

A CHALLENGE TO ARMS AND A CHALLENGE TO LOVE

Exhortations and Salutations...1 Corinthians 16:13-21

Exhortation - to incite by words or advice; to advise or warn in order to encourage.

Salutation - to address with expressions of kind wishes, courtesy, and recognition.

1 Corinthians 16:13-21, "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. 14 Do everything in love. 15 You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, 16 to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. 17 I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition. 19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. 20 All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand."

- **A Challenge to Arms for the Christian!**
- **A Challenge to Focus on Love...Loving God, Loving each other, and Loving the Word.**
- **A Challenge to Greet...Motivate...and Appreciate Each Other!**

A Challenge to Arms...And a Challenge to Love.

Paul begins with a series of five (5) imperatives.

The first four (4) have a military background...Like a Commander's or General's Orders to His Soldiers.

1. Be Alert...Be On Guard...Watch!

No Commandment Appears More Frequently in the New Testament Than to "Watch"!

- **Watchfulness Should Be the Constant attitude of the Christian Life.**
 - Paul says "It is full time to wake from your sleep!" Romans 13:11
 - "Be watchful, stand firm in your faith." 1 Corinthians 16:13
- **The Christian Must Be on the Watch Against the Wiles of the Devil. 1 Peter 5:8**
 - Watch for the continual attack of Satan
- **The Christian Must Be on the Watch Against Temptation. "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation." Jesus. Matthew 26:41**
- **Christians Need to Be on the Watch for the Coming of the Lord.**
 - "Watch therefore, for you do not know what day your Lord is coming." Jesus , Matthew 24:42
 - "What I say to you, I say to all...Watch!" Mark 13:37
 - "Let us not sleep as others do. Let us keep awake and be sober" 1 Thess. 5:6.
 - "Every person should live every day as if it was his last!
- **The Christian Must Be on the Watch Against False Teachers. Acts 20:29-31 "Grievous wolves will invade the flock from outside and inside men will speak perverse things...therefore, watch!"**
- **As the Christian Must Watch for Jesus Christ, Let Us Not Forget that Jesus Christ is Watching Us!**
"I have not found your works perfect" says the Risen Christ, "In the sight of my God!"
 - Christ is looking for something from us. (Our love, loyalty and service)
 - The things a man must do lies in his hands...He must make the decision to do the works of Christ!

**From Every One of Us Jesus Christ is Looking for Something; and
for Every One of Us There is Something to Do.**

Are you a willing vessel...He's watching to see what you decide!

2. Stand Fast (Firm) in the Faith!

When under attack...a soldier does not run! He might retreat until a better timing for being on the offensive, but he will never run. Another way of putting it..."When Under Attack, Stand firm in the faith, and yield not an inch."

"Stand firm in the faith" means understanding that the impossible is possible...with God on our side.

Let's talk a little bit about the impossible becoming possible.

The Word says:

- **"For Nothing is Impossible with God!" (Luke 1:37).**
Nothing means zero; not anything; that which does not exist; absence of something; in no degree; not at all.
- **"...All things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27)**
All means everything; as much as possible; the whole number or sum of; beyond all doubt; wholly or completely.
- **"...With God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)**
With God = to be on His side; having His promises; one of His own; wrapped in his arms and never let go!
- **"...It impossible for God to lie...an unchangeable truth." (Hebrews 6:18b)...Read Hebrews 6:13-20)**
Lie is the opposite of truth...If God doesn't lie, then He is the truthful one who sent "the truth."
- **"And without faith it is impossible to please God...." (Hebrews 11:6a)**
Faith = fidelity to one's promise; trust; allegiance to duty; loyalty; complete confidence in someone or something.
- **"...Everything is possible for him who believes." (Mark 9:23)**
Everything = a lot; a bunch; a bunch to the fullest; running over without an end; every object, fact, whatever; all that pertains to the subject considered. (Some of the definition is my own!)
- **"Nothing will be impossible for you...when you have faith..." (Matthew 17:20)**

Paul was a believer in the truth...He knew that faith in a trustworthy God and a risen Jesus was all that mattered. His main thrust of his message, "By grace are you saved, through faith, not of works lest any man should boast." What is faith...and what

makes impossibilities possibilities? God's Word in us! "...Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus (John 20:29)

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" Luke 17:5...

This is our prayer...as it was Paul's desire for the Church at Corinth..."Lord, please increase our faith so that your will may be done through us!"

3. Be Men of Courage

- Courage is not battling the enemy by yourself.
- Courage is gained by depending on the Lord to help you in time of trouble.
- It is humbling yourself before the Lord and admitting that you can't make it in life without help from above.

When we watch...when we are faithful...we will be confident enough to have courage in the face of the enemy. The enemy is Satan...and all his angels of darkness...all their schemes to discourage...to steal our joy, kill our spirit, and destroy our dreams of tomorrow.

Why does he say "Be Courageous"?

- Because Paul knew that the Church was being persecuted for their stand for Christ...and the Corinthian Church's persecution was eminent.
- Because a Christian stands for courage...he cannot waver when being challenged. He cannot cower down to the false charges...and the tactics of the devil...and his angels of despite.
- Because a war is being fought on earth and in the heavenlies. It is imperative that the Christian grows in the truth of God's Word.

4. Be Strong!

Fight the fight of faith, fight the fight of hope, and fight the fight of reason and discernment.

It is God's will that through your weakness that you

become strong.

Like a well-equipped and well trained soldier, be strong to fight for your King.

Jesus...is this King of Glory...and we should be willing to stand up and be counted...and fight the good fight of faith.

Everything changes at this point- Whatever the Christian soldier be to those persons and things which threaten the Christian faith from the outside and to those within the Church...he must be a friend and must love the brethren.

5th Imperative--In the Christian life there must be the courage which will never retreat and the love which will never fail. Paul admonishes:

- **The work of Stephanas...and the fact that those converts that were in Achaia (in which Stephanas had ministered, prayed for, and devoted his time to) were devoting themselves to the service of other saints.**
(From all indication, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus were the ones that brought Paul of the news from Corinth. They did this by letter and by a visit).
Can you get all the facts from a document...or do you have to read in between the lines to get to the truth? Seeing these three "face to face", Paul knew what they were saying was a concern.
- **Not only did they bring news from the Church, they brought the offerings from the Church at Corinth to the poor saints in Jerusalem.**
Paul stated that these three men:
 - deserved recognition,
 - refreshed his spirit,
 - refreshed the Church at Corinth's spirit.
- **"Labor of Love."**
 - These men probably left family and their job back home to find Paul... and carry him the message. These men of faith....Yes, deserved recognition.
 - These three men did not do the work of the Lord for recognition...but only in that they wanted to see their church to survive.

- **Priscilla and Aquila...real traveling evangelists!**

- They opened up their home to others...to worship and to study the Word. (Their home became a Church).
- They followed their trade...working as tent makers. Paul loved them and admonished their great work

Paul wants the brethren at Corinth to greet each other with a holy kiss.....

(The kiss of peace was a lovely custom of the early Church).

It had no prejudices, it had no misjudged purpose!

Why did the holy kiss...this lovely custom, pass from the Church's life?

1. It faded because of liable to abuse and misinterpretation of heathen slanders.
2. It faded because the Church became less and less of a fellowship.

Maranatha...Come, Lord Jesus...meaning, "The Lord is at hand"...

A watchword and a password!