

# 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Chapter 16

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Chapter 16

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## Verse 1.

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. 2. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

Paul taught the churches in Galatia that it is the duty of every believer to support other Christians or churches who minister the gospel, or when they are in distress. Many Jewish saints living in Jerusalem were harassed with various troubles by the authorities for the sake of the gospel. Their homes were ransacked, their property taken, and some were left only with the clothes they stood up in. The apostle hereby teaches the church at Corinth to lay aside as God had prospered them, and give on the first day of the week which was a Sunday, and which replaced the Jewish Sabbath of Saturday. A person was chosen to see that the collection was counted and taken to Jerusalem.

## Verse 3

*And when I come whomsoever you shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

It is quite possible that the churches in Galatia chose trusted persons from their congregations to be the couriers of the money and gifts, and when Paul visited the churches he would approve them. On some occasions they travelled with Paul.

## Verse 5/6

*Now I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.* Paul was at Ephesus when he wrote this epistle and he planned to stay there until Pentecost which would be in June. He would then travel to Macedonia visit the churches there and maybe spend the winter with them and they would have opportunity to not only give him board and lodgings but provide the means of travelling on further. It would appear that each church Paul ministered in they provided for him to move on to the next church and where this was not done he laboured at his trade to acquire the means of travelling.

## Verse 9

*For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*

God had made a grand opening to Paul in these parts to preach the gospel, a door of hope, a door of faith, but there is also much opposition who would try and block the message of the Word of God. These were not only false teachers or troublesome members of the church, but open adversaries, both Jew and heathen opposed to the preaching of the gospel. Paul knew of this type of opposition, he had ministered in Ephesus which was the hub of the making and selling of shrines for the worship of Diana which were shipped far and wide. (Acts 19:24-29). These trades' people had complained to the authorities so *many adversaries* were after Paul.

Without going into much detail, we can summarise some of the persecution that Paul suffered for the sake of the gospel. He tells us three times his feet were beaten with sticks, a Roman torture of the worst kind, his head was crushed at least once, he endured three shipwrecks, in fact let's read 2 Corinthians 11:26-27 for a list of hardships and challenges Paul went through.

**In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.**

Without doubt Paul had his share of suffering for the sake of the gospel, in our modern age we must remember Paul when we get annoyed when someone laughs at our witness or takes our seat in church!

### Verse 10-12

Paul recommends Timothy to them and sends him to Corinth to correct the abuses that have crept into the church. Timothy was a young man but a very capable apostle and a pupil of Paul. The church at Corinth was a proud church and people with a proud spirit do not bear reproof easily. So Paul tells the church to receive him in peace and not despise his youth. It was their duty to behave themselves well towards him, to encourage him and receive what he teaches and also his correction.

### Verse 13

*Watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

Throughout the 16 Chapters we have studied Paul has done his best to bring a rebellious, troublesome, wayward church to order, and teach it how to grow up and to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ to others. The Church of God universal is made up of people much like those at Corinth. *We all like sheep have gone astray... each one to his own way*, so the last few verses of this chapter apply to us as well. So sit up and take note the Lord's return is very near.

Watch you be continually on your guard because Christ is coming soon. (Mat. 24: 42)

Stand fast in the faith of God. Do not retreat, keep rank, keep unity, let nothing divide you thereby opening the door to Satan. (Phil.1:27; 4:1:1. Gal. 5:1.)

Act like men. Do not flinch in the fight, maintain your ground at all costs, press forward and strike deadly blows in prayer. (Eph. 4: 14.)

Be strong. keep spiritually fit, get to know the Bible more, get to know the Holy Spirit more (Luke 1:80; 2:40; Eph. 3:16)

Do all things in love (1 Cor.13) love is more eternal than the gifts, the gifts will cease in heaven but love will continue.

### Verse 15

*I beseech you brethren you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.*

We talked about first fruits earlier and here Paul refers to one of his first fruits. When preaching in Achaia the household of Stephanas were the first family to become Christians and became committed to help and support the work led by Paul in the town. The church at Corinth was encouraged to do the same. To support the work of God is not always about money, although if the members are tithing properly and the church is 'living' within its means money is only a part. In our church we are tithers and givers but what is more often required are men to cut the hedges, cut the large lawn, sweep the yard, set up tables and chairs for the many fellowship meals we have for the town and so on. We have a lady Pastor and the men of the church support her like this. As many of you know I have stenosis of the spine and the lower half of my spine has crumbled trapping my spinal cord, so I am unable to lift, bend, or walk, as I have been in advertising and marketing for over 40 years I have enjoyed creating the displays on the notice board. Another lady is very gifted in painting beautiful pictures, so on the many special events such as children's programs, Easter, Christmas etc. when we walk into church we see the whole of the front of the church illustrated to complement the Pastors message. The ladies cook dinners, cakes, cream teas, make tea, coffee, serve at tables, make things to support our teams that minister to the nations the church supports, such as Nagaland, Zimbabwe, Spain, and Hungry. Yes this all takes money and that is also provided when called for.

### Verse 16

*Submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helps with us and labours.*

It is quite easy to wear out a Pastor if the congregation, who have many talents hidden within it but do not help as Paul is asking the church at Corinth so to do.

#### Verse 17/18

*I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. 18. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge them that are such.*

These men supplied Paul with knowledge of the deficiencies of the church at Corinth in person which gave Paul a more perfect account and more detail than a letter could. Paul was pleased about this which 'refreshed' his spirit and greatly encouraged him and sent these men back home with instructions to pay them particular respect.

#### Verse 22

*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.*

This is directed against the Jews. The word Anathema is a Greek word that means let him be accursed. This refers to the demand of the Jews who standing round and watching Jesus being tried before Pilate and shouted 'His blood be on us and on our children'. What a curse to condemn their innocent children to, the death of their Messiah. The Jews called Jesus accursed (chapter 12:3) and that very Lord who they rejected is coming to execute judgement. Now Jesus reminds the church that if a man loves not the Lord he is accursed unless he fully repents and accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Those who do not love Him cannot be His disciples. The word Maranatha is a Syriac word which means 'Our Lord is coming'. A very encouraging phrase indeed, but with the two words together Maranatha becomes a warning urging them to prepare for His coming with repentance.

#### Verse 23/24

*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus Amen.*

It was not long ago Paul was 'breathing out threatening's and condemning those who followed Christ to death. Now we can feel his heart even for a difficult church, a church that has flirted with incest, idol worship, disrespect at the Lord's Table, questioning the resurrection, problems with prophecy and tongues, loving one another, Christian freedom becoming a stumbling block. Food sacrificed to idols, marriage and the Christian, unmarried women, civil law, and a whole lot more. We can feel his love for them even after his severe rebukes he closes with expressions of love, his rebukes were prompted by love, a lesson for us all.

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Be blessed

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