

**1Cor. 16:1** Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

**1Cor. 16:2** Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Paul always had a burden on his heart for the church at Jerusalem. As the apostle with spiritual oversight of the church at Corinth, he orders them to prepare an offering for him to deliver to the needy saints in Jerusalem. The church at Corinth isn't being singled out in this regard, he has asked for donations from all the churches in Galatia (basically the southwestern section of today's Turkey). He gives instruction for each one to set aside a part of their income on the first day of each week until the time that he comes to collect it. He doesn't ask for a specific amount; he asks only that the gift be based on financial ability in proportion to how one has been blessed by God to prosper. After looking at the CJB and the Greek from Strong's, I thought their translation for the last part of verse 2 was the best—"so that when I come I won't have to do fundraising."

I tend to think that Paul's burden for the church at Jerusalem was based in large part on his part in the persecution of so many in that area before he was converted on the Damascus Road.

**1Cor. 16:3** And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

**1Cor. 16:4** And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Paul would like to be a part of the delegation to deliver their gift to Jerusalem. If he cannot go, however, he will write letters of introduction for those chosen to deliver the gift. The Greek for the word "liberality" is *charis*, a reference to "the divine influence upon the heart." In other words, although Paul commanded them to give, his expectation was that their hearts were in tune with God's heart in this area of ministry. The Greek for the word "meet" was interesting; it stated "deserving." That sort of makes it sound like Paul's going would be based on the size of the offering.

**1Cor. 16:5** Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.

**1Cor. 16:6** And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

**1Cor. 16:7** For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

Paul now tells the Corinthians that he plans to journey through Macedonia and that he might spend the winter in Corinth. Verse 7 seems to indicate that because he would like to stay in Corinth awhile, it would be at the end of his journey. As always, his plans are contingent on the Lord's direction and provision. It seems as though he knew he could count on the Corinthians to give him whatever help he might need when the time came for him to leave.

**1Cor. 16:8** But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

**1Cor. 16:9** For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are many* adversaries.

Paul's current plan is to remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. It seems that the field was "ripe unto harvest" in Ephesus at this time. As always, wherever the Lord's work is prospering, the enemy is hard at work trying to interfere in the ministry.

**1Cor. 16:10** Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

**1Cor. 16:11** Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

It seems that Timothy was on his own missionary journeys at this time and might be expected to come through Corinth. Paul is asking the Corinthians to welcome him with respect and put him at ease. I couldn't help but think of Paul's admonition to Timothy in his letter to him.

**1Tim. 4:12** 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. Taken together these verses tend to make me think that Timothy had a self-esteem problem or was super sensitive to criticism. Or maybe he was just a well-trained young man with great respect for his elders and hesitant to exert spiritual authority due to his youth.

Paul declares Timothy's ministry to be comparable to his own; they are both doing the work of the Lord. The Greek for the word "peace" includes the idea of "prosperity." So it seems that Paul is asking them to be sure that Timothy has what he needs as he continues on his journey to meet up with Paul. Paul and the believers that are with him are looking forward to his coming.

**1Cor. 16:12** As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Apollos is another one of the band of traveling missionaries in the region. Paul is stating that he strongly encouraged Apollos and those traveling with him to come to Corinth too, but that didn't fit into his plans at this time. When I looked at the Greek, I got the idea that Apollos was ministering with specific purpose elsewhere and would come to Corinth when the right opportunity presented itself.

**1Cor. 16:13** Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

**1Cor. 16:14** Let all your things be done with charity.

All of a sudden Paul gives the Corinthians a five-fold exhortation:

- Watch ye – The Greek references staying vigilant. According to Webster this is a reference to being attentive to discovering and avoiding danger.
- Stand fast in the faith – This is an exhortation to persevere in their belief in Christ. As my life proves so often, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. When adversity comes, it takes determination to keep our focus on God's love for us and on our responsibility to honor Him in all that we do and say.
- Quit you like men – The Greek makes reference to being manly, which Webster equates to being courageous and resolute. In other words, don't let a little adversity cause you to stumble in your faith.

- Be strong – The Greek for this phrase references strength and empowerment. The Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling within ready to empower and strengthen if we will but ask for it and then step out in faith of His provision.
- Do all things with charity – The word *charity* in the Greek is *agape*, that word used in scripture to describe a love of choice. It's not conditional; it's a determination of the will. The Lord commands us to love one another—"These things I command you, that ye love one another." (John 15:17) The fact that He commands it defines it as a love of choice. Everything that we do as a child of God should be done because we've determined to show our love to Christ through faith and obedience and to show the love of Christ to others.

**1Cor. 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)**

**1Cor. 16:16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.**

The household of Stephanas is identified as the first converts to Christianity in Achaia, a region in the southern part of Greece that bordered the Gulf of Corinth. The city of Corinth bordered the Gulf on its northern coast. I love the way Paul describes them as being *addicted* to ministering to the saints, other believers. The Greek defines this as being determined and ordered (or organized) with a natural inclination to serve in this way. Paul encourages other believers in the church at Corinth to follow their example and direction in accomplishing the ministry objectives in the church; in fact, there were others of like heart and ministry as the household of Stephanas whose lives qualified them as leaders as well. To be able to help as part of a group involves cooperation (from the Greek for *helpeth*), and every group needs leadership. Ministry sometimes requires labour—working to the point of fatigue and weariness. To be willing to serve in spite of the physical sacrifice gives evidence of a heart in tune with God's heart.

**1Cor. 16:17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.**

**1Cor. 16:18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.**

Evidently, the letter to which Paul is responding was delivered to him by Stephanas (also identified as one of the few whom Paul baptized), Fortunatus, and Achaicus. I could find no other mention of the other two in scripture. Not only did this trio bring a letter, they brought a monetary gift and provided Paul with needed comfort and encouragement. Providing refreshment gives the idea of allowing for rest physically (from the Greek), which seems to indicate that they jumped right in to help Paul's team in Philippi. As with the household of Stephanas, Paul encourages the saints at Corinth to follow their example as they minister to others. Just to be around those who have a heart for ministry is refreshing to any child of God.

**1Cor. 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.**

When I look at the map, Philippi is located north of the Aegean Sea on the route between Greece and Turkey. Paul was always promoting good will and unity of spirit among the churches in which he ministered.

Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, and they eventually moved to Ephesus; so it would be natural for them to send greetings back to their friends in Corinth. It would seem that as Paul traveled, he carried news from church to church and friend to friend. Priscilla and Aquila were focused on ministry as a couple and were blessed with the gift of hospitality. They played a role in the spiritual training of Apollos.

Acts 18:24-26 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

**1Cor. 16:20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.**

Paul finally closes with a greeting from all the brethren who are serving with him. Greeting one another with a kiss is a common way to greet friends in many parts of the world. A "holy kiss" would emphasize that there should be no question as to purity of heart in the greeting.

**1Cor. 16:21 The salutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand.**

Paul dictated his letters, but he made a point of identifying his letters as authentic by closing with his personal signature. This would guard against others being able to introduce and teach false doctrine in the churches in the name of Paul.

**1Cor. 16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.**

The way it reads in the KJV sounds very harsh and uncaring, and I don't believe that correctly represents Paul's heart. He is just stating a fact that also serves as a warning. In both letters to the Corinthians Paul includes the exhortation to examine oneself. He didn't want anyone basing their eternal future on a false profession of faith that was not evidenced by fruit of the Spirit in their life.

Matt. 7:17 Even so **every** good tree bringeth forth good fruit....

Mark 4:20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, **and bring forth fruit....**

John 15:5 I am the vine, *ye are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, **the same bringeth forth much fruit....**

It would also seem to indicate that the church was to be discerning about who was allowed to identify with the body of believers since the Greek for the word "Anathema" references excommunication. This too makes sense. Any person

who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ is not capable of serving others to the glory of God. The church is not a place where men are to be glorified. The whole purpose is to bring glory to God through the edification of the body of believers and the spread of the gospel.

It just dawned on me that as you read the last two words together, Paul is connecting the curse declared upon those that don't love Jesus to the time of His coming again. The Greek for *Maranatha* states that it is "an exclamation of the approaching divine judgment."

**1Cor. 16:23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

I take every opportunity to share the Greek definition for *grace*—"the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life." That divine influence on the life of every believer comes through the indwelling Holy Spirit. In fact, Webster defines *influence* as "a flowing in or upon." The second definition from Webster is also interesting—"the bringing about of an effect, physical or moral, by a gradual process; controlling power quietly exerted." The more we submit to the Lord in obedience and wash ourselves in the water of the Word, the more we will experience the power of the Holy Spirit's influence upon our lives; it is a gradual process. He will exert His power in direct proportion to our willingness to submit to God's authority and our desire to please Him.

**1Cor. 16:24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

Again, the word for *love* is *agape*. Paul loves this body of believers, not because of who they are but because of whom they belong to—Christ Jesus.

**The first *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus and Timotheus.**