

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. We come now to the last message in our study of 1 Corinthians
2. These two years have been rich as we have studied this letter together
3. As we come to a close, we are going to hear a final word to the Corinthians
4. This final word reveals how he really felt about the church
5. Everything he did was because of his love for the church
6. The same should be true for us
7. Our love for Christ must always be manifested with His people
8. Some people ask, "Why go to church?"
9. There are several answers to that question
10. One is to worship God
11. Another is to study His word
12. Another is for Christian fellowship
13. Hebrews 10:23-25 says, "(23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

14. Being around other believers helps us to "hope without wavering" reminding us that "He who promised is faithful"
15. Stimulating "one another to love and good deeds" is also essential
16. Those who forsake the assembly miss these two ministries to one another
17. They also miss the encouragement
18. We have to be reminded that the day of the Lord's return is "drawing near"
19. Hope, love, good deeds, and encouragement are just a few of the reasons why we go to church
20. And yes, the teaching of God's Word and the worship that flows from it
21. I love the church for these reasons and you should too
22. When I'm with you, I don't want to be anywhere else
23. I'm not interested in visiting another church because this is my church like it's your church
24. And this is the place where God has put me and you to minister to one another
25. You can hear Paul's love for the church in these final words
26. They begin in verse 15 and run to the end, verse 24
27. Listen as I read verses 15-24:
28. (15) Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), (16) that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. (17) I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. (18) For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such

men. (19) The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. (20) All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. (21) The greeting is in my own hand—Paul. (22) If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha. (23) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. (24) My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

29. In these final words, Paul gives 4 final exhortations

30. Let's look at them now

31. The first is found in verses 15-16

32. Paul wanted the Corinthians to...

## **LESSON**

### **I. SUBMIT TO THOSE WHO SERVE IN MINISTRY (vv.15-16)**

Listen again to verses 15-16: "(15) Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), (16) that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors."

First Paul says...

1. Remember the first converts to Achaia (v.15)
  1. "you know the household of Stephanas"
  2. Paul mentions in 1:16 baptizing the household of Staphanas
  3. His "household" would have included his family, servants and slaves
  4. Paul refers to them as "the first fruits"
    1. "First fruits" were the part of the crop that was planted first, then ripened and harvested first

2. This was a sign to the farmer that the remainder of the crop would also soon be ready to harvest
3. The conversion of the household of Staphanas was a sign that God was ready to reap an even greater harvest of souls in Corinth and the rest of Achaia
4. The church at Corinth was part of that harvest
5. Paul also wanted them to...

## 2. Remember their devotion to serving the saints (v.16)

### 1. He says, "They have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints"

1. The word "devoted" or the KJV as "addicted" (tasso) means to "set in order"
2. They had set themselves in order for ministry to the saints
3. This was entirely their initiative
4. They did not wait to be appointed by the church
5. They spontaneously assigned themselves to help meet any need they saw among the saints
6. Their service was self-motivated and self-assigned

### 2. The word "ministry" (diakonia) means "service"

1. This is where we get the English word "deacon" (1 Tim.3:8-13)
2. The term originally meant to "serve tables" (Acts 6:2)
3. Later it referred to any service to or for the church
4. The term has to do with "humble, submissive, personal service, not simply with an office or a particular function." (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New

Testament Commentary.)

5. When you "serve the saints" you are doing the work of a deacon
6. Some of you "serve the saints" in various ways whether it helping with the offering, passing out bulletins, counting the offering, cleaning or making repairs
7. Some help in other ways with food, cards, phone calls, taking people places
8. These are just some of the ways you have been "serving the saints"
9. So Paul says to those who are being served, "be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors."
10. Instead of being lifted up with pride, let them help you. They are laboring for Jesus.
11. In verses 17-18, Paul addresses others who help and tells the Corinthians to...

## **II. REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO PICK UP WHERE OTHERS LACK (vv.17-18)**

Paul says, "(17) I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. (18) For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men."

The Corinthians were being ministered to by "the household of Staphanas" but so was Paul

He said, "I rejoice over"

1. The coming of other ministers (v.17)
  1. Staphanas (mentioned in verse 16)

## 2. Fortunatus and Achaicus

1. They may have belonged to the household of Staphanas
2. Their names are Latin
3. Lenski says based on their Latin names "rests the supposition that they were either slaves or freedmen." (Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second*)
4. Forty years later Clement of Rome writes to the church at Corinth he mentions a certain Fortunatus. This man was a presbyter in the Corinthian church and was installed as such by the apostles, Zahn, *Introduction*, I, 269. He may be the same Fortunatus that is mentioned in this letter, but he would necessarily have been rather young when Paul wrote. (Lenski)
5. Nothing else is known about Achaicus
6. All three came to Ephesus from Corinth and to be with him
  1. They genuinely befriended Paul by being with him, by encouraging him, and by identifying with His ministry (MacArthur)
  2. This "refreshed" Paul's spirit
  3. They literally "supplied what was lacking on your part"
  4. What was "lacking on your part" was "you" (the Corinthians)
  5. This phrase in Greek is an objective genitive and it states this lack
  6. It's the lack of you, the Corinthians themselves
  7. Paul would like to have the Corinthians where he can talk to them instead of being obliged to write to

them from a distance. (Lenski)

8. This lack the three messengers from Corinth "filled" for Paul, ἀνεπλήρωσαν, literally, "filled up" like a vessel that is otherwise not full enough. (Lenski)
9. Paul can talk with them, ask them many things about the Corinthians, and hear all that they had to communicate. (Lenski)
10. That's good but having them in person would have been better
11. When they returned back to Corinth, Paul wanted them to...

## 2. Acknowledge such men (v.18b)

The apostle here designs, evidently, that the Corinthians should receive them kindly on their return, and regard with deference and respect the counsel which they might offer, and the message which they might bear from him. (Barnes, Albert. [\*Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians\*](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)

John Gill adds, "Know them, have an affection for them, shew respect to them, highly esteem of them for their works' sake." (Gill, John. [\*An Exposition of the New Testament\*](#). Vol. 2. London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809. Print. The Baptist Commentary Series.)

1. Paul told the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus "in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard" (Phil.2:29).
2. He told the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction."

## 3. Submit, remember and...

### III. REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT MINISTERING ALONE (vv.19-22)

Paul says in verses 19-22, "(19) The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. (20) All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. (21) The greeting is in my own hand—Paul. (22) If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha."

5 times he uses the word aspazomai (greet, greeting) in verse 19-21

Those churches were honestly concerned for their fellow believers in Corinth, and their leaders had asked Paul to greet them when he had opportunity. Most of those involved were strangers to each other, but the love expressed was no less genuine because of that. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

So Paul writes...

1. The church in Asia greets you (v.19a)
2. Aquila and Prisca greet you (v.19b)
3. The church in their house greets you (v.19c)
4. All the brethren greet you (v.20)
5. Following these formal greetings Paul says in verse 20 to return the affection by having godly affection for one another (v.20)
  1. "Greet one another with a holy kiss" is speaking of the genuine and spontaneous expression of brotherly or sisterly love
  2. A warm, affectionate handshake or an arm around the shoulder can express the same affection
  3. In most of the church today the danger is in showing too little affection rather than too much
  4. One of the dangers of large churches is that they easily allow strangers to remain strangers



5. A shy person is often not noticed, and some Christians, unfortunately, do not *want* to get involved in the fellowship
  6. But where there is genuine love, Christians will find ways to make friends with strangers and to show affection to Christian brothers and sisters (MacArthur)
6. Paul adds his own greeting (v.21)
1. "The greeting is in my own hand - Paul"
  2. The main part of this letter was dictated to a scribe
  3. But it was signed in his own hand and finished by himself
  4. Paul closes in verses 22-24 in two was with a stern warning and an affirmation of love
  5. He begins by saying...

#### IV. LOVE JESUS OR BE ACCURSED (vv.22-24)

Paul says, "(22) If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha. (23) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. (24) My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

1. Those who refuse Christ are accursed (anathema) (v.22)

If a person does not **love the Lord** with tender affection, then he obviously has no supreme love for Him, and thus no part in Him at all. Such a person "does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God," and should not be received into Christian fellowship (2 John 9–10). He should not even be greeted, because to do is to participate "in his evil deeds" (v. 11). He should be considered **accursed** (*anathema*), devoted to destruction. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

2. Paul wants them removed from the church (v.22)

1. "Maranatha" Aramaic term meaning "Our Lord, come"
2. Paul appeals to the Lord to come and take away the accursed, the false Christians, before they cause more harm to the church
3. Grace and love are for those who love the Lord (vv.23-24)  
"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

## **CONCLUSION**

1. This is Paul's final message to the church at Corinth
2. At this time, there was no desire to write a 3rd letter
3. That would be done at another time
4. We can learn a lot from this letter but for today let's learn that our role is to submit, rejoice, remember, and love Jesus!
5. Do you love Jesus?
6. We heard some strong words in verse 22, "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha."
7. That's the question you need to ask yourself today
8. So, do you love the Lord?
9. Matthew 22:37 says, "And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."
10. That's the only way the Lord will accept you
11. Repent and let him give you this kind of heart today
12. Let's pray