1 Corinthians

Chapter 1

Vocabulary:

Blameless: without guilt

Unity: think and act the same way

Boastful: bragging or being proud of something

A. Greeting

Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian churches with the help of his friend Sosthenes. Paul told them that God has made them holy because of Christ. Jesus Christ is the perfect lamb of God. We are holy because of His perfection. The Holy Spirit continues to work in us to make us more like Christ.

Colossians 1:22, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

B. Paul gives thanks

Paul gave thanks to God for saving the believers at Corinth. Not only did God save them but He also blessed them with many spiritual blessings. The believers in Corinth had been given many gifts from God through the Holy Spirit.

Paul knew that God would continue increasing their faith. We can also trust God to do the same for us. If we continue in faith, we will be found blameless when Christ returns.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

C. Taking Sides in the Church

Although the believers in Corinth trusted God, they still fell into sin. Paul called on the believers to have unity. As believers, they should be of one mind and in agreement. People in a house church began to be boastful about who preached the gospel to them. Some people were saying that they followed Paul, others that they followed the apostle Peter. Still others were followers of Apollos. Apollos was a highly educated Jew who taught with great power. Other people proudly proclaimed that they were followers of Christ. Paul didn’t die on the cross for our sins. No one was baptized in Paul’s name. Jesus Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel but not with wisdom or fancy words. The power of the gospel comes from the cross of Christ.

Acts 18: 24-28, 1 Corinthians 1: 10-17

D. Christ is God’s power and wisdom

The cross of Christ seems foolish to those who do not believe. But God’s power saves us through the cross. God says that He will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of those who think that they are smart. All the great thinkers and wise people of the world are nothing compared to God. He has put their wisdom to shame. God didn’t want the world to know Him through its own wisdom. Instead, God chose the foolish things to save people.

Isaiah 29:14, Jeremiah 8:9

Some people look for special signs and others earthly wisdom. But Paul preached Christ and his crucifixion. Jesus Christ is God’s power and His wisdom.

God’s wisdom is rich and fair. His ways are far greater than ours. The foolish things of God are wiser than human wisdom. God’s weakness is stronger than man’s strength.

1 Corinthians 1: 18-25

Before our faith in God, we were not scholars, or important people. But God chose the weak and foolish to shame the world. God chose the things that the world views as weak or common. God did this so that we could not boast about our own wisdom and strength. Jesus alone makes us right with God, not our wisdom, strength, or ability. Jesus makes us holy and frees us from the guilt of sin.

Romans 11:33, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Questions

1. What makes us holy?

2. Why was Paul thankful for the Corinthians? How had God blessed them?

3. What were the Corinthian believers being boastful about?

4. Where does the power of the gospel come from?

5. Regarding wisdom, what will God destroy?

6. Why does God choose the weak and common of this world?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 2

Vocabulary

vulnerable: capable of being hurt

riot: uncontrolled group of people often leading to harmful acts

eloquent: compelling, forceful, used related to speech

reveal: show

A. Proclaiming Christ crucified

When Paul came to Corinth, he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in a simple and honest way. For Paul, the only thing that was important was Jesus Christ and His crucifixion. Paul was in a vulnerable state when he came to Corinth. He had been beaten and put into prison in Philippi, caught in a riot in Thessalonica, and treated badly by Jews in Corinth. When Paul brought his message to the Corinthians, his words were not clever or eloquent. Instead, it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through Paul. Paul describes this more fully in his letter to the Thessalonians. The Holy Spirit not only gave him power to preach but also an increase in his faith. By relying on the Holy Spirit, Paul knew that the Corinthians’ faith would be based on their faith in Christ.

Acts 16: 22-23, Act 17: 5, Acts 18: 1-6, 1 Thessalonians 1: 5, 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5

B. God’s wisdom through the Holy Spirit

However, Paul did speak words of wisdom from God to the believers who had grown in their faith. But the words that come from God are different than the wisdom of this world or the rulers of this world. God’s wisdom existed before time even began. His wisdom will give us glory from heaven. If the world had understood God’s wisdom, people would not have nailed Jesus Christ to the cross.

As Isaiah wrote, no one has seen nor heard of a God as great as our God. No one can imagine all that God has in store for those who love Him. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal who God is. The Holy Spirit understands all things even the very depths of God. Jesus himself told us that God would send the Holy Spirit who would teach us all things. We can’t know what another person is thinking. Only that person knows their own thoughts. In the same way, only God’s Spirit knows the thoughts of God. So the Spirit that we receive from God helps us to understand all of God’s promises.

Isaiah 64:4, John 14:26, 1Corinthians 2: 6-12

When Paul spoke to the Corinthians, he didn’t speak the words of other people. Instead, he spoke words from the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. This is because He reveals God’s truth to us. People who don’t have the Holy Spirit can’t understand God’s truth. They think it’s just foolishness. God’s truth can only be understood with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah asks who can understand the Spirit or give him advice. But we have the mind of Christ.

John 16:13, Isaiah 40:13, 1 Corinthians 2: 13-16

Questions

1. Why was Paul in a vulnerable state?

2. How did Paul know that the Corinthians’ faith was based on Christ?

3. Where did Paul’s wisdom come from?

4. Who can reveal God to us?

5. Who leads us into all truth?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 3

Vocabulary:

in the world: this means living like those who don’t believe

analogy: things that can be compared

immature: not mature

taking side: agreeing with one person or group in an argument

regard: think about

**Divisions in the church**

When Paul first spoke to the Corinthians, he had to speak to them as if they were still in the world. Peter referred to young believers as newborn babies. Both Paul and Peter use the analogy of a baby needing to drink milk. New believers need support. They need to learn who God is and how to obey Him.

However, the believers in Corinth were still immature in their faith. They were still not ready for solid food. In Hebrews, we read that those who live on milk aren’t interested in learning to live a godly life. When we begin to grow up in Christ, we can tell the difference between good and evil. We learn to make good choices.

1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5: 13-14, 1 Corinthians 3: 1-2

The Corinthian believers were still living like unbelievers. Some people were jealous, others were arguing about who they should follow. As mentioned in chapter 1, the Corinthians were taking sides about following Apollos or Paul. God gave Apollos and Paul gifts which they used to serve. God chose these men to minister in different ways. Paul’s task was to plant the seeds. He preached the gospel to the Corinthians. Apollos watered the seeds. He helped the Corinthians to learn more about their relationship with God. But it is God who causes us to grow. 2 Thessalonians tells us that salvation comes from the work of the Holy Spirit. Although Apollos and Paul had different jobs, their purpose was the same. They both worked together to serve God.

2Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Corinthians 3: 3-9

Paul laid the foundation through the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that Paul began by introducing the Corinthians to the gospel of Christ. Apollo continued by adding more knowledge about God and how to live their lives in Christ. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the foundation. Isaiah prophesied about this when he said “Look! I’m placing a stone in Zion…. It is the most important stone in the building…” This stone of course is Jesus. Many people can build on this foundation in different ways. We all play a part in building up the church, Christ’s body, with different gifts. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, we are the body of Christ. Each part of the body does its work to support each other. If we are obeying God and using the gifts that He has given us, our work will survive on the judgment day. If we are not using our gifts or using them in a wrong manner, these works will not survive.

Isaiah 28:16, Ephesians 4: 15-16, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

We are God’s temple or His church because His Holy Spirit lives in us. Anyone who tries to destroy God’s people will themselves be destroyed. If we think that we are wise according to the world’s ideas, we should become fools in the eyes of the world. God does not regard the world as wise. God knows the thoughts of people. The thoughts of people who have the world’s wisdom aren’t important. God has given us all things. We belong to Christ and are joined to God through Him.

Psalm 94:11, 1 Corinthians 3: 16-23

Questions

1. Why does Paul call new believers “newborn babies”?

2. Describe a person who is growing in Christ.

3. What were the Corinthians doing that wasn’t good?

4. Who causes us to grow and mature in Christ?

5. Who is the cornerstone of the foundation?

6. Why are we called God’s temple?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 4

Vocabulary:

steward: someone who is given charge or control of something

approval: to say one agrees with or thinks someone is good

sarcasm: words that mock or make fun of something or someone

imitators: to act like

A. True apostles of Christ

Paul and Apollos were servants of Christ. God trusted them with the knowledge of God’s mysteries. As stewards of God’s mysteries, they must be faithful. People’s approval didn’t matter to Paul. As Paul writes in Galatians, if he wanted to please people, he wouldn’t be serving God.

So, we should be careful not to judge. God is merciful and He searches the heart of every person. When Christ returns, He will bring light to all the darkness. Christ will show what is really in the hearts of man. At that time, we will be given our reward.

Paul gave himself and Apollos as examples for the believers in Corinth. He reminds the Galatians and us not to go beyond the scriptures. When we focus on the gospel and Jesus’ life, we won’t be proud. After all, we did nothing to receive God’s grace. We are all so blessed with so many riches.

Galatians 1:10, 2 Samuel 24:14, Jeremiah 17:10, 1 Corinthians 4: 1-8

The work of an apostle can be difficult. They are like people sentenced to die in front a crowd. As mentioned before in chapter 2, Paul was beaten and placed in prison many times. In this chapter, Paul used sarcasm to illustrate his point. Paul was a fool, but the Corinthians were so wise. Paul was weak but the Corinthians were so strong. During his ministry, Paul and his companions went without food, were treated badly, and had no permanent address. They continued to work hard for the Lord even when they were cursed and attacked. Although Paul and his companions were treated like trash, they responded with kindness and blessings.

1 Corinthians 4: 9-13

B. Paul warns against pride

Paul did not write this letter to make the Corinthians feel ashamed. Instead, Paul’s desire was to warn them as a father who cares for his children. Paul wanted the Corinthians to follow his example. As he wrote to the Ephesians, we should be imitators of God. To further help the Corinthians, Paul decided to send Timothy to them. Timothy was like a son to Paul and he loved and trusted him. Timothy would help the Corinthians remember what Paul had preached to them.

One of the big problems that the Corinthians were having was being too proud. As we have seen in many scriptures, this is something we can easily fall into. Pride is not from God; it is from the world. Paul ends this chapter by saying that if he could come to them, he would. What power were the proud people using to change the church? The only power that matters is God’s.

Ephesians 5:1, 1 Timothy 1: 2, Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 16:18, 1 John 2:16, 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Questions

1. What did God entrust to Paul and Apollos?

2. What will happen when Christ returns?

3. According to the 3rd paragraph, what does Paul remind the Galatians, and us, about?

4. Give some examples that show that the apostles’ lives were difficult.

5. Who was Paul going to send to help the Corinthians?

6. What was one big problem that the Corinthian believers had?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 5

Vocabulary:

defiles: to make impure

indulge: to yield to something, to follow you desires

dealing with: try to solve a problem

disciplined: punished for doing wrong

underlaying: beneath the surface

permeate: pass into, penetrate

dwelling on: thinking about

influence: having power or control

**Sexual immorality defiles the Church**

One big problem in the Corinthian church was that there was sexual sin. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes that God wants us to be holy and to stay away from sexual sins. When you indulge in sexual sin, you are actually sinning against your brother or sister in the Lord. We should control our bodies and live with honor. The Corinthian Church was involved in sexual sin. In fact, it was reported that there was incest. A man was sleeping with his mother.

Instead of dealing with this problem, the church was proud. In Ephesians, Paul says to have nothing to do with the acts of darkness or sin. It is even shameful to discuss these things. This man should have been disciplined and removed from the church. Paul judged the man in the name of Jesus. Jesus Himself told us what to do when believers sin against one another. First, someone should talk to the person who is sinning. If they don’t respond, take one or two people to confront the sinner. If the person still refuses to listen, they need to go before the whole church. Finally, if they still refuse, they should be removed from church and be treated as an unbeliever. Paul takes this further when he told the church to hand the man over to Satan

1 Thess. 4:3-7, Ephesians 5:11-12, 1 Corinthians 5: 1-5

Paul told the Corinthian church to stop bragging. This problem of sin can affect the whole church. To illustrate this, Paul refers to the sin as yeast. Just like a little yeast causes the whole loaf to rise, this underlaying sin can permeate the whole church. Paul said that the church should get rid of this sin. Christ died for all of our sins. Instead of dwelling on sin or hatred and evil, we should concentrate on honesty and truth. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, we should think about things that are true, right and pure. We should think about things that are lovely, worth our respect, and worthy of praise.

Paul wrote this letter to warn the believers to stay away from people involved in sexual sin and ungodly behaviors. He wasn’t talking about the influence of the world. Paul was referring to people who claim to be believers but were doing evil things. As Proverbs says, we should guard our hearts. If believers within the church are involved in evil and sinful behavior, they should be removed.

Phil. 4:8, Proverbs 4:23, 1 Corinthians 5: 6-13

Questions

1. What is the one big problem that the Corinthian church had?

2. What did Jesus say about dealing with someone who is sinning?

3. What did Paul tell the church to do with this man?

4. Why is sin in the church similar to yeast?

5. Instead of sin or hatred and evil, what should we concentrate on?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 6

Vocabulary:

Admonishes: to caution and scold

Disputes: serious disagreements

Idolatry: worshiping idols

A. Don’t take believers to court

Paul admonishes the Corinthians about taking fellow believers to court. Instead of going to a court of law, these disputes should be handled within the Christian community. Jesus Himself makes this clear. If a brother or sister in the Lord sins against you, you should talk to them. If they don’t repent, then take a fellow believer to confront them. We shouldn’t ask the world to make a judgment. We will judge angels. Therefore, we should be able to judge things in this world.

Why not allow yourselves to be cheated and treated poorly? After all, Jesus said blessed are those who suffer.

Matt. 18: 15-17, I Cor. 6:1-8

People who continually do wrong will not see God’s Kingdom. People who live by human desires will not receive God’s Kingdom. Human desires like sexual sin, idol worship, adultery, and stealing will keep us from God’s promised Kingdom. In Revelations, we read about God’s Holy city. Anyone who is impure can not enter. These include those who are involved in witchcraft, sexual sin, murder, idolatry, and who love doing things that are wrong.

Living by our human desires is part of our old life. At one time, we lived in the darkness of sin but now we are in the light. We can walk in the light because Jesus saved us from the darkness. We were made right with God through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:21, Rev. 22:15, Eph. 5:8, 1 Cor. 6: 9-11

B. Sexual sins

We have freedom in Christ. He frees us from the guilt of sin. However, this does not mean that everything is good for us. This does not mean that we should let ourselves be controlled by other things. For example, we should not be controlled by food. In addition, we should not be controlled by sexual sins. Our bodies are meant for the Lord. As Paul writes to the Romans, we should offer our bodies to the Lord as a sacrifice. The same Holy Spirit which raised Christ from the dead also raises us up.

When we commit sexual sin outside of marriage, we are actually being joined with that person. We read in the book of Genesis that when a man and a woman join in marriage, they become as one person. Sexual sins are really sins against our own bodies. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in us so we no longer belong only to ourselves. We should not only stay away from evil things but run away from them. Remember that Christ paid the price for our bodies. We should use our bodies to honor God.

Romans 12:1, Genesis 2:24, 2 Tim. 2: 22, 1 Cor. 6: 12-20

Questions

1. How should disputes between Christians be handled?

2. What kinds of people will not see God’s Kingdom?

3. How are we made right with God?

4. We have freedom in Christ. Does this mean we are free to do all things?

5. What happens when we commit sexual sin outside of marriage?

6. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. What does that mean to us?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 7

Vocabulary:

abstain: keep away from

hinted: suggested

urges: desires

distractions: things that keep us from focusing on what is important

A. Advice for those who are married

While it is good to abstain from sex if you’re not married, husbands and wives should not abstain within their marriage. A wife’s body belongs to her husband and a husband’s body belongs to his wife. In Genesis, God said that a man leaves his parents and becomes joined with his wife. The two become a one person. Paul is giving this as advice to reduce the temptation of sexual immorality.

As Paul says to the Ephesians, sexual immorality should not even be hinted at within the Christian community. Paul suggests that widows and those who are single should remain in that situation. But if you are not able to control sexual urges, then you should get married.

Genesis 2: 24, 1 Corinthians 7: 1-9, Ephesian 5:3

A wife should not leave her husband and a husband should not divorce his wife. The Pharisees asked Jesus if a man could divorce his wife for any reason. Jesus replied that God said that a man and his wife are one. Therefore, they should not be separated because God joined them. When the Pharisees asked why Moses allowed divorce, Jesus said it was because the Jewish people were stubborn. But Jesus said that if a man divorces, he commits adultery if he remarries.

Paul also suggests that if a man or a woman marries someone who is not a believer, they should stay together. Particularly, if the non-believer is willing to stay in the marriage. Any children that the couple has will be made holy through the believing spouse. However, if the non-believer wants to leave the marriage, divorce is better.

Matthew 19: 3-9, 1 Corinthians 7: 10-16

B. Stay as you were when God chose you

It is best to remain in the condition you were in when God saved you through Jesus. Like Paul, we should learn to be content in all circumstances.

If you have been circumcised, stay that way. If you are not circumcised, remain that way. In Colossians, we read that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles. There is no difference between circumcision and uncircumcision. Christ is the only thing that matters. Obeying God’s commands are what is important.

Regarding slavery, slaves should be content in their position. However, if they can become free it is okay to do so. While slavery does not occur now, we can still apply this to any situation. It can be a work situation or our living situation. It applies to any condition where we are under someone’s authority. We should honor and respect those in authority. We should do our jobs as if we are working for God. Regardless of our circumstance, we are all accountable to God.

Phil. 4: 11-13, Col. 3:11-12, Col. 3: 22-23, 1 Cor. 7:17-24

C. Advice to those who are not married

In this last section of chapter 7, Paul provides his opinion. Because of the difficulty in the world, Paul believed it would be better to remain single. We should honor our commitments to our relationships. However, if there is no commitment then stay single. Our time on earth is short because this world is passing away. We should not hold onto our possessions.

A single man or woman can focus on the Lord’s work without distractions. But a married man or woman worries about pleasing their spouse. Jesus talked about the cares of this world when He told the story of the seeds. In this story, seeds fell on thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded the growing plants. The seed represents God’s message. The thorns represent life’s problems, riches, and worries. Married people have to deal with these kinds of problems. So, Paul’s opinion is that marriage is good and blessed by God, but singleness is better.

Luke 8:14, 1Cor. 7: 25-40

Questions

1. Why is it not good for married couples to abstain from sex?

2. What did Jesus say about divorce?

3. Should a husband or wife stay with a non-believing spouse?

4. If neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters, what is important?

5. Although we don’t have slavery, what can we apply the idea of “slavery” to?

6. Why is it better to stay single instead of getting married?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 8

Vocabulary:

idol: a statue made of wood or metal which is worshipped

strive: to make something your goal

build one another up: to support someone

unclean: not pure, not good

Food Sacrificed to statues of gods

In chapter 8, Paul discusses what to do with food that has been sacrificed to idols. First, while we may have knowledge about what we should do, love is more important than knowledge. In everything we do, we should strive to encourage and build one another up in the faith. Honoring and obeying God is the most important thing. As Paul writes to the Romans, one person may think that one day is more holy than another day. However, to another person, all days are the same. Some people eat meat and honor God. Some people don’t eat meat and honor God. Both give thanks to God for what He gives them. We don’t live or die for ourselves; we live or die to honor the Lord. No matter what, we belong to the Lord.

Romans 14: 5-9, 1 Corinthians 8: 1-3

An idol is only a god made from human hands. It does not represent the real God. These idols did not make the heavens and the earth. These gods will disappear. But God put the world in place. He sends thunder, lightning, and rain from one end of the earth to the other. There is only one God. All things come from Him. There is only one Lord, Jesus Christ. All things were made through Him.

Jeremiah 10: 11-13, John 1: 1-3, 1 Corinthians 8: 4-6

However, some people believe that these statues are real gods. If they ate meat sacrificed to idols, they would feel guilty. Food is not important. Food doesn’t bring us closer to God. Whether we eat or not, it doesn’t make a difference. But some people are weaker. Because of this, we should be careful not to judge. We should not cause our brother or sister to fall into sin. Nothing is unclean in Christ. But if someone thinks that something is wrong, then it is wrong for them. If your brother or sister could be upset by what you do or eat, then don’t eat it. Remember that love is the most important thing. God’s kingdom is not about eating or drinking but rather it is about doing what is right and good.

Romans 14: 13-18, 1 Corinthians 8: 7-13

Questions

1. What is more important than knowledge?

2. Whether we eat meat or not, what should we do?

3. What is the difference between idols and God?

4. What should we do if a brother or sister is weaker than we are?

5. God’s kingdom is not about eating or drinking. What is it about?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 9

Vocabulary:

encounter: meeting

necessities: things that we need to live

forgo: don’t take something

compelled: must do something

entrusted: to give someone a responsibility

marathon: a long-distance race

A. Paul’s rights as an apostle

Paul begins this Chapter by discussing the rights that he has or should have as an apostle of Christ. First, to be an apostle, the person must have seen Jesus. Although Paul’s situation was different, he still had a direct encounter with Jesus.

When Paul was on his way to imprison believers, Jesus appeared to him and asked why Saul was opposing Him. Some people didn’t consider Paul an apostle. However, the believers in Corinth knew Paul was an apostle by the work that he did among them.

The apostles were allowed to eat, drink, and travel with their wives. Most of them did not have to work to get money for their necessities. However, Paul and Barnabas were treated differently. They had to spend time working to get money. While Paul was in Corinth, he worked with Aquila and Priscilla as a tent maker.

Acts 9: 3-5, Acts 18: 1-3, 1 Corinthians 9: 1-6

People who work get paid. This payment includes money and other benefits such as food or drink. As Jesus told his disciples, a worker should be given what he needs. In Deuteronomy, we read that an ox should be allowed to eat while it’s separating the grain and straw. Paul used this illustration to say that people who work should be able to enjoy the outcome of their work. As an apostle, Paul should receive help from those who received the gospel that Paul preached. People who preach the gospel should receive money for their work. But instead, Paul chose to forgo his rights. It was more important for him to keep spreading the gospel. Paul was compelled to preach the gospel. He didn’t preach because it was his duty or to get a reward. God entrusted Paul with the good news of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul chose to preach the gospel free of charge.

Matthew 10:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 1 Corinthians 9: 7-18

B. Paul uses his freedom to share the Good News

Paul had freedom in Christ. But he chose to give up his freedom to win many people to the Lord. To win the Jews, Paul became like a Jew. To do this, he placed himself under the law even though he was no longer under the law. To the Gentiles, Paul become like those who do not follow the law. He did this even though he was under Christ’s law. To win the weak, Paul became weak. Paul became all things to all people so that he could save some of those people.

1 Corinthians 9: 19-23

C. Training to win the prize.

All runners in a marathon run but only one will get the prize. Like a marathon runner, we should run our race so that we can get the prize. Runners train hard to compete in a race. They do it to win a crown that doesn’t last. We are like the runners in a race. We strive to love God and love the people around us. But the reward for our race is an everlasting crown. So, we must run with purpose toward the goal of holiness. Like Paul, we should train and control our bodies and look forward to the eternal reward in heaven.

Hebrews 12:1, 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

Questions

1. What is one criterial to be an apostle? Did Paul qualify?

2. How were Paul and Barnabas treated differently compared to other apostles?

3. Paul didn’t receive money for preaching. What was more important?

4. Why did Paul become all things to all people?

5. How are we like marathon runners? What is our reward?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 10

Vocabulary:

pillar: a slender tall structure

quail: a small game bird

calf: a baby cow

plague: widespread disease that causes death

consequences: the results of an action

A. Warnings from Israel’s history

Paul begins Chapter 10 with a review of events from Jewish history. After the people of Israel left Egypt, God guided them on their way. During the day, God led them with a cloud, and by night God provided a pillar of fire. God parted the Red Sea so that the Israelites could cross safely. When the Egyptians tried to follow, God through Moses caused the Sea to flow back again drowning the Egyptians.

God provided them with food and drink. God sent quail to the Jewish camp as well as manna each morning. The manna was like bread. God also gave them water. God commanded Moses to strike a rock and water would come out for the people to drink. This rock represents the spiritual rock who gives eternal life. This rock is Christ.

However, God was not pleased with the people of Israel. The Israelites danced and worshiped the statue of a golden calf. The only group of Israelites which joined Moses to follow God were the Levites. God commanded that the ungodly people should be killed. Three thousand people died. More people died due to a plague which God sent.

Exodus 13: 21-22, Exodus 14: 26-31, Exodus 16: 13-15, Exodus 17: 6, Exodus 32: 6,28,35; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-5

The consequences of Israel’s sin are an example for us. They remind us that we should not desire evil things. We shouldn’t worship statues of gods. As we read previously, the people of Israel danced before a golden calf. Why? They were impatient. They got tired of waiting for God’s message from Moses. We should not commit sexual sin or test the Lord. An example of testing the Lord can be read in the book of Numbers. As the people of Israel traveled from Egypt, they got tired of the journey through the desert. They began to grumble and complain. They complained about everything that God had provided for them. The Lord sent poisonous snakes. Many people were bitten, and many people died. The people admitted that they had sinned, and Moses prayed for them. In another instance, some of the Israelites didn’t like the leadership that God had chosen. They thought their ideas were better. As a result, God’s destroying angel sent a plague to kill the people.

Numbers 21: 5-7, Numbers 16: 41-49, 1 Corinthians 10: 6-10

These examples were written to warn us. We need to be careful. We should stand firm in our faith in God. Trusting Him to guide and direct us. We all experience temptation. We should obey the Lord and resist the devil. God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist. God will always provide a way out of the temptation.

James 4:7, 1 Corinthians 10: 11-13

B. Sharing the Lord’s Supper

Paul told the Corinthians not to worship idols. In fact, he said to run from idols. Paul continues with a discussion about the Lord’s Supper. During the last meal with His disciples, Jesus handed them some bread. He said, “Take this bread and eat it. It represents My body.” Then Jesus took a cup of wine and said,” Drink from it”. Jesus said that the wine represented His blood of the covenant poured out for the forgiveness of sins. When we share in the Lord’s supper, we are sharing together Christ’s body and blood. Believers are united as one in Christ.

The people of Israel ate the offerings shared at the altar. An idol of a god and food sacrificed to idols aren’t important. But a sacrifice to an idol is really a sacrifice to demons. We can’t worship the Lord and worship idols. God doesn’t want us to honor and worship anything but Him.

Matthew 26: 26-28, Leviticus 7:16, Deuteronomy 6: 14-15, 1 Corinthians 10: 14-22

C. The believer’s freedom

In Christ, we are free. But that doesn’t mean we can do whatever we want. Not everything is good or helpful to other people. Not everything is encouraging to other people. Although we are free, we should be more concerned for other people rather than being selfish. We should think and act as Jesus did. We are free to eat any kind of food. God created everything on the earth and said it was good.

We are free to eat anything we are served. But if someone says this food was used in idol worship, then don’t eat it. We can give up our freedom if it bothers someone else. For example, if someone thinks that drinking any alcohol is bad, then it is better for you to forgo drinking in their presence. We should be careful that we do not cause anyone to stumble in their faith. We should be more concern with the interest of others than our own interests.

Philippians 2: 4-5, 1 Corinthians 10: 23-33

Questions

1. How did God guide the people of Israel when they left Egypt?

2. How did God take care of the physical needs of the Israelites?

3. What did the people of Israel do that displeased God?

4. How is Israel history of disobedience an example for us? What do they warn us about?

5. What are we sharing when we share the Lord’s supper?

6. What should we be more concerned about than our own interests?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 11

Vocabulary:

Maintaining: continuing to do something

Initiated: began or started

A. Proper worship

Paul was thankful that the Corinthians remembered his teaching. The Corinthian church remained true to the gospel. But in this chapter, Paul wanted to remind them to honor God by maintaining proper worship. God has provided us with order and authority. Christ is the head of the church which is Christ’s body. He is the head because Christ created all things. God has placed all things under Christ’s rule. In addition, Christ was the first to be raised from the dead.

Just as Christ is the head of the church, He is also the head of every man. God has also chosen men to be the head of women. We can see this same order of authority in marriage where the man is the head of the wife.

Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 5:23, 1 Corinthians 11:1-3

In this next section, Paul is talking about the differences between men and women in worship. In the Jewish culture, men should worship with their heads uncovered. In contrast, women should worship with head coverings. Why was this important? In the culture of that time, only prostitutes went around without a veil or head covering. In the context of authority, a man should not cover his head because he is the glory of God. However, a woman is the glory of man. Why is this so? When God created woman, she was made from man. In addition, woman was created to be a helper for man. But ultimately, men and women are not independent of one another. Woman came from man, but men are born from women. But all things come from God.

Genesis 2: 18, 21-22; 1 Corinthians 11: 4-16

B. Celebrating the Lord’s Supper the right way

The Corinthians were not honoring God during their time of fellowship together. First, as mentioned before, the people in the church were taking sides.

In Titus, we read about a warning against anyone who would separate believers from one another. These people are sinful and will bring judgment on themselves.

Secondly, they were not honoring God and one another when celebrating the Lord’s Supper together. Some people were using this time to eat their own personal meals causing other people to go hungry. They were also getting drunk.

Titus 3: 10-11, 1 Corinthians 11: 17-23

Paul already told the Corinthians how they should celebrate the Lord’s Supper. Jesus initiated this celebration with his disciples before He was arrested.

Jesus took a loaf of bread and thanked God for it. He broke the bread saying, “this is my body broken for you.” Jesus told His disciples and us that we should eat this bread in memory of Jesus. After the bread, Jesus picked up a cup of wine. The wine represents the new covenant. When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we are announcing that Jesus died for us. As we take the Lord’s Supper, we show that we belong to Christ and we will live through Christ.

We should eat the bread and drink the cup in a way that honors Jesus. If we don’t, we are guilty of sinning against the Lord. Many of the Corinthians were becoming sick and even dying because they were not celebrating the Lord’s Supper in a worthy way.

John 6: 56-57, 1 Corinthians 11: 24-34

Questions

1. In this Chapter, Paul wanted to remind the Corinthians about what?

2. Who is the head of the church? What do we mean by “church”?

3. Why should men worship with their heads uncovered? Why is it different for women?

4. Why are women and men dependent on one another?

5. In what ways were the Corinthians not honoring God during their time of

fellowship?

6. When we take or celebrate the Lord’s Supper, what do we show?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 12

Vocabulary:

Confirmation: evidence that something is true

Discernment: to be able to tell the difference between right and wrong

Function: the purpose or job something was created for

A. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Before the Corinthians became followers of Christ, they worshiped statues of gods that weren’t real and couldn’t speak. As believers, God has given us His Holy Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit is with us because we could not say that “Jesus is Lord”, without the Holy Spirit. Another confirmation that we have the Holy Spirit is that we believe that Jesus came to earth in human form.

Through the Holy Spirit, God has given us many gifts. There are also many different ways to use these gifts to serve the Lord and other people. The Holy Spirit works differently in individual’s lives. However, all these differences in gifts and service still come from the same God.

Some people have been given wisdom, while others have been given knowledge. The same Spirit gives faith, the ability to heal, the power to perform miracles, and the ability to prophesy. Other gifts include discernment of spirits, speaking unknown languages, and explanation of the languages. In Romans, Paul also talks about some other gifts such as serving others, teaching, encouraging others, giving, leadership, and mercy. The Spirit gives gifts to each person as He chooses.

1 John 4: 1-3, Romans 12: 7-8, 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

B. One body with many members

Our bodies are composed of many parts, but all these parts together make up a body. All of us as believers make up the body of Christ. Just as the parts of our bodies have different purposes, so we have different gifts within Christ’s body. However, the Holy Spirit makes us one. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all. In Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile; no slave or free person; no male or female. We are all one in Christ.

Romans 12: 4-5, Ephesians 4: 3-6, Galatians 3:28, 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14

Although we are one in Christ, as a body we are made of different parts. Each part of a body has its own function and is important. A “foot” could say that since it’s not a hand, it’s not part of the body. An “ear” could say that since it’s not an eye, it’s not part of the body. However, both are still a functional part of the body. A body does not consist of only a hand or an eye. All parts are useful. In addition, all the parts of the body need the other parts. Even the weakest parts of our bodies are important. If one part of your body suffers, other parts also suffer. If one part is honored, each part shares in the joy.

1 Corinthians 12: 15-26

We all play a part in the body of Christ. God has given us apostles, prophets and teachers. God has provided people who heal, help, and guide fellow believers. He has also given the ability to speak in different languages. Not everyone is a prophet, healer, or teacher. Regardless, it is love that holds the body together.

Colossians 3: 13-14, 1 Corinthians 12: 27-31

Questions

1. How do we know that the Holy Spirit is with us?

2. God has given us many gifts through the Holy Spirit. How should we use them?

3. Name some of the gifts that we receive from God.

4. Although we are all different, how does God view us?

5. How is the “body of Christ” (believers) like a human body?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 13

Vocabulary:

meaningless: have no meaning

gain: receive

content: to be happy with or about

demonstrated: shown

eventually: over time

limitation: confined

The Way of Love

This is probably the most famous chapter in the bible. In this chapter, Paul compares all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to love. Love is the most important characteristic to have. Compared to love, speaking in tongues is just making noise. Prophecy, knowledge, and faith are all wonderful gifts but without love they are meaningless. If we give away all our possessions and even sacrifice our lives, without love we gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13: 1-3

What is love? It is an action or a behavior. We show love when we are patient and kind with other people. We should not be envious of others but rather we should be happy for them. We should be content with what we have. Love in action does not boast or act proud. Love isn’t about only looking out for your own interests. Love is demonstrated when we are humble and value others more than ourselves. When we love, we don’t get easily angry. We should forgive others and not remember when someone does something wrong to us. Love rejoices in the truth and hates evil. When we love, our trust, faith, and hope grow.

Hebrews 13: 5, Philippians 2:3, 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Love continues and never stops or fails. Speaking in unknown languages and knowledge will eventually end. Even prophesy is not perfect. When Christ returns, He will bring completion to all things. When we were children, we acted, thought and understood with the limitation of a child. As adults, we no longer think the way we did as a child. Just like a child, we can’t see God’s ways clearly. But when Christ returns, we will understand fully and completely. Three things are important in our lives as believers. They are faith, hope, and love. But love is the greatest of the three.

1 Corinthians 13: 8-13

Questions

1. What characteristic does Paul compare the gifts of the Spirit to?

2. What are some of the behaviors that we should have as we show love to others?

3. What does love rejoice in and what does it hate?

4. How are we like children now in our knowledge of God?

5. What is the most important characteristic to have as a believer?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 14

Vocabulary:

Strive: work toward

Congregation: group of people worshiping together

Interpret: explain what something means in a different language

Participate: join in

A. Worship so everyone can understand

We should desire and strive for love towards others. We should also desire to use the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us. Prophecy is an important gift because this gift helps us to understand God. It also gives hope, comfort, and builds up the body of Christ. However, when people speak in unknown languages, no one worshiping can understand what is being said. It is a mystery and therefore not something that builds up Christ’s body. The person who prophesies helps the whole congregation but speaking an unknown language does not.

1 Corinthians 14: 1-5

Paul explained to the Corinthians that if he came and spoke to them only in an unknown language, they would gain nothing. If he wanted them to learn something, he would need to prophesy or teach. If you are playing a musical instrument, you need to play different notes to make a tune. If we don’t speak words that people understand, there is no reason to talk at all. Again, it is better to use gifts that help build up the church. If you want to speak in an unknown language, then you must interpret what you said.

1 Corinthians 14: 6-19, Ephesians 4:12

Paul warned the Corinthians to stop thinking like children. Instead, they should be mature. We can see the real purpose in the gift of speaking in unknown languages as we read the book of Acts. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit caused the believers to speak in languages that they did not know. But God’s purpose in doing this was very important. People from all different countries were in Jerusalem to worship. When the believers spoke in the different languages, these visitors heard God’s message in their own country’s language. God used this to spread the gospel. So, the purpose of this gift is to witness to those who don’t believe.

Even with unbelievers, they can clearly hear God’s message through prophecy. They can see that God is really there in the church

Acts 2:4-8, 1 Corinthians 14: 20-25

B. Proper worship

When we worship, we all should participant to help build up the church. If people speak in another language, it should be done in an orderly way. Only use another language if there is someone there who can interpret the message. Any prophesying should also be done in an orderly fashion with each person taking turns. God is a God of order and peace. During worship, women should remain under men’s authority. Anyone who has received gifts from the Holy Spirit should understand that God desires order.

1 Corinthians 14: 26-40

Questions

1. Why is prophesy an important gift?

2. Why is speaking in an unknown language more difficult when worshipping?

3. If Paul wanted to teach the Corinthian church something, what gifts would he use?

4. What is the real use of speaking in an unknown language? (per Acts)

5. How should a worship service be conducted?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 15

Vocabulary:

put their faith in: to believe

handed over: to give someone or something to another person

symbolizes: represents

resurrected: raised from the dead

swayed: tempted to follow someone else

blink of an eye: very quickly

A. Christ rose from the dead

Paul preached the good news of the gospel to the Corinthians. Having heard Paul’s message, the Corinthians put their faith in Jesus and were saved. This is the message that Paul preached. Jesus was handed over to die for our sins and by His wounds we are healed and made righteous. Jesus was buried and rose from the dead after 3 days. Jesus appeared to many people after He rose. First, Jesus appeared to his disciples who were meeting together. He showed them his hands and side. Jesus even appeared to Thomas who doubted that Jesus came to the disciples. Finally, Jesus appeared to Paul as he was trying to kill believers. But God showed great mercy and grace to Paul.

Romans 4:25, 1 Peter 2:24, John 20: 19-20, John 20: 26-28, 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

B. Believers will rise from the dead

Some people in the Corinthian church were saying that no one can rise from the dead. But if no one can rise from the dead, then neither did Christ. If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, then our faith means nothing. If our faith doesn’t mean anything, then our sins are not forgiven, and we are lost. But Christ did rise from the dead.

Adam brought sin into the world and because of this all people die. But because Christ died for our sin and rose again, we can live. Christ was the first to rise from the dead. When Jesus returns, all who belong to Him will also rise. Christ will rule over everything including His enemies as well as death. God has placed all things under Christ’s control.

1 Corinthians 15: 12-28

When we are baptized, it symbolizes being buried with Christ. Because Christ was raised from the dead, we can live a new resurrected life. Paul suffered danger and near death experiences every day. Why? Because he believed in the work that God gave him to do. But if the dead do not rise, then what does it matter? It would not matter what we do now if we just died in the end. So, stand firm in your belief. Don’t be swayed by other people.

Romans 6:4, 1 Corinthians 15: 29-34

C. The body that rises from the dead

When the dead are raised, what kind of body will they have? We don’t know but God does. When you plant a crop, you put a seed into the ground. It doesn’t stay a seed but develops into a plant. Different seeds will produce different plants or bodies. Everything in creation has its own form. Whether it is a fish, a man, a star, or the sun, everything has a different kind of body.

Our earthly bodies will not last but the body that is raised will last forever. The body that is raised will have glory and will be spiritual. While the first Adam was of the earth, the last Adam (Christ) is a Spirit that gives life. The first man came from the ground, but the last Adam came from Heaven. We are like the earthly man now, but we will be like the heavenly one in the future.

1 Corinthians 15: 35-49

Our bodies of flesh and blood will die but we will be changed. When Christ returns, this will happen at the blink of an eye. The dead will rise, and our bodies will be changed. As Paul writes to the Thessalonians, when Christ appears, believers who have died will rise to meet Him. Those who are still alive will be taken up as well. Our bodies will change to last forever. Death will no longer affect us. Death and Satan lost their battle when Jesus died and rose again. Our victory over sin and death is in Jesus only. Until Christ returns, we should remain firm in our faith. We must continue to work for the Lord. Our faith in Christ produces our work as we serve others in love. We can continue because of our hope in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17, 1 Thessalonians 1: 3, 1 Corinthians 15: 50-58

Questions

1. What message did Paul give to the Corinthians?

2. What evidence do we have that Jesus rose from the dead?

3. If no one rose from the dead include Christ, what does that mean for us?

4. Who brought sin into the world? What did it cause?

5. What is the difference between our earthly body and our raised body?

6. What will happen when Christ returns?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 16

Vocabulary:

put money aside: save money for a purpose

on one’s guard: to be aware of danger

A. The offering for the Lord’s people

Paul asked the Corinthian church to help with the poor in the Jerusalem church. He asked them to put money aside. In 2 Corinthians, we read that we should give based on our heart and we should give cheerfully. When we give, we will receive blessings back in full. A good example of giving was the church in Macedonia. Although they were poor, they gave as much as they could. They desired to serve God by helping Paul in his ministry.

Luke 6:38, 2 Cor. 9:6-7, 2 Cor. 8: 1-5, 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4

B. What Paul asks for himself

Paul wanted to come to Corinth to spend some time with the churches there. However, he needed to be in Ephesus because God had opened some opportunities to do God’s work there. However, Timothy would go to Corinth. Paul asked the Corinthians to take care of Timothy. Apollos couldn’t come to Corinth but would visit when he was able.

Paul reminded the Corinthians to be on their guard. Believers should always be careful because the devil is like a roaring lion. He wants to destroy us. Paul told the people of Corinth to continue to be strong in their faith, be brave, and loving.

Paul also reminded the Corinthians about the family of Stephanas. This family had strong faith and served other believers well. Paul set them up as an example for the Corinthian church to follow.

1 Peter 5:8, 1 Corinthians 16: 5-18

C. Final Greetings

All the churches in Asian Minor wanted to send their greetings. Even though the Corinthian church was having problems, the other churches wanted to encourage them because of the Lord’s love.

Paul ends this letter by writing with his own hand instead of having someone write down his words. This shows how deeply Paul felt about his message. What was this message? Love the Lord.

1 Corinthians 16: 19-24

Questions

1. Who did Paul want the Corinthian church to help?

2. What will happen when we give cheerfully?

3. How was the Macedonian church an example for the Corinthians?

4. What did the Corinthian church need to be careful about?

5. What family was an example for the Corinthians? What did they do that was good?

6. What was Paul’s final message?