

A CHURCH WITH PROBLEMS

A Study Of 1st Corinthians

HISTORY OF THE CITY:

“Although the apostle Paul did not establish the church in Corinth until about A.D. 51 (Acts 18:1-18), the city’s history dates back to prehistoric times, when ancient tribesmen first settled the site. Always a commercial and trade center, Corinth was already prosperous and famous for its bronze, pottery, and shipbuilding more than 800 years before Christ. The Greek poet Homer mentioned “wealthy Corinth” in 850 B.C. In the following centuries Corinth competed for power with Athens, its stronger neighbor across the isthmus to the north. And in 146 B.C. invading Roman armies destroyed Corinth, killing the men and enslaving the women and children. Only a token settlement remained until 44 B.C., when Julius Caesar ordered the city rebuilt. Not only did he restore it as the capital city of the Roman province of Achaia; he also repopulated it with freed Italians and slaves from every nation. Soon the merchants flocked back to Corinth, too. The city soon became a melting pot for the approximately 500,000 people who lived there at the time of Paul’s arrival. Merchants and sailors, anxious to work the docks, migrated to Corinth. Professional gamblers and athletes, betting on the Isthmian games, took up residence. Slaves, sometimes freed but with no place to go, roamed the streets day and night. And prostitutes (both male and female) were abundant. People from Rome, the rest of Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor—indeed, all of the Mediterranean world—relished the lack of standards and freedom of thought that prevailed in the city.” (Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

CITY DURING THE DAYS OF PAUL:

Taken from Melvin Curry’s commentary on 2 Corinthians in the Truth series, pages 17-29.

Cosmopolitan city: “No community of the ancient world had a greater diversity of people than Corinth. Local Greeks and the descendants of Roman colonists swelled the city’s population.

Visitors traveled to the city from all over the world. Also, Jews flocked to Corinth in such numbers that a synagogue had been built there before Paul’s arrival (Acts 18:1-4). Witherington suggests that such ‘diversity of socioeconomic levels and religious and ethnic backgrounds among Corinthian Christians’ may have been ‘an underlying cause of several of the issues and problems that Paul addresses in 1 and 2 Corinthians’.” (17)

Religious community:

» Various pagan cults, “the pagans attached a religious significance to almost everything.” (18)
» Aphrodite: located on top of the acrocorinth and housed 1000 temple prostitutes. “Because the stereotypical Corinthian ‘recognized no superior and no law but his own desires,’ Aristophanes (ca. 450-35 B.C.) coined the expression ‘to live as do the Corinthians’ which became a byword throughout the ancient world for shockingly unrestrained immorality. Plato even described a prostitute as ‘a Corinthian girl’.” (19)
» Apollo: “In Corinth, there was a temple of Apollo, the god associated with prophecy. If some of the Christians there had formerly worshiped at his shrine, this fact would help to explain the perverted practice of speaking in uncontrollable, irrational, ecstatic tongues.” (19)



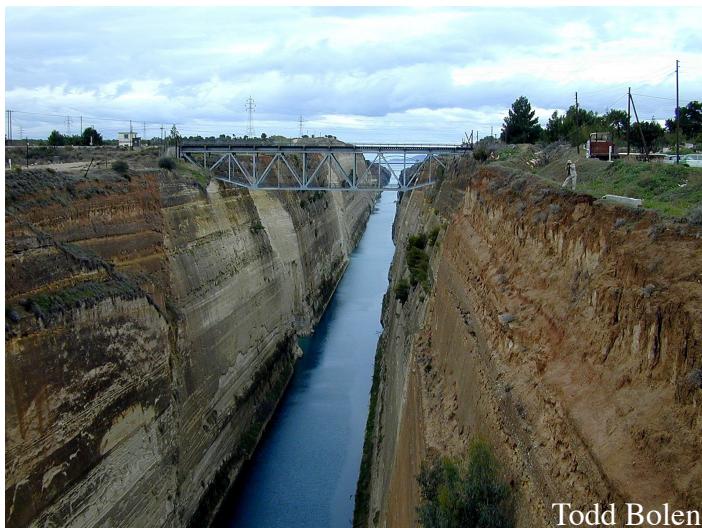
Apollo temple (foreground)
Acrocorinth (background)
Todd Bolen

»Imperial cult: “The imperial cult was quite strong in the city of Corinth. Thus, devotion to Caesar and his family would have been expected there. Even Christians would have been required to honor the emperor as divine, and the refusal to do so would have eventually lead to their severe persecution.” (19)

»“Other sanctuaries at Corinth included those of Asklepios, Athena (Minerva), Hera Argaea (Juno), Hermes (Mercury), Poseidon (Neptune), Tyche (Fortuna), and even shrines dedicated to the Egyptian deities Isis and Serapis. The meat sacrificed to idols in many of these shrines could be bought in the market.” (19-20)

Commercial crossroads:

»“Strategically located, about two miles south of the narrow isthmus that connects the Greek mainland with the Peloponnesus, the city became a major commercial meeting place of the ancient world. The traders from nearby Athens and Sparta congregated in Corinth. From the West and especially Italy, commerce came to it by way of Lechaeum, its port on the Corinthian Gulf that flowed into the Ionian Sea. In addition, the riches of the Near and Far East poured across the Aegean Sea into its port at Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf. The cargoes of ships were transported across the isthmus so that the ships might avoid the treacherous 200 mile voyage around Cape Maleae. Strabo (Geography 8.6.20) records a proverbial statement which expresses the danger: ‘When you double Maleae forget your home!’” (Curry 13)



Todd Bolen

»Besides it’s dual port cities, “roads from Isthmia in the east, from Sicyon in the west, from Argos in the south, and from the two harbors converged in Corinth.” (22)

»The Isthmian games “every other year poured additional money into both the city’s treasury and the citizen’s pockets.” (22)

»“Archaeological remains demonstrate that Corinth was designed to facilitate trade and commerce. Obviously, its paved roads served as excellent trade routes. Abundant springs supplied adequate amounts of water to quench the thirst of the people, to refrigerate numerous items of food, to wash the streets, and to flush the elaborate sewer system. In addition, there were numerous establishments for manufacturing, banking, legal services, and retail businesses, including meat markets, restaurants, and wine shops. A great variety of goods were sold in the city.” (23)

Cultural center:

»“Although Corinth never quite rivaled ancient Athens in cultural attainments, it had eclipsed it in prominence by the first century A.D. Indeed, in Paul’s time, the Corinthians had much in which to boast, namely, their beautiful buildings, religious shrines, health spas, amusement venues, and intellectual pursuits.” (23)

»Associated with this Curry discusses the Sophists: “The Sophistic movement was extremely popular in Paul’s day, and one use of the term sophist is ‘any orator who emphasized style over substance and received pay for his work’... His preaching among the Corinthians did not have the flare of the ornamental oratory of the sophists (1Cor. 2:1-5).” (27-28)

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN CORINTH

Second Journey Visit, Acts 18:1-17.

- » A period of 18 months (vs. 11)
- » First preached in the synagogue (vs. 1-6)
- » Then in the house of Titius Justus (vs. 7-11)
- » Persecution by the Jews (vs. 12-17) Regarding Gallio (vs. 12), “an inscription found at Delphi has been used to date his administration as beginning probably in the spring or summer of A.D. 51 or 52.” (Curry 29)



Judgment seat (bema) in Corinth
Todd Bolen

Apollos' work in Corinth, Acts 18:27-28.

“No doubt, Apollos’s eloquent manner and skillful exposition of the Scriptures appealed to the Corinthians (Acts 18:24,28; compare 1Cor. 1:12). But later, he must have left Corinth (perhaps, due to the divisive spirit there) and very likely returned to Ephesus, from which he did not seem eager to return to Corinth (1Cor. 16:12).” (Curry 31)

During Paul’s stay at Ephesus (3rd Missionary Journey)

- » Where Paul penned 1st Corinthians (see 16:9-10).
- » Paul apparently received reports from Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (16:17) and Chloe’s people (1:11). This furnished the material for chapters 1-6.
- » These also delivered a letter with several questions they had, chapters 7-16.
- » As a backdrop to all, several were promoting themselves and questioning Paul’s integrity (4:7-17).
- » Paul dispatches Timothy (1Cor. 4:17-21; 16:10-11; Acts 19:22).
- » Paul writes 1st Corinthians. Curry dates its writing at A.D. 52-53.
- » Paul determines to visit (16:5)

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Introduction (1:1-9)

Issues reported to Paul (1:10-6:20)

- Division (1:10-4:21)
- Moral laxity (5:1-6:20)

Their letter (7:1-16:4)

- Marriage (7)
- Food sacrificed to idols (8:1-11:1)
- The covering (11:2-16)
- The Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)
- Spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40)
- The resurrection (15)
- The collection (16:1-4)

Concluding matters (16:5-24)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Scripture	Topic
March 8, 2015	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Introduction
March 11, 2015	1 Corinthians 1:10-31	The Sin of Division
March 15, 2015	1 Corinthians 2	The Sin of Division
March 18, 2015	1 Corinthians 3	The Sin of Division
March 22, 2015	1 Corinthians 4	The Sin of Division
March 25, 2015	1 Corinthians 5	Sexual Immorality & The Church
March 29, 2015	1 Corinthians 6:1-11	Taking Each Other To Court
April 1, 2015	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	Warning Against Fornication
April 5, 2015	1 Corinthians 7:1-24	Marriage Principles
April 8, 2015	1 Corinthians 7:25-40	Marriage Principles
April 12, 2015	1 Corinthians 8	Regarding Food Sacrificed To Idols
April 15, 2015	1 Corinthians 9	Regarding Food Sacrificed To Idols
April 19, 2015	1 Corinthians 10	Regarding Food Sacrificed To Idols
April 22, 2015	1 Corinthians 11:1-16	Submission
April 26, 2015	1 Corinthians 11:17-34	The Lord's Supper
April 29, 2015	1 Corinthians 12	Guidance Regarding Spiritual Gifts
May 3, 2015	1 Corinthians 13	Guidance Regarding Spiritual Gifts
May 6, 2015	1 Corinthians 14:1-19	Guidance Regarding Spiritual Gifts
May 10, 2015	1 Corinthhians 14:20-40	Guidance Regarding Spiritual Gifts
May 13, 2015	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	The Resurrection
May 17, 2015	1 Corinthians 15:12-34	The Resurrection
May 20, 2015	1 Corinthians 15:35-58	The Resurrection
May 24, 2015	1 Corinthians 16:1-4	Principles of Giving
May 27, 2015	1 Corinthians 16:5-24	Conclusion
May 31, 2015	Topical	
June 3, 2015	Topical	

1 CORINTHIANS 1

The Folly Of Division

CHAPTER OUTLINE

1. Greeting (vss. 1-3)
2. Thanksgiving for what God has done (vss. 4-9)
3. The folly of division (vss. 10-31)
 - » Exhortation for unity (vs. 10)
 - » The issue defined (vss. 11-12)
 - » Their quarreling was not a result of Paul's work (vss. 13-17)
 - » Their quarreling was revealed as foolishness (vss. 18-31)
 - God's wisdom was deemed foolishness by men (vss. 18-25)
 - The wise had not been called (vs. 26)
 - Thus, boasting should only be in God! (vss. 27-31)

GREETING (VS. 1-3)

Paul first introduces himself.

4. He is "Called... by the will of God", as opposed to self appointment. (see Gal. 1:1; 2Cor. 1:1.)
5. He is "called as an apostle". Paul's apostleship did not come from any man, it came from God.
6. It would seem that some in Corinth were challenging Paul's authority and apostleship. See 4:1-5; 4:15; 9:1-2.

Paul is accompanied by Sosthenes. This could be the same man mentioned in Acts 18:17, but it is impossible to be certain.

Paul next addresses the church. Note how Paul's description of them strikes at many of their problems:

1. of God, not Paul or Apollos. Cf. 3:9.
2. sanctified in Christ Jesus, so why are they engaged in unholy living? See 6:11.
3. saints by calling, Paul was called to be an apostle, they are called to be saints.
4. with all who in every place
 - » Lenski: Here there is the true antidote for

individualism and sectionalism. We are not to be Christians just by ourselves but members together with all the saints of God.

- » An important point we will see is that Paul taught the same thing everywhere (See 4:17; 11:16; 14:33; 14:36.) The will of God in these matters was not limited to a particular time or culture.

THANKSGIVING (VS. 4-9)

Note: "Paul does not give thanks for qualities in the Corinthians like faith and love (contrast 1 Thess. 1:2-3), but for what God's grace has in fact done in them." (Leon Morris in the Tyndale commentary)

What God had done for them...

1. His grace in Christ Jesus (vs. 4)
2. Enriched in all speech and knowledge (vs. 5)
 - » Some see this is as the miraculous speech and knowledge that existed among the Corinthians.
 - » Seems more likely that this speech and knowledge references that of Paul, Apollos and other teachers.
3. Testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you (vs. 6). By their response to the gospel, cf. Acts 18:8.
4. They are not lacking in any gift, awaiting the revelation of Jesus (vs. 7)
 - » While it may be speaking of miraculous gifts (see 12:4), could also be speaking of the gifts associated with salvation, see Romans 5:15.
 - » The gifts we receive here are a prelude to what awaits, cf. Rom 8:23; Eph. 1:13-14.
5. They would be confirmed blameless (vs. 8)
6. Because God is faithful! It was through Him that they were called into fellowship.
 - » Contrast with vs. 10.

- » Point: this faithful God had brought them into His fellowship, He would confirm them to the end. Would they be faithful to Him?

DIVISION IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH (VSS. 10-31)

The Problem Revealed (vss 10-12)

1. Opening appeal for unity (vs. 10)
 - » After all, they were all called into the same fellowship (vs. 9)
 - » Interesting wordplay: divisions (schismata) has a literal rendering of “tear or rent”, as in a garment being torn. Paul’s desire was that they be “made complete” is the same word used for the mending of nets in Matt. 4.21. So, while they are in danger of being torn apart, Paul’s aim is that they be mended back together.
 - » As we will note in the next few verses, their division was based on preferred teachers, and no doubt the perversion of doctrine within each group that led to them not being of the same judgment on many issues. But, this goes against the basic principles of the gospel and our fellowship in Christ where we are to strive for the unity of the spirit (cf. Eph. 4.3).
 - » Contrast Paul’s words here with the prevalent ecumenical theology of today. Differences are celebrated, rather than examined in Scripture. Unscriptural teachings are shrugged off as being OK for that group to practice. A far cry from Paul’s plea to unity among believers. This is not to say that brethren will agree 100% on all things, but their aim is to agree as the Scriptures are studied and understood.
2. Rather than a united church, there were quarrels in Corinth (vss. 11-12).
 - » Quarrels are listed among the “deeds of the flesh” in Galatians 5.19-21 (translated as discord or disputes in many translations). A far cry from being in the “same mind and in the same judgment”
 - » What brought about these quarrels? Vs. 12

would indicate that they arose from preference over teachers.

- Note: this was not the doing of the teachers as Paul will make clear over the next couple of chapters.
- Likely that preference was based on the teacher that taught each convert the gospel. Paul was first to labor in Corinth (Acts 18.1-17) and was followed by Apollos (Acts 18.27-28). It is doubtful that Peter had travelled to Corinth at this time, but Jewish Christians coming from Jerusalem may have comprised the party of Cephas. For them, Peter stood out as the greatest teacher, and perhaps in their opinion more “Jewish”. The party of Christ may simply stand for the rest, those who had not been directly taught by Paul, Apollos or Peter. It is clear that Paul views them as a particular party and not Christians simply trying to follow Christ (which is what Paul will advocate).

These quarrels were not promoted by Paul (vss. 13-17)

1. It may be that the Corinthian church still viewed themselves as united. After all, they hadn’t split into different assemblies. So, Paul’s words may have come as quite a shock: “Has Christ been divided?” Of course, Christ is not divided, but their quarrels were pointing to an allegiance to something other than Christ.
2. Paul used his experience among them to show that this problem was not created by him, and by extension any of Paul’s fellow laborers. They were not baptized in Paul’s name, in fact Paul’s mission wasn’t to baptize any of them!
 - » One cannot escape the importance of baptism in this passage. This was the first point in Paul’s argument about unity in Christ. They were baptized into Christ’s name, expressing fellowship and allegiance to Him. They were not baptized in Paul’s name, or in any other name. Paul never said baptism was optional or that one could be

in a relationship with Christ without being baptized.

- » In fact, Paul had baptized very few of them. His mission wasn't to baptize people, but to preach the truth of the gospel to them. Very many of them were baptized as a result of hearing Paul's preaching, but he had personally baptized very few, a further indication that he was not trying to build a personal following.
- » This passage also helps to illustrate the dangers of reading a verse outside of its context. Some have used vs. 17 as proof that baptism is unimportant, that only the hearing of the gospel and faith matter. However, when read in context, one clearly sees that Paul was emphasizing his mission of preaching, preaching that would lead to someone being baptized "in Christ's name" and not his own.

The Foolishness Of Their Quarreling (vss. 18-31)

1. The gospel of Christ (God's wisdom) seems foolish to men (vss. 18-25).
 - » The gospel did not make sense to man. We recall how the Athenians mocked the notion of the resurrection (Acts 17.32). An inscription is still visible in Rome of a Christian worshipping a crucified figure that has the body of man with the head of an ass. The inscription reads "Alexamenos worships his god." God's wisdom for redeeming man is mocked as foolishness.
 - » The tragic result of "wise" man rejecting the foolishness of God is that man rejects the one thing that can save him. The Jews rejected the message of the cross because Jesus did not meet their expectation of the Messiah. They stumbled over the cross! The Gentiles viewed Christ's crucifixion and resurrection as foolishness, completely opposed to their wisdom. Both Jew and Greek had become foolish because they rejected God's salvation.
 - » But God's "foolishness" is the manifestation of His power and wisdom. His power in rescuing man from sin, His wisdom in

making a way for all men to be saved.

2. They could see that not many wise had been called (vs. 26)
 - » In pride they had quarreled among each other. Paul sought to humble them. "Look at yourselves! You're not the best and the brightest, at least not according to man's valuation. But you responded to the gospel!"
 - » Note: Paul is not saying that only the foolish had been called. The preceding verses make clear that the gospel had been preached to all, but the wise of this world rejected it's call. These "foolish" Corinthians had accepted the gospel invitation.
 - » Now, they needed to humbly continue to follow the teaching of Christ!
3. Thus, Boasting Should Only Be in God! (vss. 27-31)
 - » This builds off of Paul's point in vs. 26. The Corinthians were not the wealthiest, the most noble or wisest of men. But they had been saved by the gospel of Christ.
 - » Thus, they should not boast in any man! They should not boast in themselves, for salvation had come from God. Note how Paul described them as "foolish, weak, base, despised and "things that are not" in vss. 27-28. That's what they were in the world. But now in Christ they have become part of true wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (vs. 31). There is no room for man's boasting, save boasting in the Lord (vs. 30-31; Jeremiah 9.23-24).
 - » Furthermore, they should not boast in Paul, Apollos or Cephas (vs. 12), because they were only servants of Christ. Paul will elaborate on this in chapters 2-3.

1 CORINTHIANS 2

Paul Declared God's Wisdom

VS. 1-5, HOW PAUL PRESENTED THE GOSPEL TO THEM

Paul's message (vs. 1-2)

1. The "And" at the beginning of the passage points back to the preceding point at the end of chapter 1. There, the Corinthians were exhorted to only boast in the Lord. Likewise, Paul could only boast in the Lord.
2. Thus, Paul did not use the tactics of the wise sophists of Greece. "Any use of these means would have exalted them above the gospel, and the Corinthians might have been attracted by these means and not by the gospel." (Lenski)
3. Rather, Paul presented the essential message of Christ & Him crucified!
 - » Remember, Jesus crucified is foolishness to the world! 1:23.
 - » While preaching would begin with telling the audience about Jesus, His death and resurrection (see 15.1-4), to truly preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach all that He wills (cf. Matt. 28.18-20).
 - » "This inspired message did not need modifications by Paul then nor man's changes today. If one has to be drawn by social enticements he will demand these to remain. If one is drawn by the gospel he will stand regardless of the cost." (Robert Harkrider)

Paul's presentation (vs. 3-5)

1. Paul did not win them over by force of personality or dynamic presentation. See also 2Cor 10:10.
 - » "in the second-century *Acts of Paul and Thelcla*, Paul is said to be 'a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked'" (Tyndale)
 - » Acts 18.9-11 may provide some insight. It would seem that during Paul's time at Corinth he feared that persecution would

come, just as it had in the many other places he had preached. The Lord spoke to him, encouraging him.

2. Paul's message may not have been dynamic, but it demonstrated what was truly important: the Spirit (i.e. Divine revelation) and power (in this context, saving power is more likely than miraculous).
3. Paul's purpose (vs. 5): that their faith would be in God's power!

VS. 6-13, THE WISDOM OF THE MESSAGE

1. In this passage Paul switches from the singular personal pronoun, "I", to the plural personal pronoun, "we". Paul has inspired teachers such as himself, Apollos and Cephas (1.12) in mind.
2. The message is wisdom to the "mature," this is those who would rely only on God's will and not the wisdom of men (6)

It is not the wisdom of this age, but the wisdom of God in a mystery (7-9)

1. Note Ephesians 3:3-5 where the mystery isn't simply the coming of Christ and His crucifixion, but the uniting of Jew and Gentile in Him.
2. It remains a mystery to the wise of this world and those who would rely on worldly wisdom. That was particularly proven in that they crucified the Lord of glory, revealing their complete failure to comprehend God's revelation in Christ.
3. This wisdom had never been seen or heard, but it is what God prepared for those who love Him!

How God revealed it: through the Spirit! (10-13)

1. Note the "us" in vs. 10. Paul still has inspired teachers in mind. An important point should be made here. These Corinthian saints had all received "the promise of the Holy Spirit"

as Peter promised in Acts 2.38. Furthermore, many of them possessed miraculous abilities, but God's will was not revealed directly to every Christian. Rather it was delivered by the Spirit to specific teachers. See John 14:26; 15:26; 16.13.

2. So, why should Paul and other inspired teachers be followed over the wisdom of men or our own feelings and emotions? Because only they had the Spirit inspiring them, the Spirit that knows the mind of God!

VS. 14-16, THOSE WHO REJECT & THOSE WHO ACCEPT GOD'S WISDOM

1. The "natural man" does not accept the Spirit given wisdom of God.
 - » "In 1:18 he is one who considers preaching of the cross to be foolishness. He is different from one who is 'perfect, full grown' that receives the word, 2:6. The spiritual versus carnal man is described in 3:1-3 and Rom. 8:5-8. The natural man in this context is one who relies on human reasoning. He refuses to be guided by the inspired revelation of God." (Robert Harkrider)
 - » He does not accept, because it is foolishness to him, see 1:21-23.
 - » Cannot understand because these must be appraised (judged) spiritually, not physically.
2. However, those who are spiritual can appraise the wisdom of God, because they are relying on God's Spirit, vs. 12.
3. Paul concludes by quoting Isaiah 40:13.
 - » God is far superior to man, so no man can know His mind. That is unless God reveals it to him (vs. 11).
 - » Yet, Paul says that "we", i.e. inspired apostles and teachers do know the mind of Christ. Because He revealed it to them.
4. Paul's point is clear: the Corinthian saints should not lean on worldly wisdom or earthly teachers that did not follow the will of God. Such had led to division. They needed to listen to those like Paul who spoke the very words of

God. We would do well to do the same!

5. Sadly, as we will note at the beginning of the next chapter, the saints in Corinth were not mature, but were acting as natural men, see 3.1-3.

1 CORINTHIANS 3

You Are God's Field, God's Building

REVIEW: The first issue that Paul addressed in his correspondence to the Corinthian saints was their quarreling and divisive spirit (1.11-12). But why were they quarreling and dividing when this was not the will of God? It is plain that they had been following human wisdom, gravitating toward various teachers who had a different spin on the simplicity of the gospel. Thus, Paul has had much to say about wisdom in these opening chapters:

- » The wisdom of God seems like foolishness to the world (1.18-25).
- » They were not the wise of this world, which was why they had accepted the “foolish” message of the cross. Thus, their only boasting should be in the Lord (1.26-31)
- » Paul did not come with elegant speech and human wisdom, rather he presented the gospel to them. Their faith rested on the gospel, and not on human wisdom (2.1-5)
- » Those who were mature would listen to Paul and other inspired teachers, because they had the mind of God revealed to them by God’s Spirit (2.6-13).

Chapter 2 concluded with Paul contrasting the “natural man” and those who are “spiritual”. The natural man does not accept the things revealed by God’s Spirit, because they seem foolish to him. However, those who are spiritual know and accept the things revealed by God’s Spirit. Thus, they listen to Paul and other inspired teachers because, “we have the mind of Christ.”

But what of the Corinthians? Were they “natural men” or “spiritual”? Chapter 3 opens with Paul addressing that very question.

Vs. 1-4, Their conduct showed that they were following the flesh and not the Spirit.

1. There’s some interesting wordplay in this section. Paul relates how he had given them milk to drink in vss. 1-2. This probably refers to the

18 months that Paul had been there as related in Acts 18. The reason why he had given them milk and not meat is that they were “men of flesh... infants in Christ.” There was nothing wrong with this, new converts need the basics. Paul had given them this.

2. The problem was that they had not grown up! They were still “fleshly” (vs.3). When Paul spoke of them as “men of flesh” in vs. 1 he used the word, sarkinos. Now in vs. 3 he uses the word sarkikos. The difference? “The difference between sarkinos and sarkikos is like that between ‘fleshy’ and ‘fleshly’ (cf. Lenski, ‘“fleshy,” and you cannot help it; “fleshly,” and you can but do not help it’). The more thoroughgoing word is sarkinos, but there is no blame attaching to it as applied to those who are young in the faith. But sarkikos, ‘characterized by flesh’, when used of those who have been Christians for years, is blameworthy. The mature believer is pneumatikos, ‘characterized by spirit’. To be characterized instead by flesh, as the Corinthians were, is the very opposite of what Christians should be.” (Leon Morris in the Tyndale commentary)
3. The evidence of their “fleshliness” was in their quarreling and dividing (vs. 4). Recall that quarreling is one of the works of the flesh numbered in Galatians 5.19-21.
4. But going back to Paul’s main thought, this meant bad things for their receptiveness to Paul’s message. Again, Paul and other inspired teachers were delivering the mind of God to them, because the Spirit had revealed it to these select individuals. Since the Corinthians were “walking like mere men” they were still unable to receive the solid food that God intended for them to receive.

Vs. 5-9, The proper evaluation of preachers & teachers

1. Their jealousy and strife had resulted in division, some claiming to be of Paul, others claiming to be of Apollos. Human wisdom was involved in this as people gravitated toward supposed differences in the styles and messages of these teachers. So, Paul addresses how these Christians should view himself, Apollos and any other teacher of God's will.
2. They shouldn't glory in Paul or Apollos, for they were just servants doing the job they were called to do! The glory belongs solely to God!
3. An interesting point can be made from the tenses in vs. 6. Paul planted (past tense), Apollos watered (past tense), God was causing the growth (imperfect tense, indicating continued activity).
4. Paul and Apollos had a job to do: plant and water. They would be rewarded so long as they labored for the Lord. Note, their reward was based on their labor, not the results of their labor! Furthermore, there was no division between Paul and Apollos. They were both doing the work of God, and thus "are one" (vs. 8) and "fellow workers" (vs. 9).
5. Vs. 5 serves two purpose:
 - » That they were God's field and building indicated their role in this. They needed to allow Paul and Apollos to do their work so that the growth God wanted in them could occur.
 - » Transitioning from "field" to "building" will allow Paul to make his next point.

Vs. 10-17, Be Careful how you build on the foundation.

1. Building imagery takes center stage in this passage. But this isn't just any building, it's God's building, His temple (vs. 16)!
2. Paul's role was in laying the foundation, and of course the only foundation that could be laid is Jesus Christ (vss.10-11; cf. 1:23; 2:2).
3. Now, others were building on that foundation, and they must be careful how they build!
4. Some see this passage as applying to the type of converts being added to the building. However, it seems more likely that Paul is referring

to the teachings and not the converts.

- » The contrast in chapters 1&2 has been between the wisdom of the world (foolishness) and the foolishness of the cross (true wisdom), cf. 1:21-25; 2:6-9, 12-13.
- » Paul laid the one true foundation: Jesus Christ, i.e the message of the crucifixion (1:23).
- » Now others must build (i.e. teach) what would truly build up the church.
- 5. If I am correct, it would seem that the best way to read the passage would be:
 - » Those who built with gold, silver & precious stones were the ones who continued teaching the true gospel of Christ. These materials (gospel teaching) belong in God's Temple. These materials (gospel teaching) would last when the testing fire came and the teacher(s) would be rewarded.
 - » Those who built with wood, hay and straw were relying more on the wisdom of the world in their teaching. Must be careful here to emphasize that their teachings were not destructive to the church, i.e. not false, but by trying to bring worldly wisdom into the gospel they were not building anything that would last. Such materials (teaching) really don't belong in a temple. Such work would perish, but they would escape (but perhaps barely).
 - » However, there were some whose teaching was destructive to the building (God's temple). Any who advocated the divisive doctrines mentioned in vs. 4 would fall into this category. The destructive nature of their work would be repaid in that they would be destroyed themselves!
- 6. Point of application: who we listen to is so very important. There are many teachers out there. Some are good, some not so good. We should always be evaluating teachers by what Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, etc. had to say, for they revealed the mind of God to us!

Vs. 18-23, Become fools that you may be wise!

1. We've now come full circle. They've been act-

ing like fleshly men, now it's time to be spiritual! They've boasted in their wisdom, but now it's time to become foolish so that they can accept God's wisdom!

2. A stern warning is given for those who would continue to boast in human wisdom: God knows the folly you're in and it will be useless! (vss. 19-20; Job 5.13; Psalm 94.11).
3. So, quit boasting in men. After all, God had given them all things (not men). Furthermore, they now belong to Christ, just as Christ belongs to God. Christ didn't glory in man, He gloried in the Father. So, why should they do otherwise?

1 CORINTHIANS 4

Differences Between Paul & The Corinthians

INTRO: “So then let no one boast in men,” (3.21). Strife and division had entered the Corinthian church, no doubt because some of their own members had sought to create a following, appealing to worldly wisdom and human logic. What they needed to follow was the wisdom of God, His mind that He delivered to Paul and other inspired teachers (2.6-13). Such wisdom would truly build-up God’s temple (3.10-17). But would they listen? Chapter 4 continues Paul’s appeal that they forsake the wisdom of this world, and that they listen to what he has to say.

Implied in this is some tension between Paul and at least one faction in Corinth. It’s doubtful that many of the members had hard feelings toward Paul, but it would seem evident that some of their teachers had many negative things to say about the apostle. Thus, Paul’s appeal contains a defense of his own behavior, reminding them of his care so that they might again heed what he has to say.

VSS. 1-5, REGARD US AS SERVANTS & STEWARDS

1. Paul had urged them that “no one boast in men.” Paul wanted them to listen to him, but not so they could boast in him. Paul was but a servant of the master.
2. Paul’s use of the word “steward” is of interest. “Unless he was to be a slave to his slaves, a rich landowner had to find someone to do the routine work of running the estate. This deputy was called an oikonomos (cf. Luke 16:1). He held a responsible position; he was set over others and directed the day-to-day affairs. But he was subject to a master and was often a slave. Then in relation to the master he was a slave, but in relation to the slaves he was the master.” (Leon Morris in the Tyndale commentary) Thus, while Paul was a servant and

steward of Christ, the Corinthians should pay attention to him because the Master had entrusted the gospel to Paul and others like him.

3. The most important trait of a steward is faithfulness (vs. 2). Paul had been faithful to his Master, so much that he was “conscious of nothing against myself,” (vs. 4). However, Paul uses this fact to make a different point: it doesn’t matter what the Corinthians thought of him and his work. It didn’t matter what Paul thought of his own work. All that mattered is what the Lord thought of His servant!
4. Thus, the Corinthians shouldn’t be so quick to pass judgement on Paul and his labors. A day would come when the Lord would judge and reward His faithful servants (vs. 5)
 - » Must be careful that we don’t misuse Paul’s words in this verse. He is not saying that the actions and words of others, including teachers, should not be “judged”. In chapter 5 he will rebuke the church for not “judging” a sinner in their midst. Furthermore, Paul would later instruct Timothy that elders guilty of sin should be publicly rebuked (1Tim. 5.19-20).
 - » But Paul’s work was clearly approved by God. Their judging him was more about personal pride and envy on behalf of their “wise” teachers. Paul would not compromise his message to please them because doing so would mean unfaithfulness to his Master. And they should quit judging him, knowing that the Lord would do so.

VSS. 6-7, A CALL TO NOT EXCEED WHAT IS WRITTEN

1. Paul had been using himself and Apollos as examples (note 3.5-6, 22; 4.1). But it was not Paul and Apollos that needed the lesson, it was the Corinthian saints! The lesson? “To not

exceed what is written”.

- The word “exceed” in the NASB is translated “go beyond” in the ESV and NIV versions. Louw Nida defines it as “an idiom, literally ‘not above what is written’, to act sensibly in not violating written rules and traditions—‘to act sensibly in keeping with rules, to observe rules properly.’”
- Given that “what is written” typically references the Old Testament Scriptures, it seems likely that Paul is referring to the passages he has already quoted. Each passage dealt with wisdom and its relationship to the Lord. Paul’s point was that the Scriptures warned against reliance on human wisdom and its ensuing pride, so they should not go beyond what the Scriptures taught!
 - » Isaiah 29.14 quoted in 1.19.
 - » Jeremiah 9.22-23 quoted in 1.31.
 - » Isaiah 64.4 quoted in 2.9.
 - » Job 5.13 quoted in 3.19.
 - » Psalm 94.11 quoted in 3.20.
- Note: while the statement “you may learn not to exceed what is written” had a specific context in Paul’s letter, that it is a general principle for all Christians is beyond doubt (see 2John 9). Any time we stray beyond the Scriptures, we stray into danger.
- Their exceeding the Scriptures led them to arrogance and boasting (vs. 6), but had they forgotten that what they had, they had received? (vs. 7)

VSS. 8-13, THEIR ATTITUDE CONTRASTED WITH PAUL’S

- They thought of themselves as self-sufficient (vs. 8). They had the same mindset that would later be rebuked in the church at Laodicea (see Rev. 3.17). One of the stoic catch phrases, as taught by Diogenes, was “I alone am rich, I alone reign as king.”
- Contrast their self-sufficiency with the tribulation of the apostles (vss. 9-13). “Probably the imagery was drawn from the triumphal processions of returning Roman legions. The senior military people would come first, then the

more junior ones. Behind them, the prisoners would be dragged along, in descending order of rank. Among the defeated foes, the lowest classes and the slaves would bring up the rear, eating everyone else’s dust, knowing that they were destined for the arena. There they would die at the hands of gladiators or would simply be thrown to the wild beasts for the amusement of the populace. In fact, Paul says, since the stage on which the struggles of the church are being played out takes in the spiritual arena every bit as much as the physical, the apostles “have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men” (4:9b).” (D.A. Carson)

- With dripping irony, Paul sought to awaken the Corinthians to the reality of what being Christ’s servant meant. They were full and satisfied, but servants of Christ give up all things to do His will. They had become arrogant against each other and even against Paul, when Paul and the other apostles had suffered the loss of all things for their sakes.

VSS. 14-21, PAUL APPEALS TO THEM AS A FATHER

- Paul’s language had been harsh, but he was not using such in anger, but out of love for them. After all, since he had been the one to first bring the gospel to them, he was in a sense their spiritual father.
- Paul makes a contrast between himself as their father, and their countless tutors (possibly referencing Apollos and Cephas, but probably in reference to their current teachers, the ones opposed to Paul). In Greek/Roman society tutors were slaves that cared for children. Such might do a good job in caring for and instructing a child, but their esteem was nothing compared to the father.
- And since Paul was their father, he urged them to imitate him (vs. 16). Children are suppose to imitate the father, and in Greek/Roman society children were expected to enter the same kind of work as their fathers.
 - » Paul is not trying to gather a personal fol-

lowing. Rather, as Paul would urge in 11.1, he wants them to imitate him as he was trying to imitate Christ. God still takes center stage!

- » In context of what Paul has said up to this point, imitating Paul (their spiritual father) would require them to a)reject the wisdom of the world for the foolishness of God, b) boast only in the Lord, c)become fools for Christ's sake, knowing that following Him might require the loss of much.
- 4. Since Paul was concerned for his children, he had already sent Timothy to them (vs. 17), who would remind them of Paul's ways so that they could again imitate their spiritual father.
 - » Paul said that Timothy's message to them was "just as I teach everywhere in every church." This is not the only place in the letter that Paul references a uniformity of doctrine and practice in the churches (see also 7.17; 11.16; 14.33).
 - » It has become increasingly popular to discount much of what Paul says in this letter (and other epistles) as being limited by cultural context. However, Paul's words to the Corinthians were the same that he taught everywhere!
 - » We would do well to heed all that Paul and the apostles said and did.
- 5. Paul was coming to them, and they had a choice in how Paul would approach them (vss. 18-21). Their father could come to them with words of praise, or he could come with the rod of discipline (vs. 21). However, one thing was certain: those who had become arrogant against Paul would have their words tested by the apostle, to see if they contained the true power of the gospel (i.e. the ability to transform lives).

1 CORINTHIANS 5

Leaven In The Church

INTRO: the opening phrase of this chapter , “it is actually reported” reminds us of Paul’s statement in 1.11, “I have been informed... by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.” Having addressed their divisiveness, Paul now moves on to another matter that had been reported to him. However, there is a common thread that ties both issues together: the Corinthians’ pride and arrogance. Their pride had led them to rely on worldly wisdom rather than accepting the foolishness of God (2.14). Their pride had led some to reject Paul’s words and his work as God’s servant (4.18). Now, their pride was resulting in not only the toleration of, but the boasting of sin in their midst (5.2,6).

This chapter addresses the matter of sinners in the church. While we will look at the matter of “church discipline”, it is important to note that this is not Paul’s primary concern. In fact, you will note that Paul has nothing to say to the sinner. Paul’s main concern is the attitude of the church, their arrogance (vs. 2) and boasting (vs. 6). Thus, Paul addresses the attitude knowing proper action will result from proper thinking.

A final note that may explain Paul’s apparent lack of concern for the sinner and his harsh rebuke of the congregation. In vs. 9 Paul references a previous letter he had written to them, one that exhorted them to not “associate with immoral people.” It seems likely that this was not the first time Paul had addressed this situation in the church. Not only had the sinner not repented, but the church had done nothing about it! So, Paul addresses the matter again, focusing on the church’s attitude and lack of action.

VSS. 1-2, TWO SINS DESCRIBED

1. The immoral man (vs. 1).

» Important note for users of the NASB, the Greek word translated as “immorality” is

porneia and specifically refers to immorality that is sexual in nature. Thus, the ESV, NIV, and NKJV all translate it as “sexual immorality” while the KJV uses the term “fornication”

- » Paul will further address the matter of sexual immorality in 6.12-20, but the sin addressed in chapter 5 is particularly shocking: a man is sleeping with his father’s wife! (Note: not his mother).
- » Such behavior was specifically forbidden to God’s people in the Old Testament (see Lev. 18.8; 20.11), but it was also unheard of among the Gentiles! Cicero once remarked regarding the case of a woman marrying her son-in-law, “Oh! to think of the woman’s sin, unbelievable, unheard of in all experience save for this single instance!” (Loeb, I, 237).

2. The Immoral Church:

- » The church should have mourned over this sinful behavior. Such godly sorrow would have moved them to action, first by rebuking the sinner and seeking his repentance, but when that failed the sinner should have been removed from their midst.
- » Sadly, this church had “become arrogant” and even boasted (vs. 6) in the matter. As hard as it is for us to imagine, it would seem that some in the Corinthian church were not simply tolerating sin in their midst, they were boasting of it!
 - As we will note in chapters 6 & 10, it would seem that a popular Corinthian slogan was “all things are lawful for me,” (see 6.12; 10.23). They had perverted the doctrine of freedom in Christ to one of justification for all manner of sin.
 - The pride and arrogance of the Corinthian saints is a recurring theme, show-

ing their attitude as being the root of their problems (see 4.6-7).

- “Whatever the actual relationship of their pride to the incest, it has blinded them both to the fallen brother’s true condition and to their own.” (Gordon Fee)

VSS. 3-5, NECESSARY ACTION

1. Paul was not there in body, but he knew exactly what should be done. Some have taken the expression “present in spirit” to mean Paul was in their assemblies in some “out of body” way. If that were true, why did he need to hear reports from Chloe’s house? It seems best to me that Paul was referencing the words he was giving them, the instructions that they should carry out. As another has put it, “Paul’s unseen directing influence,” (Exegetical Greek New Testament).
2. What they should do was straightforward. When they came together in the Lord’s name (so the ESV and NIV read), that is under His authority, following the directions of Paul (as delivered through the Spirit) they should “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”
 - » Delivering him over to Satan would be to remove him from the fellowship of believers, the church, the realm of our Lord.
 - » “for the destruction of his flesh” is not the idea of physical punishment. Rather, as Paul often does he contrasts the flesh and spirit as the driving force of an individual (see 2.14-15). The goal of this discipline was that the sinner’s fleshly desires would be defeated.
 - » And once those fleshly desires were defeated, his spirit would be saved!

VSS. 6-8, THE THEOLOGICAL REASONING

1. Their boasting had to end, otherwise they would all be in peril. Because a “little leaven leavens the whole lump.” Paul could have

meant this in two ways: a) the sinner if not removed would lead others to sin similarly, b) their boasting in this matter would result in more evil coming into their own lives.

2. This section invokes the imagery of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (see Exodus 12.14ff). According to the Law, God’s people were to remove all leaven from their houses on the 1st day of the Feast, the same day that the Passover Lamb was slain (see Exodus 12.15). Paul’s point was that Christ, our Passover lamb, had already been slain, so why had the leaven not been removed?
3. Furthermore, the Feast of Unleavened Bread continued throughout the week following Passover. Paul applies this feast to our lives in Christ. The Feast was to be one of thankfulness and remembrance for God’s deliverance (see Exodus 12.17). So, the Corinthians should be celebrating with truth and sincerity, rather than the malice and wickedness that currently typified their relationship to God.
4. One lesson that cannot be ignored in this passage: the Lord’s church is to be typified by holy behavior! “The Christian church is not just the old society patched up. It is radically new (2 Cor. 5:17).” (Leon Morris in the Tyndale commentary)

VSS. 9-13, THE CHRISTIAN’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE IMMORAL

1. Paul concludes these thoughts with a clarification of sorts. His teaching on not associating with immoral people was limited to members of the church, not the world in general.
2. Note: Paul was not saying we should have no concerns with who we associate in the world. He will teach in other places that worldly companions can have a very bad affect on believers (see 15.33; 2Cor. 6.14-18).
3. But a Christian does have a role in “judging” the behavior of those in Christ. Other passages regarding judging others apply, so hypocritical judging is still condemned, but immoral behavior must be pointed out, repentance

must be urged and if that fails, fellowship must cease.

4. Application: it is very easy to focus on the sinfulness of the world and ignore the sin in our midst. While we do not ignore what is going on outside (we are trying to snatch others from the fire, after all), the world will continue on its way. It will be judged by God. So will our brethren, but in the meantime we can aid those who are straying by pointing out sin and encouraging repentance. Even more radical measures, such as withdrawal of fellowship, are ultimately for the good of the brother if he will destroy his fleshly desires and return to the Lord.

A FEW NOTES REGARDING CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

1. Withdrawal of fellowship is not where the process starts! Church discipline is not a means of ridding ourselves of nuisances. Rather, Christians are actively encouraging, teaching and even rebuking each other (1Thess. 5.14; Matt. 18.15-17). However, when repentance has been encouraged, but not heeded, it will become necessary to cease fellowship with one who continues in sin (2Thess. 3.6-7, 14-15).
2. The goal is always the salvation of the one who has sinned (Matt. 18.15; 1Cor 5.5).
3. The purity of the church must be maintained! The church is comprised of saved individuals, those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Thus, our conduct is to be holy, we are to be a pure bride for Christ (2Cor. 11.2). Thus, we should each look to his own conduct, encourage holy conduct in others, and when necessary remove ourselves from those who persist in unholiness.

1 CORINTHIANS 6.1-11

Taking Each Other To Court... And Loosing!

INTRO: Chapter 5 concluded with Paul discouraging judgment of outsiders while saying that sinners in the church should be judged (5.12).

Interestingly, chapter 6 begins with showing that not only had they failed to judge the sinners in the church, they were actually taking each other to court to outsiders! “Everything in this church is in reverse order. If the church does not “judge” those outside, neither does it go outside with inside affairs.” (Gordon Fee)

We’ve noted that pride and arrogance were at the root of the Corinthians’ problems, whether their divisive behavior or their boasting in sin. So, we should not be surprised that pride was involved in this matter as well. However, to understand what was taking place, we need to look at the cultural context.

LAWSUITS IN GREEK / ROMAN SOCIETY

(Summarized from David E Garland in the Baker Exegetical Commentary)

1. The courts were weighed in favor of the wealthy and men of higher social ranking.

“The poor always had the cards stacked against them in the courtroom. Pliny the Younger (Ep. 9.5) commends the new governor of Baetica in Spain regarding his administration of justice for ‘maintaining consideration for the best men.’ He advises him to continue to ‘maintain the distinctions between ranks and degrees of dignity.’ Social standing weighted the scales of justice; and if that did not work, bribery could tip the balance.” (Garland)

2. Men of high social ranking used the courts as a tool to maintain their status. “Persons of high status were prone to settle disputes through litigation. They had the upper hand in the courts because they could capitalize on their influence and wealth and could enhance their own reputation by injuring their opponent’s

or increase their wealth with legal conquests. The lower classes were restricted from doing so since they were unlikely to win against stacked odds.” (Garland)

3. Lawsuits were nasty affairs (some things never change). “The aim of the ancient lawsuit was to prevail over another, and that usually involved an assault on the opponent’s character.” (Garland)
4. With this background information, it seems likely that the lawsuits were related to the factionalism in the church, part of which we will see in chapter 11 was based on economic standing. It would see that those who were wealthy in the congregation were using the courts to beat down their opponents. Furthermore, evidence in the chapter would indicate that these suits were over small matters (as indicated by the words used for “smallest law courts” in vs. 2 and “matters of this life” in vs. 3). So, it may have been that these small slights were being used by the powerful to beat down their opponents and secure higher rank for themselves in the church.
5. This helps clear up some of our own questions about this chapter and how it applies to us.
 - » First, this chapter does not apply to criminal offenses. The language of the chapter clearly shows that civil cases (and probably small ones) are under consideration. Furthermore, Paul’s words in Romans 13.1-5 show that God has given government the authority to “bear the sword” in criminal cases.
 - » Second, this chapter does not preclude the involvement of the law in matters between brethren. For instance, if there is a wreck in our parking lot two brethren can make use of their insurance to settle any damages that occur. Such will require the involvement of law. Matters involving the

exchange of property, inheritance, etc. will all involve the law and need not fall under what Paul is considering here.

- » However, this isn't to say that this chapter doesn't have much to say to us. It certainly does, particularly regarding our attitude toward each other.

VSS. 1-6, HOW THESE SITUATIONS SHOULD BE HANDLED

1. The situation is described in vs. 1. You will note that Paul doesn't say a wrong wasn't committed or that the situation doesn't need to be resolved, even though it's clear in vss. 7-8 that Paul was not happy with those who thought themselves to "be in the right".
2. Paul's issue was that these matters were not being handled within the church, but brought before "the unrighteous." It is doubtful that Paul was referring to civil judges as unrighteous in character (although their penchant for taking bribes made them unrighteous), but in reference to their standing outside of God's people, the righteous.
3. The church should have been able to handle these matters! (vss. 2-6)
 - » After all, the saints will judge the world and even angels! While it is God who will judge the world (Romans 3.6), our status as reigning with Christ (2Tim 2.12; Rev. 22.5) means that we "judge" with Him.
 - » Paul's point is plain: if we will one day "judge" all things, how can we not take care of these small matters?
 - » The fact that they were unable to do this was to their shame (vs. 5). After all, for a group that boasted so much in wisdom, how could they not have a wise person among them to decide these cases?
 - » You will also note that Paul uses the term "brethren" once and "brother" twice in vss. 5-6. Had they forgotten that they were a family, that families should be able to take care of things within the family? The Lord's words in Matthew 18.15-18 must have been on Paul's mind.

VSS. 7-11, THE REAL TRAGEDY

1. Having the dirty laundry of the church aired out in the public is bad enough, but the real tragedy is addressed in these verses.
2. The Christian attitude and character found in Matthew 18 was completely absent in these believers! They were wronging and defrauding each other (I believe this is aimed at the men who were bringing their "opponents" to court). They should have been willing to be wronged instead! After all, that was the attitude of Jesus (1Peter 2.23) and of Paul (1Cor 4.12-13).
3. Thus, this situation was a "defeat" for them. Interestingly, this term is the same word used for loss in a lawsuit. So, they were suing each other to gain something physically, but they were loosing spiritually and morally.
4. Vss. 9-11 show them their spiritual danger. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom! They had once been unrighteous, but had been saved by God's grace. Implied is that they are in grave danger of being considered unrighteous again!
 - » This makes an important point about our attitude toward others and our treatment of them. Injustice is a serious matter, on par with sexual sins, sins that we emphatically warn others against. "The people of God frequently have trouble recognizing that injustice is as serious a sin as incest and other sexual misconduct and that it warrants the very same punishment (cf. Jer. 7:8-15)." (Garland)
5. Finally, this passage speaks to the necessity of Christians becoming the new creatures God intends for them to be! "Their former life was to be just that, their former life...God's grace does not mean that God benignly accepts humans in all their fallenness, forgives them, and then leaves them in that fallenness. God is in the business not of whitewashing sins but of transforming sinners." (Garland)

1 CORINTHIANS 6.12-20

Glorify God In Your Body

Intro: On the surface, chapter 6 seems to cover two very different issues: the matter of taking brethren to court (vss. 1-11) and the issue of sexual immorality (vss. 12-20). Yet, the two matters are closely connected. First, vss. 9-11 serve as a bridge between the two matters. Their treatment of each other was making them unrighteous again, and thus unfit for the kingdom of God. Certainly that would also be true of fornicating with prostitutes! Second, as we've noted throughout, their pride was a major problem. Pride fueled their divisiveness and their litigious spirit. And pride had led them to believe that fornication wasn't that big of a deal.

Fornication is the subject of this passage. While we will be making application to sexual immorality in general, it is clear from the text that the particular issue in Corinth had to do with prostitution (see vss. 15-16). Such behavior would seem shocking and scandalous to us, but not to those living in the first century, particularly those living in Corinth. First, cultic prostitution was the norm in the city, where Aphrodite's temple housed 1000 temple prostitutes. Visiting these was encouraged so as to curry the favor of the gods, and because the money funded the temple itself. Second, sexual immorality was viewed as normal in Greek/Roman culture. So Cicero said, "If there is anyone who thinks that youth should be forbidden affairs even with courtesans, he is doubtless austere (I cannot deny it), but his view is contrary not only to the licence of this age, but also to the custom and concessions of our ancestors. For when was this not a common practice? When was it blamed? When was it forbidden?" And Plutarch urged wives to not be angry with their cheating husbands: "She should reason that it is respect for her which leads him to share his debauchery, licentiousness, and wantonness with another woman."

With this background, we will note what Paul and more importantly the Lord have to say about sexual immorality.

VSS. 12-14, COMBATING FALSE PREMISES

1. This section is difficult to interpret, particularly because of the opening phrase, "All things are lawful for me..."
 - » Paul will use the same phrase in 10.23. Was Paul saying that all conduct was lawful, but then amending or clarifying that statement? It would seem doubtful.
 - » I have adopted the conclusion that Paul is citing a Corinthian slogan. In fact, it would seem that vss. 12-13 contain two Corinthian slogans: "All things are lawful for me," and "Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food." If you use the ESV or NIV versions, you'll note that those phrases are in quotations, reflecting the translators' belief that Paul was quoting their slogans. But how could the Corinthians have adopted such slogans?
 - » It would seem that they had perverted some of Paul's own teachings. Much of what Paul dealt with was Gentile inclusion in Christ, inclusion without being bound to the Law. In fact, all Christians possess "freedom" in Christ (Galatians 5.1). Such freedom from the Law meant a doing away of the Old Testament food restrictions (see Colossians 2.16-17). So, it would seem that the Corinthians had perverted Paul's teaching regarding freedom, particularly as it relates to food, into a general maxim that the Christian is free in all regards, that all things are lawful.
2. Their reasoning was flawed! There may be freedom in Christ, but to go back into sin is to be mastered by sin! Food and the stomach are meant for each other, but the body is not meant for sexual immorality! Furthermore, food and the stomach are only for this life, but

the body will remain in the next life!

3. "The body cannot be dismissed as unimportant; the body is for the Lord. It is the instrument wherein we serve God. It is the means whereby we glorify God. The Lord for the body shows that just as food is necessary if the stomach is to function, so is the Lord necessary if the body is to function. It is only as God enables us that we can live the kind of life for which we were meant." (Leon Morris)
4. The resurrection of the body, and not just the preservation of the soul, is a clear teaching (vs. 14). That Jesus' body actually arose is clear from the gospels. That our bodies will actually arise is equally apparent.
 - » Note that Paul places himself with those who would be raised (see also 2Cor 4:14). However, in 1Thess 4:15 he places himself with the living. Point: he didn't know when the resurrection would occur.

VSS. 15-17, CANNOT BE "ONE" WITH THE LORD AND "ONE" WITH A PROSTITUTE.

1. A Christian belongs to the Lord, both his soul AND his body. Christianity does not know anything of Greek dualism (the separation of one's body and spirit). Rather, the Scriptures deal with the whole person. So, if our bodies belong to the Lord, we can't take them and give them to a prostitute!
2. To further the point, Paul uses the marriage analogy of "one flesh". While the principle of "one flesh" in Genesis 2.24 speaks to the complete union of husband and wife, when a man engages in fornication with a prostitute he becomes one body with her. However, a Christian has been joined to the Lord (they have become "one spirit", i.e. man's spirit remade in the image of His Spirit, see Eph. 4.24; 2Cor. 3.18). Becoming "one spirit" with Christ is a complete union, making the partial union with a prostitute impossible. Or viewed from the negative side, if one gives themselves to a prostitute, what does that say about their union with Christ?

VSS. 18-20, YOUR BODY, THE TEMPLE OF GOD

1. Based on all that has been said, Paul does not mince words: flee immorality! No toying around, no half measures. Get away! All that Paul has said before and what he says after only emphasize the urgency of fleeing sexual immorality.
2. First, the nature of sexual immorality is to sin against one's body. Given what Paul has already said, it would seem that he is referencing the union we have with the Lord. Since we are "one spirit" with Him, our bodies belong to Him. Many sins affect the body, but fornication takes the body away from the Lord and joins it to another!
3. Second, our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (note, this would be another way of expressing our becoming "one spirit" with Him, vs. 17). God's Spirit can only dwell in a holy place, thus we need to keep His dwelling place pure and holy. We must flee sexual immorality.
4. Third, since we are His temple, we do not belong to ourselves, but to Him. And the price He paid for us was great! 1Peter 1.18-19
5. The passage began with a negative, "flee immorality," but ends with its opposite yet equal positive: "therefore glorify God in your body." One cannot engage in sexual immorality and glorify God at the same time. Only when we appreciate our union with Him and use our bodies for His purposes can we glorify Him.

APPLICATION:

1. **Sober thinking about sexual immorality.** Paul may have been addressing fornicating with a prostitute, but his words ring home in today's hyper-sexualised culture!
 - » We would do well to remember that "the body is not for immorality." That humanity has forgotten this was humorously illustrated by CS Lewis: "You can get a large audience together for a strip-tease act—that is, to watch a girl undress on the stage. Now suppose you come to a country where

you could fill a theatre by simply bringing a covered plate on to the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let every one see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food?"

- » "Sexual immorality is still sin, even though it has been justified under every conceivable rationalization. Those who take Scripture seriously are not prudes or legalists at this point; rather, they recognize that God has purchased us for higher things." (Gordon Fee)
- » "'Casual sex' is anything but casual. It is an act of sacrilege. Temples like our bodies are not meant for profanations like this." (Leon Morris)

2. **The body is important.** The Greeks had denigrated the body, saying it was inherently evil. Some Christians have taken similar views, believing in a purity of the spirit that is untainted by the transgressions of the flesh. But you will note the importance this passage puts on the body;

- » The body is for the Lord (vs. 13)
- » The body will be raised (vs. 14)
- » The body is a member of Christ (vss. 15-17)
- » The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (vs. 19)
- » The body was purchased by God (vss. 19-20)
- » The body should be used to glorify God (vs. 20)

1 CORINTHIANS 7.1-24

Remain As You Were Called

Intro: All the matters leading up to this point in Paul's correspondence had been reported to Paul by members of Chloe's household (see 1.11). No doubt there were some things that some members of the Corinthian church wished Paul were ignorant of (their divisiveness, suing each other, fornication, etc.). However, there were some things that the Corinthians wanted to ask Paul, so they sent him a letter. Paul's responses to their questions make up the material in chapters 7-15.

SOME PRELIMINARIES:

1. This passage has been misconstrued by some to mean that celibacy is a higher, more spiritual calling than marriage. While Paul will say that he wished "all men were even as I myself," and he will show the benefits of remaining unmarried, it is exceeding the purpose of Paul's words to refer to celibacy as a higher calling.
 - » First, it is clear from Paul's writings that he had a very high view of marriage. See 1Cor 9.5; 1Tim 4.1-3; Eph. 5.22-33, etc.
 - » Second, all of Paul's words in this chapter need to be understood in the context of vs. 26, "I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is." The present distress is not described, but some current (not future) situation had arisen that would make marriage more difficult.
2. This chapter deals with God's will regarding marriage and divorce. Before looking at what this chapter has to say about the matter, it is beneficial to note that God's marriage law is uniform throughout Scripture. His intent is for one man to marry one woman and for them to remain bound together.
 - » Genesis 2:18-25. God's marriage will demonstrated in the creation account, as man and woman become "one flesh".
 - » Deut. 24:1-4 Contingency legislation. The

Jews had turned this passage into legislation allowing divorce, but a closer examination of the text reveals it to be an "if... then" statement. God was not sanctioning the divorcing of a spouse, but legislating against further abuse in these matters.

- » Malachi 2:14-16. God's hatred of divorce clearly stated.
- » Matthew 5:31-32. The unlawfulness of divorce taught by Jesus, except when the spouse was guilty of fornication.
- » Matthew 19:1-12. The same teaching as in 5.31-32, except remarriage is explicitly allowed only in cases where an unfaithful spouse was put away.
- » Mark 6:14-29 The universality of God's will as shown in John's denouncing of Herod's marriage to Herodias.
- » Mark 10:10-12 Same teaching as found in Matthew 5 and 19, except both husband and wife are addressed.
- » Luke 16:18 Same teaching as found in Matthew and Mark, save that marrying a divorced person is shown to be unlawful.
- » Romans 7:1-4 The marriage bond lasts until death.

VS. 1, A FALSE CONCEPT

1. The Corinthian's letter to Paul revealed a misguided notion regarding marriage: it is good for a man not to touch a woman.
 - » That this was not Paul's teaching is clear from vss. 3-6.
 - » I believe the ESV correctly renders this passage with quotation marks, showing that the statement belonged to the Corinthians and not to Paul.
2. "History records that there came to be a very strong element in the church that emphasized fasting, celibacy, and other forms of self denial and physical affliction (Schaff 2:174-84). A

study of 1 Corinthians 7 implies that there was a strong feeling at Corinth that celibacy was a holier state than marriage. This feeling had created these problems:

- » Contention for spiritual marriages, in which sexual activity was not practiced.
- » An argument that it would be better to dissolve marriages, especially if the marriage involved an unbeliever.
- » An argument that since celibacy was a holier state, it would be preferable not to marry.” (Bob Waldron, 1996 FC Lecture)

VS. 2-7, PAUL ADDRESSES THEIR MISGUIDED CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE:

1. At its basest level, marriage is to be allowed so that men and women will not give into sexual immorality. (vs. 2) Again, Paul is addressing this from the basest level. He has a high view of marriage, but he begins by addressing the matter from the lowest vantage point.
2. Marriage is not a place for celibacy (vss. 3-6).
 - » Because each has a duty to the other (vs. 3)
 - » Because your body belongs to your spouse (vs. 4)
 - » Celibacy should ONLY be for agreed times of spiritual devotion, but those times should be short and infrequent. And those are only a concession, not a law (vss. 5-6)
3. Paul addresses the matter of celibacy, wishing that all could be as he, but recognizing that the burden of celibacy is not for everyone (vs. 7). Again, we will see that there are spiritual benefits for celibacy, but we must take Paul’s words in light of the “present distress” in vs. 26.

VSS. 8-24, STAY AS YOU ARE

1. The overwhelming point of this passage is that the believers should remain in their present marital state. Paul will first address Christians in differing marital situations (vss. 8-16), then lay down the general principle that Christians should be content in their present circumstances (vss. 17-24). However, this general principle is laid down to emphasize how the principle

applies to marriage.

- » Before moving on it is necessary to stress that this passage DOES NOT change or amend earlier principles of God’s marriage law. Some have sought to apply the principle of “remain as you were called” to any marital relationship, saying that if one was in an adulterous marriage when they came to Christ they can remain in that marriage.
- » However, that idea is not within the scope of Paul’s teaching in this chapter. He has already said that some of the Corinthians had been adulterers (6.9) with the implied warning about continuing in such behavior. The teachings in this passage apply to Christians in sanctioned relationships and how they should conduct themselves.
- 2. The unmarried and widows: remain as you are (vss. 8-9).
 - » Again, Paul’s words must be read in light of vs. 26, for in other passages Paul will counsel young widows to marry (1Tim 5.14).
 - » However, if sexual temptation is too strong, these can marry even though it might make life more difficult “in light of the present distress”
- 3. To believers married to other believers: stay as you are (vss. 10-11)
 - » Don’t divorce! If a divorce does occur, don’t compound the problem by marrying again. Rather, remain unmarried.
 - » Paul will say, “not I, but the Lord,” because the instructions he gives are the exact same as spoken by the Lord in Matthew 5.31-32; 19.6,9.
- 4. To believers married to unbelievers: stay as you are (vss. 12-16)
 - » You will note that the teaching in vss. 12-13 is the exact same as in vss. 10-11! Thus, when Paul begins by saying “I say, not the Lord,” he is NOT devising a new teaching, but applying the Lord’s teaching to a different situation. The Lord had addressed marriage between believers (believing Jews anyway), now applies the same teaching to marriage between believers and non-

believers.

- An important application needs to be made here: God doesn't just govern by command, He governs by principle. We sometimes hear things like, "well, God never said anything about..." This is true, there are many situations and circumstances we face that the Bible does not describe. However, God has given PRINCIPLES that apply in any and every situation.
- » Vs. 14 may seem confusing at first, but when read in light of vs. 16 it becomes clearer. Paul is NOT saying that an unbeliever is holy because he/she is married to a believer, but rather the possibility of the unbelieving spouse being converted (and thus sanctified) is greater when the marriage remains in tact.
- » Finally, some view vs. 15 as another exception to God's marriage law, that in cases of abandonment the spouse is free to remarry. A few things to consider:
 - Remarriage is never addressed, so reading remarriage into this passage would be unwise.
 - The word "bondage" in vs. 15 literally means "enslaved" and is nowhere used of the marriage bond. In fact, Paul will speak of the marriage bond (deo) in 7.39.
 - Paul's point is that the believing spouse who is put away does not need to view themselves as enslaved to the unbeliever. "they are not bound to the ruling given above about maintaining the marriage. They have wanted to dissolve such marriages. Paul has said No. But now he allows that if the pagan wants out, then one is not enslaved." (Gordon Fee)
- 5. The general principle: remain in the condition in which you are called (vss. 17-24).
 - » Paul will use circumcision and slavery as ways to illustrate the point he has been making in regards to marriage. We are all called to Christ in varying life circum-

stances, in differing marital status. Regardless of where we find ourselves in life, our goal should be to serve God, recognizing that we belong to Him. Everything else is secondary!

- » "Sometimes we foolishly think that holiness is external, and that a change of circumstances - go live in a cave away from people, for example - would be bound to make us holier. Holiness is something that is in the heart and radiates out into the life (Mt. 12:34-35; cf. Prov. 4:23). The problem Paul deals with in this passage is one that confronts us constantly. We think: If only God would give me more money, then I would not worry, or, If only I could be healthy, then I would be so grateful that I would work hard for the Lord. Apparently some of the Corinthians thought: I am free in the Lord, yet I am a slave. If I could only get freed from my slavery, I could be holier, and more useful to the Lord." (Bob Waldron, 1996 FC Lecture)
- » "Precisely because our lives are determined by God's call, not by our situation, we need to learn to continue there as those who are "before God." Paul's concern is not with change, one way or the other, but with "living out one's calling" in whatever situation one is found. There let one serve the Lord, and let the call of God sanctify to oneself the situation, whether it be mixed marriage, singleness, blue- or white-collar work, or socioeconomic condition." (Gordon Fee)

1 CORINTHIANS 7.25-40

Remain As You Were Called (2)

Intro: Throughout 7.1-24 the idea of “remaining” is found. The unmarried and widows should “remain” as they were (vs. 8). The married should remain in their marriages (vs. 10, 12-13). As a general principle, Christians should remain as they had been called, focusing on serving the Lord in whatever station in life they found (vss. 17-24). Beginning in vs. 25, Paul addresses another situation they had inquired about: the marriage of virgins. As we will see, Paul’s advice to them was the same: remain as you are.

VS. 25, NOW CONCERNING VIRGINS

1. Depending on your translation, 7.25-40 will read differently. Some will read the situation as a man giving his “virgin daughter” in marriage (such as the NASB). Others read the passage as referring to a man marrying his virgin fiance (such as the ESV).
 - 2. I follow the NASB’s reading, seeing the passage as referring to a man giving his virgin daughter in marriage. Father’s exerted great control over their daughters, and given the Corinthians’ numerous questions about marriage, it would be natural for them to also inquire about giving their daughters in marriage.
 - 3. Paul begins addressing this situation by saying, “I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion...”
 - » Similar to the situation described in vss. 12-16, Paul is addressing an issue where Jesus never gave an express command. However, Paul’s opinion in this is not the simple opinion of a man, but:
 - One who by God’s mercy is trustworthy. Significant that in other places Paul refers to his apostleship is the Lord’s mercy.
 - Refers to his opinion in vs. 40 as well,

but adds that he also has the Spirit of God.

- » Note that his overall advice is the exact same that he had given in the other cases (unmarried, married, married to unbelievers): remain as you are!

VSS. 26-38, REMAIN AS YOU ARE

1. Due to the “present distress”, they should remain as they are (vss. 26-28).
 - » We are not told what the present distress was, but we can rule out two things:
 - Could not be the normal pressures of being a Christian, or Paul’s counsel in 1Timothy 5.14 that young widows should marry would be nonsense.
 - Is not referring to the end of the world, for Paul is referring to something happening at that time. Significant that the term translated “distress” is used by Jesus in Matthew 24.21 in speaking of events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and it is used by Paul when speaking of the persecutions he endured (1Thess 3.7).
 - » So, it seems best to read this as some form of persecution the Corinthians were currently experiencing.
 - » Due to this persecution, Paul’s counsel is that all remain as they are. Those bound (deo, the marriage bond) to a wife, should remain married. Those unbound, should not seek to marry, although they had not sinned if they did choose to marry.
2. How they should conduct themselves since the time was shortened (vss. 29-31)
 - » What does Paul mean by the time being shortened? The following from Leon Morris is helpful: “Both in his earlier and his

later epistles he uses the second advent to inspire people to blameless conduct (e.g. 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Phil. 1:9-11). The note of present crisis, so marked here, is absent. Those who see the second advent here never seem to face the question of why the last generation should live differently from any others. We all face the same judgment. It is best to see a reference to prevailing circumstances at Corinth (the 'crisis' of v. 26). The culmination was evidently not far off; in this troubled period many kinds of conduct must be transformed. In particular those who have wives must be 'as those who have none'."

- » Paul's point in this section is that during this time of distress, normal behavior cannot be the norm!
- 3. The benefit of remaining unmarried (vss. 32-35)
 - » That Paul still has their present distress in mind would seem evident from Paul's opening words, "I want you to be free from concern." Paul's counsel here must be read in this light, not as an injunction against marriage for all time, but godly advice given during a time of great distress.
 - » It is unfortunate that this passage has been used to promote celibacy as a higher degree of holiness. "If one seeks to use verse 34, 'that she may be holy both in body and in spirit,' to say that the virgin is holier than the married woman, his effort contradicts Hebrews 13:4, 'Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled.' Such an interpretation also raises the interesting question: Was Paul, then, holier than Peter? Paul was unmarried, while Peter had a wife (1Cor. 9:4). Paul affirmed his right to lead about a wife that is a believer (1Cor. 9:5). He had simply chosen not to take advantage of that right because of the circumstances in which he found himself as he traveled about in his preaching and faced the persecutions that came his way."

(Bob Waldron)

- » However, we can also be guilty of over emphasizing marriage, acting as if a Christian is incomplete if unmarried. Not so! Their calling is a holy one, of devotion to Christ.
- 4. Counsel to those with virgin daughters (vss. 36-38). Having made his point about the value of remaining undistracted to the Lord, Paul applies this to the situation he had begun to address in vs. 25. His point is easy to understand: a man had not sinned by allowing his virgin daughter to marry, but given the present circumstances, a man would do better if he did not give his daughter in marriage.

VSS. 39-40, REGARDING WIDOWS

1. Paul's basic counsel was the same: stay as you are. He first emphasizes the general rule of God's marriage law: a husband and wife are bound (deo) together so long as they live. However, death ends that bond, leaving open the possibility of remarriage.
2. Opinions differ regarding the meaning of the phrase, "only in the Lord." Does this mean 1) she must marry another Christian or 2) she may marry again, so long as she follows the Lord's will. I confess to not knowing for sure, although I lean toward Paul saying the remarriage should be to a Christian. Given the distressing circumstances and the need to remain focused on the Lord, it would not make much sense for a woman to marry an unbeliever during these difficult times. I cannot be dogmatic, saying that all widows can only marry believers, but the principle applies to any who would marry. Will your spouse help or hinder your relationship with God?

1 CORINTHIANS 8

Knowledge vs. Love

Intro: having addressed their questions and issues regarding marriage, Paul moved on to another matter the Corinthians had brought up in their letter to him: meat sacrificed to idols. This topic will be addressed over chapters 8 - 10.

THE ISSUE: MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

1. This was a relevant issue in Corinth for two reasons:
 - » Eating meat in an idol's temple was prevalent not only for religious reasons, but for civil reasons. "• The kind of occasion, public or private, when people were likely to come together socially was the kind of occasion when a sacrifice was appropriate. To have nothing to do with such gatherings was to cut oneself off from most social intercourse with one's fellows." (Leon Morris) Public festivals, religious celebrations in the temples might well be the only occasion when the poor could obtain meat. Paul addresses this matter specifically in 8.10; 10.14-22.
 - » Most meat available in the markets had been sacrificed to idols. "Part of the victim was always offered on the altar to the god, part went to the priests, and usually part to the worshippers. The priests customarily sold what they could not use. It would often be very difficult to know for sure whether meat in a given shop had been part of a sacrifice or not." (Leon Morris) Paul addresses this matter specifically in 10.23-30.
2. The difficult social circumstances in Corinth were compounded by the attitude of some brethren, those who boasted in their knowledge, knowledge that might wound the conscience of their brethren.
3. Outline of chapters 8-10

- » Their "knowledge" contrasted with love (chapter 8)
- » Paul's example of forsaking liberty (chapter 9)
- » The issues addressed directly (chapter 10)
 - Eating in an idol's temple (10.1-22)
 - Eating meat sold in the market place (10.23-33)

VSS. 1-6, THEIR KNOWLEDGE

1. It is clear from this section that some of the brethren in Corinth boasted of superior knowledge when it came to meat sacrificed to idols. Their knowledge is summarized in vss. 4-6. They knew that there were no such things as "idols". Yes, the heathen worshipped many gods and lords (shorthand for idols), but those were nothing. There is only one God and one Lord.
2. Paul doesn't discount their knowledge, but there was a deficiency in their knowledge: love! Their knowledge had made them arrogant towards their brethren, but love would edify!
3. Paul uses strong irony in vss. 2-3. They supposed that they had "knowledge", but since they didn't have love they did not know "as he ought to know." Furthermore, if they would focus on loving God (and by extension, others), they would be known by God! They may have known that the idols were not God, but the truly important thing was to be known by God, and that was only possible when they loved Him and their brethren.

VSS. 7-12, THE EFFECT OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE ON OTHERS

1. There were some without knowledge (vs. 7). Some of the Christians in Corinth had been converted out of idolatry. They may have the mental knowledge that idols were not real, but

the practice of eating in an idols temple, or eating meat sacrificed to idols was so associated with their former lives, to do so would be against their conscience, and thus wrong.

2. The relative unimportance of food (vs. 8).
Some Christians in Corinth may have thought that eating in the temples only showed their superior knowledge, their utter disregard for the idols. But Paul reminds them that the eating of meat is ultimately meaningless.
3. However, their “liberty” (i.e. the exercise of their knowledge in eating meat in the temples) could do great damage to their brethren (vss. 9-12)
 - » Their liberty could be a stumbling block to the “weak.” Paul uses this term accommodately. He is not implying that their spiritually inferior, only that in the matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols their conscience was weak.
 - » Note: Paul does not condemn them for eating in the temples of idols in this passage, but he will rebuke the practice in chapter 10. For now, Paul is only addressing their sinful attitude, not the sinful practice.
 - » Vss. 11-12 served as a powerful warning to these brethren. Their attitudes could lead to brethren violating their conscience. Their attitude could lead a brother into sin! Their attitude could destroy those for whom Christ died! We would do well to apply the same warning to the supposed liberties of our day (drinking, dancing, clothing, etc.)

PAUL’S RESOLVE (VS. 13).

1. Paul was willing to forgo meat if it meant sparing a brother. He will delve further into his own attitude in chapter 9.
2. But Paul’s statement in vs. 13 was meant to challenge these arrogant brethren. Would they be willing to forgo a liberty for the sake of their brethren?
3. Would we?

1 CORINTHIANS 9

Paul's Example of Self-Denial

INTRO: Chapter 9 continues Paul's answer to their questions regarding meat offered to idols. To recap, there were two issues at hand: 1) could a Christian eat in an idol's temple (recall that such meals would often times be civic events, not merely religious). 2) could a Christian eat meat sold in the market place, meat that may have been sacrificed to an idol. Paul will give answers to these matters in chapter 10, but first Paul sought to deal with the root of the problem: their attitude. Paul addressed this in chapter 8, rebuking them for boasting in their knowledge (that an idol is nothing), while failing to show love to their brethren whose conscience would not allow them to eat the meat.

Chapter 8 concluded with this declaration from Paul, "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble." Chapter 9 continues this line of thought, showing how Paul was willing to forego many rights for the good of the gospel, with the implied exhortation that the Corinthians should do the same.

Paul looks to accomplish two things in chapter 9. First, Paul gives his example of self-denial, exhorting others to do the same. Second, Paul defends his credentials as an apostle. "it seems clear that at least some in the Corinthian church did not hold him in very high regard, precisely because in their view he did not stand up for himself. He did not throw his authority around and make people respect him. They were so attuned to the forms of leadership in first-century pagan Corinth, especially those of the sophists and other traveling teachers, that they simply did not understand a preacher like Paul." (D.A. Carson)

VSS. 1-14, PAUL'S BEHAVIOR AMONG THEM.

1. Paul's apostleship (vss. 1-2) There have been

indications earlier in the letter that some in Corinth questioned Paul's authority as an apostle (see 4.1-5, 8-13, 14-21), but Paul now addresses the issue directly.

- » Paul begins by asserting that he had the same freedom in Christ that they possessed, but he then moves on to his apostleship, something they did not share.
- » Paul offers two proofs of his apostleship: First, he had seen the Lord (Acts 9.1-9). It is significant that when Paul saw the Lord was also the time when he was commissioned to be an apostle (Acts 26.16-18). Second, the Corinthians were Paul's proof of his apostleship. While others had taught in Corinth, it was Paul who took the gospel to that city (Acts 18).

2. Paul's right (vss. 3-11). As a Christian and an apostle, Paul had many rights, yet he chose to not use them. These rights are detailed in this section, but we shouldn't lose sight of the larger goal. Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to emulate his example of love, a love that would forego one's rights for the good of the brethren. To emphasize this point, Paul enumerated many of his rights:

- » He had the right to eat and drink (vs. 4).
 - This may refer to Paul's freedom to eat meat, a right he was willing to not exercise (8.13). However, given what Paul goes on to say, it seems more likely that Paul is referring to his right to be supported by the Corinthian saints.
 - "It may be hard for us at first to understand why this should be thought so serious a charge. But in much of the first-century Hellenistic world, traveling teachers were assessed, in part, by the amount of money they could take in... If Paul would not accept money from

the Corinthians, who wanted to lavish it on him so they could feel good about how important their guru was, many felt it proved he did not really understand the rules of the game, and so he could not amount to much. From the Corinthian perspective, Paul denigrated himself yet further by doing manual labor—something no respectable Hellenistic teacher would have dreamed of doing! The problem of the Corinthian attitude toward money and teaching surfaces even more poignantly in 2 Corinthians 11:7ff.” (D.A. Carson)

- » He had the right to a spouse, but he did not exercise this right (vs. 5)
- » He had the right to refrain from working (vss. 6-11)
 - Recall that while in Corinth, Paul had worked with his own hands as a tent-maker (Acts 18.1-4). However, when Timothy and Silas arrived, it seems that Paul left manual labor and devoted all of his time to preaching the gospel (Acts 18.5). It would seem that Timothy and Silas had brought monetary support from other churches to Paul (see 2Cor 11.8-9).
 - But Paul had a right to be supported, just as other professions had the right for support (vs. 7). Furthermore, Paul appeals to the principle laid out in the Law (vss. 8-10; see Deut. 25.4). Since Paul had sowed spiritual things to them, he had a right to receive physical support (vs. 11).
- 3. Paul did not use this right (vss. 12-14). Paul has established that he had the right to be supported by the Corinthians. He will further make the point in vss. 13-14, appealing directly to the Lord’s teaching (see Luke 10.7; Matt. 10.8,10). But Paul did not use this right. Why?
 - » “we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.”
 - » “Paul’s word for hinder is unusual (here only in the New Testament). It means ‘a

cutting into’, and was used of breaking up a road to prevent the enemy’s advance. Paul had avoided doing anything that might prevent a clear road for the gospel advance.” (Leon Morris)

- » “By preaching the gospel ‘freely,’ that is, without accepting ‘pay,’ he is able further to illustrate the ‘free’ nature of the gospel. Almost certainly this stands over against the itinerant philosophers and missionaries, who ‘peddled’ their ‘wisdom’ or religious instruction (cf. 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Thess. 2:5-10).” (Gordon Fee)

VSS. 15-27, THE REASON FOR PAUL’S BEHAVIOR

1. Paul’s compulsion to preach the gospel (vss. 15-17). Preaching the gospel wasn’t a job for Paul. It wasn’t a means to earn a pay check. The gospel was much more important, it was a charge he had been entrusted with from the Lord. Paul did everything to be faithful to that charge (see also 4.1-2; Acts 26.15-20).
2. Paul’s true reward (vs. 18). Preaching the gospel is its own reward, and Paul did this without demanding pay so that the gospel would not be hindered. NOTE: Paul has established that teachers of the gospel could / should be paid, and Paul did receive support from churches (2Cor 11.8-9; Phil. 4.15-16). But he would not let payment be the reward for preaching, he would not let money be the determining factor. The gospel was far to important, the salvation of others was at stake! (See Romans 1.16-17)
3. Paul became all things to all men for their salvation (vss. 19-23). This passage is at the heart of Paul’s argument. Recall that the Corinthians had boasted in their knowledge, but their knowledge had led to arrogance and a lack of love for others (8.1). Paul has established his rights, but shown that he has not used those rights. Why? His love for people, his desire that others would receive the truth of the gospel and be saved. Thus, Paul “became all things to all men, so that I may be all means save some.” (vs. 22). Note a few things about

this passage:

- » This passage sheds some light on the matter of “Law”. Paul states that sometimes he lived as “under Law” and sometimes “without law”. His point is simply that depending on the situation, Paul might adhere to Jewish customs or not, depending on what furthered the gospel. An example of this was when he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16.3) and when Paul agreed to keep a vow (Acts 26.17-26). Paul didn’t do these things as a matter of compulsion, he knew he was not under the Law, but he did them for the furtherance of the gospel.
- » However, it should be noted that while Paul knew he was not under “the Law”, he was not lawless. “though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ,” (vs. 21). Paul was not at liberty to do anything to get people to listen to the gospel, he was still bound to follow all of Jesus’ commands (see Matthew 28.20). He may not have been under the Law (i.e. circumcision, sacrifice, etc.), but he was still under God’s law.

4. Paul did this for his salvation (vss. 24-27). The salvation of others was not the only thing at stake. Paul’s own salvation was also at stake! That is evident in this passage as Paul states, “I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it,” (vs. 24) and “I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified,” (vs. 27).

- » This passage is a familiar one, one we use to talk about the Christian life in general. While that application can be made, we should respect the original context. Paul’s theme has been the presentation of the gospel, the revoking of individual rights so that others would hear the words of God.
- » The implied exhortation to the Corinthians was that they needed to be mindful of their brother’s conscience not just for his salvation, but for theirs!

» The implied exhortation to us is the same! What would we not do for the gospel? Who would we not talk to? What right would we not give up if it meant the gospel would be furthered?

1 CORINTHIANS 10

Flee From Idolatry

Intro: chapter 10 concludes Paul's answer to their inquiry regarding meat sacrificed to idols. Paul first dealt with their attitude, their arrogance based on "knowledge" of an idol being nothing, their attitude that had little regard for the sensitive conscience of their brethren. At the conclusion of chapter 8, Paul offered himself as an example of one who would give up meat for the sake of his brother (8.13) and then detailed in chapter 9 how he had given up many rights, all for the sake of the gospel (9.12). Now, Paul will address the issues directly, warning against eating in an idols temple and giving counsel for eating meat sold in the market place.

Chapter 10 begins with the word "For," indicating that Paul is continuing a line of reasoning. Recall that Paul's final point in chapter 9 was that he forsook many rights so that he would "not be disqualified." Paul's point in chapter 10 is that he doesn't want them to be disqualified, a very real possibility given their "knowledge" and unloving behavior.

VSS. 1-13, AN APPEAL TO HISTORY

1. Israel (vss. 1-5)

- » Some of the Corinthians had become arrogant, puffed up, because of their knowledge. In their minds they were established as God's people and thus free to act as they chose. But Paul reminds them of God's first people, in particular the generation of Israelites that God had delivered from Egyptian bondage.
- » You will note the repeated use of the term "all" in vss. 1-4. It occurs 5 times, every time referencing a blessing that all of Israel had received from God. They had been guided by God, delivered from their oppressors through the Red Sea, fed with manna from heaven and water from the rock. However,

with most of them, God was not pleased and they perished in the wilderness! Should the Corinthians assume that God would treat them differently?

» What does Paul mean in vs. 4 by saying, "and the rock was Christ"? I believe the term "spiritual" in this verse provides the key. While Israel received physical food and water from God during their travels, more importantly they received the Word of God (note Deuteronomy 8.3). Their spiritual life was a product of Christ, the true Word of God.

2. A call to learn from their example (vss. 6-11).

» Twice in this passage Paul states that Israel serves as an example to Christians (vss. 6, 11). Paul mentioned four sins Israel was guilty of that the Corinthians should heed their example:

- Idolatry (vs. 7; Exodus 32.6). As we will see, eating in an idols temple would be idolatry.
- Immorality (vs. 8; Numbers 25) Sexual immorality was often associated with idolatrous practices.
- Testing God (vs. 9; Numbers 21.5-6). Israel had tested God by failing to appreciate all He had done for them. The Corinthians were doing the same by not being content with what Christ had done for them.
- Grumbling (vs. 10; Numbers 16). Israel had grumbled against God and His chosen leader, Moses. The Corinthians were doing the same!

» Note: many boast about the freedom we now have in Christ, freedom from the Law of Moses. The freedom provided by God's grace. However, do not forget that even though we are no longer under The Law, we are still under God's law (9.21). Paul's point

in this passage is significant. Israel serves as an example of what happens to God's people when they turn aside from following the Lord. They are an EXAMPLE to us, because if we are not careful the same could be true of us!

3. Exhortation (vss. 12-13). The exhortation is straightforward. Have some humility (vs. 12). We have been saved by God's grace, we have every possible advantage in Christ, but we must not become arrogant or we may stumble and fall! Yet, there is the reminder that God is still on our side, He can / will provide the way of escape. But would the Corinthians look for and take the escape rout? Paul proceeds to show them how they can escape this temptation.

VSS. 14-22, REGARDING EATING IN AN IDOL'S TEMPLE

1. Note: that Paul is referencing the practice of actually eating in an idol's temple is likely based on Paul's mentioning it in 8.10 and referring to their partaking of the table of demons in 10.21.
2. Flee! (vs. 14) Sometimes the only manner of resistance is to flee! The Corinthians may have reasoned that with their "knowledge" they could safely eat in an idol's temple, but Paul says to get away! "They must not try how near they can go, but how far they can fly." (Leon Morris)
3. The matter of communion (vss. 15-20). Throughout this passage Paul uses the term *koinōnia*, often translated as "sharing," "communion," or "fellowship".
 - » The Lord's Supper (bread and cup) is a matter of our "sharing" or being in fellowship with the Lord (vss. 16-17)
 - » Most sacrifices under the Mosaic Law involved the worshipper eating a portion of the sacrifice (see Leviticus 7.6, 14f). Thus, Israel shared in the altar (vs. 18).
 - » An idol might be nothing. The Christian might have this knowledge, but the pagan did not. They were "sharers" with their de-

mons (i.e. Pagan gods). Should a Christian be seen as sharers with these demons? (vss. 19-20)

4. NO! You cannot share with the Lord & with demons! (vss. 21-22)
5. Note: much ink has been spilled over what kind of meal the early Christians partook of during worship. Many talk about "love feasts" and say that the Lord's Supper was a common meal involving all kinds of food. While I have no doubt that Christians often ate together, it is significant that in a passage dealing with meat sacrificed to idols, Paul only mentions the bread and cup when referring to our fellowship meal. We would do well to follow suite.

VSS. 23-30, REGARDING MEAT SOLD IN THE MARKET PLACE

1. Restatement of principle (vss. 23-24). Recall from 6.12 that the phrase "all things are lawful" was probably a Corinthian catchphrase. They probably used the phrase in reference to eating in the temple of idols and of their right to eat anything, regardless of their brother's conscience. Paul reminds them that what is important is their brother. They should edify their brother rather than destroy him (see 8.10-12).
2. Eat without asking in good conscience (vss. 25-27). They were free to eat meat, because meat came from God. Being sacrificed to an idol did not change that fundamental fact. Remember: much of the meat sold in the market place had been killed in a god's name. They could buy and eat in good conscience, and a practical piece of advise was to just not ask!
3. When you should not eat (vss. 28-30). However, the situation was different when they knew the meat had been sacrificed to an idol. In that case, they should not eat. You don't want an unbeliever thinking you are "sharing" with an idol, you don't want to violate the conscience of others!
 - » Paul's words about himself in vss. 29-30 are difficult. He has just said we must not violate the conscience of another, but then defends his own freedom?

- » The best solution is that Paul is anticipating their arguments. Yes, they have freedom, yes they might give thanks, but they must not eat if it would give offense!

VSS. 31-33, ALL FOR GOD'S GLORY

1. Again, we come back to attitude. Their “knowledge” had made them arrogant (8.1). Now was the time live for God’s glory, not self!
2. The way to glorify God? By avoiding offending others (vs. 32), by doing all things for the salvation of others (vs. 33).

1 CORINTHIANS 11.1-16

The Principle of Headship

Intro: Having addressed their questions regarding marriage (chapter 7) and meat sacrificed to idols (chapters 8-10), Paul moves on to another issue the Corinthian Christians had inquired about: the covering. Actually, it may be unfair to say that their question was regarding the covering, for the covering is not the main issue of this chapter. Rather, principles of headship and how that is expressed by men and women would seem to be the main issue, the covering being related to that main issue.

Regarding the covering, Paul's teaching in this passage is relatively plain: men should not cover their heads when praying or prophesying, women should (vss. 4-5). However, significant questions remain. First, why does Paul give this instruction? Second, are these instructions binding today? In this lesson we will first examine what Paul says in the text, then look to make application to today. But, before we begin let us be cautious of the attitude we bring into this study. A sister in Christ should not approach this passage with her mind already determined that she won't wear the covering, refusing to wear any sign of submission. She will find principles in this passage that rebuke such an attitude. Likewise, a brother in Christ should not think this passage will "put a woman in her place." He will find principles in this passage that rebuke such an attitude.

VS. 2, OPENING COMMENDATION

1. Paul begins this passage by praising them, an unusual occurrence in the letter. Some believe that Paul was being sarcastic, but I find no basis for this idea. It would seem that in this matter, Paul found reason to give them praise. You will note in vs. 17 that we reach another matter where Paul could not give them praise.
2. Paul's praise for them was that they took into consideration his teachings, inquired of him

regarding these issues. Yes, it would appear that some in Corinth did not have high regard for Paul (see 9.3), but others did respect him enough to seek his counsel and guidance.

3. What did Paul mean by traditions? A tradition is something handed down from one person to the next. We typically think of a tradition as being non-binding, but that is not how Paul used the term. In 1Cor 15.1-3, He will speak of the gospel as something they "received" and that he "delivered" to them. Those are the two components of a "tradition." Clearly, Paul was not saying the gospel was optional or non-binding. Paul will speak in other passages about the necessity of following "the traditions" (see 2Thess 2.15; 3.6). Paul had received his teachings from the Lord, he then delivered those teachings to the churches. They needed to follow these "traditions". (see Matt. 28.20)
4. However, it is clear that even though there was a willingness on the part of many to follow Paul's teaching in this matter, there was some confusion. While I cannot be certain, I believe that something like the following had taken place. Paul often spoke of unity in Christ, including the equality of men and women in Christ (Gal 3.26-29; cf. Eph. 4.4-6). It would seem that the Corinthians had taken this teaching to heart, appreciating the equality of men and women in the church. However, they may have taken the teaching too far, to a point where headship was no longer respected. So, Paul sought to correct their understanding in this passage.

VSS. 3-10, THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP

1. As stated in the intro, this section plainly teaches that the Corinthian men should NOT pray or prophesy while covered and that the

Corinthian women should. But why? In a word: headship.

2. The idea of headship runs throughout this passage, centered on the following relationships:
 - » Christ and man (Christ is man's head)
 - » Man and woman (man is woman's head)
 - » Christ and God (God is Christ's head)
3. But what does Paul mean by saying "head of"?
 - » First, he is NOT saying inferior. To take that meaning would be contrary to Gal. 3:26-29 and vss. 11-12 of this chapter.
 - » It seems best to think of preeminence or first position. For instance, every citizen in the US is "equal", yet we recognize the President as our "head". He is not naturally better than us, but his position is one of headship, one that all citizens are called to recognize.
 - » So, Christ is equal with God, yet Christ recognizes God as head (Phil. 2). In terms of manhood, Christ and man were equal, but Christ is clearly head. Man and woman are equal in Christ, but man is to be recognized as head.
4. There are some important points in this passage that help us to see why this teaching was needed in Corinth.
 - » First, you had the situation where men and women were "praying or prophesying".
 - This was NOT in the assembly. It is significant that the assembly is mentioned in vss. 17, 18, 20, but not here. A woman's conduct in the assembly is addressed in 14:34-36.
 - She is actively "praying or prophesying." She is doing the same thing as a man (vs. 4). These terms are never used passively, i.e. a woman listening to prophecy or to prayer. No, she was actively doing the praying or prophesying.
 - Both activities would seem to be some of the spiritual gifts mentioned later in the letter. Prophecy is inspired (12:10) and it is likely that prayer is as well (see 14:14-19).
 - » Second, it would seem that Greek / Co-

rinthian customs played a part in Paul's instructions.

- In Greek culture, men typically pulled their toga over their head when making sacrifices. "Because of the clear association of this practice with pagan devotion, pulling the toga over the physical head in Christian worship would shame the spiritual head of the man, Christ." (Garland)
- In Corinthian culture, respectable women covered their heads when out in public. Furthermore, a woman guilty of adultery would have her head shaved as an act of public shame.
- Taking all of this into account, it would seem that these principles are meant to show headship in Corinthian culture. Men should not cover their heads, lest they dishonor their head (Christ) by mimicking pagan practices. Women should cover their heads, lest they dishonor their head (man) by doing something dishonorable in the local culture.
- 5. Vss. 7-10 again emphasize the necessity of respecting headship. However, further theological reasoning is given, namely creation.
 - » While both man and woman were created by God, man was first created from the very dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). Thus, man is the image and glory of God. Paul states this is the reason man "ought not to have his head covered," (vs. 7).
 - » However, woman originated from man (Gen. 2:21-23). Thus, woman is the glory of man. Paul says this is the reason a woman "ought to have a symbol of authority on her head," (vs. 10).
 - » The final phrase, "because of the angels" is uncertain. However, it seems best that Paul is referencing the angels that did not respect God's authority and were therefore punished (Jude 6; 2Peter 2:4).

VSS. 11-12, CAUTION TO NOT TAKE THIS TOO FAR

1. Respecting headship is important. Not abusing headship is also important!
2. Man and woman may occupy different roles, but those roles are complementary. Neither is independent of the other (either in the family or in the church!)
3. Woman originally came from man, but ever since then man has come from woman! (vs. 12)
4. Furthermore, we all originate from God! Thus, the principle of equality in Christ is again affirmed (Gal 3.26-29).

VSS. 13-16, APPEAL THAT THEY JUDGE CORRECTLY

1. Having given them information and instruction, Paul urges them to make the proper conclusion.
2. Vss. 14-15 provide a final piece of evidence that should be taken into consideration: nature itself! "When Paul speaks of "nature", he means what his society understands to be natural. Since male hair grows the same way as female hair does, he must be referring to hair that conforms to societal expectations concerning male and female hairdos. In general, it was dishonorable for men in this culture to have long hair." (Garland)
3. Recall that Paul had begun by praising them (vs. 2), and has now called on them judge for themselves (vs. 14). However, he recognizes that some might be contentious, not wanting to abide by this teaching. So, as Paul has done before, he appeals to uniformity of doctrine and practice (see also 4.17; 7.17). What Paul had outlined in the text is the practice in the churches.

APPLICATION:

1. Are women bound to wear the covering today?
 - » Simply put, no. I conclude this partly because cultural context today is not exactly the same (i.e. it is not inherently shameful for a woman to go out in public with her head uncovered).
 - » However, the main reason is that the same circumstances do not exist today. Paul was

not describing a woman in the assembly passively listening to a sermon or prayer. These were women with spiritual gifts, exercising their abilities to prophecy and pray outside of the assemblies. The same situation simply does not exist today.

- » But let us make sure we do not forget to respect the principle of headship, a principle that should be respected in every time and circumstance.
- 2. Apostolic Tradition & The Church
 - » This passage began by Paul praising them for respecting the "traditions" he gave them. Again, Paul's use of the term "tradition" stands for anything he "received" and then "delivered", including the very basics of the gospel (15.1-3).
 - » Regarding the covering, Paul gave them instructions they "ought" to follow (vss. 7,10). Ought does not mean optional, but necessary as in John 13.14; 1John 3.16; 4.11.
 - » Paul concluded the passage by saying he was uniform in his teaching and practice in the churches (vs. 16).
 - » People will sometimes talk about the essentials of the gospel (Christ's death, grace, faith, love, etc.) and nonessential teachings and practices. The list of nonessential items will vary depending on whom you talk to, but may include singing, Sunday observance of the Lord's Supper and even baptism. However, when giving guidance regarding the covering, Paul spoke of it as essential. He said his teaching on it was uniform.
 - » As I've already stated, the conditions today are not the same, so women are not bound to the covering. However, there's a larger point we should see. We would do very well to not quickly discount any New Testament teaching or practice as nonessential. Paul did not speak of them that way, nor did he instruct others to do so.

1 CORINTHIANS 11.17-34

The Lord's Supper

Intro: You will recall that Paul had already brought up the Lord's Supper in his discussion of eating meat sacrificed to idols (10.16-17). In that passage we learned that it is impossible for a Christian to share or commune with an idol and Christ, showing that our partaking of the Lord's Supper is a matter of our communing with Him, and by extension each other. Paul now returns to the matter of the Lord's Supper, this time to correct it's abuse in the Corinthian assembly. You will note that the assembly is clearly in view in this passage as Paul speaks of their "coming together" or "meeting together" 5 times in this chapter (vss. 17,18,19,33,34).

VSS. 17-22, THE WRONG PRACTICE

1. Paul does not describe exactly what was going on in the Corinthian assemblies, thus we can only speculate on exactly what the Corinthians were doing. Some assume that 1st Century churches regularly partook of the Lord's Supper as part of a larger meal. If that is the case, we know nothing of it from the Scriptures. Others believe that the Corinthians met in the homes of the wealthy and sat in different rooms, according to social standing. That may be the case, but we are not told so. We do not know if the Corinthians met in a home, a public space, or an upper room (like those in Troas, Acts 20).
2. However, there are some clues in this passage as to what was going on.
 - » Divisions were apparent in their assemblies (vss. 18-19). Their divisiveness was first brought up in 1.11-13 and was the source of many troubles in Corinth.
 - » They were divided along socioeconomic lines (vss. 21-22). The Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a common meal, and partook of it in such a way that

the poor had nothing to eat. Some believe that the wealthy brought lavish provisions to the assembly and either did not share with poorer members, or ate them before the poor arrived. (Sunday was a regular work day in Greek society, thus Christians among the lower classes would often be compelled to work the day before assembling with the saints).

3. Paul's reaction:

- » Could not praise them (vss. 17,22).
- » Rebuked them because they had so perverted it's intent, that it could no longer be said that they ate the Lord's Supper (vs. 20).
- » Accused them of doing more harm than good in their assemblies (vs. 17).

VSS. 23-26, THE RIGHT PRACTICE

1. Note: it is believed by many that 1 Corinthians was written before the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were written, thus Paul provides the earliest record of Jesus' words.
2. You will also note that Paul now begins speaking of the authorized practice. Everything he has said before (vss. 17-22) has been wrong.
3. It is interesting to note that Paul mentions that Jesus instituted the Supper "in the night in which He was betrayed," (vs. 23). "that feast of love that was to bring such strength and consolation to Christians was instituted at the very time when human malignancy was engaged in betraying the Saviour to his enemies." (Leon Morris) This may have some bearing on what Paul has to say in vss. 27-32.
4. The importance of the Lord's Supper is conveyed in vss. 24-26.
 - » It reminds us that His body was given for us (vs. 24).
 - » It reminds us that the new covenant is

- made possible by His blood (vs. 25).
- » Thus, the Supper is a memorial of what He did, a call to remember the greatness of what He did in allowing us to “share” in Him (10.16-17)
- » We are to proclaim His death “until He comes,” (vs. 26). “Christ’s death is not itself the End, but the beginning of the End... They have not yet arrived (4:8); at this meal they are to be reminded that there is yet a future for themselves, as well as for all the people of God.” (Gordon Fee)

5. Note on transubstantiation and consubstantiation. The Catholic church and other denominations teach that when blessed, the bread literally becomes the body of Christ. There are a host of problems with this view (did Jesus eat his own flesh?), but you will note that Paul still calls it “bread” when we eat it (vss.26-27).

4. Thus they should “examine” themselves, not to see if they are sinless (that’s not what Paul means by unworthy), but to see if they are taking the Supper in remembrance and appreciation of the Lord’s sacrifice, that they are judging the body correctly.

5. They had not been doing so, as was seen in their divisive practices mentioned in vss. 17-22. Thus, many of them were “weak and sick, and a number sleep,” (vs. 30). Their weakened spiritual condition could be tied with a failure to appreciate the Lord’s sacrifice and to remember it in the correct fashion!

6. Vss. 31-32 represent something of a final appeal: if they would start judging rightly, they need not fear God’s judgment (vs. 31). They were being judged now (Paul’s words to them were a judgment), but if they would accept the discipline they could escape the condemnation that the world will receive (vs. 32)

VSS. 27-32, CALL TO PROPERLY DISCERN

1. Having reminded the Corinthians of the true nature of the Lord’s Supper, Paul now urges them to examine their current practice. Does it fit with the nature of what the Lord instituted?
2. Key to this passage is the idea of judging. They are told to “examine” themselves” in vs. 28, warned of God’s “judgment” in vs. 29 and urged to “judge” themselves and the body of Christ in vss. 29, 31.
3. All of this “judging” was necessary so that they would not partake of the supper “in an unworthy manner,” (vs. 27). “The adverb ἀναξιῶς (anaxiōs, unworthily) refers to doing something that does not square with the character or nature of something... Paul’s logic is this: The Lord’s Supper proclaims the Lord’s death. Those whose behavior at the Lord’s Supper does not conform to what that death entails effectively shift sides. They leave the Lord’s side and align themselves with the rulers of this present age who crucified the Lord (1 Cor. 2:8; cf. Heb. 6:5). This explains how they make themselves so vulnerable to God’s judgment.” (David Garland)

VSS. 33-34, APPLICATION TO THE CORINTHIAN SITUATION

1. Wait for one another (vs. 33). They had turned the Supper into a meal where factionalism reigned, where the wealthy were fed and the poor went without. This is a call to return to the original purpose of the Supper, to wait for one another so that as a church they could share in the Supper, remembering the Lord’s body and blood.
2. Eat at home (vs. 34). Their turning the Lord’s Supper into a common meal had disastrous consequences! Paul was not forbidding Christians from eating together, but it had no place in the assembly. Eat at home so that the nature of the true Supper was not changed.
3. Note: some advocate partaking of the Lord’s Supper as part of a larger meal. I fail to see how one could read Paul’s words in this passage and conclude that the Supper was part of a larger meal. Paul mentions only two aspects of the Lord’s Supper: the bread and the cup (vss. 24-26; 10.16-17). Anything else is to be left at home!

1 CORINTHIANS 12.1-11

Concerning Spiritual Gifts (1)

Intro: "Now concerning spiritual gifts," lets us know that Paul is again addressing a matter brought up in their letter (see 7.1). Paul addresses this topic over the course of chapters 12 - 14.

While it would seem that a variety of questions were raised, Paul spends most of his time addressing their attitudes concerning these gifts. Before looking at what Paul says in these chapters, let's spend a little time reviewing some things revealed about spiritual gifts in Acts.

1. The Spirit was promised to the apostles (Acts 1.8). Note John 14.26; 15.26-27; 16.13. The Spirit both revealed the word to them, and confirmed it through miraculous signs (see Mark 16.20).
2. Acts 2 is significant in that two different "givings" of the Spirit are seen.
 - » We see that the apostles received the promised Spirit in Acts 2.1-4 and miraculous signs accompanied this baptism of the Spirit.
 - » However, the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is offered to any and all who would repent of their sins and be baptized into Christ (vs. 38). I.e. the restoration of man's spirit to its original condition, created in the image of God. See also Ezekiel 36.24-27; John 3.5.
3. Significantly, although ALL Christians received the "gift of the Holy Spirit" at baptism, ONLY the apostles performed miraculous signs during the early days of the church. See Acts 4.33; 5.12. The first non-apostles to perform these works were Stephen and Philip, men whom the apostles had laid their hands on (Acts 6.6,8; 8.6). That the passing on of these gifts could occur through the hands of an apostle only is seen in Acts 8.14-18.
4. Other than Acts 2.1-4, we read of only one occasion where the Spirit "baptized" by someone: the first Gentile converts (Acts 10.44-48).

That this was unusual is evident from the text and was for the purpose of showing that the Gentiles were accepted by God, see also Acts 11.15-18.

5. Summing up: although every Christian received the gift of the Holy Spirit, most did not have miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

Returning our attention back to Corinth, it is clear that several in the church possessed miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Presumably, Paul had laid his hands on some of them during his 18 month stay in Corinth. Many, probably most, of the Christians in Corinth did not possess these gifts. Furthermore, it is evident from chapter 14 that those with the gift of tongues were arrogant about their ability, deeming their gift as greater than others (including prophecy). So, there was yet another situation where the Corinthians' pride and arrogance could be manifest. So, Paul addresses the matter in the following way:

- » All gifts come by the same Spirit (ch 12)
- » Without love, no gift is profitable (ch 13)
- » The proper use of the gifts (ch 14)

VSS. 1-3, THEY HAD ALL FOLLOWED THE SAME SPIRIT

1. This is a difficult passage, but it makes more sense when we keep in mind that Paul is contrasting their former life as pagans (vs. 2) with their current life in Christ (vs. 3).
2. Their former life was characterized by worshipping idols. These idols were deaf and dumb, Psalm 115.4-7; Isa 41.21-24, yet they had been led astray into worshipping them.
3. But now, they confess "Jesus is Lord", i.e. the only Lord (8.6) with all authority and deserving of absolute allegiance (Matthew 28.18). The only way anyone can make such a confession is "by the Holy Spirit." No, this is not a direct inner-working of the Spirit that convicts some and not others (as Calvin would assert).

Rather, the Spirit revealed and confirmed the message of Christ, it is only by His work that any could or would proclaim Jesus as Lord. The rest of the world, those who would say “Jesus is accursed” have clearly not been led by the Spirit, that is they have not accepted His testimony about Jesus.

4. Paul’s point is a simple one: the saints in Corinth had a shared experience. They had all been pagans, they had all worshipped the mute idols. If they had not followed the Spirit, they would be in the condition of calling Jesus accursed. But they had all followed the Spirit’s teaching, they had all come to the confession that Jesus is the Christ. They were united in their following the Spirit in salvation, now they needed to be united in the exercise of the Spirit’s gifts.

VSS. 4-11, ALL GIFTS WERE FROM THE SAME SPIRIT

1. These verses enumerate a variety of Spiritual gifts. The term for “gift” in vs. 4 is charisma. “The -ma suffix denotes the result of an action, and in this case, charisma refers to the results of grace—the free gift.” (Garland). Significantly, this term is not limited to miraculous gifts (see Romans 5:15-16; 2Cor 1:11; Romans 1:11-12; 1Cor 1:4-7).
2. However, keep in mind that the true emphasis of this passage is not on the variety of gifts, but on the SAME SPIRIT that gives the gifts. Thus, there should be unity among saints that exercise a variety of gifts.
 - » Note the unity found between the Spirit, the Lord and God (vss. 4-6)
 - » “Services’ (ministries NASB) match nicely with the Lord’s ministry and with his self-sacrifice proclaimed in the Lord’s Supper, which was just discussed in the previous section (11:17-34). ‘Workings’ (effects NASB) are appropriate to God (Gal. 2:8; Eph. 1:11; 3:20; Phil. 2:13) and imply that all things accomplished in the church are effected by God’s power.” (Garland)
3. Vs. 7 is key to the whole chapter. You will note two main points:

- » Each gift is a manifestation of the Spirit. The gifts are many and varied, but their source is the same Spirit.
- » The purpose of each gift is the common good!

4. Vss. 8-10 enumerate many of the gifts. A few notes on them:
 - » You will note that the “word” is listed first (vs. 8), while “tongues” come last (vs. 10). While Paul does not say so here, he makes it clear in chapter 14 that the giving of the word is superior to speaking in tongues. However, the Corinthians had it backwards.
 - » What is meant by “faith” in vs. 9 is uncertain. That Paul is not talking of the faith required of every believer is clear from the words “to another” that a disciple might have this gift as opposed to others. “It is possible that “faith” stands at the head of this next grouping of gifts because they depend especially on the power of faith (Edwards 1885: 313). Healings and miracles plainly are related to faith (Matt. 16:8; 21:21; Mark 5:34; 10:52; 11:2; Luke 17:5-6; Acts 3:16; 27:25; Heb. 11:29-30; James 5:15), and Paul says that prophecy is given “in proportion to faith” (Rom. 12:6). We may assume that discerning the spirits also takes root in faith.” (Garland)
 - » That these gifts disappeared soon afterwards is accounted in history. “Chrysostom lamented that the passage is obscure on account of the cessation of the gifts, ‘being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place’” (Leon Morris)
5. Paul brings us back to the main point in vs. 11: all of these gifts come from “one and the same Spirit”! Thus any credit belongs to the Spirit, and not to the individual. Furthermore, while the Spirit gives all of the gifts, each Christian only received some of the gifts. Throughout, the Spirit is emphasized over the individual saints, showing why they should be humble in exercising the gifts they had received.

1 CORINTHIANS 12.12-13.13

Concerning Spiritual Gifts (2)

Intro: The Corinthians had questions regarding the use of spiritual gifts (12.1), but before Paul specifically addressed their questions, he first examined their attitude. So far, we've seen that Paul emphasized the unity of spiritual blessings: it was through the Spirit's work that they had made a common confession (vss. 1-3) and their gifts had all come from the same Spirit (vss. 4-11). Paul continues to emphasize this unity in this chapter and in chapter 13, appealing to the Corinthians to use their gifts for the good of Christ's body and to exercise them out of love.

As we noted in our last lesson, vs. 7 serves as something of a key verse. "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Paul has already emphasized that each gift was a "manifestation of the Spirit," now he turns his attention to how each gift is "for the common good."

12.12-13, ONE BODY BY THE SPIRIT

1. The main point of vss. 12-31 is that Christians are all members of one body, Christ's body. Every body (singular) has many members, and if a body is missing a member or a member is not functioning properly, then the body as a whole suffers or is incomplete. You see that Paul is continuing his discussion of unity by using this illustration.
2. Vs.13 concerns how we became part of the body of Christ. In short, it was by the Spirit. You will recall that Paul has already said similar in vs. 3, that our confession of Jesus as Lord is only possible by the Spirit's work. Now he says that we were all 1) baptized by the Spirit into one body and 2) we drink of one Spirit. What does he mean by this?
 - » Since Paul is speaking of a baptism that every Christian undergoes, we can eliminate Holy Spirit baptism, a baptism with only

2 recorded instances (Acts 2 & Acts 10). No, Paul is speaking of believer's baptism, baptism that forgives sin (Acts 2.38). But how is this "by the Spirit"? Two options: Paul could be speaking of the Spirit's work of revelation and confirmation that leads to baptism OR Paul could be speaking of the spiritual work that takes place at our baptism, the spiritual work of being added to His body. Perhaps we should say that Paul means ALL of the above!

- » If being baptized by the Spirit is the same baptism spoken of in Acts 2.38 (and I believe we are right in concluding so), then it would seem that "we were all made to drink of one Spirit" is synonymous with receiving the gift of the Spirit in Acts 2.38.

3. Let's make sure we keep in mind Paul's point in this passage. It was not introduce some new theology into the conversion process. Rather, his point is that the Spirit that gave the gifts mentioned in vss. 8-11 is the same Spirit that made us part of Christ's body in the first place! Furthermore, the Spirit made Jews, Greeks, slaves and free all equal members in the body. Thus, the Spirit gave the gifts already listed for the benefit of the entire body, not just a few members in the body.

12.14-26, EACH MEMBER OF THE BODY IS ESSENTIAL

1. These verses are self explanatory, so I offer only a few comments.
2. Paul focuses on presentable members with honor and those with less honor. Clearly those with "honor" in this context are those boasting of some spiritual gift. Paul not only shows that both are essential to the body, but that the member with "honor" should view it as part of his work to "bestow more abundant honor" on those that are deemed less honorable. This goes

back to his point in vs. 7, “each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

3. “The sun does not say that it is black. The tree does not say, ‘I bear no apples, pears, or grapes.’ That is not humility, but if you have gifts you should say, ‘These gifts are from God; I did not confer them upon myself. One should not be puffed up on their account. If someone else does not have the gifts I have, then he has others. If I exalt my gifts and despise another’s, that is pride.’ The sun does not vaunt himself, though more fair than the earth and the trees, but says, ‘Although tree, you do not shine, I will not despise you, for you are green and I will help you to be green.’” (Martin Luther)

12.27-31, EACH MEMBER OF CHRIST IS ESSENTIAL

1. These verses serve as the application of Paul’s extended imagery in vss. 14-26.
2. There is one body, it is Christ’s body. We are many and individually members of the one body. It is another call to unity.
3. In that body are many gifts, vs. 28. Paul does not have to spell it out here, because he has already made the point that every gift should be used for the benefit of the entire body.
4. No member has every gift, vss. 29-30. Again, Paul does not have to spell out the conclusion they should read. Just like in a body no member does everything, so each member should focus on doing its part in service to the whole.
5. Vs. 31 serves as the transition to Paul’s discussion of love in chapter 13. You will note that Paul is not opposed to their desiring gifts, but he wants them to desire the greater gifts. As he will make clear in chapter 14, the greater gifts are those that benefit God’s people. Thus, this isn’t a selfish desire, but a desire to be of service to Christ’s body. That desire will make one willing to follow the “still more excellent way” detailed in chapter 13.

13.1-3, THE INDISPENSABILITY OF LOVE

1. Again, Paul’s point in this passage is simple. It matters not what the gift is, if it is not exercised in love then the one using it has not profited. Note: the gift itself may have done some good. A prophecy may have been given, a healing may have occurred, but Paul’s point is on the one exercising the gift. If done without love the user of the gift has “become a noisy gong...”, is “nothing” and has profited “nothing”.
2. Before we move on, just a note about the word love. Paul uses the term agape throughout the chapter. Some have concluded that this word denotes a deeper or fuller love than other Greek words. However, it’s usage in the Bible does not bear this out. (For instance, God’s love for the Son is termed as both agape and phileo, see John 3.35; 5.20). What the term agape may indicate is the motive for love. This kind of love is a choice, a love motivated by the nature of the one who loves rather than the worthiness of the recipient. Thus, God loves us who are unworthy of His love (John 3.16). Thus, we are to love others, not because they are worthy of such love and often in spite of their unworthiness.

13 4-7, CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

1. This passage is interesting in that it enumerates both things that love is and things that love is not. Note that Paul does not describe love as emotional, but behavioral. “All you need is love” is true when viewed in this context, when love is viewed not as how we feel but how we act.
2. A few notes on the characteristics:
 - » That Paul is addressing both those with spiritual gifts and those without is clear. Those without the gifts should not be jealous, those with the gifts should not brag or become arrogant.
 - » Does not act unbecomingly: “It is well said that you can spot a gentleman not by the way he addresses his king but by the way he addresses his servants. The former may not

be courtesy at all, but merely enlightened self-interest.” (DA Carson)

- » Does not take into account a wrong suffered: “It is a word connected with the keeping of accounts, noting something down and reckoning it to someone. Love does not take notice of every evil thing that people do and hold it against them. Love takes no account of evil. It does not harbour a sense of injury.” (DA Carson)

manifest and show love.

13.8-13, THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE

1. To conclude and top off the argument, Paul shows the superiority of love by emphasizing its permanence. Love never fails. The gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge (miraculous knowledge) will be done away, but not love.
2. The main question in this passage is regarding when these gifts cease. Most commentators, even those that do not believe we still have the gifts of prophecy, tongues, etc., think that Paul is speaking of Christ’s return. However, such is not necessary in the text.
 - » Recall that the purpose of these gifts was revelation (John 16.13) and confirmation (Mark 16.20). These gifts were essential so long as God’s revelation was being given. However, once God’s will had been fully revealed, the gifts would no longer be needed.
 - » This makes the most sense of vss. 9-10. During the time of miraculous gifts they “know in part and we prophesy in part,” but once the will of God was fully revealed, there was no need for the partial, i.e. the spiritual gifts.
3. Returning to Paul’s main point, those who boasted in the gifts they had needed to be reminded that God’s people are marked by greater attributes, namely faith, hope and love. That the greatest of these is love is not explained. Some conclude that this is true because in heaven only love will still exist. However, may be more related to the fact that God is love (1John 4.16), thus the greatest attribute of any Christian is to act like the Father. To

1 CORINTHIANS 14.1-25

Concerning Spiritual Gifts (3)

Intro: Paul began this section (chapters 12-14) by saying, “Now concerning spiritual gifts,” (12.1) indicating that the Corinthians had some questions regarding the gifts. Based on what Paul has to say in chapter 14, it would seem that the Corinthians had two basic issues: 1) confusion over which gift was greater (tongues or prophesy) and 2) how the gifts should be used in the assembly. Before proceeding to how Paul dealt with these two issues, let’s review what he had said about gifts up to this point.

- » Chapter 12 revealed their partisan attitude in the matter of gifts. Paul stressed unity, that every gift came from the same Spirit, and every member was a part of one body. They should pursue the gifts, but there is a “more excellent way” vs. 31.
- » Chapter 13 reveals the more excellent way: love. Unless the saint does so in love, his use of any gift is unprofitable for him (vss. 1-3). Furthermore, the very nature of love shapes how one views and treats others (vss. 4-7). Finally, the miraculous gifts that some Christians boasted of were only temporary in nature. However, the spiritual fruit of love would endure forever (vss. 8-13)!
- » Chapters 12-13 addressed the Corinthians’ attitude regarding spiritual gifts, but Paul makes the transition from attitude to practice in 14.1, “Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” The use of spiritual gifts was not at odds with love, rather the use of spiritual gifts with love would edify! (vs. 3-4).

WHAT WERE TONGUES?

1. Various “charismatic” groups use this text as justification for the practice of “tongue speaking”. Their tongue speaking is unintelligible and in direct contrast with the known languages spoken by the apostles in Acts 2.4-11.

If questioned about this a modern charismatic would probably respond with 1Cor 14.2, saying they were “speaking to God.” Robert Harkrider provides the following response:

- » “This verse teaches that to speak ‘mysteries’ is not the approved result! Merely to speak ‘mysteries’ so that only God understands is to nullify the intended purpose of tongues. God does not need edifying! And tongues are for a sign to unbelievers, not believers! V. 22.”
- » “If others do not understand what is spoken the words are simply spoken ‘into the air,’ v. 9. They are ‘mysteries’ because they are not understood.”
- 2. The text identifies what “tongues” are:
 - » Vs. 10-11 states that the use of uninterpreted tongues is akin to a barbarian speaking.
 - » Vs. 21, the quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12 is clearly referencing to foreign language (Assyrian).
 - » Vs. 22, tongues are a sign to unbelievers. This accords with Acts 2.
 - » Vs. 18, if this is merely “ecstatic speech” we have no record of Paul doing this. However, this accords well with Paul proclaiming the gospel throughout the world.
- 3. It would seem that an element of prophesy was involved with speaking in tongues.
 - » Tongue speakers were apparently unaware of the contents of their messages, otherwise they would not have needed to pray for interpretation (vs. 13).
 - » Referring to God-breathed messages spoken in a foreign tongue that not even the speaker understands (cf. vs. 14).

OUTLINE OF THIS SECTION:

1. Potential of spiritual gifts for building up the church (vs. 1-5)
 - » Prophecy would edify the church, whereas

tongues would only edify the speaker.

- » One acting out of love would want to edify others, thus he would desire to prophesy rather than speak in tongues.

2. Edification depends on intelligibility of the tongues (vs. 6-12)
3. Stipulations for tongue-speakers (vs. 13-19)
 - » “Whatever the place for profound, personal experience and corporate emotional experience, the assembled church is a place for intelligibility. Our God is a thinking, speaking God; and if we will know him, we must learn to think his thoughts after him.” (DA Carson)
 - » “It is better to be useful than brilliant.” (AT Robertson)
4. Effects of prophecy and tongues on unbelievers (vs. 20-25)
 - » Vs. 20: “It is indeed the characteristic of the child to prefer the amusing to the useful, the brilliant to the solid. And this is what the Corinthians did by their marked taste for glossolalia (tongue speaking).” (Leon Morris)
 - » Vs. 21 quotes from Isaiah 28.11-12, the “tongues” in this passage refers to a foreign language (in this case the language of the Assyrians). Further indication that the tongues spoken of throughout these passages is that of real languages.

APPLICATION:

1. Purpose of gifts is to edify (cf. Ephesians 4:16).
2. Certain gifts edify in different circumstances.

1 CORINTHIANS 14.26-40

Concerning Spiritual Gifts (4)

Intro: These verses conclude Paul's teaching concerning the use of spiritual gifts. Paul began by addressing their attitude, emphasizing that each gift came from the same Spirit and that each gift was essential to the body (chapter 12). Next, Paul focused on the necessity of love, that the gifts were useless to them if not exercised in love and that love was permanent whereas the gifts were temporary (chapter 13). Finally, Paul began to address their issues regarding the gifts. In 14.1-25 Paul emphasized the value of prophesying over speaking in tongues in the assembly. The reason being that prophesy edifies because all can hear and understand. Now, Paul finishes by addressing how their assemblies should be conducted.

THE PRINCIPLES:

1. Assemblies should edify (vss. 26, 31)
 - » Recall from vss. 1-25 that the reason Paul emphasized the gift of prophesy over speaking in tongues was that prophesy would edify the church (note vss. 3-5). One of the main purposes of an assembly is to edify (literally build up) the faith of those present.
 - » However, it would seem that the Corinthian assemblies were so disorderly that edification was not possible! This seems to be Paul's point when he says in vs. 26, "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalms, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." In their rush for everyone to be heard, no one was truly heard, therefore no one was truly edified.
 - » That the Corinthians pride and arrogance played a role seems apparent from Paul's words in vss. 36-38. (Note: vs. 36 appears at the end of Paul's teaching regarding women, but would seem to apply to all that
2. Assemblies should reflect the God we worship. (vs. 33)
 - » God is not a God of confusion. "It has to do with the character of God, probably vis-à-vis the deities of the cults, whose worship was characterized by frenzy and disorder. The theological point is crucial: the character of one's deity is reflected in the character of one's worship. The Corinthians must therefore cease worship that reflects the pagan deities more than the God whom they have come to know through the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 12:2-3). God is neither characterized by disorder nor the cause of it in the assembly." (Gordon Fee)
 - » God is a God of peace. "the sense of harmony that will obtain in a Christian assembly when everyone is truly in the Spirit and the aim of everything is the edification of the whole (v. 26)." (Gordon Fee)
3. Assemblies should be "decently and in order" (vs. 40)
 - » The natural result when the first two principles are considered. If assemblies are to 1) edify the saints and 2) reflect the nature of God, then it follows that assemblies should be decent and orderly.

Paul has said) This church, that had in so many ways rejected the teaching of Paul and other approved teachers, had done so again by setting up assemblies that were confusing, disorganized and that did not lead to edification. Thus, the rhetorical question, "Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?" (vs. 36), and the stern reminder, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized." (vss. 37-38).

- » Note: that doesn't mean stuffy and formal. Our God is deserving of emphatic, heartfelt praise, of worship that involves the whole person. Such worship is not at odds with this passage, rather such worship is to be conducted in such a way that edifies everyone and reflects God's nature (one of order and peace, not disorder).

HOW THE PRINCIPLES TO DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

1. Tongue Speakers (vss. 27-28)

- » None of these instructions are difficult to understand, and when seen in the light of the above principles, make perfect sense.
- » The limitations on tongue speaking go back to the point of edification in (vss. 3-5). Uninterpreted tongues would not edify the church.

2. Prophets (vss. 29-33)

- » Paul has already emphasized the value of prophesy (vss. 3, 24-25). Prophesy, giving the word of God, would edify, exhort, console and convict!
- » Yet, even this gift needed to be regulated in the assembly. Only 2 or 3 should prophecy (the other prophets could judge if the message was truly from God). Thus, the rest would be silent. Furthermore, if a revelation was given to a prophet in the assembly, the prophet currently speaking was to keep silent.

3. Women (vss. 34-35)

- » That some women in the congregation possessed these gifts is clear from 11.5. However, in the assembly they were to keep silent.
- » That statement seems so harsh to our ears, but I urge you to consider it in the overall context of the passage. It wasn't just the women who were to keep silent, but the majority of the church! A man might have the gift of speaking in tongues, but if no one could interpret he must keep silent. A man might have a prophesy, but if he were

not one of the 2 or 3 chosen he must remain silent. It could even be a man's "turn" to prophesy, but if another had a prophesy revealed, then the first man must keep silent.

- » We consider more of what the Scriptures teach regarding the silence of women below, but just a note on vs. 35. That passage can be pressed too far. A woman present in the assembly can/should learn just as men do. After all, the purpose of the gifts was for the edification of all. Thus, it is clear that Paul is NOT saying that a woman should receive all instruction from her spouse. Rather, this verse is probably best read in light of vs. 29 where others were passing judgment on a particular prophesy. A woman might have some questions regarding this prophesy. Rather than raise her voice in the assembly to question, as others might do, she should wait and ask at home.

REGARDING WOMEN:

1. Some objections:

- » "This is just an opinion of Paul." Yet, Paul would say, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment." That carried much weight in the early churches as was reflected by their practice. This teaching may not be popular today, but there is no reason to say it was simply Paul's opinion.
- » "Limited by cultural context." Many commentators see this as limited to the culture of Corinth. However two clues in this passage show that a particular culture was not in mind. First, Paul begins by saying "as in all the churches of the saints." While the NASB has this phrase with vs. 33, it is generally agreed that the phrase introduces Paul's teaching regarding women in vss. 34-35. Second, Paul appeals to the Law in vs. 34. While there was no particular command demanding the silence of women in the Mosaic Law, Paul uses the term "Law"

for the entire OT (see vs. 21 which references Isa 28.11f). It is likely that Paul is referencing the Creation account as he had previously done in 11.8-9, specifically what was said to Eve in Genesis 3.16.

» Limited to the time of spiritual gifts.

Given that these instructions to women occur within a section regulating the use of spiritual gifts in the assembly, I have no issue with saying that Paul was forbidding a woman using from using these gifts in the assembly. However, recall that in 12.28 we see that not every gift was miraculous in nature (i.e. one might teach without being directly inspired like a prophet. One might "help" in many ways that do not require supernatural abilities). Furthermore, Paul will have much the same teaching in 1 Timothy 2.8-12 where spiritual gifts are not in view.

2. What This Passage Does Not Say:

- » That women cannot "talk" in the assembly. "The silence imposed in the special circumstances of 1 Cor. 14: should not be interpreted to mean she could not, under any circumstances, speak in the presence of the assembled saints. She sings (teaching, Col. 3:16) and Peter asked one woman to speak (Acts 5:8). (I am reminded of one church which took a woman out of "the assembly" so she could confess faith in Christ.)" (Robert Turner. • Plain Talk. Vol.XVI No.1 Pg.7. March, 1979)
- » That women cannot be involved in the teaching of a man. You may recall that one of Jesus' most successful disciples was the Samaritan woman who told her entire village about Jesus (John 4.28-29, 41-42) and that it was Priscilla and Aquilla who took Apollos aside and "explained to him the way of God more accurately," (Acts 18.26).
- » That women are not deserving of MUCH honor in the church. Consider how much honor Paul sought to give various sisters in Christ: Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4.2-3), Priscilla (Romans 16.3; 1Cor 16.19); Mary (Romans 16.6); Junia (Romans 16.7),

Trypnaena and Tryphosa (Romans 16.12), Phoebe (Romans 16.1-2) and Nympha (Col. 4.15).

3. The Real Issue: Headship

- » You will recall that this was the true principle under discussion in 11.3-12 when discussing the covering. In that situation, a woman who was exercising her gifts OUTSIDE of the assembly should have her head covered, to show her respect for the headship that God has set forth. But what of a woman INSIDE the assembly? She recognizes that headship be remaining silent.
- » I conclude with a portion of an article written by Bette Wolfgang in the April 1986 issue of Christianity Magazine. The article was titled, "Women Are Second Class Christians." I pray that none of us think of any woman in such a way.

"God's prescribed order is given in its clear, elegant simplicity in 1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ" (NASB). Does this mean that a woman is inferior to the man? That would be the case if the assumption that women are second-class citizens is true.

That appears to be a dangerous assumption, since logically it would also be true, based on this verse, that Christ is inferior to God! But scriptures such as Philippians 2:5-8 and John 1:1-3 teach that Christ is not "less than" the Father, even though He voluntarily submitted Himself to assume the form of humanity and establish Himself as the Mediator between God and man. Likewise, a woman, if she is to be pleasing to God, voluntarily submits herself to the role designated by God in the rank order: God-Christ-the man-a woman.

Is Christ less worthy of respect? Was He ever discounted by the Father? Is He a second-class deity? The parallelism is clear: one's position does not necessarily imply inferiority of mind, character, or spirit.

The matter does not rest on the logic of this passage alone. Galatians 3:26–29 assures women of spiritual equality: we are “all one in Christ Jesus,” and all “heirs according to the promise.”

Yet, in practicality, women are all too often treated in the church as if they are indeed “second class,” almost non-existent. Paul did not consider women so, but gave honor and recognition to workers for the Lord such as Phoebe, Priscilla (who taught the Word to Apollos and others), as well as others identified in Romans 16.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15.1-11

The Resurrection (1)

Intro: We now come to the final “issue” Paul addresses in his letter to the Corinthians: the resurrection. He does not say if this was a matter the Corinthians had brought up in their letter to him (see 7.1), or if this was one of the issues that had been reported to him (see 1.11). I lean toward this being an issue that was reported to Paul, but that he chose to address at the end of his correspondence. As such, the resurrection isn’t simply one of many “issues” that the Corinthians struggled with, but perhaps one of the chief explanations for why the Corinthian church had so many problems. In short, if the Corinthian Christians were confused about the resurrection, then they were probably mistaken about everything associated with the resurrection, including the Judgment and what it means to be in the Kingdom. Their bad theology would become manifest in bad practices, which had clearly taken place at Corinth. So, having addressed their various issues, Paul now turns his attention to the main issue.

THE PROBLEM: DENYING THE RESURRECTION (VS. 12)

1. While in this study we will focus on vss. 1-11, it is necessary to first examine the problem in Corinth. Paul lays this out in vs. 12, “Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”
2. It is important to note that the Corinthians would have believed in an afterlife, but it was the soul that lived on, not the body. This is made clearer by Paul’s words in vs. 35, “But someone will say, How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?”
3. The Corinthians’ struggle with the resurrection of the body is easily understood when examined in the light of Greek philosophical teaching regarding the future of the body:

- » “Once a man has died, and the dust has soaked up his blood, there is no resurrection.” (words attributed to Apollo by Aeschylus, Eumenides 647f)
- » “she (the soul) is now finally released from the errors and follies and passions of men, and forever dwells in the company of the gods... his soul has escaped from the influence of pleasures and pains, which are like nails fastening her to the body. To that prison-house she will not return” (Plato, Phaedo 80-85)
- » “The denial of the restoration of the body is taken from the aggregate school of all the philosophers.” (Christian apologist Tertullian, AD 160-230).
- » Recall the response to Paul’s preaching in Athens, Acts 17.16-34.

THREE THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Note: I recommend David Owen’s lecture from the 1996 Florida College lectures for further study.

1. The Corinthians believed in the resurrection of Christ (vss. 3-4,11)
 - » Believing in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is essential for one to become a Christian. Paul makes it clear to the Corinthians that this was part of the gospel he had preached to them and that they had believed. That the Corinthians believed in Jesus’ resurrection is beyond doubt.
 - » What the Corinthians struggled with was the logical conclusion to Christ’s resurrection: their own resurrection! The bulk of Paul’s words in this chapter address this point.
2. Paul is discussing the resurrection of the body, not the immortality of the soul.
 - » It is important to remember that the im-

mortality of the soul was a given in Greek thought, but the preservation of the body was completely contrary to accepted Greek philosophy. Thus, Paul has very little to say in this chapter regarding the soul, but much to say regarding the body.

- » This point is helpful to keep in mind when dealing with espouse such things as the AD 70 doctrine. In short, this doctrine teaches that every Biblical prophecy was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, including the resurrection of the dead. But how could the resurrection of the dead go unnoticed in history? They claim that it was a spiritual resurrection and not a bodily resurrection. But Paul's point in this chapter is that just as Christ's body was raised, so are we! I've yet to hear a good explanation of this chapter from the AD 70 perspective.
- 3. Paul is describing the resurrection of Christians, not of unbelievers.
 - » That all, the righteous and the unrighteous, are raised in the end is made in clear in John 5.28-29.
 - » However, in this passage Paul is speaking only of believers, those who are faithful to Christ. Paul does not deny that the unrighteous will be raised, he simply does not address them in this passage.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION & THE GOSPEL

1. Christ's resurrection is central to the gospel (vss. 1-4)
 - » First, note that Paul uses the language of tradition in this passage. Paul had "received" the gospel and "delivered" it to them (vs. 3), which they had "received" (vs. 1).
 - » The essentials of the gospel are clearly outlined in vss. 3-4:
 - Christ died for our sins
 - He was buried (not, bodies are buried, not souls).
 - He was raised on the third day.
 - » Paul makes it clear that this was "according to the Scriptures", showing that this was

a part of God's purpose (see Psalm 16.8ff; Acts 2.31; 26.22f).

- » This passage offers a compelling proof for the resurrection. It is generally agreed that 1Corinthians was written in the 50s and if so this may well be the first written account of Christ's resurrection. If the resurrection was a myth, this is too short a time for such a myth to develop.
- 2. Christ's resurrection was verified (vss. 5-8)
 - » The Scriptures may have foretold that the Christ would die and then rise, but it was human eyes that witnessed and confirmed that Jesus rose from the dead.
 - » Paul's listing of Jesus resurrection appearances would have a couple of implications. First, it was His appearance that convinced all of these that Jesus is the Christ. Second, when Paul says "most of whom remain until now," he is making it clear that the proof of Jesus' resurrection is still there.
 - » Finally, you will note that Paul places Christ's appointment to him (Acts 9) on par with Jesus' other post-resurrection appearances.
- 3. The effect of the gospel on their lives (vss. 9-10, 1-2,11)
 - » Jesus' resurrection changed the course of Paul's life. He went from a persecutor of the church to, by God's grace, to an apostle and laborer for God (vss. 9-10).
 - » Jesus' resurrection had changed the lives of the Corinthians. They were saved by the gospel (vs. 2), present tense indicating their salvation was ongoing process, secured by their faith in the gospel. However, they would have to "hold fast the word" which Paul had preached to them. Paul's point, while not explicitly stated here, is that failure to apply Christ's resurrection to their own future would constitute a departure from the gospel, hence they would have "believed in vain."

1 CORINTHIANS 15.12-34

The Resurrection (2)

Intro: Paul began this discussion of the resurrection by focusing on Christ's resurrection in vss. 1-11. Christ's resurrection (His body!) was at the heart of the gospel (vss. 1-4) and had been confirmed by a host of witnesses (vss. 5-8). Furthermore, Christ's resurrection had changed the course of Paul's life (vss. 9-10) and the lives of the Corinthians (vss. 1-2). All of this was a given, acknowledged by both Paul and the Corinthians. However, starting in vs. 12 the apostle turns his attention to the problem: the Corinthians' denial of their own resurrection!

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CORINTHIAN DENIAL (VSS. 12-19)

1. If no resurrection, Christ is not raised! (vss. 12-13)
 - » Note again vs. 4. His body was buried, it was His body that was raised. Paul must be speaking about the body!
 - » "To deny the general resurrection is to deny that Christ was raised. The two stand or fall together." (Robert Harkrider)
2. If Christ was not raised, preaching and faith are vain (empty) (vss. 14-17)
 - » Note that Paul says both his preaching and their faith would be vain (vs. 14)
 - » Both would be vain because they would still be in their sins (vs. 17)! "Faith in Christ is a fruitless exercise if the result is you are still in your sins." (Leon Morris)
3. No hope for something after this (18-19)
 - » Note the contrast between "fallen asleep" with "perished" in vs. 18.
 - If Christ was raised from the dead and the believer is awaiting a resurrection, then death is not something to dread. It is "falling asleep" indicating a future hope, see 1Thess 4.13-14; Phil 1.21-23.
 - But if Christ was not raised, and thus the believer is not raised, then death is

perishing!

- » And if our only hope is for this life, what a pity! (vs. 19) "Faith in Christ brings persecution and a lifestyle of self-denial of fleshly lusts, 2Tim 3:12; 1Pet 2:11. Why live this way if the hope of future glory is merely a false promise? The logic is clear and undeniable that if one believes Christ arose, he must believe in the resurrection of the dead." (Robert Harkrider)

CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED! (VSS. 20-28)

1. You will note that the word "if" is found 7 times in vss. 12-19, indicating that Paul is only entertaining a hypothetical situation. "If" the dead were not going to be raised, then Christ was not raised, and "if" Christ was not raised then there is no hope! But in this passage Paul returns to the facts of the matter: Christ WAS raised, and we will be too!
2. He is the first-fruits! (vss. 20-23)
 - » "The first fruits point us to the first sheaf of the harvest, which was brought to the temple and offered to God (Lev. 23:10f.); it consecrated the whole harvest. Moreover, first fruits imply later fruits. Both thoughts are to the point here." (Leon Morris)
 - » Paul then makes a comparison between Adam and Christ. Since Adam's sin resulted in death for all (see Genesis 3.19), then by Christ's resurrection all will be raised! Remember, the resurrection of all men is a Biblical doctrine (John 5.28-29), but in this chapter Paul is focusing on the believers, thus Paul says "all will be made alive."
3. The kingdom will be handed over (vss. 24-28)
 - » This passage stresses the completion of God's plan / Christ's work, the restoration of man to God. It is at the resurrection that all things are completely subjected to God

and the Kingdom is given to Him. But, if no resurrection, God's plan failed!

- » This passage also stresses the abolishment of death! The resurrection of the body God created would be the final defeat of death. The Corinthians had said there would be no resurrection, but Paul said there would no longer be any death!

THE RESURRECTION IS ESSENTIAL FOR CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE (VSS. 29-34)

1. "What will those do who are baptized for the dead?" (vs. 29)
 - » A tricky verse, but to take this verse as apostolic approval for vicarious baptism (such as the Mormons practice) is to ignore the rest of what the Scriptures teach, i.e. baptism was a result of an individual's faith and repentance (see Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
 - » "I believe there are at least two plausible explanations of the baptism to which Paul refers. One is that the apostle has in mind immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16). If the dead are not to be raised, why are these baptized with regard to the dead? That is, why are they baptized with a view toward their dead, if, in fact, the dead are not raised? The other view is that Paul refers to a baptism of suffering. The Bible does speak of certain ones being immersed in sufferings (cf. Macknight 268). For example, in Mark 10:38, Jesus asked James and John if they were able "to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Again, in Luke 12:50, the Lord said, "I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!" In both instances the immersion is in sufferings. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul may refer to brethren who are overwhelmed with severe trials. Why do these willingly endure suffering with regard to the dead, or in expectation the dead will rise? If the dead are not raised, their perseverance is

meaningless. This second interpretation conforms to Paul's statements about his own hardships suffered with a view toward the resurrection." (David Owen)

2. Paul & others who are in danger every hour (vss. 30-32)
 - » If there was no resurrection, why did Paul endure all that he endured? He specifically mentions his trials at Ephesus (where Paul wrote this letter). See Acts 19:23-41; 2 Cor. 1:8-11.
 - » But "if" the dead are not raised, the only sane course of action would be to live just like the rest of the world, cf. Isa 22:13.
3. A call to sobriety (33-34)
 - » They needed to consider the effect their associations were having on their theology (vs. 33). If they denied the resurrection to fit in with prevailing Greek thought then they needed to reconsider what was most important.
 - » Rather they should become sober-minded in their thinking regarding the resurrection (vs. 34). If they did so they would stop sinning. Their denial of the resurrection was itself a sin, and had probably influenced much of their sinful behavior which Paul had previously addressed. "For doctrine leads to conduct, and unsound doctrine in the end must lead to sinful behavior... The error with which Paul is concerned arises basically (as do so many others) from a lack of real knowledge of God." (Leon Morris)

1 CORINTHIANS 15.35-58

The Resurrection (3)

Intro: Having established the centrality of Christ's resurrection to the gospel message (vss. 1-11) and that Christ's resurrection stands or falls with the believer's resurrection (vss. 12-34), Paul turns his attention to the objections the Corinthians had to the resurrection. As we've previously noted most Greeks had no problem with the immortality of the soul, but in their thinking there was no future for the body. In this passage, not only does Paul insist that there is a future for the body, he shows that it is a glorious one! "Paul's insistence on bodily life should not be overlooked. Those who held to the immortality of the soul, but denied the resurrection of the body, usually looked for nothing more than a shadowy, insipid existence in Hades. It is fundamental to Paul's thought that the after-life will be infinitely more glorious than this one. This necessitates a suitable 'body' with which the life is to be lived, for without a 'body' of some kind there seems no way of allowing for individuality and self-expression. But Paul does not view this 'body' crudely. He describes it with the adjective 'spiritual' (v. 44), and he expressly differentiates it from 'flesh and blood' (v. 50)." (Leon Morris)

VSS. 35-41, TWO QUESTIONS: HOW & WHAT?

1. Vs. 35 shows that the Corinthians had two questions regarding the body's resurrection: 1) how are the dead raised and 2) with what kind of body?
 - » "It was clear to these Greek skeptics that a body quickly decomposes, and they thought to laugh the idea of resurrection out of court with their query about the body. What kind of body would arise from a heap of decomposed rubbish?" (Leon Morris)
 - » Note that in responding Paul refers to them as "fools". Recall that Jesus said the same thing of the Sadducees in Matt. 22:29.

Not only did they deny the resurrection of the body, but the immortality of the soul! "(164) But the Sadducees are those that compose the second order, and take away fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil; (165) and they say, that to act what is good, or what is evil, is at men's own choice, and that the one or the other belongs so to every one, that they may act as they please. They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades." (Josephus, Wars of the Jews. Book 2, Chapter 8.)

2. Question of "how" is answered in vs. 38: God does it!
3. Question of "what kind of body" is covered in the rest of the passage.
 - » "Far from the decomposition of the body presenting an obstacle to the resurrection, it merely prepares us for the truth that the body that is raised is much more wonderful than the body that is buried. Plant life is always on hand to teach us. We sow nothing more than just a seed, whether it be corn or anything else; this is common to all seeds. At sowing there is no indication of the plant with its stem and leaves and flowers. But they come." (Leon Morris)
 - » "Do you have the same body that you had as a baby, or is it different? Every particle that was in your body at birth has been displaced, yet it is the same body. Your individual identity has been preserved despite the dramatic changes that have occurred in your body. In a similar way, our individual identity will be preserved in the resurrection, though our bodies will undergo dramatic alterations." (David Owen)

VSS. 42-49, BEARING THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY

1. Continues discussion of “what kind of body” will be raised.
 - » Note: the same thing that is sown is raised, but in a radically different nature! (vs. 42-44)
 - » “Natural” derived from psyche. Not sarxe as in vs. 50. Idea is that the body equipped for this life is buried, but the body equipped for the spiritual life is raised.
 - » Note also that Paul does not say “it is raised a spirit” but that “it is raised a spiritual body”
 - » “This does not mean a body ‘composed of spirit’, but rather ‘which expresses spirit’, ‘which answers to the needs of spirit’.” (Leon Morris)
2. Adam - Christ Contrast (vs. 45-49)
 - » Refers back to vss. 20-22 and also makes use of Genesis 2.7.
 - » “The ‘living soul’ of Genesis 2:7 is the natural body of this passage. This corresponds with the book of Genesis itself because the same construction also occurs in 1:24 to describe animals. Hence, when Moses recorded that God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul, he was saying that the dust of the earth began to have animal life.” (Mike Willis)
 - » Perhaps it would be best to consider Christ’s resurrected body as the model for our future body. Christ’s resurrected body was different in some ways from His body before His death (consider for instance that Jesus would suddenly appear at times, see John 20.19). This “body” ascended into heaven (Acts 1.9) and apparently the same “body” with which He will return (Acts 1.11). Should we be surprised that we would be raised with the same type of “body”?
 - » “The first Adam, who became a “living psychē,” was thereby given a psychikos body at creation, a body subject to decay

and death. This Adam, who brought death into the world (vv. 21-22), thus became the representative man for all who bear his psychikos likeness. The last Adam, on the other hand, whose “spiritual (glorified) body” was given at his resurrection, not only became the representative Man for all who will bear his pneumatikos likeness, but he is himself the source of the pneumatikos life as well as the pneumatikos body.” (Gordon Fee)

- » Vs. 45: note “life-giving” is exact same phrase as “made alive” in vs. 22.
- » Vs. 47: “Paul’s sentence reads, literally: The first man of earth made of dust; The second man of heaven” (Gordon Fee) Not speaking of His incarnation body, but His resurrected body.
- » Vs. 48-49, during this life we have always born the image of Adam’s body, a body that dies. But we will also bear the image of Christ’s body, i.e. a heavenly body. See 1John 3:2; Phil. 3:21.

VSS. 50-57, THE VICTORY

1. Paul says that “flesh and blood” cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Of course they cannot, because they are corruptible. However, he does not say a body cannot, because “bodies” will inherit the kingdom of God. Our bodies will. Not flesh and blood, but changed bodies!
2. Regarding “we will not all sleep” in vs. 51, note also 2Cor 4:14; Phil 3:11 where the language shows the possibility of Paul being dead when the resurrection occurs. He did not know when it would occur.
3. With the resurrection, death is totally defeated, cf. Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14.
4. Note: our victory is not complete until the resurrection. We have been delivered from sin and the law through Christ, but death is not totally defeated until the body is raised imperishable and immortal.

VS. 58, CALL TO ACTION

1. They should be “steadfast, immovable.” No

doubt Paul has their doctrine in mind, particularly what he has just written regarding the resurrection.

2. However, theology must translate into action. Proper theology would tell them that Christ was returning, and that they would be transformed into His image. If they believed that, then it mattered what they did during this life. Thus, they should abound in the work of the Lord. Their lives could be spent doing His work with the assurance that it would not be in vain!

1 CORINTHIANS 16.1-4

The Collection

VSS. 1-4, CONTRIBUTION FOR NEEDY SAINTS

1. Why the need?
 - » Persecution (1Thess 2:14-15)
 - » Famine (Acts 11:28-30)
 - » Resources exhausted? (Acts 4:34-35)
2. Its importance to Paul
 - » Instructions regarding this given to churches of Galatia, Macedonia & Achaia. Cf. Acts 18:23; 2Cor. 8:1ff.
 - » Spiritual importance: solidarity between Jew and Gentile? Romans 15:25-27; 2Cor 9:12-14.
3. Method (Vss. 2-4)
 - » "What is significant here is the very matter-of-fact way the issue is taken up. On a weekly basis they should set money aside, as the Lord has prospered them. No pressure, no gimmicks, no emotion. A need had to be met, and the Corinthians were capable of playing a role in it. In a day of highly visible campaigns for money on every side, there is something to be said for the more consistent, purposeful approach outlined here." (Gordon Fee)
 - » "On the first day of every week" Note the frequent mentions of their assemblies in 5:4; 11:17,18,20; 14:26; etc. Taken with this verse it gives strong evidence that their assemblies took place on the first day of the week. See also Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10.
 - » "each one of you..." Answers the question of "who" was to do the giving. Both those with much and those with little have a responsibility to be charitable, Ephesians 4:28; 1Timothy 6.17-19.
 - » How much? "According to what he has prospered." "The meaning is then that one's giving should be in direct proportion to the way one prospers; it should be determined as a matter of principle, not something

done on impulse." (Leon Morris)

- » "So that no collections made when I come." Paul did not want to be cast in the position of strong-arming these disciples.
- » Others would go with Paul, he would not be handling the gift. Note Acts 20.4. The wisdom of this arrangement is apparent. It was the churches giving to the relief of the needy saints, not churches giving to Paul who would then give to the needy. While it was Paul that brought this need to their attention and instructed them on how to give, this was the work of each congregation.

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEAN FOR US TODAY?

1. Each first day of the week we take up a collection. Why is this?
2. It is not because Paul gave us a command to do so in 1Cor. 16.1-2. The context is clearly regarding a collection to address a specific need: the poor saints of Judea. (See Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25-27; 2Cor 8 - 9.)
3. We give because giving is a principle that goes all the way back to the beginning of the church, Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35.
4. The church has collective opportunities/responsibilities in evangelism and benevolence.
 - » Benevolence: Acts 4:34-35; 6:1; 11:27-30; 1Tim 5:9; etc.
 - » Preaching: 1Cor. 9:8-14; 2Cor 11:8; Phil. 1:5; 4:15-16.
5. Hence, there is a need for congregations to pool resources and funds, cf. Acts 4:34-35. How should this be done? This passage provides the pattern that we continue to follow.
6. So, in that sense the passage remains authoritative. Not because it's a command to be followed for all time, rather this passage gives a pattern for how churches should continue to

pool their resources to meet the needs it has and to carry on its work. Something doesn't have to be a direct command to be followed, for the principle involved in this passage is one to be followed.

1 CORINTHIANS 16.5-24

Closing Words

VSS. 5-9, PAUL'S PLANS.

1. Paul's plans as outlined in this passage seem to be exactly what happened. When he left Ephesus he went through Macedonia (likely visiting the saints at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) before arriving in Achaia, where he stayed approximately 3 months. See Acts 20:1-3.
2. Before Paul arrived in Achaia he wrote a second letter to the Corinthians, apparently from Macedonia. There we see Paul's anxiety as he awaited word from Titus regarding the Corinthians' reception of his first letter (see 2Cor. 2.12-13; 7.5-7).
3. Note that Paul hopes they could "send me on my way" in vs. 6. "The verb "help me on my journey" is a technical one for providing a person with food, money, and traveling companions so as to ensure a safe and successful arrival at his or her destination. It seems to be a key means of Christian hospitality in antiquity. In light of the tensions over his refusal to accept monetary support while among them (see on chap. 9), this has all the earmarks of being a peace offering on this matter. Although he has refused to take money while with them so that his gospel might be offered "free of charge," he now offers them the opportunity to assist him on his further journeys, so that in this way they, too, can have a share in his ministry." (Gordon Fee)



VS. 12, REGARDING APOLLOS.

1. Recall that one of the main issues in Corinth was division, with various parties forming around the names of specific teachers (see 1.11-12).
2. Paul's words here show the absolute harmony between the two teachers, something also seen in his earlier appraisal of their work (3.5-9).
3. It's possible that Apollos' reluctance was related to how the Corinthians had used his name for one of their divisive parties.

VSS. 13-14, EXHORTATION

1. Given the prevalence of false doctrine and practice in Corinth, culminating in false teachings regarding the resurrection (15.12), it is not surprising that the first part of Paul's exhortation appealed to them to stand firm, to act like men and be strong. The doctrine that had been given to them needed to be adhered to (4.17; 15.1-2).
2. But the exhortation concluded with an appeal that everything they do be done in love (see chapter 13).
3. Thus we see that the right things should be done, but in the right way. There should be no tension between those two concepts.

VSS. 10-11, REGARDING TIMOTHY.

1. Timothy had earlier been sent to Macedonia (Acts 19.22) and then on to Corinth (see 1Cor. 4.17).
2. Timothy would "remind you of my ways which are in Christ," (4.17), which given what we know of in Corinth could have led to hostility toward him. Thus, Paul's exhortation that they receive him in a brotherly manner.

VSS. 15-18, REGARDING HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANUS

1. This household was baptized by Paul (see 1.16). This family “did not assume a place of leadership or prominence, but one of lowly service.” (Leon Morris).
2. Such servants make good leaders, so the saints at Corinth would do well to submit to them (see also 1Thess 5.12-13).

VSS. 19-20, GREETINGS.

1. Paul had spent over 2 years at Ephesus, during which time “all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord,” (Acts 19.10). Thus, there were by this time several churches in Asia.
2. Aquila and Prisca had labored with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18.1-4), but they had travelled to Ephesus with Paul at the conclusion of the second missionary journey (Acts 18.18-21).

VSS. 21-24, PERSONAL REMARKS.

1. Paul does not define those that do “not love the Lord” (vs. 22), but given all that he has addressed in this letter it is likely that Paul has in mind those who would persist in their divisive ways and reject his teachings.
2. Maranatha: Aramaic for “Come, O Lord!”
 - » Paul had earlier exhorted the Christians to eagerly await the Lord’s coming (see 1:7).
 - » The coming of the Lord is when He will set all things right. God’s people long for that day! Rev. 22:20.
3. Finally, note that Paul concludes his letter by saying, “my love be with you all in Christ Jesus.” He had some tough things to say to these saints, but it was all said for their benefit, all said out of love (see 1Cor. 13).