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A1321 – May 26, 2013 – 1 Corinthians 16:10-12
Preacher Boys

Returning to our verse by verse, last time, which was two weeks ago in this series, we completed 1 Corinthians 16:1-9 where Paul is addressing issues from a letter the Corinthians had written to him. He began responding to these issues in 7:1 and each time he deals with another issue he introduces it with the famed words of 16:1, “Now concerning” and he cites the issue. The issue he cites here is how to take up a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. These Jewish saints were facing the most severe effects of a famine that was predicted to occur by an early prophet in the Church named Agabus and which did occur during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Claudius reigned from AD41-54 and this letter was written in AD56 so the effects of the series of famines were continuing to wreak economic havoc in Judea. And as Paul traveled and established local churches on his missionary journeys in the Mediterranean world he made the needs of the saints at Jerusalem known to the local churches and established a procedure for taking up a collection for these saints to help relieve the distress they were facing. In doing so Paul is applying two principals. First, the doctrinal principal that Gentile believers should help Jewish believers, Romans 15:25-27. Since salvation is of the Jews and we Gentiles enjoy their spiritual things then we are indebted to minister to them in material things. Many of the Corinthian believers were Gentiles, we are Gentiles and we share in the spiritual riches that come from the Jewish people. Jesus was a Jew and the gospel of John says “salvation is of the Jews.” So the logic is that if we Gentiles have shared in the spiritual things of the Jews then we are indebted to provide material things for them. So the doctrinal principal that stands behind this collection for the saints at Jerusalem in 1 Cor 16:1ff is Rom 15:25-27. In our own day, as we were working through the Book of Acts I came face to face with this principal several times and so I looked over the missionaries we supported and asked if any of these missions were specifically targeting Jewish believers in the land

of Israel. There were none. And yet there are Jewish believers called Messianic Jews in the land of Israel who are in need. Messianic Jews in the land are one of the groups that are targeted by orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews. They are not well-liked and so they have been legislated against and are prohibited from evangelizing their fellow Jews. Of course, in the eyes of orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews, if a Jew believes in Jesus as the Messiah he is a Christian and no longer a Jew. The reason is because these sects of Judaism are defining a Jew as someone who practices the religion of Judaism. But scripturally a Jew is someone who is a natural descendant of a father who is of one of the twelve tribes of Israel regardless of religious practice. So when a Jew believes in Jesus as the Messiah he doesn't become a non-Jew. He becomes what Paul calls in Romans 2:28 and 9:6, a true Jew, one who has completed his Jewishness by believing in the Jewish Messiah. Of course he is a Christian, but a true Jew is always a Christian, that's what is meant by the term Messianic Jew. So any racial descendant of Jacob who is a believer in Jesus as the Messiah is a Messianic Jew. And these Messianic Jews in the land are our brothers and sisters in Christ and they are persecuted in the land of Israel. Beyond that they don't get much financial support from evangelical Christians. Most Evangelical Christians who give to the Palestinians, they're pro-Palestinian which is so far from the Bible it's not even close. But even most Evangelical Christians who give to Israel almost always give to secular Jewish organizations in the land of Israel (e.g. Joshua Fund). These kinds of gifts are fine so far as they go but the Messianic Jews get overlooked. And yet the doctrinal principal of Rom 15:25-27 commands us to support Messianic Jews and it's that principal Paul is applying in 1 Cor 16:1ff as far as his command for how to take up the collection for those Jewish saints. So in our missions giving I researched various missions' organizations and found one that specifically targets Messianic Jews in the land of Israel. Jeff Gutterman, who is now a field representative for Ariel Ministries, specifically makes sure that the funds we now send monthly are given to Messianic Jews in the land of Israel to help disciple them and to help them evangelize and disciple other Jews in the land. The second doctrinal principal behind 1 Cor 16:1ff is simply helping other saints in other places who are facing economic hardship, Gal 6:9. The passage says that "while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." The end of that verse points up the Christian's responsibility to especially help fellow believers. Those believers may be at Fredericksburg Bible Church or they may be in Timbuktu. It makes no

difference. As long as those believers proclaim a clear gospel and pure teaching of the word then we want to make sure we support those believers in times of need. And we do engage in this kind of helping here through the benevolence fund for those who are in need within our congregation and have been for years and we have also engaged in supplying financial needs for believers outside our congregation within the last year or so. There are believers who face difficult times and are in great need and are in doctrinal agreement with our church so we reach out to help supply their material needs.

So those two principles are behind 1 Cor 16:1ff, giving materially to Jewish believers because we Gentiles share in a Jewish salvation and giving while we have the opportunity to those who are of the household of the faith. Now the procedure Paul puts forth in vv 1ff for how to collect monies to give to Messianic Jews in the 1st century was standard operating procedure for all the churches Paul planted. He says in verse 1, “as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.” In other words, you don’t need to develop some novel procedure that will distinguish you from other churches, just do what every other church does. Creating novel practices is a sign of arrogance and so they should humble themselves and just go with the flow. Verse 2 is the procedure, “On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. 3When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; 4and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.” Basically Paul’s principal of giving is simple: set a little aside each week so when I come to make collections you don’t have to make a large withdrawal from your bank account. Whatever procedure the Corinthian’s were trying to implement was an evasion of this principal and was not financially responsible. In any case, when Paul arrived he would make the collection and send a letter with whomever was approved to go up to Jerusalem on behalf of the church and if it was fitting Paul would go with them.

Then in verse 5 Paul dispelled some common notions about the will of God and human planning. Paul obviously planned even though many Christians argue that we should not plan citing James 4. The problem with citing James 4 is that the planning in James 4 is planning in such a way that we don’t permit God into the equation; just dogmatically stating our plans and going about trying to fulfill our plans without taking account of the fact that God is

sovereign over our plans and His plans can trump our plans. That kind of planning is sinful. But planning when we figure God into the equation and recognizing that God can disrupt our plans is not sinful, it's biblical. And so plan but make a plan that includes God's intervention into the plan and that amounts to saying something along the lines of "I am planning to do this and this and this, if the Lord permits." You see this is the way Paul planned in verse 5, "But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; 6and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. 7For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits." Paul clearly had a plan but his plan was subject to the Lord's permission. And I suggest to you that you make plans but just make sure they are subject to the Lord's permission and if something goes wrong with the plan just adapt and change the plan, don't fight it tooth and claw, relax, adapt and see what the Lord has in store for you that day and the next. No matter what He's trying to teach you He is in control not you and you have to be malleable; you shouldn't harden up and try to force your way, you should be willing to adjust to His plan and if you do I assure you your life will be much more productive and enjoyable. You'll also be able to see God's invisible hand working in your life and the lives of others and that is always a marvelous thing to watch. Verse 8, more of Paul's plan, "But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; 9for" and verse 9 really blows some people's theories on deciphering the will of God. "for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." Usually Christians say that if there are adversaries God must be closing the door but Paul said it indicated a wide door for effective service. Why, if things were hard, did Paul conclude that his ministry was effective? Because when your ministry gets resistance it means Satan doesn't like what you're doing. Satan was getting carpet bombed at Ephesus and so Satan was raising up adversaries against Paul and from that Paul concluded, "Hey, my bombs are hitting key targets, I've got a wide open door for effective ministry so I'm sticking around for a while to watch the harvest." So contrary to many American Christians who think the will of God is always the easy way out, Paul recognized hard times as an indication that the preaching of the word was knocking Satan out of a region. This is consistent with what Jesus said in John 16:33, "In the world you have tribulation," adversity, "but take courage; I have overcome the world." He was speaking to the apostles when He said that, and of course, the adversity He was saying they would have was adversity due to preaching the

word of God. So if we don't have adversity then we probably aren't preaching the word of God and therefore Satan isn't threatened by us. My instruction to you is to preach the word of God humbly and boldly expecting that some people are going to hate you for it but you just keep preaching it. The word of God does not make for a calm environment, it's invasive, it gets down to the nitty gritty of who we are and our rebellion against God and naturally it divides people. Put another way, the word of God does not return void, it gets a positive or a negative response. That should be expected so don't soft pedal it. Preach it without shame and in all its awesome power and watch it part people like God parted the Red Sea. People think that's wrong but that's right. That's what God wants; His word to be preached with authority so that people hear a clear gospel that divides. Every one of us has been given that ministry. 2 Cor 5:17-21, we are ambassadors for Christ, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation and we are to go and to proclaim this message. So go do it and if people don't like it why do you care? Are you really that concerned with what people think? If you're doing what's right and you are telling them the truth and you are telling them in love then what does it matter what they think? Are you just trying to preserve a friendship or your reputation with men? What about God? What does He think? Are you here to please God or please men? Jesus came to please His Father only and always. It didn't matter what people thought. And when He died He died alone on a cross, all the apostles left, they all scattered like a bunch of cockroaches. They didn't stand by His side. They denied they even knew Him and they left Him. But God was pleased with Him and God raised Him. So who cares if you're all alone in the end, if you please God in what you do, so be it. One man and God is always a majority. Paul knew that and Paul preached the word at Ephesus and Paul made so many enemies that he said, I'm not stopping, I'm knocking Satan out with the word of God and so I'm staying, it's a wide open door of ministry. That's the exposition of 1 Cor 16:1-9, today we come to verse 10.

Here we meet Timothy again. We met Timothy earlier in 1 Cor 4 so turn back to 1 Cor 4:17. The context in chapter 4 was Paul's desire for the Corinthians to imitate him, to fashion their lives after his life but they were not doing this. They were carnal. Paul was their spiritual father and yet they were not spiritual children but carnal. So because of this and the fact that Paul couldn't come to them Paul says in verse 17, "For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in

every church.” Timothy was a spiritual child and so Paul sent Timothy to remind them of what it looks like to be spiritual. Timothy was an excellent imitator of the apostle Paul, a ‘little apostle Paul’ if you will. And this shows you how important it is to have the spiritual life modeled for you. Paul knew that carnal believers need to see spiritual believers and model their lives after them. So Paul sent them Timothy. The Greek text of verse 17 is an aorist tense; he had already sent Timothy before he sent this letter he was writing.

So Paul is sending two things to the Corinthians. First, Timothy. Timothy would be a living example of the spiritual life. Second, this letter. The letter would explain in words the spiritual life Timothy was exemplifying. Always one’s words and one’s example must go together to be effective. Think about it, if someone tells you to do something over and over but they do the opposite after a while you aren’t going to listen to them anymore. You see right through them and you naturally lose respect for them. But if someone does what they say you conclude they have integrity and you naturally respect them. So be like Paul and Timothy and do what you say and say what you do. Then over time people will give you respect but until then you can forget it. People need a track record. God even gives us a track record of His integrity in the Scriptures and says, now trust Me. We ought to follow His example and give a solid track record to others so they can trust and respect us. Paul did, Paul was sending them two things; Timothy to be a living example (the works) and the letter to be a written instruction (the words). The hope was that the two together would bring them to repent of their carnal ways and become spiritual believers.

Now if we return to 1 Cor 16:10 we find that though Timothy had already been sent to Corinth his arrival there was not certain. Paul says, **if Timothy comes** and it’s a 3rd class condition, meaning it’s 50-50, maybe he’ll come, maybe he won’t. The plan was for Timothy to come but whose plans may trump Timothy’s plans? God. So Timothy may or may not make it and Timothy will just have to deal with it. So this is a continuation of the doctrine of planning and the fact that ultimately history is up to God, not man. God controls whatsoever comes to pass, not man. So **if Timothy comes**, third class condition, maybe he will, maybe he won’t, but if he does, **see that he is with you without cause to be afraid**. The Greek says, “see to it that he has no fear because of you.” We gather from other letters in the NT that

Timothy was kind of timid. But apparently the Corinthian's were also prone to using intimidation tactics, they were given to bullying. This was another sin pattern at Corinth and Timothy was the perfect target since he was timid and young. Timothy was probably only in his mid to late 20's. He'd been a disciple of Paul's for about five years by this time and Paul looked at him as a mature believer. A believer can grow to maturity in less than five years. It just takes discipling, intense training in the word of God. So Timothy was mature or Paul wouldn't send him but he was a young, timid man and so they might look down on him and try to intimidate him because of his youth.

The reason they should not try to intimidate him is stated at the end of the verse, **for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am.** So to disdain Timothy would be to disdain **the Lord's work.** A 25 year old can do **the Lord's work.** When I came here I was 30 and some of you thought I was 14. Actually Charles Spurgeon was only 17 when he began preaching the word of God and they called him 'the boy preacher.'" Some boys can preach, if they've been gifted by God and if they're skilled with the text. We all receive a spiritual gift or gifts at the moment of spiritual birth, some of these gifts, like teaching, have to be developed so they can be used skillfully. So it's feasible that "boy preachers" come along every now and then. I've heard of men in our own day that started devouring commentaries at age 13-14. It seems there were more in the past. 100 years ago most college men learned Latin, those who were pursuing the queen of the sciences, theology, learned Greek and Hebrew, and that, by their late teens. The reason is because they had more important things on their mind than dating girls and shooting squirrels. They were called to do **the Lord's work** and they knew it by age 12 or 13 and they started pursuing it for the glory of God very early. Today we're just glad if they graduate. The standards have dropped radically. They had very high standards then and as a consequence they had "boy preachers. But then as now there has been a tendency to intimidate and discourage 'boy preachers.' And yet if God can speak through Balaam's ass then I bet He can speak through a 'boy preacher. And yet people show they don't believe God spoke through an ass because they still try to intimidate preacher boys who know what they are talking about. And by intimidating them they are hindering **the Lord's work.** And if I were hindering **the Lord's work** I would get out of the way. You shouldn't despise a young "preacher boy" *if* he is gifted and skilled in handling the word. I wasn't even a 17 year old preacher boy when I came, I was 30, but Fred told me that he told you not to

look down on me because of my youth. He specifically said that from this pulpit. And yet I know some around here didn't follow his advice and that is a pity because this church is the strongest Bible teaching in Fredericksburg, TX, and it's one of the strongest in the entire State of Texas, and I would venture to say it's one of the strongest Bible teaching churches in the entire world. And it's a pity the whole town isn't here to hear the word of God taught. But what can I do except teach the word? What can I do except be ready in season and out of season? What can I do except preach the word in love? What can I do but live the word? That's what Paul did, that's what Timothy did, they had different personalities but they both taught and lived the word. And that's what I do.

And so Paul sent Timothy to remind the Corinthians of the word and to be a living example of the word, to try to get them to be spiritual instead of carnal. But it was unknown at the time of verse 10 whether he would make it or not. If we were to jump ahead into 2 Corinthians we would discover that he did make it (2 Cor 1:19). And while he was there he preached Christ Jesus and Him crucified among them just as Paul had. But his preaching did not bring about repentance. The Corinthians remained carnal until Paul wrote another letter, uncaptured in the canon of Scripture, a letter Paul alluded to in 2 Cor 7:8-10 that brought much sorrow, not worldly sorrow but godly sorrow that did lead to repentance. So while Timothy's coming to them will not bring them to repentance and neither will the letter of 1 Corinthians, yet another letter afterwards which has not been captured in the canon of Scripture will bring them to repentance and get them back on the path to true spirituality. The preacher boy was great but his ministry wasn't successful because the people rejected the preacher boy.

In any case, before all this unfolds, Paul indicates that Timothy may come and if he arrives, they should not intimidate him because he is doing the Lord's work. Further, verse 11, **let no one despise him.** To despise in the Greek means "to look down on, to treat one without merit or worth." They should not treat Timothy this way even though he may be just a young preacher boy. But rather, middle of verse 11, **send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.** The implication is that if they did not **send him on his way in peace** then he would have to stay behind and this would delay his return to Paul. Paul

had sent him out along with other brethren and he expected their return soon, sometime before Pentecost when he was leaving himself.

Now we're not told the names of these **brethren** but in Acts 19:22 Paul mentions Timothy going forth with Erastus and I assume there were others because Paul says brethren, plural, but Timothy was clearly the leader of the group even though he was a youngster, 25'ish. So they should receive Timothy and send him on his way **in peace**, a state of harmony and well-being; any other reception would be intolerable and would delay Timothy's return to Paul.

Now verse 12 and this is actually a break because the words **But concerning** in the Greek are "Now concerning..." just like in verse 1 and these words are used by Paul to indicate a shift in topic to address something the Corinthian's wrote in their letter to Paul. Apparently they had asked **Apollos** to come to them. If you turn back to 1 Cor 1:11 you will recall there were quarrels among them over certain Bible teachers and one of the favorites at Corinth was Apollos, apparently because he was so eloquent and the Greeks marveled at eloquence. "Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." The last group there being the super-spiritual types, "Oh, we just follow Jesus." "Oh really, why don't you get off your spiritual high-horse." The rest were on their own kind of horse, some claimed adherence to Paul, others Apollos and still others Cephas, and they pitted one against the other and argued among themselves who was the best teacher. They were like kindergarteners. And some of these kindergarteners whose favorite teacher was Apollos said, "Can Apollos come back, we like the bottles Apollos feeds us."

But if we swing back to 1 Cor 16:12 we find that Apollos didn't want to come feed them a bottle at that time even though Paul encouraged him to go. **Now concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity.** It's interesting that Paul does three things in this verse to shut down these divisions at Corinth between the Apollos lovers and the Paul lovers. First, he refers to **Apollos** as **our brother** and not "their brother." He lumps himself in along with Apollos because Paul is trying to say we are all brothers in Christ, we are all a unit

and not a division. So get over your kindergarten behavior. Second, he says **I encouraged him greatly to come to you**. You can see from that Paul wasn't jealous for the Apollos lovers affections; he just wanted the word of God taught to them and them to grow up spiritually. He could care less if it was him or Apollos or Cephas or anyone else for that matter that could teach the word of God. So his encouragement of Apollos to go visit the Corinthians indicated that he did not see himself in competition with Apollos for the Corinthian's affections. Third, **Apollos** didn't have any **desire** whatsoever to **come** to them at that time. So their favorite teacher didn't want to come see them at that time. This would further deflate those who were so enamored with Apollos and it shows the proper attitude of a Bible teacher. Apollos was not trying to be well-liked by everyone. And what we're talking about here is approbation lust. Some pastors that shouldn't be pastors are just trying to get everyone's praise and admiration; get everyone's approval so they can feel good about themselves. Apollos could care less about their approval. Apollos gets his approval from God and that's the focus I try to maintain as your pastor, to not worry about whether you approve of me or not but simply to live my life before the Lord in good conscience and preach the word. How you feel about is supposed to be irrelevant to me. As long as I am conscious of nothing against myself that I need to confess I leave my final examination up to the Lord because He knows my heart. So by three ways Paul has tried to deflate the Apollos fans; first, referring to Apollos as **our brother**, an expression of unity, second, Paul's encouraging Apollos to come to them, an expression that shows Paul wasn't jealous of Apollos and third, Apollos' lack of desire to come to them, an expression that shows he's not into approbation lust.

Now the last expression of verse 12 gives some indication of why Apollos did not have any desire to come to them at that time. **But he will come when he has opportunity**. The Greek word **opportunity** means "when a more favorable time presents itself." Apparently he was busy in ministry at Ephesus with Paul and so his time was best spent there continuing in that ministry. Recall verse 9 where Paul said there was a wide door for effective ministry open at Ephesus and there were many adversaries. Apollos was with him handling many ministry opportunities so Corinth would have to wait for another time. Nevertheless, he did intend to come to them after all when a better time presented itself.

What can we learn from these verses? First of all, we shouldn't look down on "preacher boys" who are doing the Lord's work. Timothy was a preacher boy and he was skilled with the text. So if a preacher boy is skilled in using the text then who are we to look down on them? If God can speak through an ass then maybe, just maybe he can speak through a preacher boy! Second, we should imitate those who are living examples of the text. Timothy was a living example of Paul because Paul was following God's word. Ultimately we are not imitating a chain of men that go back to Christ and the apostles, we are imitating the men who follow the word of God that came from Christ and the apostles. Paul knew the word and Paul followed it so imitate Paul. Timothy knew it and Timothy followed it so imitate Timothy. I am endeavoring to know it and follow it so imitate me. I have no problem saying imitate me because I'm imitating the text and there are men that I imitate, men who know the text and those are the men I turn to as living examples of the faith. Third, avoid the sin of approbation lust. Apollos didn't care what the Corinthian's thought. And he was not itching to go back so he could get their approval. It doesn't matter what everyone else thinks if you are following the text and ministering God's word. You are not here to please every Tom, Dick and Harry. You are here to please the Lord and as long as you do everything in good conscience and for the glory of God then you have nothing to worry about, the only one who examines you is the Lord. If, of course, you are out of line scripturally and a brother or sister in Christ confronts you about it, then yes, you need to get back on track, confess your sin, be restored to fellowship and walk with the Lord. But if you are doing all those things then you have nothing to be concerned about, just keep walking in fellowship and ministering the word.

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