
Last time in 1 Corinthians 16:

As Paul began to conclude his letter, we read of him submitting himself, and "all of his intentions and future plans" to the Lord's will.

"But I trust to tarry awhile with you, if the Lord permit"

Remember that our lives are not to be "my will be done, but thine, O Lord, thy will be done in my life today". And yet, so often, we speak in absolutes, like gods of our own lives, YES, I will be there.

Brethren, our mouths speak for our hearts; therefore, we must first (in our hearts) submit ourselves to the will of the Lord; and then, when WE SAY, "if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that"; ONLY THEN, will our words be words of faith and practice!

Paul wrote of a great and effectual gospel door that God had opened in Ephesus, Acts 19:

"And the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed"

There were many in Ephesus who believed the gospel! BUT this great open door ALSO provoked many adversaries. Open gospel doors may not look the way we might like them to look. And finally, there was Paul instructions to the church to receive Timothy, but also that Apollos would NOT be coming to Corinth at this time. 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Knowing that the church at Corinth would be subjected to attacks from enemies of Christ:

Paul, wrote these final commands in the language of a military combatant commander, charging and encouraging his soldiers (as they readied themselves for battle) to be in a constant state of vigilance and watchfulness against enemies without and enemies within.

We already know that there were false teachers (in the church) who were spreading false teachings about the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:12: "How say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead"

Paul warned the saints in (C15), if Christ be not raised from the dead, your faith is vain! The "enemies" of your soul are going to strike hardest at the object of your faith to corrupt your minds and turn you away from Christ and the truth of the gospel!

Knowing your enemies helps you to understand Paul's military type commands to the church. The battlefield is

your mind, the artillery and weapons of your enemies are false teachings and Satan's lies!

2 Corinthians 11:1-4, John 5:39-44

Paul's fears, they would easily be swayed away from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Hence, his command for them to:

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong"

These are four (4) spiritual imperatives (military type commands) for each of us to live by as good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

"Watch ye": This "watching" is the same word used to describe our vigilance and expectation of our Lord's return! Cp. Matthew 24:42-44

Be awake, listening, always ready, and vigilant, because the church has many adversaries who will attack under their king: 1 Peter 5:8.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"

Watchfulness and vigilance are deliberate and defensive acts of our minds! BUT: TOWARD WHAT is our watchfulness and vigilance to be directed? In context, false teachers, those that are preaching another Jesus and teaching another gospel.

This is why it is SO IMPORTANT (for each of us a Christians) to be rooted and grounded upon Christ! For how can we be WATCHFUL and VIGILANT against false teachers and false doctrines if we don't know what we believe about Jesus Christ and the gospel?

The god of this world wants you to be biblically ignorant, prone to being tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. He wants to lull you to sleep and to be watchful of nothing!

Beloved, if you would be effectively WATCHFUL against being deceived, if you would be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, you must be well-trained, well-studied in the Holy Scriptures, able to detect and expose false doctrines and the devil's lies. (Acts 17:11 ~ Bereans)

2 Timothy 2:15-18, 2:22-25, 4:1-5, Titus 1:9-11

2nd Command: "Stand fast, (or Stand firm) in the faith"; in the faith meaning, in the truth and gospel of Christ, who is the object of your faith!

"Stand Fast": Meaning to (continue to be) rock solid, unshakeable, and unmovable; and to persevere and to be committed to Christ and the gospel!

"In the faith": Meaning in the truth and object of your faith which is Jesus Christ! Your faith, Christian MUST have an object, the object of your faith MUST be the Person of Jesus Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ!

You, Christian, are called to "stand fast"; TO HOLD YOUR GROUND in Christ, never retreat from it. It is noteworthy that Paul just concluded teaching the Church at Corinth the truth of the resurrection. (15:58): He wrote "Be ye steadfast and unmovable" in the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the truth of the resurrection of the saints! Stand firm in it!

1 Corinthian 15:1, Philippians 1:27, 4:1, Psalm 125:1

Beloved, one of the identifying characteristics of EVERY Christian is, THEY "stand fast" in the faith of Jesus Christ! Like "watching", to stand fast in the faith is an imperative command and must be a deliberate act of YOUR faith in Christ!

3rd Command: "Quit you like men, be strong"!

In these final (2) commands, Paul encouraged the hearts of the saints at Corinth like a combatant commander to his soldiers before a great battle.

He gave them (2) commands, "quit you like men and be strong"; take courage, be valiant, brave, and spiritually strong in the Lord for what is before you!

Deuteronomy 31:1-8, Joshua 10:1-4, 24-26

Christian, because you have bowed the knee to Jesus, because you serve Him, you will be hated by the world; like the Gibeonites, they were hated by the kings of Canaan because they bowed to Joshua and became his servants! John 15:18-21.

1 John 4:5: "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"

There is so much hatred, anger, and resistance against Christ, against the church, and against Christians in the world; beloved, you have need of a strength, not your own to persevere through it all!

If you live an open, public, devoted Christian life in the world, if you're a faithful witness for Christ, (if you identify with Joshua), you will experience resistance and hatred in the world, and you will be attacked because you no longer serve the world or the god of this world, but you serve the Lord Jesus Christ! THIS IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!

2 Timothy 3:12, Acts 14:19-22

Paul knew the god of this world and the enemies of Christ would attack the saints at Corinth; these are the same enemies that will come at us in our day. Paul therefore encouraged the saints at Corinth to be courageous, brave, and strong in Christ!

Ephesians 6:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 4:13

Paul's final command to the Church at Corinth:

1 Corinthians 16:14: "Let all your things be done with charity"

There's nothing worse than "a church" where there is no love!

The church at Corinth needed this final command and exhortation to do everything with "charity or love"; to treat each other with "charity or love". THIS is a present, imperative command which means agape love is to constantly be practiced by each of us in our fellowship, in our gathering!

Agape love SHOULD be obvious in your Christian Character, agape love should be very obvious in our church gathering brethren!

If you've been with us through this study, you know that the Church at Corinth was wanting and greatly lacked agape love!
John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this (love) shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"

1 John 3:7-11, 4:20-21

(4) Military Commands, (1) Command to "let all things be done with charity": 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

The final command, NOT written here, God commands all men everywhere to repent!