Jesus destroyed death on the cross.

Re 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

It was there He was given the keys or power over death by virtue of being raised again from death. But the final victory will be when all death is done away with in the new heaven and earth where we will be with him forever in our resurrection bodies, which can never die.

Joh 11:26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

The Scripture must be fulfilled that prophesied that Jesus would “put everything under His feet. That does not mean the Church, it means Jesus Himself when He returns.

Ps 110:1 Of David. A psalm. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

The Lord (the Father) said to my Lord (The Son) that He would sit at His right hand until He made the enemies of God a footstool for His feet. This has not happened yet and will only happen upon the Second Coming of Christ. Notice that it is the Father who glorifies the Son. The Son is always in obedience to the Father and brings glory to the Father in all things. The Father is not subject to the Son but the Son to the Father. That does not make the Son any less. It shows the character of God Who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30 And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I die every day—I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."^d 33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

If a person is baptized, they are stating that they believe in the resurrection. Those who get baptized and deny the resurrection might as well not be baptized. If there is no resurrection then the saying “Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die” is all we have left. That is all the world has to hope for is a few moments of enjoying God’s creation only to be followed by nothing, or worse hell. Paul warns the Corinthians to stop hanging out with people who deny the resurrection. This is a good verse to remind true teachers to no fellowship with false teachers. It is a good verse to teach our kids about the necessity of making good friends instead of bad ones. Bad company corrupts good character. We all need to make sure we are not being corrupted by bad people, get away from them, and stop sinning. If we continue to sin we do not have the hope of the resurrection.

The Resurrection Body

35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the

earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

The question of what kind of body we will have should be left up to God. He will create a new body for those who believe in Him.

Php 3:21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

God has created all kinds of “bodies” therefore He is able to make a new body in the Resurrection.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

It follows that the body that is sown will be far greater when it is raised. If there is a natural body then there has to be a spiritual body. That spiritual body is either raised to be imperishable, or is to be sent to hell for eternity.

45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"^[e]; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we^[f] bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

The natural man comes first. God gives us the breath of life, the spirit. But the natural body in the womb and what is born comes first. The first man was made of dust, the raised man is made of heavenly essence. Those who are born of heaven through Christ will be of heaven. Those who reject Christ are simply dust in the wind. We will be raised to the likeness of Christ who is the firstborn resurrection and sits at the right hand of the Father in His glorified body.

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."^[g]

In other words if you are not born of the Spirit, the second birth, you cannot inherit the kingdom of God or share in the resurrection.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

Obviously you have to be born of water, born as a human being, in order to be able to be born again of the Spirit. At the last trumpet, at the coming of Christ, those who are dead in Christ will rise in their new glorified bodies, and those who are still living will be changed in an instant into their immortal bodies. There is no way to go into the next world, the new heaven and new earth, without a body to match. Those who do not know Christ, by virtue of reality, cannot take part in the Kingdom. That is why it is absolutely essential to believe in Christ, have a new creation made in us by His power, and ultimately have a new heavenly body made for our spirit to inhabit. Without that no one can be with God for eternity. No mortal man could live in the presence of God. We need the new bodies He has promised to make for those of use who believe. Then we will be able to fully know the saying "Death has been swallowed up in victory". We can claim that promise but until Jesus Christ reigns and we with Him in our glorified bodies we will not know the full reality of that statement.

55"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"^[u] 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We can now know that the wages of sin is death and the power of sin is evident in the law. But thanks go to God for giving us the victory of sin and death.

Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in {Or through} Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ro 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Christians live in the law of the Spirit of life and are no longer subject to the law of sin and death by the fact that Jesus fulfilled all the Law and gave us freedom.

Ga 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.

Ga 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; {Or the flesh; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24} rather, serve one another in love.

We must then be careful to live in the law of the Spirit no longer imprisoned by the law of sin and death.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

This is what was said above. Stand firm in your faith. Don't be moved by the world, the flesh or the devil. Stay at work for the Lord because you know that working for the Lord is not without a reward.

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 15:3](#) Or you at the first

[1 Corinthians 15:5](#) Greek Cephas

[1 Corinthians 15:27](#) Psalm 8:6

[1 Corinthians 15:32](#) Isaiah 22:13

[1 Corinthians 15:45](#) Gen. 2:7

[1 Corinthians 15:49](#) Some early manuscripts so let us

[1 Corinthians 15:54](#) Isaiah 25:8

[1 Corinthians 15:55](#) Hosea 13:14

Study In Corinthians 1

by Sandy Simpson

1 Corinthians 16

The Collection for God's People

1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

It is clear that Paul had written Galatians before 1 Corinthians. He had urged the Galatians to put together their offerings on the first day of the week. This is another proof that the early church met on Sunday, not Saturday. Other verses that prove that the early church had changed the day for meeting from the Sabbath to the first day of the week because they did not want to have people think they were still obligated to keep the whole Law of Moses are as follows.

What we need to do is look at what transpired on the first day of the week and then look at the scriptural evidence for the assembly on the first day in the New Testament.

- 1. Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week after the Sabbath (John 20:1). He was the first fruit until eternal life others were also raised Mt.27:53, the resurrection is the capstone of our faith and the proving of the new covenant. He was raised for our justification..*
- 2. Jesus appeared to ten of His disciples on the first day of the week (John 20:19). If he appeared on the 7th day do you think the Sabbatarians would use this to promote the Sabbath? Of course they would.*
- 3. Jesus waited one week, and on the next first day of the week appeared to the eleven disciples (John 20:26).*
- 4. The promised coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the first day of the week. On the day of Pentecost he was sent (Pentecost by law came on the first day of the week (Lev. 23:16).*
- 5. On the first day of the week the first gospel sermon was preached by Peter the Apostle on the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:14).*
- 6. On that first day of the week three thousand converts were united into the New Testament covenant separating from Judaism (Acts 2:41). While at the first Pentecost 3,000 were slain, at this Pentecost God reversed it and instead they were given eternal life. The law kills the new covenant gives life.*
- 7. On that same first day of the week the rite of Christian baptism into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was administered for the first time (Acts 2:41).*

8. *At Troas Paul preached to the assembled Christians on the first day of the week, the only example of the Lord's supper being practiced on Sunday (Acts 20:6, 7). So did the churches of Galatia and Corinth.*

9. *Paul instructed the Christians at Corinth to make contributions on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). Why did Paul specifically give orders to the church for this to be done on the "first day of the week"? Offerings are a part of worship itself. Offerings are a part of our worship and since offerings took place on the first day of the week, wouldn't it make sense that worship also took place on the same day of the week. This is the only day in the New Testament that Paul commands Christians to give. They would have to be gathered to do so.*

If Sunday was not an allowable day to worship or teach on then none of this would have occurred. (Mike Oppenheimer, They Changed The Sabbath To Sunday, 2008)

John also had the vision of the Revelation on the first day of the week when he was worshipping God in the Spirit.

*Re 1:10 **On the Lord's Day** I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,*

The Lord's day; the first day of the week, commemorating the Lord's resurrection, and observed as a day of divine worship, the Christian Sabbath. (Family New Testament Notes)

*Not on the Jewish sabbath, which was now abolished, nor was that ever called the Lord's day, and had John meant that, he would have said on the sabbath day; much less the Jewish passover, but the first day of the week is designed; so the Ethiopic version renders it "on the first day"; and is so **called just as the ordinance of the supper is called the Lord's supper, being instituted by the Lord**, and the Lord's table, #1Co 10:21 11:20, and that because it was the day in which our Lord rose from the dead, #Mr 16:9; and in which he appeared at different times to his disciples, #Joh 20:19,26, and which the primitive churches set apart for his worship and service, and on which they met together to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, #Ac 20:7 _ 1Co 16:1; (John Gill Expositor)*

Paul was instituting a tradition of taking offerings in the Church. But notice that these offerings were not for himself. That is the disgusting thing being taught by money preachers on TV. They take up offerings to enrich themselves all the while claiming it is for "the ministry". But we know from year of observation that those false teachers live like kings on money donated. Paul was asking them to collect money to take to the council at Jerusalem so that they could, in turn, help with the needs of the churches. Paul was not even going to carry that money himself, but asked them to appoint trustworthy men to take the money to Jerusalem, and if they approved Paul would go also. Paul did not want any of the glory for himself, but wanted the churches to be faithful to the Lord to give.

Personal Requests

5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6 Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

Paul promises that he will come to them at which time he will minister to them and they will pick men to take their offerings to Jerusalem. Paul was hoping to stay with them for awhile, perhaps even over the winter. Paul did actually stay in Corinth for three months that winter according to Ac 20:3,6. Though Paul's plans were not yet fixed, he planned to go to Judea after the winter months and he stated that his stay with them in Corinth would be a help to him. Paul did not just want to come right away and leave in order to avoid the winter. He wanted to spend some time with them. There was much to correct in the Corinthian church and Paul wanted time to be able to help them also. Paul did stay on in Ephesus till Pentecost. This proves that the first letter to the Corinthians was written in Ephesus. Then Paul was driven out by people who opposed him there but he had already planned to go to Corinth. He was apposed at Ephesus because of adherents of Diana, the false god of the Ephesians where they had a great temple there. The Gospel Paul preached had effected the sales of temple idols and so those who made those idol, such as Alexander the coppersmith, were very angry with Paul.

2Ti 4:14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.

10 If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. 11 No one, then, should refuse to accept him. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

Timothy was a young man who was sent out by Paul many times when Paul could not go. Paul hopes that Timothy will be able to come before Paul comes to Corinth. Some in the churches did not accept Timothy but Paul urged them to accept him, to not let him fear them so that he could carry on the work of the Lord. They were then to send Timothy to Paul so that he could come to him with some of the other brothers.

12 Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

Apollos was another type of apostle. He was not a foundational apostle like Paul but rather a sent out one, a missionary and church planter. Apollos seems to have been a person with his own strong will, yet he was used of the Lord to preach the Gospel.

13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. 14 Do everything in love.

This is always the admonition from God through the Bible. Be alert, stand firm in the faith.

Eph 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

1Th 5:6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

1Pe 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Ga 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.

Php 4:1 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

2Th 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings {Or traditions} we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

Jas 5:8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

We also need to be strong and bold in that stand for truth.

Eph 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

2Ti 2:1 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Eph. 6:19-20 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.

Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Most importantly we are to do everything we do for the Lord in love.

Php 1:16 The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel.

2Jo 1:6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

1Jo 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

15 You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, 16 to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. 17 I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

Paul urges the Christians of Corinth to submit to the elders of the household of Stephanas. We are to respect our elders in the faith and submit to them.

1Ti 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Apparently the church at Corinth had neglected to help Paul. Paul needed help, especially because he was being persecuted in Ephesus at the time. Some of the elders from Corinth, however, went to visit Paul and gave him help. They not only gave material help but refreshed Paul's spirit. This was their way and they were also about refreshing the spirit of those at Corinth. This is a reason why Paul told the Corinthian church to give them recognition, to honor them, to submit to their leadership.

Final Greetings

19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla^{al} greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. 20 All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

The Christians in Ephesus and other house churches sent their greetings to Corinth.

21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. 22 If anyone does not love the Lord—a curse be on him. Come, O Lord^[b]! 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24 My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.^[c]

Paul wrote the end of the letter to the Corinth and dictated the rest. *Paul's letters were written by an amanuensis (certain persons performing a function by hand, either writing down the words of another or performing manual labour as in Ro 16:22 - Tertius), but he always added a salutation in his own hand as a proof of genuineness (2Th 3:17). 2Th 2:2, implies that spurious letters (false letters made to look like Paul's) were circulated. (People's New Testament Notes)*

Those who claim to love the Lord but do otherwise do not love Him. They are under the curse of judgment still. They need to repent and become true followers of Christ. False teacher, false prophets and false apostles are especially under judgment. When we are surrounded by many false teachers we can only say "Come, O Lord". I say that often myself. We can trust God will judge them. But the grace of Jesus Christ will be with those who serve Him. Paul wraps up his letter letting them know that he loves them even while rebuking them for a number of things that they are doing wrong. The point is that they repent of them and do right. What Paul wrote in this letter is done in love, speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

Footnotes:

[1 Corinthians 16:19](#) Greek Prisca, a variant of Priscilla

[1 Corinthians 16:22](#) In Aramaic the expression Come, O Lord is Marana tha.

[1 Corinthians 16:24](#) Some manuscripts do not have Amen.