

Session 16: Collection for the Saints

A Challenge to Arm Ourselves...and a Challenge to Love

1 Corinthians 16:1-12, “Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. ³ Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. ⁵ After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. ⁶ Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. ¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. ¹¹ No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers. ¹² Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.”

The collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem...
An undertaking very dear to Paul’s heart!

To Paul this collection for the poor at Jerusalem meant:

- *It was a way of demonstrating the unity of the Church.*
It was a way of teaching the scattered Christians that they were not members of a congregation only, but members of a Church, each part of which had obligations to the rest.
- *It was a way of putting into effect the practical teaching of Christianity.*
By arranging this collection Paul was providing his converts with an opportunity of translating into action the teaching of Christ on the virtue of love.

Paul uses nine (9) different words to describe this collection in his writings:

- *Here he calls it... “logia”; the word means an extra collection. It meant something opposite of tax which a man had to pay; it was an extra piece of giving....not grudgingly...but a willingness....a “cheerfulness in giving.”*

- “*Charis*” (*1 Cor. 16:3, 2 Cor. 8:4*) which describes a free gift freely given. Something given in the overflowing love of a man’s heart, however small it may be. “A man’s heart must tell him what to give.”
- “*Koinonia*” means fellowship, and the essence of fellowship is sharing (*2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Romans 15:6*). Christian fellowship is based on the spirit which cannot hug to itself that which it has, but which regards all its possessions as things to be shared with others. Its dominating question is not, “What can I keep?”...but, “What can I give?”
- “*Diakonia*” means practical Christian service (*2 Cor. 9:1, 12*). It is from its kindred word *diakonos* that we get our English word “deacon.” Understand that there are limitations of life that prevent us from rendering personal service...and it may often happen that our money can go where we cannot go.
- “*Hadrotes*” means abundance (*2 Cor. 8:20*). Paul speaks in the passage about the envoys of the Church who accompany him to guarantee that he does not misuse the abundance which is entrusted to him. Greed goes beyond the non-Christian...and Paul knew that he must set the example for others; that is, to assure that the abundance is shared and not kept for personal use by anyone.
- “*Eulogia*” means bounty (*2 Cor. 9:5*). There is a kind of giving that is a bleak and unavoidable duty. Not in this kind of bounty....because in this, there is no giving because of duty (grudgingly or because of duty). All true giving is a bounty in which we are supremely glad to give.
- “*Leitourgia*” means to volunteer to give for a good cause. To render a service of giving to help the poor, the needy, or to give to build a home for the homeless. Christian giving is something which should be volunteered.
- “*Eleemosune*” means alms (*Acts 24:17*). So central was alms-giving to the Jewish idea of religion, that the Jew could use the same word for almsgiving and righteousness. The Jew would have said, “How can a man show that he is a good man except by being generous?”
- “*Proosphora*” means an offering and a sacrifice (*Acts 24:17*). That which is given to a person...is a sacrifice to God. The best of all sacrifices to Him, after the sacrifice of the penitent heart, is kindness and generosity to one of His children in trouble.

At the end of this section, Paul commends two of his helpers (*1 Cor. 16:10-12*)

1. **Timothy—had the disadvantage of being a young man.**

The situation in Corinth was difficult for the experienced and wiser Paul. Paul’s commendation is that the Corinthian Church is to respect Timothy, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the work that he is doing. It is not the man who glorifies the work but the work which glorifies the man.

2. **Apollos—A man of great wisdom. Many in the church had attached themselves to his name. Apollos knew that when a church is torn with party politics, there is a time when it is wiser and more far-sighted to stay away.**

How wise are you in the Word? A wise person knows when to speak/not to speak.

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^a 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....And a Challenge to Love.

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

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

2. Stand Fast (Firm) in the Faith!

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, 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.

Every thing 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 were Jews, special friends with Paul; moved to Rome and while under persecution by Claudius, the Roman Emperor of Rome (49-50 A.D.), were banished from Rome (like all Jews during his reign).

- They then made their way to Corinth...and then moved to Ephesus.
- ✓ **They opened up their home to others...to worship and to study the Word.** (Their home became a Church....every place they went).
 - Churches were found in homes until the 3rd century.
 - If the home had a room large enough to hold a small number of people, they had church.
- ✓ **Aquila and Priscilla followed their trade...working as tentmakers.**

Paul loved them and admonished their great work both secularly and spiritually.

They were witnesses everywhere they went.

Question to ask ourselves: Are we good stewards and witnesses everywhere we go...at work and at play.

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... "The Lord is at hand"...A watchword and a password!

Paul lets us know that the greeting and salutation is in his own handwriting.

Note that after he warns, corrects, and rebukes ("those that don't love the Lord...let him be accursed")...he uses the two words that every Christian ought to close any rebuke or correction with....grace and love.

Don't just complain and criticize....show grace and love toward others!