



We have come to the end of Paul’s lengthy letter. It is an important letter for our Christian doctrine. Without it, we would have little information on marriage, Christian liberty, Church conduct, manifestations of the Spirit, The Resurrection, or giving to missions. And while the Corinthian church was certainly not a body of believers’ in which churches today should emulate, Paul’s Holy Spirit inspired instructions provide us with guidance in our Christian life.

In this final chapter, Paul gives parting instructions, greetings, and warnings.

Verse 1—

The conjunction $\delta\epsilon$ in the Greek, or **Now**, alerts us to transition; **Now Concerning the collection for the saints**. These are the **saints** or Jewish believers in Jerusalem (vs.3). To paraphrase Paul, “When you take the offering for the saints in Jerusalem,” follow the same **order** I have given **to the churches of Galatia**. The churches of Galatian are an example to the Church in Corinth. We see other passages where Paul commends churches (assemblies) for their example to others:

- The Corinthians (Achaia) to the Macedonians (2 Corinthians 9:2). Evidence that this church collected a healthy offering for the saints in Jerusalem.
- The Corinthians (Achaia) and Macedonians to the Romans (Romans 15:26).

His topic is missions giving to those outside of Corinth.

Verse 2—

Setting aside money **upon the first day of the week** has become a formula for all giving within the church today. It is not a doctrine for weekly giving to the local church today but instruction from Paul to the church in Corinth; **let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him**. While not a command for us it is not wrong to put this principle into practice, i.e., learning to give systematically. But that is an individual choice. We must be careful not to make it a law. Paul is writing about a special “missions project” he wants the church to give to; that is the poor saints in Jerusalem. He instructed the money be collected ahead of his visit to Corinth so that **there be no gatherings when I come**. “Gatherings,” the same Greek word as *collections*.

What About Weekly Giving in the Church?

There is scant evidence (if any) in the letters of Paul of how to give to your local church. If anything, his instructions are better applied to giving to a poor missionary work. Paul instructs the churches to set some money aside for the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:7). Contrary to popular evangelical teaching, Paul does not give instruction for weekly giving. Giving to the local church in the dispensation of grace is not mandatory, nor should anyone feel compelled to give, or have guilt if they are unable to give. There are real needs a church must meet: Rent, Insurance, materials, utilities, payroll, etc. The pastor should make the needs known and the members can decide if they would like to help with that need.

The first day of the week does not refer to Sunday in this passage. Tradition has the church meeting on Sunday, and it may very well be so. This phrase is referring to **the first of the sabbaths**.

The word **week** is the Greek word *Sabbaton* which is the *Sabbath day*. The Sabbath is not the first day of the week (as in our week), but the seventh day. Therefore, the phrase is literally, **the first of the Sabbath weeks**. Seven weeks prior to the Day of Pentecost. (See Deuteronomy 16:9). More likely, this is a collection taken for the poor Saints in Jerusalem to be delivered to them by Pentecost. This collection for a mission's project makes more sense. Paul wants to take a considerable offering to the poor Saints in Jerusalem.

Verse 3,4—

And when I come, it is possible Paul went to Greece into Corinth in Acts 20:2, picked up the collection, and then headed to Jerusalem by way of Macedonia and Philippi (see notes on verse 5). In Acts 21:17, he and the others met the *brethren* in Jerusalem, where they were *received gladly* (possibly indicating their gifts were received gladly as well). Then, later while he was under arrest in Caesarea and stood before the governor Felix (in Acts 24:17), Paul recounted his journey to Jerusalem, mentioning that he *brought alms to my nation, and offerings*.

Nevertheless, Paul instructs the church in Corinth to select certain men (**them**, plural masculine) to **bring your liberality unto Jerusalem**, and if Paul was **meet** (worthy) **that I go also, they shall go with me**. It is interesting how Paul shows his humility in the desire to deliver this gift. He wanted to be seen as worthy to help those in need.

Verse 5,6, 7—

Now I will come unto you...for I do pass through Macedonia. Did Paul actually to back to Corinth? Maybe, maybe not. Acts 20:2 records he went into Greece, but did he make it to Corinth? Notice how he leaves open the door that he might not make it back in vs. 6? **And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you...** And (vs. 7) **I trust to tarry a while with you if the Lord permit**. According to 2 Corinthians 1:15-17, he seems to indicate he didn't make it back to Corinth. Therefore, someone from the church must have brought the money to him before he sailed from Philippi. It is difficult to figure out the chronology of Paul's travels. We have to leave some of it to speculation. He intended to go back to Corinth. Whether or not he did, what we do know is he made it to Jerusalem

Verse 8—

But, I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. It is not clear if he did this either. Acts 20:16, he was in such a hurry to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost, *Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus*. What he did was send for the elders of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus.

Remember, although Paul said he would do this or do that, it is not Paul's *intent* that makes the Word of God inerrant—in other words, Paul is not an *inspired man*, but it is his words that are inspired. And only the words we find in his letters in the Bible. The Bible is the completed inerrant word. If we were to find a lost letter from Paul (while interesting), it would not be inspired. God has promised to preserve his word, and the books and letters contained in our Bible, all sixty-six of them are the inspired word of God. No others qualify.

Verse 9—

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me. There is an excellent opportunity to do many things for the Lord right now—the door is wide open, and there is great power (*energies*) to do the work. **And many adversaries**. Here again, he is putting them on notice that he may be prevented from returning. We can get an application for us today in that we should not be hindered by what *may happen*. The door to be an ambassador for Christ is open right now—come what may we should always proceed.

Verse 10,11—

Did Paul send **Timotheus** to pick up the offerings? **Without fear** is the Greek word *aphobos*. Phobos is where we get phobia, the “a” negates it. Why would they have a phobia or fear if Timothy came to them? It is unknown. Did Paul think the Corinthians might not trust Timothy to carry a large amount of money? Paul makes it clear that he and Timothy are in the same ministry, **For he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do**. Therefore, don’t **despise** Timothy. **Conduct him forth in peace**, that is, send him away (with the offerings?) **in peace, that he may come unto me**.

Timotheus must have been a young man. In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul wrote to Timothy, *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*

Verse 12—

Apollos was one who had ministered in the Corinthian church at one time. You may remember that he was one of those whom the church members were divided over in chapter 1. They were taking sides by saying, “I am of Paul or Peter, or I am of Apollos, etc. Paul was hoping Apollos would have been able to **come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time**. Perhaps Apollos was aware of the divisions in the Corinth church and did not want to go there until Paul could write to them and hopefully straighten them out? Nevertheless, Paul passed on a message from Apollos that **he will come when he shall have convenient time**.

Verses 13, 14—

In the meantime, since Paul was not with them, and Apollos would come at a more convenient time, Paul gives final instructions: **Watch ye**, stay alert as believers, and watch out for problems creeping into the church. **Stand fast in the faith**, don’t let anything knock you down. **Quit like men**, in 1611 English; the word quit meant “to play one’s part.” The Greek word is *andrizomai*. It can be translated, “Play your part as a man!” or “Be brave like a man.” **Be strong** in the face of adversity. **Let all your things be done with charity**; everything done in the church should be done in *agape*. All of these are *imperatives* in Greek, meaning they are commands from Paul, not suggestions. They are certain imperatives we too should take to heart.

Verses 15, 16--

Beseech is not a Greek *imperative*. Paul desires that they model themselves after **the house of Stephanas**. Perhaps the house church of Stephanas (compare with 1:11, the house of Chloe). **Stephanas** and his house were the **firstfruits of Achaia** (1:16), which could be they were the first saved by Paul’s message of grace through faith. **They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**. Addiction carries the thought of total commitment. Paul says, **submit yourselves** (*hupotasso*), which is the same root word of **addicted** (*tasso*). The word *hupo* can mean under; *“come under the same addiction as Stephanas. Be addicted to the ministry of the saints.*

Verse 17,18—

Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus must have come to Paul while he was in Ephesus (where he was most likely writing this letter). **They have refreshed my spirit and yours**. He instructs the church to **acknowledge them that are such**. Those who build up the church should be recognized and appreciated.

Verses 19-23 | Parting Greetings and Warning

The churches in Asia salute you. They send their greetings, as do **Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house**. Along with a greeting from all.

Holy kiss. Not erotic, but fraternal, and practiced still today in many cultures.

Salutation of Paul with mine own hand. Paul has used this phrase before, Colossians 4:18 and 2 Thessalonians 3:17. To guard against forgeries?

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. This word **Anathema** is strong. Some versions translate the word, accursed. The problem in this church was division, so Paul may be saying, “Look, if after reading this letter, there are people who still want to divide the church and not love the Lord Jesus, let them go their own accursed way.” **Let them** is written in the *imperative*.

Maranatha. Is Aramaic and means *our Lord will come!*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you; Paul uses this phrase six times; Romans 16:20, 24; 1 Cor. 16:23; Philippians 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 3:18. The apostle John uses it in Revelation 22:21. The word **grace** is the Greek word, *Charis*, signifying *undeserved favor*

My love (agape | same as charity) **be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen** (so be it).