



A Great While Before Day

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A
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Daily Devotional

by Don and Pearl Anderson

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Bible Teaching Resources

by Don Anderson Ministries

What Do We Do?

Formed in 1972 as a non-profit organization, Bible Teaching Resources is dedicated to excellence in Bible exposition and the provision of tools for teaching the Word. Our mission is: To glorify God through a national ministry which will continue to change lives based on the belief that “Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11b).

Communicating God’s Word accurately and clearly is our primary focus. Teaching the Word by means of technology is providing a larger platform. Classes are being taught weekly on the internet at OnePlace.com and six days a week in the Philippines by way of radio. Classes are also being taught in Texas cities by videoconference. Webcasting and camcording will be used in the days ahead.

Because our goal is to convey the Good News of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, the BTR’s media division produces biblically-based messages on CD and in Mp3 format. Marriage videos and CD series are also available. BTR’s team also distributes Don’s many books. These resources for teaching, study, and spiritual enrichment are listed in our media catalog and are available at nominal cost from our office. Orders may also be placed online at www.BibleTeachingResources.org. A quarterly magazine, *The Grapevine*, and a daily devotional, *A Great While Before Day* (distributed semi-annually), are sent without cost to anyone who requests to be on our mailing list. To receive a personal weekly email from Don and Pearl, contact BTR at dam@bibleteachingresources.org. Hundreds of copies of Don’s series, *God’s Invitation: How to Become a Christian*, have been given out in classes or mailed from the office through the years. There is never a charge for this timely series and our constant prayer is that it will be used to bring others into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

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A Great While Before Day

The gospel writer Mark records that Jesus “rising up a great while before day... went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (1:35 KJV) Whenever and wherever you spend your time with the Father each day, we hope that these devotional verses and thoughts will be encouraging.

We will journey through the book of 1 Corinthians.

☞ JULY ☞

July 1 — The Corinthian Issues

What a joy for us to continue through the year studying the Corinthian issues! My purpose this morning is to give an outline of our daily journey through Corinthians:

<u>Chapter 1:</u>	A divided church between those identifying themselves with Apollos, Paul, Peter and Christ with many splits and quarrels.
<u>Chapter 2:</u>	Wisdom of the world rather than the wisdom of God.
<u>Chapter 3:</u>	Carnal living in the flesh which creates extended babyhood.
<u>Chapter 4:</u>	Ministry, learning to serve.
<u>Chapter 5:</u>	Immorality.
<u>Chapter 6:</u>	Lawsuits.
<u>Chapter 7:</u>	Marriage, divorce, singles.
<u>Chapter 8:</u>	Meat offered to idols.
<u>Chapter 9:</u>	Surrendering your rights to others, a personal example by Paul in 9:24-27.
<u>Chapter 10:</u>	Disqualified.
<u>Chapter 11:</u>	The Lord's Supper.
<u>Chapters 12-14:</u>	Spiritual Gifts.
<u>Chapter 15:</u>	Resurrection.
<u>Chapter 16:</u>	Giving.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 & 2 of **"Battle Hymn of the Republic"**: *"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps; They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps; I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps; His day is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on."*

July 2 — Paul and Sosthenes (1 Corinthians 1:1)

1 Corinthians 1:1: “Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.”

Verse 1: Paul begins the letter to the Corinthians in a traditional manner, mentioning his own name first as the author of the epistle. He describes himself as “called as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.”

The word “called” or “calling” occurs four times in these first nine verses. Paul’s calling came on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:3-6: “And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who art Thou, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.’”

2 Chronicles 16:9: “For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”

“Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.”

In his book, *The Great Deceiver*, by Paul W. Powell, he says:

If I were asked to give a motto for the Christian life, it would be this:

“Thy will, oh God—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else!” Since the will of God is so important, we must anticipate Satan’s opposing it.

Romans 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

This verse concludes with “and Sosthenes our brother.” The name Sosthenes means “*of sound strength*” or “*savior*.” It is from the Greek word “*I save*.”

In Acts chapter 18, we read of Paul’s initial ministry visit to Corinth. Acts 18:17: “And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. And Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.”

Shortly thereafter, Sosthenes came to know Jesus Christ in a personal way. Since that time, he has migrated to Ephesus with the apostle Paul. It is obvious a transformation has taken place in his life. Since coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior, he has become a spiritual brother to all those who know Christ.

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 3 & 4 of “**Battle Hymn of the Republic**”? *“He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea, With a*

glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me; As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free, While God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on."

July 3 — The Church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2)

1 Corinthians 1:2: "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all those who are calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours."

Verse 2: In the first verse, we were introduced to the author of the letter. In this verse, we are introduced to the recipients of the letter: "to the church of God which is at Corinth."

It is God's church. The specific part of that church being addressed on this occasion resides at Corinth. The apostle characterizes the church of God in Corinth in two ways:

1. Those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus.
2. Saints by calling.

Let's consider the phrase: "to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus." The word "sanctified" means *"to be set apart for a specific purpose," "to be made holy."* When we come to know Jesus Christ in a personal way, we are declared righteous in the eyes of God the Father.

We are justified, sanctified and glorified in God's sight the moment we receive Jesus Christ as Savior. God is an eternal being. From His point of view, we are not only declared righteous, but made righteous and holy, set apart for His purpose. He already sees us glorified.

This is our position in Christ. However, our practice is often far from our position.

Philippians 1:6: "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:28-30: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* said:

Sanctification means the impartation of the holy qualities of Jesus Christ to me. It is the gift of His patience, love, holiness, faith, purity, and godliness that is exhibited in and through every sanctified soul.

Sanctification is not drawing from Jesus the power to be holy— it is drawing from Jesus the very holiness that was exhibited in Him, and that He now exhibits in me. Sanctification is an impartation, not an imitation. Imitation is something altogether different. The perfection of everything is in Jesus Christ, and the mystery of sanctification is that all the perfect qualities of Jesus are at my disposal. Consequently, I slowly but surely begin to live a life of inexpressible order, soundness, and holiness— “...kept by the power of God...” (1 Peter 1:5).

Positionally, I am sanctified, but practically I am not. To be pleasing to the Lord, we must be making progress upward, pointing in the direction of our position with Christ.

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, John MacArthur says:

It is important for every Christian to keep in mind the great difference between his position and his practice, his standing and his state.

Paul also calls the Corinthians “saints by calling.” Positionally, they are saints, but, practically, they haven’t reached this state yet. This is the goal. The primary goal of the Christian life is to become what we are in Christ Jesus.

Paul’s purpose in writing this epistle is to encourage and direct the Corinthians so their practice lives up to their position in Christ, and their present state begins to reflect their standing in the Lord Jesus.

Jesus Christ is mentioned in each of the first ten verses of our study.

William Barclay in his *Daily Study Bible* says:

Sometimes in the Church we try to deal with a difficult situation by means of a book of laws and in the spirit of human justice; sometimes in our own affairs we try to deal with a difficult situation in our own mental and spiritual power. Paul did none of these things; to his difficult situation he took Jesus Christ, and it was in the light of the Cross of Christ and the love of Christ that he sought to deal with it.

The apostle concludes this verse: “with all those who are calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours.” The practical working out of progress and growth in our lives is a continual surrender to His Lordship. The extent of His Lordship is reflected in growth, maturity and Christlikeness in our lives.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of “**Higher Ground**”: *“I’m pressing on the upward way, New heights I’m gaining ev’ry day; Still praying as I’m onward bound, ‘Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.’ Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven’s tableland, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

July 4 — Grace and Peace (1 Corinthians 1:3)

1 Corinthians 1:3: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Verse 3: This is Paul’s traditional greeting. He first gives the Greek greeting of grace, then the Hebrew greeting of peace. These two gifts come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Nowhere are these two reversed. You must experience God’s grace before you can know God’s peace.

God’s grace and peace are available to each of His growing children as they pursue the path of living practically in light of their position. The source of this grace and peace is “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Note the apostle Paul uses the possessive nine times in these first ten verses: (1) Calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – verse 2, (2) Their Lord and (3) ours – verse 2. (4) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ – verse 3.

After the greeting in verses 1-3, we come to the standing of the Corinthians in verses 4-9. Paul begins with their standing or position and then addresses their state or practice later.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Higher Ground”**: *“My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts arise and fears dismay; Tho’ some may dwell where these abound, My prayer, my aim, is higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven’s tableland, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

July 5 — Thanking God (1 Corinthians 1:4)

1 Corinthians 1:4: “I am thanking my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 4: “I am thanking my God always.” A key to Paul’s life and ministry was his consistent gratitude. This verse is an expression of that gratitude for the Corinthians.

Is there anyone for whom you are thankful? Do you express it?

Paul continues his use of the possessive in these first ten verses in this verse: (5) I am thanking my God always.

A heart in fellowship with God expresses thankfulness.

“I am thanking my God always concerning you.” The apostle is referencing the Corinthians who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus: “saints by calling, with all those who are calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place.”

The reason for his thanksgiving is “for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.”

What does Paul mean by “the grace of God”? I believe it involves two things:

1. The gift of salvation.
2. The spiritual gift or gifts given at this same time to enable ministering in the body of Christ.

Please note it was *given* and not *earned*. A gift of grace is unearned. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and this [salvation] is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God; not because of works, in order that no one might boast.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of “**Higher Ground**”: *“I want to live above the world, Tho’ Satan’s darts at me are hurled; For faith has caught the joyful sound, The song of saints on higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven’s tableland, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

July 6 — Rich in Him (1 Corinthians 1:5)

1 Corinthians 1:5: “That in everything you were made rich in Him, in all speech and all knowledge.”

Verse 5: In this verse, we have the result of the gift of grace given to us in Christ Jesus.

“That in everything you were made rich in Him.” Focus on the word “everything.” God touches every area of our lives. 2 Peter 1:3: “Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue.”

The limitation of this act is in the phrase “in Him.” How are we “rich in Him”? This isn’t material, but spiritual. It is in the aorist passive tense which means we have been acted upon at some point in time in the past. We have been made rich in Him. In response to our faith, God was free to make us rich in Christ.

He cares for us in the present as well as in the future. Our richness in Him is mental, physical, spiritual and emotional. God the Father takes full responsibility for our salvation and eternal destiny once we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Ephesians 1:7-8: “In whom we are having our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.”

“In all speech and all knowledge.” Paul defines two areas where we have

been made rich in Him as a result of coming to know Christ. Speech is the outward expression of the truth, words that come from our tongues, and knowledge is the inward conviction of the truth. Knowledge is what we have learned. It is insight and understanding about life.

Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ be at home (dwell) in you abundantly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing each other with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of “**Higher Ground**”? *“I want to scale the utmost height And catch a gleam of glory bright; But still I'll pray till Heav'n I've found, 'Lord, lead me on to higher ground.' Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's tableland, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

July 7 — Christ Confirmed (1 Corinthians 1:6)

1 Corinthians 1:6: “Even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed among you.”

Verse 6: Christianity was never designed to be a closed experience. What we do with our Christianity is significant.

Our witness flows out of an enrichment in speech and knowledge. It involves both our words and our wisdom. As Christians, we are to give testimony concerning Christ. This testimony was confirmed among the Corinthians.

1 Peter 3:15: “But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence.”

As the Corinthians had opportunity to bear witness, they spoke the words that confirmed the testimony of Christ among them.

Rebecca Manley Pippert shares an unexpected witness opportunity in her book, *Out of the Salt Shaker & Into The World*:

I am often put in a religious box when people discover what my profession is. Because I travel a great deal, I have a clergy card which sometimes enables me to travel at reduced rates. The only problem is that occasionally ticket agents won't believe I am authorized to use it! A young female just isn't what they have in mind when they see a clergy card. More than once I've been asked, “Okay, honey, now where did you rip this off?”

Once when I was flying from San Francisco to Portland I arrived at the counter and was greeted by an exceedingly friendly male ticket agent. “Well, hel-lo-o-o there!” he said. “Ah . . . I'd like to pick up my ticket to Portland, please.” “Gee, I'm sorry. You won't be able to fly there tonight.”

“Why? Is the flight canceled?” “No, it’s because you’re going out with me tonight.” “What?” “Listen, I know this great restaurant with a hot band. You’ll never regret it.” “Oh, I’m sorry, I really must get to Portland. Do you have my ticket?” “Aw, what’s the rush? I’ll pick you up at eight.” “Look, I really must go to Portland,” I said. “Well, okay. Too bad though. Hey, I can’t find your ticket.” He paused, then said, “Looks like it’s a date then!” “Oh, I forgot to tell you, it’s a special ticket,” I said. “Oh, is it youth fare?” “No, um, well, it’s ah, clergy,” I whispered, leaning over the counter. He froze. “What did you say?” “It’s clergy.” “CLERGY!?” he shouted, as the entire airport looked our way. His face went absolutely pale, as he was horrified by only one thought, “Oh, no. I flirted with a nun!”

When he disappeared behind the counter, I could hear him whisper to the other ticket agent a few feet away, “Hey George, get a load of that girl up there. She’s clergy.” Suddenly another man rose from behind the counter, smiled and nodded and disappeared again. I never have felt so religious in my entire life. As I stood there trying to look as secular as possible, my ticket agent reappeared and stood back several feet behind the desk. Looking shaken and sounding like a tape recording he said, “Good afternoon. We certainly hope there have been no inconveniences. And on behalf of Hughes Airwest, we’d like to wish you a very safe and pleasant flight, Sister Manley.”

In Acts 1:8, Jesus spoke these last words: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of “**Channels Only**”: *“How I praise Thee, precious Savior, That Thy love laid hold of me; Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me That I might Thy channel be. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

July 8 — Awaiting Eagerly (1 Corinthians 1:7)

1 Corinthians 1:7: “So that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Verse 7: You are (1) not lacking in any gift and (2) awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle again uses the possessive in these verses: (6) awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians are prepared for now and later. Now in the present,

they are “not lacking in any gift.” In the future, they are “awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” God provides for their *practice* in their spiritual gifts. Their *priorities* are straight as they eagerly await the revelation of Christ.

What does “you are not lacking in any gift” mean? The body of Christ in Corinth has everything it needs to grow and function effectively.

“Awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:12-13: “Instructing (disciplining) us that denying ungodliness and worldly desires we should live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present (now) age. Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus.

In several of His parables, the Lord Jesus commended the servant who was watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord. Paul speaks of this issue in his epistles, also.

As believers, we look forward to that glorious day described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “Because the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the call of the trumpet sounded by God’s command; and the dead in Christ shall be raised first. Then we who are living, who are left behind, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. So keep on encouraging one another with these words.”

Although the Corinthians are “not lacking in any gift,” they are also not using all of them correctly as we will see later in the epistle. However, it is commendable that they are “awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 2 & 3 of “**Channels Only**”: *“Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand; With no pow’r but as Thou givest Graciously with each command. Witnessing Thy pow’r to save me, Setting free from self and sin; Thou who boughtest to possess me, In Thy fullness, Lord come in. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

July 9 — Blameless in the Day (1 Corinthians 1:8)

1 Corinthians 1:8: “Who also shall confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Verse 8: In verse 6, the Corinthians are commended that their testimony concerning Jesus Christ was confirmed among them. In this verse, Paul states that in response to their confirmation, Christ will confirm them to the end: “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He uses the possessive phrase (7) our Lord Jesus Christ again.

Mark 8:38: “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

The church body is “sanctified” in Christ Jesus in verse 2. In this verse, it is “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:26-27: “In order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, in order that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things; but in order that she might be holy and blameless.”

Jude 1:24-25: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all times, both now and forever. Amen.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 4 of “**Channels Only**”: *“Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit Hearts that full surrender know; That the streams of living water From our inner self may flow. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

July 10 — God Is Faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9)

1 Corinthians 1:9: “God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Verse 9: “God is faithful.” What a glorious statement of affirmation to follow these previous verses. In the Greek text, the word “faithful” is first. Literally, it would read: “Faithful is God.” He keeps His promises.

A number of writers believe this verse is the key verse to the whole book. This verse should be tied to 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it.”

Lamentations 3:22-23: “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

A.J. Gordon said: “The promises of God are certain, but they do not all mature in ninety days.”

“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the key to all the problems the Corinthians are facing. They must recognize God wants a relationship with

them and not a performance from them.

We were “called into fellowship.” It is fellowship that deepens the relationship. This is what God desires most. Until sin entered, He met daily with our first parents, Adam and Eve. Genesis 5:24: “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.” This fellowship is how we grow toward our position in Christ.

Paul uses the warm, possessive (8) Jesus Christ our Lord. Notice the focus on lordship. We have seen the word “Lord” six times in this passage.

Ray Stedman in his *Expository Studies in 1 Corinthians* said:

They had not understood the implications of their calling, and the relationship they personally and individually had with Jesus Christ himself. Instead (as we see beginning with the very next verse), the apostle has to deal with divisions, scandals, lawsuits, immorality, drunkenness, quarreling, and with much misunderstanding of the truth about idols and demons and various other matters. It is clear that despite this full provision which they had received, they were experiencing a great failure in the church.

We considered the greeting in verses 1-3, the standing of the Corinthians in verses 4-9, but with this next verse, we turn to the first problem Paul will address with the Corinthians: the declaration of divisions in verses 10-17.

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of “**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**”?: *“Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As thou hast been Thou forever wilt be. ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!”*

July 11 — I Am Appealing to You (1 Corinthians 1:10)

1 Corinthians 1:10: “Now I am appealing to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you keep on speaking the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same conviction.”

Verse 10: Because they have been called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, the apostle can make an appeal to the Corinthians. Paul doesn't command them. It is the Law that commands. Grace appeals to them.

He uses the possessive term again as he begins to focus on the Corinthian church issues: (9) by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“I am appealing to you, brethren.” Paul uses terms which indicate

fellowship as he did in verse 1: “Sosthenes, our brother.” The ministry of his appeal is “by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” He makes a two-fold appeal:

1. All of you keep on speaking the same thing.
2. There be no divisions among you.

The apostle spoke of their speech in verse 5: “in everything they were made rich in Him, in all speech and all knowledge.” Now, he appeals that they “keep on speaking the same thing.” This is the key. It is in the present tense. They should continually be speaking the same thing because the source of their speaking is the divine truth.

“That there be no divisions among you.” In verse 9, we have been “called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” In this verse, the apostle contrasts by speaking of divisions.”

This appeal is to all of us. Everyone must be involved in speaking the same thing and avoiding divisions among us. The word “but” forms the contrast as the apostle instructs them to: “be made complete in the same mind and in the same conviction.”

These four statements are the basis for fellowship:

1. You keep on speaking the same thing.
2. There be no divisions among you.
3. You be made complete in the same mind.
4. You be made complete in the same conviction.

The word “complete” is the same word used for “*making adjustments*,” “*putting things together*” or “*the outfitting of a ship for a journey*.” It is also a medical term used for “*the setting of bones*.”

Psalms 133:1-3: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.”

Harry Ironside used to tell of the old Quaker who left one meeting place after another, and finally someone said to him, “Well, what church are you in now?” “I am in the true church at last,” he said. “How many belong to it?” “Just my wife and myself, and I am not sure about her sometimes.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 2 of “**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**”: “*Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, Sun, moon and stars in their courses above, Join with all nature in manifold witness, To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!*”

July 12 — Quarrels Among You (1 Corinthians 1:11)

1 Corinthians 1:11: “For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.”

Verse 11: The reason for the apostle’s appeal in the previous verse is given in this verse. He was informed concerning them. They are his “brethren” because they are the fruit of his labor. He mentions that Chloe’s people are the source of his information. Chloe is part of the Corinthian assembly. Some of her servants are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:17: “And I am rejoicing over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus; because they supplied that which was lacking on your part.” These individuals mentioned could be the source of the information Paul references.

The name “Chloe” means “*a tender shoot*.”

Bob Briner in *Deadly Detours: Seven Noble Causes That Keep Christians from Changing the World* says:

When Christians fail, fight, and fall, non-Christians acquire another excuse to reject the claims of Christ. They quite easily and quite logically say, “See, there is really nothing to this Christianity business. I get enough fighting, bickering, and backbiting without getting into that mess.”

Believers fail at reaching out when they are focusing on other believers instead of the lost.

In *Hope Again*, Charles R. Swindoll said:

Before Andrew Jackson became the seventh president of the United States, he served as a major general in the Tennessee militia. During the War of 1812 his troops reached an all-time low in morale. As a result they began arguing, bickering, and fighting among themselves. It is reported that Old Hickory called them all together on one occasion when tensions were at their worst and said, “Gentlemen! Let’s remember, the enemy is over *there*!”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of “**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**”: “*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!*”

July 13 — Following the Leader (1 Corinthians 1:12)

1 Corinthians 1:12: “Now I am meaning this, that each one of you is saying: ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of Cephas,’ and ‘I of Christ.’”

Verse 12: This verse defines the accusation of quarrels among them. The problem was widespread by the phrase: “each of you is saying.” There are four groups mentioned:

1. I am of Paul.
2. I of Apollos.
3. I of Cephas (Peter).
4. I of Christ.

This quartet should be harmonious, but their differences were causing disharmony.

The first group, Paul’s fans, probably focused on his teaching ministry and ability to make the word of God come alive as well as address difficult biblical concepts. The second group, Apollos supporters, were possibly intellectuals who loved to hear great oratorical speaking. The third group, who followed Peter, probably wanted to go back to the founder. These might have been legalists since Peter struggled with grace from the beginning. The fourth group were followers of Christ. However, they might have been self-righteous and superior. Their group did not trust in men, but went back to the original source.

We have these same challenges in the body of Christ today. Some believers focus on the teachers, some follow the intellectuals, some are legalists and some feel superior and self-righteous.

In the book, *Communication: Communication: Communication: The Key To Your Marriage*, H. Norman Wright shares:

There is an old story about a shepherd in Wyoming who would observe the behavior of wild animals during the winter. Packs of wolves, for example, would sweep into the valley and attack the bands of wild horses. The horses would form a circle with their heads at the center of the circle and kick out at the wolves, driving them away. Then the shepherd saw the wolves attack a band of wild jackasses. The animals also formed a circle, but they formed it with their heads out toward the wolves. When they began to kick, they ended up kicking each other.

Max Lucado says it well in *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*:

We, too, play games at the foot of the cross. We compete for members.

We scramble for status. We deal out judgments and condemnations. Competition. Selfishness. Personal gain. It's all there. We don't like what the other did so we take the sandal we won and walk away in a huff.

So close to the timber yet so far from the blood. We are so close to the world's most uncommon event, but we act like common crapshooters huddled in bickering groups and fighting over silly opinions.

How many pulpit hours have been wasted on preaching the trivial? How many churches have tumbled at the throes of miniscuity? How many leaders have saddled their pet peeves, drawn their swords of bitterness and launched into battle against brethren over issues that are not worth discussing?

So close to the cross but so far from the Christ.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 1 of **“My Anchor Holds”**: *“Tho the angry surges roll O’er my tempest driven soul, I am peaceful, for I know, Wildly though the winds may blow, I’ve an anchor safe and sure, That can evermore endure. And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest, then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail, By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.”*

July 14 — Has Christ Been Divided? (1 Corinthians 1:13)

1 Corinthians 1:13: “Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

Verse 13: The apostle continues addressing this issue with three pointed questions:

1. Has Christ been divided?
2. Paul was not crucified for you, was he?
3. Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

The answer to all of these questions is absolutely “No”!

Billy Graham in *Facing Death and the Life After* says:

God did not invent denominations, man did. When we go to His home, He will invite us in, but will not ask us for our church or Sunday school credentials.

Corrie ten Boom used to say, “A mouse in a cookie jar isn’t a cookie.”

Stephen Brown in his book, *Heirs With The Prince*, said:

There was once a rooster who went into the ostrich pen and got one of the gigantic eggs. He rolled it over to his pen, pushed it in front of the

hens, and said, “Now, I don’t want you to think I’m complaining, but I did want you to see what the competition is doing.”

In *The Great Gain of Godliness* by Thomas Watson, he says:

These divisions are unseemly and are flaws in God’s diamonds. Discord among Christians brings a reproach upon religion, advances Satan’s kingdom, and hinders the growth of grace. Divisions are fatal, and do presage God’s judgments coming upon us.

But this is comfort, God will shortly make up his jewels: he will so gather his saints together that he will unite them together. They shall be all of one heart (*Acts 2:46*). What a happy time it will be when the saints shall be as so many pearls upon one string, and shall accord together in a blessed unity!

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of “**My Anchor Holds**”? *“Mighty tides about me sweep, Perils lurk within the deep, Angry clouds o’er shade the sky, And the tempest rises high; Still I stand the tempest’s shock, For my anchor grips the Rock. And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest, then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail, By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.”*

July 15 — I Am Thankful (1 Corinthians 1:14)

1 Corinthians 1:14: “I am thankful that I baptized not even one of you, except Crispus and Gaius.”

Verse 14: Earlier in the chapter, Paul was “thanking my God always concerning you.” In this verse, he is thankful he didn’t baptize even one of them except Crispus and Gaius.

Paul is not critical of the ordinance of baptism, but explains the reason it is mentioned on this occasion.

Crispus was the most notable convert as the ruler of the synagogue. There are several men who have the name Gaius in Scripture so it is difficult to distinguish if they are the same individual. In 3 John, John addresses his little epistle to “the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.” Additionally, Paul is accompanied by a Gaius of Derbe in Acts 20:4.

Donald English said: “The wonder of the cross is not the blood, but whose blood.”

Max Lucado in his book, *No Wonder They Call Him The Savior*, says:

There was something about the crucifixion that made every witness either step toward it or away from it. It simultaneously compelled and repelled.

And today, two thousand years later, the same is true. It's the watershed. It's the Continental Divide. It's Normandy. And you are either on one side or the other. A choice is demanded. We can do what we want with the cross. We can examine its history. We can study its theology. We can reflect upon its prophecies. Yet the one thing we can't do is walk away in neutral. No fence sitting is permitted. The cross, in its absurd splendor, doesn't allow that. That is one luxury that God, in his awful mercy, doesn't permit.

On which side are you?

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of **"My Anchor Holds"**: *"I can feel the anchor fast As I meet each sudden blast, And the cable, though unseen, Bears the heavy strain between; Thro' the storm I safely ride, Til the turning of the tide. And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest, then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail, By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds."*

July 16 — For the Record (1 Corinthians 1:15-16)

1 Corinthians 1:15: "Lest anyone should say you were baptized in my name."

1 Corinthians 1:16: "Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that I am not knowing whether I baptized any other."

Verse 15 - 16: Paul's record keeping and attitude toward the ordinance of baptism clarify that he did not believe it necessary for salvation of the soul. He viewed baptism as an outward ordinance of an inward work.

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read:

The church at Corinth was headed for trouble. Problems had arisen because they were aligning themselves with human leaders. Their focus was no longer on Christ, but on their favorite preachers and teachers. In his letter to the believers, the apostle Paul pleaded with them to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind" (1 Corinthians 1:10). He knew how dangerous it was to exalt men above God.

This problem has plagued churches down through the ages. I am reminded of an incident Lyman Beecher Stowe wrote about in his book *Saints, Sinners and Beechers*. Stowe told that on one occasion Thomas K. Beecher substituted for his famous brother Henry Ward Beecher at the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. Many curiosity seekers had come to hear the renowned Henry Beecher speak. Therefore when Thomas Beecher appeared in the pulpit instead, some of the people got up and started for the doors. Sensing that they were disappointed

because he was substituting for his brother, Thomas Beecher raised his hand for silence and announced, “All those who came here this morning to worship Henry Ward Beecher may withdraw from the church; all who came to worship God may remain.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of **“My Anchor Holds”**: *“Troubles almost ’whelm the soul; Griefs like billows o’er me roll; Tempters seek to lure astray, Storms obscure the light of day: But in Christ I can be bold, I’ve an anchor that shall hold. And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest, then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail, By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.”*

July 17 — Preaching the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17)

1 Corinthians 1:17: “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to be preaching the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, in order that the cross of Christ should not be made void.”

Verse 17: In this verse, we have the reason Paul identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God: “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to be preaching the gospel.”

Negatively, “Christ did not send me to baptize,” but, positively, “to be preaching the gospel.” This was the apostle’s mission in life. He continues, negatively: “It was not in cleverness of speech,” but for the purpose: “in order that the cross of Christ should not be made void.”

Galatians 6:14: “But far be it from me to be glorying except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom to me the world has been crucified and I to the world.”

Winkie Pratney said in his book, *Youth Aflame*:

Jim Elliot said, “Most Christians don’t need a call—they need a kick in the pants!” You don’t become a missionary by crossing the sea, but by seeing the cross.

God gave us two ends: One to think with; the other to sit on. Our future depends on which end we use. Heads we win—tails we lose.

In *Out of the Saltshaker & Into the World*, Rebecca Manley Pippert said:

John Stott suggests that those who wish to take this final step echo the following prayer in their heart:

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that I have gone my own way. I have sinned in thought, word and deed. I am sorry for my sins. I turn from them in repentance.

I believe that you died for me, bearing my sins in your own body. I thank you for your great love.

Now I open the door. Come in, Lord Jesus. Come in as my Saviour, and cleanse me. Come in as my Lord, and take control of me. And I will serve as you give me strength, all my life. Amen.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 & 2 of **“At Calvary”**: *“Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified, Knowing not it was for me He died On Calvary. By God’s Word at last my sin I learned, Then I trembled at the law I’d spurned, Till my guilty soul imploring turned To Calvary. Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.”*

July 18 — The Word of the Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18)

1 Corinthians 1:18: “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.”

Verse 18: We see the contrast in response to two groups: (1) those who are perishing and (2) those who are being saved.

The word “perishing” is present active. The words “being saved” are in the passive—being acted upon. “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but (in contrast) to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.”

Note that “perishing” and “saved” are in present tense. The cross of Christ divides men. We should think of the cross as a place of shame rather than picturing it as a beautiful emblem on the top of many churches or pendants worn. It is a place of *execution*. It is the hanging gallows, the electric chair or lethal injection. It is truly a place of shame.

It is also a place of rejection. Jesus Christ was rejected both by God and man. Finally, we learn there is salvation in no other way at the cross.

Jessie B Pounds wrote:

I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
There’s no other way but this;
I shall ne’er get sight of the Gates of Light,
If the way of the cross I miss.

“For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness.” Those who are perishing are on the broad road to destruction. J.B. Phillips translates the word “foolishness” as *“nonsense.”*

The verse continues: “but to us who are being saved, it is the power

of God.” How is the power of God displayed in the cross of Christ? It is beautifully displayed in three great theological words:

1. Justification – my past when I am declared righteous by faith.
2. Sanctification – my present as I am growing in the spirit of God.
3. Glorification – my future when I will be with Him forever.

The power of the cross is displayed when Christ takes the guilty sinner and makes him righteous in the sight of a holy God. 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 3 & 4 of **“At Calvary”**?: *“Now I've giv'n to Jesus ev'rything; Now I gladly own Him as my King; Now my raptured soul can only sing Of Calvary! O, the love that drew salvation's plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.”*

July 19 — It Has Been Written (1 Corinthians 1:19)

1 Corinthians 1:19: “For it has been written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of those who have the ability to discern, I will frustrate.’”

Verse 19: In outlining these verses, John MacArthur points out five reasons that God's wisdom is superior. Its (1) permanence, (2) power, (3) paradox, (4) purpose and (5) presentation.

Isaiah 29:14: “Therefore I will again do an amazing thing amongst these people—an absolutely extraordinary deed. Wise men will have nothing to say, the sages will have no explanation.”

Paul's argument is beautiful. He puts the word of God first with this quotation from Isaiah.

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Ray Stedman says:

But God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and announced that he would deliver his people without any help from the politicians. The Book of Isaiah goes on to record how God did that very thing. The Assyrian army came right up to the gates of Jerusalem and surrounded the city. King Hezekiah could see the hordes of Assyrians, mocking and taunting the Israelites. Their leader, Sennacherib, sent a letter to the king ordering him to surrender, but the king spread it out before the Lord and prayed over it. And God answered. He sent an angel who in one night slew 185,000 of the Assyrian soldiers. (History says that a plague broke out in the Assyrian camp, and overnight 185,000 died. The

Authorized Version puts it in a rather remarkable way: “When they woke up in the morning, behold, they were all dead men.”) God did exactly what he said he would do. He did not ask for any human help. He did it alone, and the land was delivered. Now, Paul picks this up and says it is the way God works, and especially, he works that way in the matter of human redemption.

God doesn’t need any help. He can handle it. He does exceedingly, abundantly more than we could ask or imagine.

Dr. Dwight Pentecost points out there are three reasons why man’s wisdom is not sufficient:

1. Scriptural – verses 19-20.
2. Natural – verse 21.
3. Spiritual – verses 21-25.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of **“Because He Lives”**: *“God sent His Son - they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon; An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives.”*

July 20 — Four Questions (1 Corinthians 1:20)

1 Corinthians 1:20: “Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

Verse 20: When we read this verse, we think of the foolishness of (1) Pharaoh, (2) the Philistines, (3) Goliath and (4) the Midianites.

Paul continues his reference to the book of Isaiah with a somewhat free and combined translation of Isaiah 33:18: “This is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him” and Isaiah 19:12: “But where, O where, are your wise men? Let them tell you, let them find out what the Lord who leads armies has planned for Egypt?”

The last question completes this series of questions: “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” This supports Paul’s statements in verse 19: (1) I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and (2) I will frustrate the ability to discern.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Because He Lives”**: *“How sweet to hold a newborn baby And feel the pride and joy he gives; But greater still the calm assurance: This child can face*

uncertain days because He lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives.”

July 21 — Saving Those Who Are Believing (1 Corinthians 1:21)

1 Corinthians 1:21: “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who are believing.”

Verse 21: Romans 1:19-20: “Because that which is knowable about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For the invisible attributes of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by means of the things that are made, even His eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse.”

A.W. Tozer in *Man—The Dwelling Place of God* said:

A new Decalogue has been adopted by the neo-Christians of our day, the first word of which reads “Thou shalt not disagree”; and a new set of Beatitudes too, which begins “Blessed are they that tolerate everything, for they shall not be made accountable for anything.”

Paul uses the word “foolish” or “foolishness” for the third time in this passage. He continues to preach the word of the cross from verse 18.

John 3:14-15: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”

This verse includes the single condition of salvation in the phrase: “those who are believing.”

John 3:18: “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

John 3:36: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of **“Because He Lives”**: *“And then one day I’ll cross the river; I’ll fight life’s final war with pain. And then, as death gives way to vict’ry, I’ll see the lights of glory - and I’ll know He reigns. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives.”*

July 22 — Signs & Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:22)

1 Corinthians 1:22: “For indeed Jews are asking for signs, and Greeks are searching for wisdom.”

Verse 22: Most of the world passes over the gospel because they are looking for signs and searching for wisdom when they should be coming to the crucified Savior for their eternal salvation.

The Jews are focused on ritual and the Greeks on reason. Matthew 12:38-40: “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’”

Jesus responded to the Jews with the sign of the resurrection.

While the “Jews are asking for signs,” the “Greeks are searching for wisdom.” Acts 17:21-23: “(Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, “To An Unknown God.” What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.’”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“We'll Understand It Better”**?: *“We are often tossed and driv'n on the restless sea of time, Somber skies and howling tempests oft succeed a bright sunshine, In that land of perfect day, when the mists have rolled away, We will understand it better by and by. By and by, when the morning comes, When all the saints of God are gathered home, We will tell the story how we've overcome, For we'll understand it better by and by.”*

July 23 — Preaching Christ (1 Corinthians 1:23)

1 Corinthians 1:23: “But we are preaching Christ, the One who has been crucified; to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness.”

Verse 23: Paul points out that while the “Jews are asking for signs and the Greeks are searching for wisdom,” in contrast, “we are preaching Christ.”

“We are preaching Christ, the One who has been crucified.” The apostle again references the word of the cross in verse 18: “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is

the power of God.”

Because of our preaching of Christ, we respond: “to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness.” Paul uses the word “foolishness” again.

“To the Jews a stumbling block.” There is no place in their theology for a cross or a suffering Messiah. Romans 9:33: “Even as it is written, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who is believing in Him will not be disappointed.’”

1 Peter 2:7-8: “To you therefore who are believing is the preciousness, but to those who are unbelievers. ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this [stone] became a head cornerstone’ and ‘a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock which arouses opposition;’ for they are stumbling at the word, being an unbeliever, to which indeed they were appointed.”

Wisdom fails to recognize sin, but a crucified Christ does.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of **“We’ll Understand It Better”**: *“Trials dark on ev’ry hand, and we cannot understand, All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed Promised Land; But He guides us with His eye and we’ll follow till we die, For we’ll understand it better by and by. By and by, when the morning comes, When all the saints of God are gathered home, We will tell the story how we’ve overcome, For we’ll understand it better by and by.”*

July 24 — Christ the Power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24)

1 Corinthians 1:24: “But to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Verse 24: The apostle used the phrase “being saved” in verse 18, the word “save” in verse 21, but now he uses the word “called” in this verse.

Christ is the primary focus of Paul’s message to the Jews and Greeks that have been called and responded. They will experience “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Jews were interested in the power of God in some sign or miracle while the Greeks were concerned about wisdom.

In the person of Jesus Christ, we find the power to change and the wisdom to love. 1 Corinthians 1:18: “...but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of **“We’ll Understand It Better”**: *“Temptations, hidden snares, often take us unawares, And our hearts are made to bleed for many a thoughtless word or deed, And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best, But we’ll understand it better by and by. By and by, when the morning comes, When all the saints of God are gathered home, We will tell the story how we’ve overcome, For we’ll understand it better by and by.”*

July 25 — The Foolishness of God (1 Corinthians 1:25)

1 Corinthians 1:25: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Verse 25: Paul again uses the word “foolish” or “foolishness.” In response to the wisdom perpetrated by the natural man, the apostle states, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” For those who are fascinated by power, he adds: “the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

James 3:14-18: “But if you are having bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, stop boasting and lying against the truth. This wisdom is not the wisdom coming down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, kind, obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free from insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is being sown in peace for those who are making peace.”

Justin Martyr said: “Pray that, above all things, the gates of light may be opened to you; for these things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by the man to whom God and His Christ have imparted wisdom.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 1 of “**What A Friend We Have In Jesus**”: *“What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev’rything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Ev’rything to God in prayer!”*

July 26 — Take A Good Look (1 Corinthians 1:26)

1 Corinthians 1:26: “For take a good look at your call, brethren that there were not many wise according to human standards, not many powerful, not many well born.”

Verse 26: With the word “for,” Paul states the reason why the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. He asks the Corinthian Christians to “take a good look at your call” and calls them “brethren.”

The apostle outlines three categories in this observation:

1. Not many wise according to human standards.
2. Not many powerful.
3. Not many well born.

Average people like you and me are important to God.

Matthew 11:25: “At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I praise Thee, O

Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes.”

The Lord reveals Himself to those who recognize their need, not to men of wisdom. There are limited numbers of educated, influential and well-connected people who are part of the body of Christ.

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“What A Friend We Have In Jesus”**?: *“Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer.”*

July 27 — God Picked Out (1 Corinthians 1:27)

1 Corinthians 1:27: “But God picked out the foolish things of the world in order that He might put to shame the wise, and God picked out the weak things of the world in order that He might put to shame the powerful.”

Verse 27: The apostle uses the word “foolish” for the last time in this passage.

“God picked out the foolish things of the world” for the purpose: “that He might put to shame the wise.” He also “picked out the weak things of the world” for the purpose: “that He might put to shame the powerful.”

Jesus said of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:11: “Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read:

Someone has suggested that the Creator used dust, not uranium, to make man. When He spoke to Moses, it was from the burning of a small *bush*, not a mighty cedar. He chose as His dwelling place a skin-covered tabernacle, not one of the magnificent temples of the ancient world. When Joshua commemorated the crossing of the Jordan, he erected a monument; but instead of using polished marble, he took 12 ordinary stones out of a river bed. During the time of the judges, Samson wielded the jawbone of a donkey to slay 1,000 of the enemies of the Lord. David was just a lad when he conquered mighty Goliath with a single stone hurled from a seemingly weak weapon—a sling. Five loaves and two fishes provided by a boy were multiplied by the Lord to feed a multitude.

Think of it! God takes sinful human beings and makes them His very own. Then He employs their limited abilities, and through them accomplishes His work in this world. To the unsaved person this is ridiculous. But to the believer it's an expression of His unfathomable

grace, and indication that He uses “the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

May this truth impress upon us anew the words of the apostle Paul: “But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (2 Cor. 10: 17).

—P.R.V.

Inadequate but mighty—How strange, yet wholly true; Weak men endued with power The Lord’s blest work shall do!

—G.W.

Christ often uses the smallest tools to perform the largest tasks.

—D.J.D.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of **“What A Friend We Have In Jesus”**: *“Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge, Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do your friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He’ll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there.”*

July 28 — No Flesh Should Boast (1 Corinthians 1:28-29)

1 Corinthians 1:28: “And the insignificant (not well born) of the world and those who have been utterly despised, God picked out, the things that are not, in order that He might nullify the things that are.”

1 Corinthians 1:29: “in order that no flesh should boast before God.”

Verse 28: Paul used the words “God picked out” three times in verses 27-28. Three purpose clauses followed the phrases, “God picked out”:

1. God picked out the foolish things of the world in order that He might put to shame the wise.
2. God picked out the weak things of the world in order that He might put to shame the powerful.
3. God picked out, the things that are not, in order that He might nullify the things that are.

Verse 29: This is the ultimate purpose in “God picking out” the foolish, the weak and the things that are not. It is “in order that no flesh should boast before God.”

God desires every knee to bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Heaven is made available to sinful man to the glory and praise of the Father and the Son.

2 Corinthians 10:17-18: “But he who is boasting, let him be boasting

in the Lord. For not he who is commending himself is approved, but whom the Lord is commending.”

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and this [salvation] is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God; not because of works, in order that no one might boast.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“When We All Get To Heaven”**: *“Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, Sing His mercy and His grace; In the mansions bright and blessed He’ll prepare for us a place. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.”*

July 29 — In Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30)

1 Corinthians 1:30: “But out from Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

Verse 30: At the moment we receive Christ by faith, we are taken out of Adam and placed in Jesus Christ. He is all we need. Colossians 3:11b: “Christ is all, and in all.”

“Out from Him you are in Christ Jesus, who (Jesus Christ) became wisdom to us from God.” Colossians 2:3: “Christ, in whom are all the hidden treasures of the wisdom and knowledge.”

Colossians 2:9-10: “Because in Him there is dwelling all the fullness of the divine nature bodily. And you are in Him, having been filled full [in Him] who is the head of every ruler and authority.”

The wisdom of God resides in a person, Jesus Christ, not in a philosophy. Wisdom means these three things:

1. Righteousness. – points to the past.

Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; even as it has been written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”

I am declared righteous before God the moment I receive Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. My righteousness is now a person—the Lord Jesus Christ.

John Bunyan said: “My righteousness has been in heaven for 1800 years.” He is our righteousness.

2. Sanctification – points to the present.

As we grow in our relationship to the Lord, we are becoming more and more like His Son on a daily basis. “And soon we shall be

like Him for we shall see Him as He is.”

3. Redemption – points to the future and refers to the redemption of the body.

Romans 8:23: “And not only this, but also we ourselves who are having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves are groaning within ourselves, waiting eagerly our adoption, the redemption of our body.”

Romans 8:38-39: “For I stand convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things about to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **“When We All Get To Heaven”**: *“While we walk the pilgrim pathway Clouds will overspread the sky; But when trav’ling days are over, Not a shadow, not a sigh. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.”*

July 30 — Boasting In the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31)

1 Corinthians 1:31: “In order that, just as it has been written: ‘He who is boasting, let him be boasting in the Lord.’”

Verse 31: This is God’s ultimate goal and purpose. Wisdom’s purpose is for the glorification of God. In verses 27-31, we have seen five purpose clauses of God’s wisdom:

1. God picked out the foolish things of the world in order that He might put to shame the wise.
2. God picked out the weak things of the world in order that He might put to shame the powerful.
3. God picked out, the things that are not, in order that He might nullify the things that are.
4. In order that no flesh should boast before God.
5. In order that, just as it has been written: ‘He who is boasting, let him be boasting in the Lord.’

What are we boasting in today? Wisdom? Wealth? Power? Position? Character? Are we truly “boasting” in the Lord?

Man’s wisdom leaves man to boast in man, but God’s wisdom leaves man to boast in God.

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse

3 of **“When We All Get To Heaven”**?: *“Let us then be true and faithful, Trusting, serving ev’ry day; Just one glimpse of Him in glory Will the toils of life repay. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.”*

July 31 — When I Come (1 Corinthians 2:1)

1 Corinthians 2:1: “And when I came to you, brethren, I came not as a superior person in speech or wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.”

Verse 1: The Corinthians criticized the apostle Paul for three things: (1) his appearance, (2) what he said and (3) what he wrote. In this verse, the apostle begins to address these complaints.

As we begin chapter 2, we have Paul’s wisdom and witness demonstrated before us, his concept of the ministry. We see four things in these verses: (1) the minister, (2) the message, (3) the method and (4) the motive.

In an effort to show the Corinthians the foolishness of their division, Paul plays down any of his positive qualities and speaks of his weaknesses. Paul shared the attitude of John the Baptist who said, “He, Christ, must be continually increasing and I must be decreasing.”

“I came not as a superior person in speech.” Moses offered his excuses to the Lord:

1. Who shall I say sent me?
2. They won’t believe me.
3. I am not eloquent.

But the Lord answered him in Exodus 4:12: “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

“When I came to you, brethren, I came not as a superior person in speech or wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.” The word “testimony” could be translated *“mystery.”* The Greek words are very similar. The mystery of God is that righteousness, sanctification and redemption come through a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 4 of **“When We All Get To Heaven”**: *“Onward to the prize before us, Soon His beauty we’ll behold; Soon the pearly gates will open, We shall tread the streets of gold. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.”*

∞ AUGUST ∞

August 1 — For I Determined (1 Corinthians 2:2)

1 Corinthians 2:2: “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and that One having been crucified.”

Verse 2: Paul had already confronted the philosophers on Mars Hill in Athens before he headed to Corinth. I believe that experience contributed to his determination: “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and that One having been crucified.”

This is the apostle’s third reference to the cross:

1. For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness – verse 18.
2. But we are preaching Christ, the One who has been crucified – verse 23.
3. Jesus Christ, and that One having been crucified – this verse.

Calvary captivates the heart and kindles the fire of the Spirit.

John 1:29: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

John 12:21: “These therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Beneath The Cross of Jesus”**: *“Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand, The shadow of a mighty Rock Within a weary land; A home within the wilderness, A rest upon the way, From the burning of the noontide heat, And the burden of the day.”*

August 2 — My Message (1 Corinthians 2:3-4)

1 Corinthians 2:3: “And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.”

1 Corinthians 2:4: “And my word (message) and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

Verse 3: In this verse, Paul focuses on his positive attributes in contrast to downplaying his strengths and speaking of his weaknesses in verse 1: “I came not as a superior person in speech and wisdom,” but in contrast “I was with you (1) in weakness and (2) in fear and (3) in much trembling.”

“In weakness and in fear and in much trembling.”

When the apostle speaks of weakness, he is referencing his physical infirmity. 2 Samuel 22:33: “God is my strength and power and He makes my way perfect.”

Paul’s fear was an anxiety to do the right thing, to be pleasing to the Lord.

“In much trembling.” The focus is on the word “much.” Paul used these same two words in Philippians 2:12: “So then, my beloved ones, just as you always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence, with a reverential fear and trembling be working out your own salvation.”

Verse 4: Paul has spoken of himself as the preacher, we have heard his proclamation and his practice is revealed in this verse. It is a view of the *minister*, his *message* and his *method*.

Negatively, “it was not in persuasive words of wisdom,” but, positively, “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

1 Corinthians 1:25: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Acts 2:36-37: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’”

Zechariah 4:6: “‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**Beneath The Cross of Jesus**”: *“Upon that cross of Jesus Mine eye at times can see The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me; And from my smitten heart with tears Two wonders I confess; The wonders of redeeming love And my unworthiness.”*

August 3 — Resting On the Power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5)

1 Corinthians 2:5: “In order that your faith should not be resting on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

Verse 5: This verse shows Paul’s motive. What was his ultimate purpose? The apostle wanted the Corinthians to ground their faith in the person of Jesus Christ, not in a philosophy.

Negatively, “In order that your faith should not be resting on the wisdom of men,” but positively, “on the power of God.”

Faith is the single condition of salvation. He wants their spiritual house to be built on the Rock of Revelation instead of the shifting sands of human philosophy.

This purpose clause beautifully ties together the other purpose clauses in this passage:

1. God picked out the foolish things of the world in order that He might put to shame the wise – verse 27.
2. God picked out the weak things of the world in order that He

might put to shame the powerful – verse 27.

3. God picked out the things that are not, in order that He might nullify the things that are – verse 28.
4. In order that no flesh should boast before God – verse 29.
5. In order that just as it has been written, “He who is boasting, let him be boasting in the Lord” – verse 31.
6. In order that your faith should not be resting on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God – verse 5.

Our passage begins and ends with the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18: “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.” It is the cross of Jesus Christ that has the power to change lives.

In *No Wonder They Call Him Savior*, Max Lucado says:

And, by the way, never were those arms opened so wide as they were on the Roman cross. One arm extending back into history and the other reaching into the future. An embrace of forgiveness offered for anyone who'll come. A hen gathering her chicks. A father receiving his own. A redeemer redeeming the world.

No wonder they call him the Savior.

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“Beneath The Cross of Jesus”**?: *“I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place; I ask no other sunshine than The sunshine of His face; Content to let the world go by, To know no gain nor loss, My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross.”*

August 4 — A Wisdom Among Those Who Are Mature (1 Corinthians 2:6)

1 Corinthians 2:6: “Yet we are speaking a wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away.”

Verse 6: Because the Greeks glorify wisdom, the apostle addresses the conflict between God's wisdom and human wisdom. They were bringing man's wisdom into the church and glorifying the leaders.

In these verses, Paul continues to deal with the problems of disunity and allegiance to human philosophy. Human wisdom was keeping believers from (1) divine wisdom, (2) spiritual growth and (3) unity.

John MacArthur says true wisdom from God:

1. Is not humanly discovered.
2. Is divinely revealed.

This passage defines true wisdom. It is the wisdom of men versus the power of God. 1 Corinthians 13:12: “for now we are seeing by means of a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I am knowing in part, but then I shall fully know even as also I was fully known.”

Romans 8:28: “And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, all things He is working together for good, for those who are called in accordance with His purpose.”

The word “yet” references verse 5: “In order that your faith should not be resting on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

“Yet we are speaking a wisdom among those who are mature.” Maturity is related to wisdom and the ability to use that wisdom. Proverbs 9:10-12: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.”

“Yet we are speaking a wisdom among those who are mature; (negatively) a wisdom, however, (1) not of this age, (2) nor of the rulers of this age, (they are characterized as) who are passing away.”

2 Corinthians 4:4: “In whose case the god of this world blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Luke 12:19-20: “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’”

Jack Mayhall in his book, *Discipleship: The Price and the Prize* said:

In order for the Master's life to master you, you must master the Master's life.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of **“Give of Your Best to The Master”**: *“Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor Into the battle for truth. Jesus has set the example; Dauntless was He, young and brave; Give Him your loyal devotion, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation's full armor, Join in the battle for truth.”*

August 5 — God's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:7)

1 Corinthians 2:7: "But we are speaking God's wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom having been hidden, which God decided upon beforehand before the ages to our glory."

Verse 7: *The Living Bible* translates this verse: "Our words are wise because they are from God, telling of God's wise plan to bring us into the glories of heaven. This plan was hidden in former times, though it was made for our benefit before the world began."

J.B. Phillips then translates this verse: "The wisdom we speak of is that mysterious secret wisdom of God which he planned before the creation for our glory today."

Colossians 1:27: "To whom God desired to make known what is the wealth of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

God's wisdom spoken by the apostle Paul and other believers is a wisdom spoken in a mystery. A mystery is a truth yet unrevealed that has been revealed at this time. Both Jesus and Paul speak of the mysteries of God.

1 Corinthians 15:51: "Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." In this verse, Paul speaks of the mystery of the rapture of the church, but earlier in the Ephesians passage, he spoke of the mystery of the church—the body of Christ—made up of both Jew and Gentile.

"But we are speaking God's wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom having been hidden, which God decided upon beforehand before the ages to our glory."

Our complete and eternal salvation is part of the wisdom of God, hidden through the ages. As Paul speaks, this mystery is now revealed.

Andrew Reed wrote these lyrics to a Lutheran hymn:

Holy Ghost, with light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away,
Turn my darkness into day.

Max Lucado in his book, *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*, says:

Nearing the climax of the story, God, motivated by love and directed by divinity, surprised everyone. He became a man. In an untouchable mystery, he disguised himself as a carpenter and lived in a dusty Judean village. Determined to prove his love for his creation, he walked incognito through his own world. His calloused hands touched wounds and his compassionate tongue touched hearts. He became one of us.

Have you ever seen such determination? Have you ever witnessed such a desire to communicate? If one thing didn't work he'd try another. If one

approach failed, he'd try a new one. His mind never stopped. "In the past God spoke...at many times and in various ways," writes the author of Hebrews, "but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **"Give of Your Best to The Master"**: *"Give of your best to the Master; Give Him first place in your heart; Give Him first place in your service, Consecrate every part. Give, and to you shall be given; God His beloved Son gave. Gratefully seeking to serve Him, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation's full armor, Join in the battle for truth."*

August 6 — Understanding God's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:8)

1 Corinthians 2:8: "The wisdom which none of the rulers of this age have understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Verse 8: In the previous verse, the apostle said: "we are speaking God's wisdom in a mystery." In this verse, he expands on this wisdom as "wisdom which none of the rulers of this age have understood." In verse 6, Paul wrote this wisdom is "not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age." He continues to speak of God's wisdom with this statement: "wisdom which none of the rulers of this age have understood" and continues with the reason: "for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

The apostle again focuses on the cross of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:2: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and that One having been crucified."

1 Corinthians 1:23: "But we are preaching Christ, the One who has been crucified; to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness."

Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of **"Give of Your Best to The Master"**: *"Give of your best to the Master; Naught else is worthy His love. He gave Himself for your ransom, Gave up His glory above: Laid down His life without murmur, You from sin's ruin to save; Give Him your heart's adoration, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation's full armor, Join in the battle for truth."*

August 7 — Prepared For Those Who Are Loving Him (1 Corinthians 2:9)

1 Corinthians 2:9: “But even as it has been written: ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, so many things as God prepared for those who are loving Him.’”

Verse 9: In this verse, Paul references Isaiah 64:4 and Isaiah 65:17 regarding the wisdom of God. This verse explains the reason for the crucifixion. There are three characteristics of these things:

1. Eye has not seen.
2. Ear has not heard.
3. Have not entered the heart of man.

In 1 John 1:1, he says of Jesus Christ: “That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life.”

John MacArthur says of this verse in his 1 Corinthians commentary:

Paul is not referring to the wonders of heaven, but to the wisdom God has prepared for believers. His point is that the natural eyes, ears, and hearts of men cannot know or comprehend His wisdom. It is prepared only for those who love Him.

It is a complete surprise! 2 Timothy 3:7: “Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Deuteronomy 29:29: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”

The apostle concludes with this phrase: “so many things as God prepared for those who are loving Him.” What are some of the “many things” God has prepared?

John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

He has prepared:

1. A place for us to live eternally.
2. Amenities we cannot even comprehend.
3. Eternal life for those born again by the Spirit into His family.
4. Forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ upon the cross.
5. A righteousness which is not our own.

We cannot comprehend all that God has prepared for those who love Him. Revelation 22:12: “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”**?: *“Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

August 8 — The Depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:10)

1 Corinthians 2:10: “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit is continually exploring all things, even the depths of God.”

Verse 10: In this verse, the apostle points out the reason we can utter things hidden from the eye, ear and mind of man: “for to us God revealed them through the Spirit.”

John 16: 13-14: “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.”

As this verse continues, Paul provides a second reason to help explain this first reason why God revealed these things through the Spirit: “for the Spirit is continually exploring all things, even the depths of God.”

Romans 11:33-34: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and incomprehensible His ways! For whoever knew the mind of the Lord? Or who became His counselor?”

John Oxenham wrote this beautiful poem:

God's Handwriting

He writes in characters too grand
For our short sight to understand;
We catch but broken strokes, and try
To fathom all the mystery
Of withered hopes, of death, of life,
The endless war, the useless strife —
But there, with larger, clearer sight,
We shall see this—His way was right.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 2 of **“Jesus, I Am**

Resting, Resting: “O, how great Thy loving kindness, Vaster, broader than the sea! O how marvelous Thy goodness, Lavished all on me! Yes, I rest in Thee, Belovèd, Know what wealth of grace is Thine, Know Thy certainty of promise, And have made it mine. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”

August 9 — The Thoughts of God (1 Corinthians 2:11)

1 Corinthians 2:11: “For who among men is knowing the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? In the same manner also the thoughts of God no one has known except the Spirit of God.”

Verse 11: Paul uses a question in this verse to illustrate the Spirit of God exploring and knowing all things, even the depths of God: “For who among men is knowing the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him?”

In *God’s Teacher*, Ray Stedman asks:

Do you ever try to tell your troubles to your dog? I know people who do. I’ve done it myself. A dog is man’s best friend; he seems so sympathetic. Do you know what your dog will do if you talk to him? He’ll whine, wag his tail, and lick you on the face. He knows you’re trying to get something across; he is trying so hard to understand, but he cannot comprehend the things of a man. If you sit down and tell your troubles to your wife, however, she will understand. Or if you tell your troubles to your husband, or your friend, they will understand. Fortunate is the man whose wife is his friend, or the woman whose husband is her friend. They can understand because the spirit which is in man shares a common basis of knowledge.

After the question, Paul continues applying his illustration in the verse: “In the same manner also the thoughts of God no one has known except the Spirit of God.” For us to know anything about God, the Spirit of God will have to reveal those truths to us.

William Temple said: “Christianity is the total commitment of all I know of me to all I know of Jesus Christ.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”**: *“Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art, And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, Satisfies my heart; Satisfies its deepest longings, Meets, supplies its every need, Compasseth me round with blessings: Thine is love indeed! Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

August 10 — The Things Freely Given To Us By God (1 Corinthians 2:12)

1 Corinthians 2:12: “Now we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, in order that we might come to know the things freely given to us by God.”

Verse 12: The apostle wants us to understand that we have personally received the Spirit of God. Negatively, “not the spirit of the world,” but, positively, “the Spirit who is from God.” The Spirit was received at salvation.

Romans 8:16-17: “The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”

The salvation experience is offered if we will just take it. In verses 9 and 10, God *prepared* and *revealed*. In this verse, we have *received*:

1. God *prepared* for those who love Him – verse 9.
2. God *revealed* them through the Spirit – verse 10.
3. We *received* the Spirit who is from God – verse 12.

John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

At the end of this verse, Paul provides the purpose for this statement: “in order that we might come to know the things freely given to us by God.”

The word “things” references verse 9: “so many things as God prepared for those who are loving Him.” These “things” are those revealed to us by the Spirit of God.

In verses 9 and 10, God *prepared* and *revealed*. In this verse, we have *received*. The apostle then adds the purpose “in order that”:

1. We might *come to know* the things freely given us by God.”

Romans 8:31-32: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who could be against us? Indeed, He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 4 of “**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting**”: “*Ever lift Thy face upon me As I work and wait for Thee; Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth's dark shadows flee. Brightness of my Father's glory, Sunshine of my Father's face, Keep me ever trusting, resting, Fill me with Thy grace. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.*”

August 11 — Taught By the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13)

1 Corinthians 2:13: “Which things we also are speaking, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

Verse 13: Paul again references the things “prepared for those who are loving Him” in verse 9 and these things “freely given to us by God” in verse 12. Negatively, this speaking is “not in words taught by human wisdom,” but, positively, “taught by the Spirit.” This process combines “spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

John 16:15: “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.”

In *God's Teacher*, Ray Stedman points out in this 1 Corinthians passage:

What I think Paul is describing here is the process of taking the wisdom of God, these great facts about our personalities and our makeup, the facts about life, the facts about God himself that are revealed in this secret and hidden wisdom of God, and fitting them to the circumstances and the personalities of each individual. In other words, making the Word living to us. That is the work of the Spirit of God as well. We have all had that experience, if we are believers.

In *Our Daily Bread*, I read this daily devotional called “From Mind to Mouth”:

Have you ever heard of the condition called “aphasia”? It is a loss of the ability to speak. This problem results when the message from the brain is unable to get to the tongue because of an injury or illness.

A similar spiritual malady affects many Christians. They know Jesus Christ, but they never speak of Him. They are familiar with God's plan of salvation, but they never communicate it to others. They do not demonstrate the impelling force of the early Christians who said, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). This faulty connection between knowledge and testimony must be corrected. Often fear causes the breakdown, or sometimes sin blocks our freedom to speak about Christ. Only as the believer relies on the power of the Holy Spirit and forsakes his sin can he consistently share Christ with others.

Just before His ascension, the risen Christ assured His disciples of power for the transmission of His message to the world (Acts 1:8). That power is the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit. Every believer has this source.

But if we quench or grieve the Holy Spirit, our witness in words will be either ineffective or nonexistent.

Let's evaluate ourselves. Are we relaying to others the knowledge we have of Jesus Christ? We must keep the message of the gospel flowing to those around us who need to hear it. We can't let spiritual aphasia cripple our witness. —P.R.V.

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 1 & 2 of **“May The Mind of Christ, My Savior”**?: *“May the mind of Christ, my Savior, Live in me from day to day, By His love and power controlling All I do and say. May the Word of God dwell richly In my heart from hour to hour, So that all may see I triumph Only through His power.”*

August 12 — Not Accepting the Things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14)

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But the unspiritual man is not accepting the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them, because it must be examined in a manner consistent with the (divine) Spirit.”

Verse 14: This verse begins with the contrast “but.” Paul contrasts the person who has not come to know Jesus Christ, the “unspiritual man” in this verse, with the “spiritual man” in verses 15 and 16.

“But the unspiritual man is not accepting the things of the Spirit of God.” In 1 Corinthians 2:8, we read “the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age have understood.” In this verse, Paul adds “the unspiritual man is not accepting the things of the Spirit of God.” Unbelievers do not have a perception of this true wisdom.

1 Corinthians 1:18: “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.”

The words “not accepting” include not only an attitude, but also an action. His attitude illuminates that he doesn't have the capacity, but his action reveals he doesn't want it or rejects it. An example is an angry response when we say “No!” Then, we punctuate our response by slamming the door. This was also exemplified by the responses of the scribes and Pharisees in how they rejected Jesus Christ's words of wisdom in His ministry.

The apostle states the reason for this attitude and action of the unspiritual man: “for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them, because it must be examined in a manner consistent with the (divine) Spirit.”

The unspiritual man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for two reasons:

1. They are foolishness to him.
2. He is unable to understand them.

Without the Spirit of God, it is impossible for the unspiritual man to understand God's wisdom.

In his commentary, William Barclay says:

So in 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul speaks of the man who is *psuchikos*. He is the man who lives as if there was nothing beyond physical life and there were no needs other than material needs, whose values are all physical and material. A man like that cannot understand spiritual things. A man who thinks that nothing is more important than the satisfaction of the sex urge cannot understand the meaning of chastity; a man who ranks the amassing of material things as the supreme end of life cannot understand generosity; and a man who has never a thought beyond this world cannot understand the things of God. To him they look mere foolishness. No man need be like this; but if he stifles "the immortal longings" that are in his soul he may make himself like this so that the Spirit of God will speak and he will not hear.

In *God's Teacher*, Ray Stedman says of this 1 Corinthians passage:

People who live like this are what we call men and women of the world. Their viewpoint is natural; it is instinctive with them; it is from birth. This is what Paul describes here as the natural man, the man who sees nothing beyond this life worth considering or doing much about. As someone who has well put it:

Into this world to eat and to sleep,
And to know no reason why he was born,
Save to consume the corn,
Devour the cattle, flock and fish,
And leave behind an empty dish.

The apostle then provides a final reason: "because it must be examined in a manner consistent with the (divine) Spirit." The one primary prerequisite to gaining insight into spiritual truth is you must be a believer. When you receive Jesus Christ, the Spirit comes to dwell in you and to guide you into truth. When Christ is your Savior, you have a heart open to the Spirit of God and to receive His teaching.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verses 3 & 4 of "**May The Mind of Christ, My Savior**": *"May the peace of God my Father Rule my life in everything, That I may be calm to comfort Sick and sorrowing. May the love of Jesus fill me As the waters fill the sea; Him exalting, self abasing, This is victory."*

August 13 — Examining All Things (1 Corinthians 2:15)

1 Corinthians 2:15: “But he who is spiritual is examining all things, yet he himself is not being examined by anyone.”

Verse 15: In this verse, the apostle begins his contrast between the unspiritual man and the spiritual man with the word “but.” The spiritual man is God’s normal, healthy child who has a desire to be examining all things as a believer.

1 Peter 2:2: “Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow up in salvation.”

Psalms 42:1-2 (NIV): “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”

Jeremiah 15:16: “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.”

Psalms 1:1-3: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

“He who is spiritual is examining all things, yet he himself is not being examined by anyone.” The spiritual man cannot be understood by someone who is not spiritual.

The natural or unspiritual man does not understand the desire of the believers to fellowship, read the Word of God, and commune with the Heavenly Father through prayer. These concepts are foreign to him. He cannot comprehend how a believer deepens their relationship with the Lord.

In August 6th of *Renewed Day by Day*, A.W. Tozer said:

A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see, expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst.

He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passeth knowledge.

The man who has met God is not looking for something—he has found it. He is not searching for light—upon him the Light has already shined!

His religion is not hearsay. He is not a copy, not a facsimile print: he is

an original from the hand of the Holy Ghost!

He may hear the tin whistle starting every new parade, but he will be cautious. He is waiting for a trumpet note that will call him away from the hurly-burly and set in motion a series of events that will result at last in a new heaven and a new earth.

He can afford to wait!

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 5 & 6 of **"May The Mind of Christ, My Savior"**: *"May I run the race before me, Strong and brave to face the foe, Looking only unto Jesus As I onward go. May His beauty rest upon me, As I seek the lost to win, And may they forget the channel, Seeing only Him."*

August 14 — The Mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16)

1 Corinthians 2:16: "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we are having the mind of Christ."

Verse 16: Paul states the final reason the spiritual man isn't being examined by anyone: "who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him?" This is a follow-up question to verse 11: "For who among men is knowing the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him?"

Notice the apostle's response to this question has transitioned to the word "we" when he references the spiritual man: "But we are having the mind of Christ."

Psalm 119:18: "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

Luke 24:45: "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect (honorable), whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is appealing (attractive), if there is any virtue and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind be dwelling on these things."

We began the passage with the cross of Christ and end the passage with the mind of Christ.

A primary characteristic of a mature believer is a heart open to the Spirit of God to learn.

Jesus warns about "casting our pearls before swine." These pearls are pearls of wisdom. They will not be accepted, appreciated or acknowledged by the unspiritual man. In the world's wisdom, there is always another way, a second opinion or a creative alternative.

The wisdom of the world believes: “Eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow you will die.” The world encourages abortion, divorce, trying drugs, smoking, drinking, living for the here and now and accumulating as much as you can materially. The wisdom of the world tells us it is OK to be homosexual—that we are intellectually broad-minded to consider all of the alternatives.

God’s wisdom is revealed in John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”

Acts 4:12: “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”

Isaiah 43:11: “I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.”

However, as a believer, it is possible to get off track of God’s wisdom and fail in our ministry of effectively relating His perfect will for our lives.

James 3:13-18: “Who is wise and learned among you? Let him show by his praiseworthy way of life his works with humility of wisdom. But if you are having bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, stop boasting and lying against the truth. This wisdom is not the wisdom coming down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, kind, obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free from insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is being sown in peace for those who are making peace.”

This is a significant morning. This is our 63rd wedding anniversary. I love you, Pearl.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 1 of Fanny Crosby’s hymn, “**My Saviour First of All**”: *“When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, When the bright and glorious morning I shall see; I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, And His smile will be the first to welcome me. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, And redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hand.”*

August 15 — Babes In Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1)

1 Corinthians 3:1: “And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.”

Verse 1: The word “and” references 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 as Paul contrasted the unspiritual and spiritual man. In this verse, he calls them “brethren” so he is addressing Christians.

Negatively, “I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men,” but, positively, “as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.”

In chapter 2:14-15 and this verse, Paul gave the description of three different men. All of us fit into one of these descriptions:

1. In chapter 2:14: “the unspiritual man is not accepting the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him.” This is a spiritually dead man.
2. In chapter 2:15: “he who is spiritual is examining all things.” This is a spiritual man delivered by the wisdom of God.
3. In this verse: “but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.” This is a spiritual man deformed by the wisdom of the world.

Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* said:

The true expression of Christian character is not in good-doing, but in God-likeness. If the Spirit of God has transformed you within, you will exhibit divine characteristics in your life, not just good human characteristics. God’s life in us expresses itself as **God’s** life, not as human life trying to be godly. The secret of a Christian’s life is that the supernatural becomes natural in him as a result of the grace of God, and the experience of this becomes evident in the practical, everyday details of life, not in times of intimate fellowship with God. And when we come in contact with things that create confusion and a flurry of activity, we find to our own amazement that we have the power to stay wonderfully poised even in the center of it all.

The apostle describes the Corinthians in two ways: (1) men of flesh and (2) babes in Christ. He gave them what was suited for their “babyhood.”

Some of the most difficult people in the world are those who have grown old without growing up.

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of “**My Saviour First of All**”? : *“Oh, the soul thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face, And the luster of His kindly beaming eye; How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love and grace, That prepare for me a mansion in the sky. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, And redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hand.”*

August 16 — Milk To Drink (1 Corinthians 3:2)

1 Corinthians 3:2: “I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.”

Verse 2: Paul tailored his teachings for their needs: “milk to drink, not solid food.” Positively, “I gave you milk to drink,” but, negatively, “not solid

food.” He describes his 18-month ministry among them as a “milk” ministry.

1 Peter 2:2: “Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow up in salvation.”

Hebrews 5:11-14: “Concerning Him there is much to be said, and it is hard to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing (hard of hearing). For though by this time you are under moral obligation to be teachers, you are having need again for someone to be teaching you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have become such as are having need of milk and not solid food. For everyone who is partaking only of milk is unacquainted with the teaching about righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice are having their powers of perception trained to discern good and evil.”

In this verse, Paul states the reason for his tailored teachings during his ministry with them: “for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.”

This letter to the Corinthians was written four years later. Even with the passage of time, they haven’t grown. They are not able to handle more.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of “**My Saviour First of All**”: *“Oh, the dear ones in glory, how they beckon me to come, And our parting at the river I recall; To the sweet vales of Eden they will sing my welcome home; But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, And redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hand.”*

August 17 — You Are Still Fleshly (1 Corinthians 3:3)

1 Corinthians 3:3: “For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking around like mere men?”

Verse 3: A weakness in verse 1 becomes a willfulness in verse 3 over time. 1 Corinthians 3:1 describes us all as men of flesh, but we do not have to be fleshly—controlled by the flesh.

There are two indications or marks of carnality in chapter 1:1:

1. The exaltation of human leadership.
2. The divisions.

Being “not yet able” and “still fleshly” indicates there is arrested development in the Corinthians. Because they are living in the flesh rather than the Spirit, they are not making spiritual progress and growth.

For many people, they believe the Christian life is like running into the wind or riding a bicycle up hill. There is a time when you can coast

and freewheel on the downside. However, this never happens in the Christian life. It is a constant pressing on toward the mark and continuous development of Christlikeness during our days here on earth.

“For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking around like mere men?” Jealousy is an attitude. It is an inner emotional condition, but strife is an outward action expressing selfishness.

James 3:14-17: “But if you are having bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, stop boasting and lying against the truth. This wisdom is not the wisdom coming down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is disorder and every evil thing.”

“Are you not fleshly, and are you not walking around like mere men?” Satan is the mastermind behind the Corinthians stunted growth.

Max Lucado in *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior* says:

His rhetoric of rationalization never ends. The father of lies croons and woos like a traveling peddler, promising the moon and delivering disaster. “Step right up. Taste my brew of pleasure and sing my song of sensuality. After all, who knows about tomorrow?”

Like a fisherman, Satan baits his hook according to the appetite of the fish. His primary tool is not an active sinner, but an inactive saint.

The best measure of a spiritual life is its obedience, not its ecstasies.

P.T. Forsyth remarked: “If within us we find nothing over us, we succumb to what is around us.”

The flesh is a powerful weapon in the hands of the devil. He can use it to stifle our growth and destroy our effectiveness. May God work in us to learn the principles of walking in the Spirit so we might become those who are continually growing in spiritual Christlikeness.

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of **“My Saviour First of All”**: *“Thro’ the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears will ever fall; In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight; But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, And redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hand.”*

August 18 — By Your Words Shall We Know You (1 Corinthians 3:4)

1 Corinthians 3:4: “For when one is saying: ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not mere men?”

Verse 4: Paul prompts them with another question and repeats the phrase “mere men” in the question. This verse references 1 Corinthians 1:12: “Now I am meaning this, that each one of you is saying: ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of Cephas,’ and ‘I of Christ.’” However, he omits Peter and Christ from this reference.

A man’s relationships with his fellow men are reflective of his relationship with God.

The key to our growth and spiritual development is time with our spiritual discipline. This involves reading the Word of God and spending time with the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be obedient and surrender our will to Him.

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read:

The Presbyterian minister Theodore Cuyler wanted to learn all he could about the godly Robert McCheyne. So he asked an elderly gentleman who knew him, “Can you tell me some of the texts or outstanding quotations he used?” The man shook his head. “I’m sorry, but I don’t remember any.” Perplexed, Cuyler inquired, “Well, don’t you recall anything about him?” “Oh, that’s a different question,” said the gray-haired Christian. “I’ll never forget the time McCheyne came to visit our home when I was just a lad. He said to me, ‘Jamie, I’ve come to see your sick sister.’ Then he looked into my eyes, and - added with deep emotion, ‘And Jamie, I’m very concerned about your soul.’ I’ve forgotten his sermons, but I can still feel the tremble of his hand and see the tears in his eyes. His concern for my soul resulted in my conversion.”

As you witness to others, plant the seed of God’s Word with zeal and warmhearted compassion.

—H.G.B.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 1 of **“Praise Him! Praise Him!”**: *“Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim! Hail Him! hail Him! highest archangels in glory; Strength and honor give to His holy Name! Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard His children, In His arms He carries them all day long: Praise Him! Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness. Praise Him! Praise Him! Ever in joyful song!”*

August 19 — Servants Through Whom You Believed (1 Corinthians 3:5)

1 Corinthians 3:5: “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.”

Verse 5: The apostle asks two additional questions: (1) What then is Apollos? (2) And what is Paul? Who they are isn't important, but what they are. They are “servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.”

The Lord used them as servants to present the message of the gospel. Through their service, the Lord gave the Corinthians the opportunity to come to know Him.

“Through whom you believed” is the single condition of salvation. God gave each Corinthian an opportunity to respond and He gives that opportunity to us, also.

2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord of the promise is not delaying, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not desiring for any to perish but for all to make room for (come to) repentance.”

Matthew 20:26-28: “It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Joseph C. Aldrich in his book, *Love for All Your Worth*, says:

Do you want to know an excellent way to add practical value to your lovability level? Take the importance of little things seriously! Things like a simple note, a pretty card, a surprise bouquet, an opened door, a kind word, a helping hand, a touch, a listening ear. Friend, that list is loaded with tug power. Who can place a premium on these things? Even the simplest of them may come to hold a cherished place in the memory of another. An act backed by a caring attitude helps the practical become precious. A habit of helping is one compelling way to build value and become more lovable.

Is the Lord giving you another opportunity today to open your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ? Satan wants to distract or detain you from ever making this vital decision. He doesn't want you to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. He will put multiple obstacles in your way to keep you from coming to that moment of salvation by receiving Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 27:1 (NIV): “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **"Praise Him! Praise Him!"**: *"Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! For our sins He suffered, and bled, and died. He our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation, Hail Him! hail Him! Jesus the Crucified. Sound His praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows, Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong. Praise Him! Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness. Praise Him! Praise Him! Ever in joyful song!"*

August 20 — God Was Causing Growth (1 Corinthians 3:6)

1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was, causing the growth."

Verse 6: The apostle uses an agricultural illustration to describe the various ways Paul and Apollos ministered in Corinth. The illustration is similar to the parable of the sower and the seeds Jesus told in Matthew 13. How does the seed respond? It is dependent on the soil. The Corinthians were a new crop.

During his 18-month ministry, Paul had the opportunity to plant many seeds and see several come to know Christ. Apollos came later with a teaching ministry. Paul describes his ministry as "watering."

God was causing the growth! God expects us to grow and mature in the faith. The Corinthians had not followed this pattern. Growth only takes place when we are in fellowship with God and under the control of the Holy Spirit. We must surrender, be submissive and be obedient to His Word.

Peter was very concerned with growth in his epistles. In 1 Peter 2:2, we read: "Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow up in salvation." Then in 2 Peter 3:18: "But be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of **"Praise Him! Praise Him!"**: *"Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! Heav'nly portals loud with hosannas ring! Jesus, Savior, reigneth forever and ever. Crown Him! Crown Him! Prophet, and Priest, and King! Christ is coming! over the world victorious, Pow'r and glory unto the Lord belong. Praise Him! Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness. Praise Him! Praise Him! Ever in joyful song!"*

August 21 — Without Me, You Can Do Nothing (1 Corinthians 3:7)

1 Corinthians 3:7: "So that neither the one who is planting nor the one who is watering is anything, but God who is causing the growth."

Verse 7: Paul concludes his argument that he and Apollos were simply servants with one of them planting and one watering: "so that neither the

one who is planting nor the one who is watering is anything, but God who is causing the growth.”

The focus should always be upon God who causes the growth, not the servants. He is everything!

We should take our direction from Jesus on the night before his crucifixion in John 15:1-8: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

The Corinthians were focused on the servants rather than on their Savior.

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

August 22 — Reward According To His Labor (1 Corinthians 3:8)

1 Corinthians 3:8: “Now the one who is planting and the one who is watering are one; but each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

Verse 8: As servants of the Lord, Paul and Apollos are one. They have the same ministry objectives in Corinth.

Romans 1:5: “Through whom we received grace and apostleship with a view to [promoting] obedience which springs from faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake.”

However, being one in ministry does not mean they will be together at the time of reward. There is focus on the words “each one” in this verse. “Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

Romans 14:12: “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to that he has done whether good or bad.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, By the pow’r of grace divine; Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, And my will be lost in Thine. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

August 23 — God’s Fellow Workers (1 Corinthians 3:9)

1 Corinthians 3:9: “For we are God’s fellow-workers; you are God’s cultivated land, God’s building.”

Verse 9: In describing the ministry in Corinth, the apostle changes his illustration from agricultural to architectural.

Paul described himself and Apollos as “servants through whom you believed” in verse 5, but in this verse, he calls them “God’s fellow workers.” His description also defines the relationship between these ministry workers.

“We are God’s fellow-workers; you are God’s cultivated land, God’s building.” As God’s cultivated land, the Corinthians have been planted and watered.

After the apostle introduced this new illustration of the Corinthians as God’s building, he will continue that example throughout the rest of the passage. Later in this letter in chapter 6, the apostle writes in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: “Or are you not knowing that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you are having from God, and that you are not your own? For you were purchased with a price. Now therefore glorify God in your body.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“Draw Me Nearer”**?: *“O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend! Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

August 24 — Wise Master Builder (1 Corinthians 3:10)

1 Corinthians 3:10: “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be taking heed how he is building upon it.”

Verse 10: Paul considers his whole ministry a gift of grace from a loving, heavenly Father.

“According to the grace of God which was given to me.” It was a free gift. Paul did not earn or deserve this gift.

The apostle continues: “as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it.” In his agricultural illustration, Paul considered his ministry as one of planting and Apollos’ ministry as one of watering. In this architectural illustration, he seems to have the role of architect and chief contractor. The apostle describes himself as a “wise master builder” who has laid a foundation. He sees Apollos and others as builders upon this foundation.

Paul ends the verse with the command: “let each man be taking heed how he is building upon it (the foundation).”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 4 of **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“There are depths of love that I cannot know Till I cross the narrow sea; There are heights of joy that I may not reach Till I rest in peace with Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

August 25 — Another Foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11)

1 Corinthians 3:11: “For no man is able to lay another foundation alongside that which is being laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Verse 11: After Paul’s command and warning in the previous verse: “be taking heed how he is building upon it,” he gives us the reason: “no man is able to lay another foundation alongside that which is being laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

In *God’s Builders*, Ray Stedman says of this 1 Corinthians verse:

Now, in all or any of these manifestations the matter of first importance is the foundation. A church, or a building, is no good if the foundation is no good, and in this case the apostle is very clear to make sure that we understand who that foundation is. He does not leave it to debate; we do not have to argue about it; it is stated as plainly as it can be.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“The Church’s One Foundation”**: *“The Church’s one foundation is Jesus*

Christ her Lord; She is His new creation, By water and the word; From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride; With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died."

August 26 — Building Materials (1 Corinthians 3:12)

1 Corinthians 3:12: "Now if any man is building upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw."

Verse 12: In verse 8, Paul gave the agricultural illustration: "Now the one who is planting and the one who is watering are one; but each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." The apostle uses the word "now" in this verse to indicate a transition to the architectural—building illustration in this verse: "Now if any man is building upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw."

Jesus gave the illustration in Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

The permanent building materials (gold, silver and precious stones) represent the wisdom of God—the Spirit, but the perishable building materials (wood, hay and straw) indicate the wisdom of men—the flesh.

The "precious stones" may reference stones honed out and shaped for the occasion. The apostle may have been describing very fine granite or marble to be used in the building project.

The wisdom of God and the wisdom of man can be seen graphically contrasted in the marriage relationship. The wisdom of man will see the marriage as a temporary relationship like one expressed in the song, "Seasons of the Heart": *"Love is why I came here in the first place, And love is now the reason I must go."* However, God's wisdom views marriage as a permanent relationship that only death can terminate.

It is not only in marriage that we can build with gold, silver and precious stones, but also in our stewardship. As we are faithful to give, we sow a bountiful harvest. 2 Corinthians 9:6: "Now this I am saying: 'He who is sowing sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who is sowing bountifully shall also reap bountifully.'"

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **“The Church’s One Foundation”**: *“Elect from ev’ry nation, Yet one o’er all the earth, Her charter of salvation, One Lord, one faith, one birth; One holy Name she blesses, Partakes one holy food, And to one hope she presses, With ev’ry grace endued.”*

August 27 — Fire Tested (1 Corinthians 3:13)

1 Corinthians 3:13: “The work of each person will become apparent, for the day will make it plain, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.”

Verse 13: Whether each person building is using that which is permanent or perishable will become evident: “for the day will make it plain, because it is to be revealed with fire.” The perishable will burn up, but anything that remains will be left for reward. The fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.

Please note it’s the quality of each man’s work, not the quantity. It is not the amount, but the faithfulness of the individual.

In *God’s Builders*, Ray Stedman says:

Each one of us has an influence on somebody else in the body of Christ. It may be on our children, on our parents, on our friends, on our companions, on our wives, on our husbands. We are building upon the foundation which has been laid in their lives. “What are you building with?” That is the great question. There are two types of material:

One is permanent — gold, silver, costly stones. When it says “precious stones” I do not think Paul means jewels like rubies, diamonds, emeralds, etc. The word really refers to those large foundation stones carved out of granite or marble that could be put upon the foundation to raise the walls and complete the edifice. They were costly stones because they required a great deal of work in quarrying and shaping and fitting them into the place where they ought to be. That is what Paul has in mind. The thing that is characteristic about all of these materials is that they withstand the fire. Gold and silver and costly stones are permanent; they are abiding; they never fail; they do not slip off the foundation; they are in line with the nature of the foundation.

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 5 of **“The Church’s One Foundation”**?: *“Yet she on earth hath union With God, the Three in one, And mystic sweet communion With those whose rest is won. O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we Like them, the meek and lowly, On high may dwell with thee.”*

August 28 — Reward or Suffer Loss (1 Corinthians 3:14-15)

1 Corinthians 3:14: “If any man’s work which he built upon it shall remain, he shall receive a reward.”

1 Corinthians 3:15: “If any man’s work shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.”

Verse 14: After the fire; the gold, silver and precious stones will be all that remain. That which remains shall receive a reward.

There will be a reward when we are faithful to walk in the wisdom of God. We are building ourselves a structure upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. The foundation will remain if it is made of those permanent materials described in this passage which are produced from the wisdom of God.

2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to that he has done whether good or bad.”

In his *1 Corinthians Commentary*, John MacArthur says:

Believers who have right motives, proper conduct, and effective service build with gold, silver, and precious stones. They do constructive work for the Lord and will receive corresponding rewards.

Joni Eareckson Tada in *365 Days of Hope* said:

“The time has come...for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great.”
—Revelation 11:18

Maybe some adults pooh-pooh the idea of rewards, but I don’t. The child in me jumps up and down to think God might actually reward me with something. I remember when I took piano lessons as a kid and would squirm with delight on my bench whenever Mrs. Merson pasted gold crowns on my sheet music for a job well done. I wasn’t so much overjoyed with my performance as I was in pleasing Mrs. Merson. My focus wasn’t on what I did; it was on her approval.

We are judged as sheep at the cross. We are judged as sons now (Hebrews 12). In the future, we will be judged as servants at the judgement seat of Christ.

Verse 15: In verse 14, Paul described the man building with gold, silver and precious stones—with the wisdom of God upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. He contrasts that man with the individual in this verse who is building with the wisdom of men upon the foundation of the Lord. The fire of the judgment seat has consumed everything for which he lived.

“If any man’s work shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss.” Lot is a vivid illustration of this verse. When fire and brimstone fell upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he left and lost everything.

2 Peter 2:8: “For by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, they were tormenting his righteous soul day after day with their lawless deeds.”

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read:

Child of God, are you faithfully serving Jesus each day? If not, your selfish works will all be burned up. It’s very sobering to think of being saved, “yet so as through fire.” Begin serving Christ today!

—H.G.B.

“No crown for your labors,” the Master will say
To some whom He calls by name;
Then, lifting their eyes as they look in His face,
Their hearts will be filled with shame.

—D.J.D.

This will be the case of many who stand before the smoldering ruins of everything for which they’ve lived at the judgment seat of Christ. There will be nothing left worthy of reward.

In J. Vernon McGee’s 1 Corinthians commentary, he says:

I like to put it like this: there are going to be some people in heaven who will be there because their foundation is Christ, but who will smell as if they had been bought at a fire sale! Everything they ever did will have gone up in smoke. They will not receive a reward for their works.

In *God’s Builders*, Ray Stedman includes this poem by Martha Snell Nicholson:

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ
And He shows me His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way, and I see

How I blocked Him here, and I checked Him there,
And I would not yield my will
Will there be grief in my Saviour’s eyes,
Grief, though He loves me still?

He would have me rich, and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing

Down the paths I cannot retrace.

Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break
With the tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands,
I shall bow my uncrowned head...

Lord of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand;
Take me and break me, mould me to
The pattern Thou hast planned!

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of **“Jesus Is All The World To Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, my life, my joy, my all; He is my strength from day to day, without Him I would fall. When I am sad, to Him I go, no other one can cheer me so; When I am sad, He makes me glad, He’s my Friend.”*

August 29 — You Are the Temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16)

1 Corinthians 3:16: “Are you not knowing that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?”

Verse 16: As believers, each of us has a responsibility for ministry in the body. In these remaining verses in chapter 3 and the first five verses of chapter 4, Paul will continue speaking to this point. He begins this section with a question: “Are you not knowing that you are the temple of God?”

The apostle transitions from the foundation and building on that foundation to the temple. The word might be better translated “sanctuary.” It may reference the Holy of Holies where God dwelt.

Paul references the entire Corinthian congregation when he speaks of the temple of God. However, the truth of the verse can be applied to each of us individually. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: “Or are you not knowing that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you are having from God, and that you are not your own? For you were purchased with a price. Now therefore glorify God in your body.”

“Are you not knowing that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?” There are no exceptions. The Spirit of God dwelt in them, as He does with us, as the presence of God dwelt in the Holy of Holies.

Galatians 2:20: “With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2

of **“Jesus Is All The World To Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, my Friend in trials sore; I go to Him for blessings, and He gives them over and o’er. He sends the sunshine and the rain, He sends the harvest’s golden grain; Sunshine and rain, harvest of grain, He’s my Friend.”*

August 30 — The Temple of God Is Holy (1 Corinthians 3:17)

1 Corinthians 3:17: “If any man is ruining the temple of God, God will bring him to ruin, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

Verse 17: After asking a question, Paul provides a condition: “If any man is ruining the temple of God, God will bring him to ruin.”

If the apostle is referencing the Corinthian church, he is pointing out the devastating results from the false teachers who were dividing the church rather than unifying the body by teaching the truth.

This is a sobering statement: “God will bring him to ruin.” Paul adds the reason: “for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

In *How To Destroy a Church*, Ray Stedman says of these 1 Corinthians verses:

We have a very dramatic example of that in the fifth chapter of Acts, where Ananias and Sapphira indulged in a little personal hypocrisy. They pretended to a level of dedication and commitment which they really did not fulfill, and when they came before Peter by the insight of the Spirit he pronounced them guilty, and instantly they both fell dead at Peter’s feet. That was not intended to be a model of what the Spirit is going to do every time there is hypocrisy in the church because he has never done it since. But it is intended to be a message from God as to what happens spiritually in a church when hypocrisy is allowed to pervade the thinking of the congregation. Something dies; something is damaged; some injury occurs, and God takes it very seriously.

“If any man is ruining the temple of God.” When we apply this individually and realize we are each indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we realize our innermost being is a sanctuary, a Holy of Holies where the Spirit of God dwells. This prompts the question, “How can I be ruining the temple of God individually?”

This is an agenda the devil can use in our lives to ruin the church: sin, sleep, sex, steaks, smoke, substance, but also jealousy, gossip, division, tongue, criticism, pride, selfishness and control. These are just a few of the things that can ruin the temple of God and render us disqualified for a reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

“For the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of **“Jesus Is All The World To Me”**: *“Jesus is all the world to me, and true to Him I’ll be; O how could I this Friend deny, when He’s so true to me? Following Him I know I’m right, He watches o’er me day and night; Following Him by day and night, He’s my Friend.”*

August 31 — Deceiving Himself (1 Corinthians 3:18)

1 Corinthians 3:18: “Let no man be deceiving himself. If any man among you is thinking himself to be wise in the things of this age, let him become foolish in order that he may become wise.”

Verse 18: In light of what Paul has stated in verses 16-17, we will see five different commands issues as exhortation in verses 3:18 through 4:5.

Command #1: Let no man be deceiving himself. How do we deceive ourselves? Rationalization, resistance and retreat. We can rationalize our spiritual condition, resist the Spirit of God who is trying to reveal it to us, and retreat from any opportunity to see the real picture of ourselves.

Command #2: Let him become foolish. This is for the purpose: “in order that he may become wise.” He must become humble and broken to receive God’s wisdom.

The person who considers himself wise probably glories in his education or success, or that he has no needs.

William Barclay said: “The old proverb laid it down, ‘He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not is a fool; avoid him. He who knows not, and knows that he knows not is a wise man; teach him.’”

Bud Robinson said: “Pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the one who has it.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of **“Jesus Is All The World To Me”**?: *“Jesus is all the world to me, I want no better Friend; I trust Him now, I’ll trust Him when life’s fleeting days shall end. Beautiful life with such a Friend, beautiful life that has no end; Eternal life, eternal joy, He’s my Friend.”*

☞ SEPTEMBER ☞

September 1 — Wisdom of the World (1 Corinthians 3:19)

1 Corinthians 3:19: “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it has been written, ‘He is the one who is catching the wise in their craftiness.’”

Verse 19: Just as the wisdom of God is foolishness before the world, the wisdom of the world is foolishness before God.

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But the unspiritual man is not accepting the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them, because it must be examined in a manner consistent with the (divine) Spirit.”

The apostle concludes this verse with a quote from Job 5:13: “He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.”

In his 1 Corinthians commentary, John MacArthur says:

Pride is always at the heart of human wisdom, the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness before God. It is difficult to teach a person who thinks he knows everything. The Roman rhetorician Quintilian said of some of his students, “They would doubtlessly have become excellent scholars if they had not been so fully persuaded of their won scholarship.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of “**Jesus Is Calling**”: *“Jesus is tenderly calling thee home, Calling today, calling today; Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam Farther and farther away? Calling today. Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today.”*

September 2 — Reasonings of the Wise (1 Corinthians 3:20)

1 Corinthians 3:20: “And again, ‘The Lord is knowing the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless.’”

Verse 20: In this verse, the apostle quotes from Psalm 94:11: “The Lord knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.” Man can only look on the outward appearance, but God looks in the heart. He knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

In *How To Destroy a Church*, Ray Stedman says of this 1 Corinthians verse:

How ridiculous, how foolish are the ways of the world. That is what Paul is saying. “The wisdom of this world is folly with God,” he says. Quoting from Job he says, “God catches the wise in their craftiness,” (Job 5:13). And then from Psalm 94, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the

wise are futile,” (Psalms 94:11). The word, really, is a breath, a puff of air. The words of the wise in the world are like a breath of air, a puff — it is gone, instantly; it changes to something else. Those who give way to that not only damage the church, but they give way to that which in the end proves to be a wasted life.

I will never forget in my own life, as a young Christian many years ago, hearing George Beverly Shea sing the words for which he became famous. They spoke volumes to my own heart along this line.

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.
I'd rather have him than have riches untold.
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.
I'd rather be led by his nail pierced hands
Than to be a king of a vast domain
And be held in sin's dread sway.
I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.*

That is what Paul is talking about. Never mind what the world thinks, never mind what the world says, for the wisdom of the world will prove to be foolish in the end.

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Jesus Is Calling”**: *“Jesus is calling the weary to rest, Calling today, calling today; Bring Him thy burden and thou shalt be blest; He will not turn thee away. Calling today. Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today.”*

September 3 — All Things Are Yours (1 Corinthians 3:21)

1 Corinthians 3:21: “So then, let no one continue to be boasting in men, for all things are yours.”

Verse 21: Paul makes the point of his argument with the words “so then.” The apostle continues exhorting his commands with the third of five commands in this passage:

Command #1: Let no man be deceiving himself.

Command #2: Let him become foolish (in order that he may become wise).

Now:

Command #3: Let no one continue to be boasting in men. This command is referencing Paul, Apollos and Peter. These men were being followed by leaders in the Corinthian church which caused divisions in the church fellowship.

“So then, let no one continue to be boasting in men,” for the reason: “all things are yours.”

1 Peter 1:4: “Unto an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you.”

From *Our Daily Bread*, this reading is titled “All Things Are Yours”:

An elderly Scottish woman stood in the doorway of her cottage and basked in the light and warmth of the summer sun. According to author J. R. Caldwell, she shaded her eyes as she looked up and exclaimed, “I’ve got a whole sun to myself!”

Caldwell commented, “I could say the same. This is just one of the beautiful things in nature that you have as much as I have. [Likewise] you and I and millions of the redeemed have individually the whole heart of Christ... There is room for all.”

This truth is simple and self-evident, yet its implication is so profound that it almost overwhelms us. God’s gracious gift of salvation can be experienced by all who believe (Eph. 1:3-19), and we can fully enjoy its blessings without diminishing their enjoyment by others. We who know Christ and His limitless provisions are not deprived, even though other believers are drawing on them too.

In a sense, every child of God can say, “I’ve got the Son all to myself.” Joy, assurance, peace, and the awareness of His presence are just a few of the many benefits that are given without measure for every believer to enjoy.

Remember, if you are born again, God has given you “every spiritual blessing...in Christ” (v.3).

—R.W.D.

We’re loaded with benefits daily,
Sent down from the Father above;
His mercies and blessings abounding
Are gifts of His marvelous love.

—Anon.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of “**Jesus Is Calling**”: *“Jesus is waiting; O come to Him now, Waiting today, waiting today; Come with thy sins; at His feet lowly bow; Come, and no longer delay. Calling today. Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today.”*

September 4 — All Things Belong To You (1 Corinthians 3:22)

1 Corinthians 3:22: “Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things about to come; all things belong to you.”

Verse 22: Christ is not included in this list. We should boast in Jesus Christ!

The apostle lists eight things that the Corinthians have: “Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things about to come.” Then, concludes this verse similarly to verse 21: “all things are yours,” but in this verse: “all things belong to you.”

Romans 8:38-39: “For I stand convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things about to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world.” Psalm 24:1: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

Hymn writer, Maltbie D. Babcock, wrote these words:

This is my Father’s world,
and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.

This is my Father’s world:
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
his hand the wonders wrought.

“Whether (1) Paul or (2) Apollos or (3) Cephas or the (4) world or (5) life or (6) death or (7) things present or (8) things about to come.”

John 10:28: “And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.”

1 Corinthians 15:55-57: “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who is giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 1:21: “For to me, to be living is Christ, and to have died, that would be a gain.”

Philippians 4:13: “I am having strength for all things in the One who is making me strong.”

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is adequate for you, for power is finding its consummation (or reaching perfection) in the presence of weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

Revelation 21:1-4: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having been prepared as a bride who has been adorned for her groom. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them. And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be any longer mourning or crying or pain for the first things passed away.’”

The Daily Walk Bible writes: “We should be thankful that God always turns out to be bigger than we thought.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of **“Jesus Is Calling”**?: *“Jesus is pleading; O list to His voice, Hear Him today, hear Him today; They who believe on His Name shall rejoice; Quickly arise and away. Calling today. Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today.”*

September 5 — You Belong To Christ (1 Corinthians 3:23)

1 Corinthians 3:23: “And you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.”

Verse 23: We belong to Jesus Christ when we come to know Him. We are His inheritance.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: “Or are you not knowing that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you are having from God, and that you are not your own? For you were purchased with a price. Now therefore glorify God in your body.”

2 Corinthians 10:7: “You are looking at what is before your eyes. If anyone is convinced in his own mind that he belongs to Christ, let him be considering this again within himself, that just as he belongs to Christ, so also do we.”

In *Our Daily Bread* in “The Meaning of Life,” we read:

Life is viewed as being empty and meaningless by many great thinkers who do not believe the Bible. Here are a few quotations from people with brilliant minds, but who have not been illuminated by the truth of God.

“Man is a sick fly, taking a dizzy ride on a gigantic wheel!”

“Life is reasoning on the past, complaining of the present, and trembling for the future!”

“Life is but a hollow bubble!”

“The time man spends here has no more meaning than that of the humblest insect, crawling from one annihilation to another.”

In contrast to such hopelessness, how refreshing are the inspired words of Paul, “For to me to live is Christ!” The apostle’s motivation and strength were found in the Savior!

An anonymous Christian said: “Life with Christ is an endless hope, without Him it is a hopeless end.”

We are the temple of God and belong to Christ. Tragically, these carnal Corinthian Christians are living for self when they belong to Jesus Christ.

In his commentary of 1 Corinthians, Harry Ironside says:

I can say, “Thank God, it all belongs to me, and I am going to reign over it some day.” Or “life—yes, life is mine in which to glorify God.”

The *Daily Walk Bible* says: “The best way to put an idea across is to wrap it up in a person.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of “**Jesus Is Lord of All**”: *“All my tomorrows, all my past - Jesus is Lord of all. I’ve quit my struggles, contentment at last! Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all. Lord of all.”*

September 6 — Servants of Christ (1 Corinthians 4:1)

1 Corinthians 4:1: “In this manner let a man be regarding us, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

Verse 1: In this verse, the apostle provides the fourth of five commands in this passage:

Command #1: Let no man be deceiving himself.

Command #2: Let him become foolish (in order that he may become wise).

Command #3: Let no one continue to be boasting in men.

Command #4: Let a man be regarding us, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Paul wants the Corinthians to regard him and his ministry team as servants and stewards. 1 Corinthians 3:5: “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.” 1 Corinthians 3:9: “For we are God’s fellow-workers; you are God’s cultivated land, God’s building.”

Are we servants and stewards? This is where we pass or fail as Christians.

Ray Stedman in *The True Minister* says of this passage:

The word for servant is the Greek word *huperetes*, which literally means “an under-rower.”

Now everyone in Corinth understood what that word meant. Corinth was

where the war galleys of the Roman Empire crossed through the isthmus that separated the Ionian Sea from the Aegean Sea, and the Corinthians knew that the lowest deck of a war galley was made of single rows of benches on both sides of the ship where the rowers sat. Then on a little deck raised up above them all, so that each rower could see him, was the captain of the ship. It was the rowers' task to row according to what he said. If he wanted the ship to move then they were to row; if he wanted them to stop they had to stop instantly. Their whole business was to obey his orders. Now, that is the word that Paul chooses to describe those who are teachers, preachers and ministers of the Word of God within the congregation of the Church. They are "under-rowers" of Christ.

In *The Daily Walk Bible*, we read: "Ministry is our love for Christ dressed in working clothes."

Ray Stedman in *The True Minister* continues of this passage:

Now what is the work of a minister of Christ? Here Paul uses another term. He calls them "stewards of the mysteries of God." Isn't that an enchanting term? The word for steward is *oikonomos*, meaning "housekeeper." Today I think the nearest equivalent would be "administrator," but perhaps we get at the heart of this when we come right back to the old biblical word "steward" or "stewardess." We know what they are. When you are on an airplane you find a stewardess or a steward who serves coffee, tea, milk (and other beverages), and a tray of food at the proper time. They have been entrusted with certain valuable commodities which they are responsible to dispense. That is what a steward is and that is exactly in line with this New Testament picture.

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of "**Jesus Is Lord of All**": *"All of my conflicts, all my thought - Jesus is Lord of all. His love wins the battles I could not have fought; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all. Lord of all."*

September 7 — Faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2)

1 Corinthians 4:2: "In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful."

Verse 2: A requirement of stewards is faithfulness: (1) in their walk, (2) in their work, and (3) in their warfare. 2 Timothy 1:14: "Guard the precious deposit which has been entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us."

It is faithfulness that counts with God!

Robert E. Coleman in his book, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*, said:

Half-hearted, lukewarm commitment can never be condoned in the ranks of God's army. We are engaged in mortal combat with all the principalities of darkness, and the battle will grow more intense as the end of the age approaches. Nothing less than total allegiance to our Commander-in-chief qualifies soldiers for battle. Christ's call is to martyrdom--to die to our own self-appointed ways, in loving submission to the will of God. His Word is our command, His cross the measure of our obedience. Such consecration may be looked upon as fanaticism by the worldly-wise, but it is the stuff the New Testament church is made of: daring faith that does not think of limits or make excuses; a willingness to go wherever Christ leads, never to stop until His work is finished and the commendation is heard, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it."

St. Augustine said: "To be faithful in little things is a big thing."

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read: "The world crowns success; God crowns faithfulness."

V. Raymond Edman in *The Disciplines of Life* included this poem by Meade MacGuire:

"Father, where shall I work today?"
And my love flowed warm and free.
Then He pointed me out a tiny spot,
And said, "Tend that for me."
I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not that.
Why, no one would ever see,
No matter how well my work was done.
Not that little place for me!"
And the word He spoke, it was not stern,
He answered me tenderly,
"Ah, little one, search that heart of thine;
Art thou working for them or me?
Nazareth was a little place,
And so was Galilee."

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of "**Jesus Is Lord of All**": *"All of my longings, all my dreams - Jesus is Lord of all. All of my failures His power redeems; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all. Lord of all."*

September 8 — Examined By You (1 Corinthians 4:3)

1 Corinthians 4:3: “But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I am not even examining myself.”

Verse 3: The Corinthians were possibly accusing the apostle and his ministry team of unfaithfulness based upon Paul’s response.

Ray Stedman in *The True Minister* comments on this verse:

Stuart Briscoe says there are three kinds of congregational pressure — there is adulation, which swells the head; there is manipulation, which ties the hands; and there is antagonism, which breaks the heart.

I have experienced all three of those as everyone has who seeks to teach and preach the Word of God.

I love the way The King James Bible phrases the latter part of Isaiah 59:19: “...When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”

“But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you.” The Corinthians were examining these individuals instead of regarding them as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Dick Innes in his book, *I Hate Witnessing*, shares:

As Gene Thomas is fond of saying, “Jesus was simply not your ideal Rotarian.” It is a profound irony that the Son of God visited this planet and one of the chief complaints against him was that he was not religious enough.

Philippians 2:1-4: “If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if there is any solace afforded by love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if there is any affection and sympathy, make full my joy in order that you may be thinking the same thing, having the same love, united in spirit, thinking the one thing, doing nothing from selfish ambition or from empty conceit, but with humility of mind regarding one another as excelling themselves; not looking out each one for his own interests, but also each one the interests of others.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of “**Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned**”? : *“Majestic sweetness sits enthroned Upon the Saviour’s brow; His head with radiant glories crowned, His lips with grace o’erflow, His lips with grace o’erflow.”*

September 9 — Examined By the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:4)

1 Corinthians 4:4: “For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet by this I have not been acquitted; but the one who is examining me is the Lord.”

Verse 4: In his 1 Corinthians commentary, J.Vernon McGee points out there are three courts involved:

1. Lower court – the opinion of others. “It is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court.”
2. Higher court – Paul’s own conscience. “I am not even examining myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself.”
3. Supreme court – the ultimate, the Lord Himself. “Yet by this I have not been acquitted; but the one who is examining me is the Lord.”

The present tense indicates this is a continual examination.

Acts 24:16: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”

2 Timothy 2:15: “Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”

Psalms 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 2 of “**Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned**”: *“No mortal can with Him compare Among the sons of men; Fairer is He than all the fair Who fill the heav’nly train, Who fill the heav’nly train.”*

September 10 — Passing Judgment (1 Corinthians 4:5)

1 Corinthians 4:5: “Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and bring out in the open the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”

Verse 5: This is the fifth and final command of this passage:

Command #1: Let no man be deceiving himself.

Command #2: Let him become foolish (in order that he may become wise).

Command #3: Let no one continue to be boasting in men.

Command #4: Let a man be regarding us, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Command #5: Do not go on passing judgment before the time. This command is a present imperative, a daily Christian discipline.

Matthew 7:13: “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”

“But” forms the contrast in this verse. Negatively, “do not go on passing judgment before the time,” but, positively, “wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and bring out in the open the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”

There are three things the Lord will do when He comes in judgment:

1. Bring to light the things hidden in the darkness.
2. Joseph C. Aldrich in his book, *Life-Style Evangelism*, said:
Love springs from a pure heart. No clever arrangement of rotten eggs will make a good omelet.”
3. Bring out in the open the motives of men’s hearts.
4. Each man’s praise will come to him from God.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of “**Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned**”: *“He saw me plunged in deep distress And flew to my relief; For me He bore the shameful cross And carried all my grief, And carried all my grief.”*

September 11 — Going Beyond What Is Written (1 Corinthians 4:6)

1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, in order that in us you might learn not to go beyond what has been written, in order that no one of you might be puffed up in favor of the one against the other.”

Verse 6: The apostle has been addressing various problems within the Corinthian church body. In chapter 1:1, he noted they were divided into four different groups. Then, he contrasted the wisdom of God with the wisdom of man, demonstrating that the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world. In chapter 3, Paul described the Corinthians as babies in Christ, dominated by the flesh rather than controlled by the Spirit. He also reminded them of the consequences of building their lives with perishable materials rather than the imperishable for the judgment seat of Christ.

In the first part of chapter 4, the apostle instructed the Corinthians to

regard the ministry team as stewards and servants of Christ, and stop passing judgment. In these following verses, Paul addresses personal application and concludes the discussion of dissention.

Frederick Buechner said: “The trouble oftentimes with religious people is that they try to be more spiritual than God himself.”

Nikolai Bordyaev said: “Living the good life is frequently dull, flat and commonplace. Our greatest need is to make life fiery, creative and capable of spiritual struggle.”

Howard Hendricks said: “In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering.”

“Now these things” references Paul’s agriculture and architecture illustrations. “Brethren” points out their common relationship in Jesus Christ.

“I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes.” He is applying these things to Apollos and himself as an example. These were applied for the reason: “for your sakes.” The apostle wants them to learn from this example.

The conclusion of the verse is two purpose clauses: (1) in order that in us you might learn not to go beyond what has been written and (2) in order that no one of you might be puffed up in favor of the one against the other. Both are negative in character.

This first purpose clause emphasizes Paul’s statement that they are servants and fellow workers. They are stewards of the mysteries of God. Going beyond what has actually been written is one of the biggest dividers in the body of Christ. They often equate Scripture with experience.

The second purpose clause addresses being “puffed-up,” another divider in the body. Pride leads to favoritism of one against the other and breaks down unity.

Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 & 2 of **“Only Trust Him”**: *“Come, ev’ry soul by sin oppressed; There’s mercy with the Lord, And He will surely give you rest By trusting in His Word. For Jesus shed His precious blood Rich blessings to bestow; Plunge now into the crimson flood That washes white as snow. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now; He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.”*

September 12 — The Big Questions (1 Corinthians 4:7)

1 Corinthians 4:7: “For who is conceding you any superiority? And what are you having which you did not receive? But since also you received it, why are you boasting as though you did not receive it?”

Verse 7: The apostle asks three pointed questions in this verse:

1. Who is conceding you any superiority?

In verse 6, Paul used the words “puffed up.” In this verse, he uses “superiority.” There was a subtle superiority among some self-righteous Christians in Corinth. They were those causing the division. Paul asks who gave any of them the right to superiority to choose between Paul and Apollos.

This is illustrated in 3 John 1:9-10: “I sent a brief letter to the church about this, but proud Diotrephes, who loves to push himself forward as the leader of the Christians there, does not admit my authority over him and refuses to listen to me. When I come, I will tell you some of the things he is doing and what wicked things he is saying about me and what insulting language he is using.”

2. What are you having which you did not receive?

Everything involved in salvation comes from God’s grace. It has been granted to us. Therefore, we have no right to pride regarding our salvation. Everything given to us is a gift.

The word “but” forms the contrast in the passage: “since also you received it.”

3. Why are you boasting as though you did not receive it?

The words “receive” or “received” are used three times in this verse. This emphasizes that receiving these benefits from God should encourage humility and an excitement to serve rather than an attitude of superiority.

John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 3 & 4 of **“Only Trust Him”**: *“Yes, Jesus is the truth, the way, That leads you into rest; Believe in Him without delay, And you are fully blessed. Come, then, and join this holy band, And on to glory go, To dwell in that celestial land Where joys immortal flow. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now; He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.”*

September 13 — Brother, You Have It All (1 Corinthians 4:8)

1 Corinthians 4:8: “You already are having all you could wish, already you became rich, without us you have become kings; and I wish indeed that you had become kings in order that we also might reign with you.”

Verse 8: The apostle focuses on three points:

1. You are already having all you could wish.
2. You already became rich.
3. You became kings without us.

The problems in Corinth are evidenced by the words Paul uses: (1) “puffed up” in verse 6, (2) “superiority” in verse 7, and (3) “kings” in verse 8. These words are not associated with servants and stewards.

“I wish indeed that you had become kings in order that we also might reign with you.” If they had become kings, it would indicate the millennium was here. We would all be ruling and reigning with Christ.

In this verse, the apostle states two indications of complacent Christians:

1. The sense of having arrived.
2. An exclusive advance ahead of others, not needing spiritual leaders.

In the letter to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:17, Jesus says to them: “Because you are saying, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and I am having need of nothing,’ and you are not knowing that you are the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

We are to sacrifice like a saint, a servant, not reign like a king!

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of “**Make Me A Servant**”: *“Make me a servant, humble and meek; Lord, let me lift up those who are weak. And may the prayer of my heart always be: Make me a servant, make me a servant, Make me a servant today.”*

September 14 — Last Of All (1 Corinthians 4:9)

1 Corinthians 4:9: “For I am thinking, God exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.”

Verse 9: Paul states his reason for desiring the millennial kingdom was indeed upon them. As we are all part of the family, we will rule and reign with Christ. Verses 9-13 focus on the real world where the Corinthians are living.

“For I am thinking (in contrast to how the Corinthians are thinking) God exhibited us apostles last of all.” The apostle may be theorizing that

God is spotlighting all of his valuable treasure first and then the less valuable last. John 2:10: “And said to him, ‘Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now.’”

“For I am thinking, God exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death.”

William Barclay in his commentary on this passage said:

The Corinthians in their blatant pride were like the conquering general displaying the trophies of his prowess; the apostles were like the little group of captives doomed to die. To the Corinthians the Christian life meant flaunting their privileges and reckoning up their achievement; to Paul it meant humble service and a readiness to die for Christ.

Charles Mayes said: “Make sure the thing you’re living for is worth dying for.”

There are fifteen points outlined in these last verses of chapter 4 that support why he believes the Christian experience is exemplified in this statement: “God exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death.”

1. We have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

We are on display. We are battling for our lives before the crowds in the Roman amphitheaters. 1 Peter 1:12: “To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but for you they were ministering these things which now have been reported to you through those who have proclaimed the good news to you by the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven—which things angels are eagerly desiring to gain a clear glance (to look into).”

Jesus Christ hung on the cross in open display—giving of His life.

Paul sees Christians battling for their lives on the field of conflict.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of “**More About Jesus**”: *“More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love Who died for me. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

September 15 — Fools For Christ’s Sake (1 Corinthians 4:10)

1 Corinthians 4:10: “We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.”

Verse 10: In this verse, Paul focuses on (1) the teaching, (2) the conduct and (3) the position. He also continues his list of fifteen points exemplifying the Christian experience in this passage with three contrasts:

1. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ.
We cannot be wise for Christ in our own intellect. Wisdom in our own eyes disqualifies us from being servants of Jesus Christ. We must know the wisdom of God before we can be used by our heavenly Father.
2. We are weak, but you are strong.
We are weak in our dependency upon the Lord, but also physically weak. The Corinthians were strong in their proud, self-sufficiency.
3. You are distinguished, but we are without honor.
This is a clear picture of ministry.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **"More About Jesus"**: *"More about Jesus let me learn, More of His holy will discern; Spirit of God, my Teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me."*

September 16 — Roughly Treated (1 Corinthians 4:11)

1 Corinthians 4:11: "To this very hour we are hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless."

Verse 11: The contrast in this passage is reminiscent of the health, wealth and prosperity gospel. As the apostle continues his list in this verse, this section focuses on present conditions:

1. We are hungry.
2. We are thirsty.
3. We are poorly clothed.
4. We are roughly treated.
5. We are homeless.

Charles A. Beard said: "The two great tests of character are wealth and poverty."

Hebrews 11:16: "But as it is, they are longing for a better [home], that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He prepared a city for them."

Philippians 4:10-14: "But I rejoiced greatly in the Lord, that already once more you made alive your thought for me in which also you were thoughtful, but you were having no opportunity. Not that I am speaking because of need, for I have learned in whatever circumstances I am to be content (self-sufficient). I am knowing how to discipline myself in lowly circumstances (to be humbled); I am knowing how to be having abundance.

In everything and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, and to be having abundance and to be in need. I am having strength for all things in the One who is making me strong. Nevertheless, you did well when you shared with me in my affliction.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“More About Jesus”**?: *“More about Jesus, in His Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing His voice in ev'ry line, Making each faithful saying mine. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

September 17 — Persecuted & Enduring It (1 Corinthians 4:12)

1 Corinthians 4:12: “And we are toiling, working with our own hands; when we are being reviled, we are blessing; when we are being persecuted, we are enduring it.”

Verse 12: Paul continues his list of current ministerial conditions of the Christian experience:

1. We are toiling.
The word “toiling” describes working to the point of exhaustion.
2. We are working with our own hands.
Acts 18:3: “And because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers.”
3. When we are being reviled, we are blessing.
4. When we are being persecuted, we are enduring it.

Matthew 5:10-12: “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

2 Corinthians 11:23-28: “Are they servants of Christ? (I am talking as if I were beside myself) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from those of my own race, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the

daily pressure upon me, of concern for all the churches.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 4 of “**More About Jesus**”: *“More about Jesus; on His throne, Riches in glory all His own; More of His kingdom’s sure increase; More of His coming, Prince of Peace. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

September 18 — Scum of the World (1 Corinthians 4:13)

1 Corinthians 4:13: “When we are slandered, we are trying to speak in a friendly manner; we have become as the scum of the world, dirt scraped off of all things, even until now.”

Verse 13: In this verse, Paul completes his list of conditions exemplifying the Christian ministerial experience:

1. When we are slandered, we are trying to speak in a friendly manner.
1 Peter 3:18-12: “Finally, all of you be united in spirit, sympathetic, loving the brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded; not giving back evil for evil, or verbal abuse for verbal abuse, but on the other hand, be blessing; because to this you have been called in order that you might inherit a blessing. For ‘he who is desiring to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. But let him turn away from evil and let him do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their petitions, but the face of the Lord is against those who are practicing evil.’”
2. We have become as the scum of the world.
“We have become as the scum of the world, dirt scraped off of all things, even until now.” Paul compares their situation to scraps left on the plate after a banquet.

This is the full list of stresses Paul was experiencing in the real world: (1) becoming a spectacle, (2) being fools, (3) weak, (4) without honor, (5) hungry, (6) thirsty, (7) poorly clothed, (8) roughly treated, (9) homeless, (10) toiling, (11) working with our hands, (12) reviled, (13) persecuted, (14) slandered and (15) being scum. When you see the list of possibilities, you can understand why there can be hesitation to sign up for ministry.

C.S. Lewis said: “The real problem is not why some pious, humble believing people suffer, but why some do not.”

John Bunyan said: “In times of affliction we commonly meet the

sweetest experiences of the love of God.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“When peace, like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well, with my soul.’ It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

September 19 — Beloved Children (1 Corinthians 4:14)

1 Corinthians 4:14: “Not as shaming you am I writing these things, but admonishing you as my beloved children.”

Verse 14: The apostle wants to clarify his intention is not to shame the Corinthians by describing these experiences, but to admonish them as his beloved children. Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to recognize these experiences are expected as a believer growing in maturity.

3 John 1:4: “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

In verse 6, he called them “brethren.” They are “my beloved children” in this verse. He doesn’t allow their conduct to affect his love for them.

In verses 14-21, Paul describes six characteristics of a faithful, spiritual father. He (1) admonishes, (2) loves, (3) begets, (4) sets an example, (5) teaches and (6) disciplines. They are not specifically labeled, in chronological order or in order of importance. However, they are implied through his illustrations of various ways in which a faithful father is responsible for his children. These elements are necessary in an effective relational discipleship.

John Hoover said: “God may not promise a comfortable journey, but he does guarantee a safe landing.”

William Arthur Ward said: “Adversity causes some men to break; others to break records.”

“Not as shaming you am I writing these things, but admonishing you as my beloved children.” The apostle has not allowed their pride, superiority and wrong attitudes to affect his love and relationship with them, his “beloved children.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“Though Satan should buffet, tho’ trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul. It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

September 20 — Ten-Thousand Tutors (1 Corinthians 4:15)

1 Corinthians 4:15: “For if you may be having ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet you would not be having many fathers; for in Christ Jesus through the gospel I became your father.”

Verse 15: They may have ten-thousand teachers, but only one father. Philemon 1:10: “I am begging you concerning my child, of whom I became the father while in prison.”

There is nothing more thrilling than the opportunity of leading someone to Jesus Christ and then begin to see them grow in the Lord. I had that privilege recently and have been discipling him. I was overjoyed when he wrote the following statements in one of his study books: “Because I’m reborn, I think more clearly about the Lord, I appreciate hearing the Word, and the fellowship of my brother and sister Christians.”

In the last phrase of this verse, Paul states the reason he considers himself their spiritual father: “for in Christ Jesus through the gospel (how they came to faith and part of God’s family) I became your father.”

John 1:12-13: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**?: *“My sin, O, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

September 21 — I Am Exhorting You (1 Corinthians 4:16)

1 Corinthians 4:16: “I am exhorting you, therefore, be becoming imitators of me.”

Verse 16: The apostle admonished the Corinthians in verse 14, but exhorts them in this verse. “I am exhorting you, therefore.” Paul exhorts them in light of what was previously said and described in the previous verses.

“Be becoming imitators of me.” This is a command. These Christians need to follow in the footsteps of their spiritual father. Philippians 3:17: “Become imitators of me, brethren, and be observing those who are walking in this way even as you are having us for an example.”

Robbi Mikkola said: “The measure of a man’s character is not what he gets from his ancestors, but what he leaves his descendants.”

Your example is not just one way to attract others to Christ, but the primary way.

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read:

Yes, the Bible records many examples of godly people who have blazed a clear trail that believers can follow. By looking at their successes and failures we can learn to walk in the paths of righteousness.

—D.C.E.

We're wise when we ponder the path saints have trod

Who learned the great secret of walking with God.

Yet often we follow our own stubborn way,

Though countless examples could guide us each day.

—D.J.D.

A new saint who follows an old saint becomes a bold saint.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 4 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, ‘Even so,’ it is well with my soul. It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

September 22 — I Sent Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17)

1 Corinthians 4:17: “For this reason I sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will bring to your remembrance my ways which are in Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every church.”

Verse 17: The apostle sent Timothy to the Corinthians to guide them in following his admonishments and exhortations. He characterizes Timothy in two ways: (1) beloved and (2) faithful child in the Lord.

Paul has used many statements in this passage that refer to a family relationship:

1. Brethren - in verse 6.
2. Beloved children - in verse 14.
3. Father - in verse 15.
4. Child - in this verse.

Timothy is beloved and faithful. Philippians 2:19-22: “But I am hoping in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you quickly, in order that I also may be of good cheer having come to know the things concerning you. For I am having no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned about the things concerning you. For they all are seeking their own things, not the

things of Christ Jesus. But you are knowing the proof of him, that as a child to a father, he served with me for the gospel.”

The apostle describes Timothy’s job description in the last section of this verse: “who will bring to your remembrance my ways which are in Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every church.” Timothy will remind the Corinthians of the ways of the apostle and demonstrate to the Corinthians that they are not currently following Paul’s example.

“Just as I am teaching everywhere in every church.” His message is the same, only the audience is different in each city and location.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 1 & 2 of “**So Send I You**”: *“So send I you to labor unrewarded, To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown, To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing; So send I you to toil for Me alone. So send I you to bind the bruised and broken, O’er wand’ring souls to work, to weep, to wake, To bear the burdens of a world a-weary; So send I you to suffer for My sake.”*

September 23 — Arrogant (1 Corinthians 4:18)

1 Corinthians 4:18: “Now some have become arrogant, as though I am not coming to you.”

Verse 18: Paul uses the loaded word “arrogant” to describe the condition of some of the Christians in the Corinthian church. Some of the other words he has used to describe this group are: (1) “puffed up” – verse 6, (2) “superiority” – verse 7 and (3) “kings” – verse 8.

Some of these Christian Corinthians do not believe Paul is coming to Corinth. Therefore, they do not have to follow anything he writes because they will not see him face to face.

In his book, *Building Life on the Promises*, Robert Foster shared:

Romanoff is not only a connoisseur of good eating but also a pretty sharp observer: “There are three publications we seldom plunge into. The dictionary...therefore, we don’t know how to spell. The cookbook ...therefore, we don’t know how to cook. The Holy Bible ... therefore, we don’t know how to find God.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of “**So Send I You**”: *“So send I you to loneliness and longing, With heart a-hung’ring for the loved and known, Forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one; So send I you to know My love alone.”*

September 24 — I Am Coming Soon (1 Corinthians 4:19)

1 Corinthians 4:19: “But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant, but their power.”

Verse 19: In contrast, Paul says: “I will come to you soon,” with the condition, “if the Lord wills.”

Revelation 22:7: “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who is keeping the words of the prophecy of this book.”

James 4:13-17: “Come now you who are saying, ‘Today or tomorrow we shall go into that city, and we shall spend a year there and we shall carry on business and make a profit.’ Whereas you are not knowing what will happen tomorrow and what character is your life. For you are a mist which is appearing for a little time and then disappearing. Instead you ought to be saying: ‘If the Lord wills, we shall both live and do this or that.’ But now you are glorying in your arrogance. All such glorying is evil. Therefore, to the one knowing how to do good, and is not doing it, to him it is sin.”

“But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out.”

He continues negatively, “not the words of those who are arrogant,” but, positively, “their power.” It isn’t the words they say, but their power. Their power is the primary concern.

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of “**So Send I You**”?: *“So send I you to leave your life’s ambition, To die to dear desire, self-will resign, To labor long, and love where men revile you; So send I you to lose your life in Mine.”*

September 25 — What Are You Desiring? (1 Corinthians 4:20-21)

1 Corinthians 4:20: “For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.”

1 Corinthians 4:21: “What are you desiring? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness?”

Verse 20: In this verse, Paul states the reason for his concern regarding their power rather than their words: “for the kingdom of God,” negatively, “does not consist in words,” but, positively, “in power.” Words are meaningless without power.

The kind of power the apostle is describing is four-fold:

1. Changes lives.
2. Copes with circumstances.
3. Challenges others to walk with him.
4. Confronts others when it is needed.

Verse 21: The words “you” and “yours” have occurred 30 times in these 16 verses. Paul concludes this passage of our study with two questions:

1. What are you desiring?
2. Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

It is their choice. He can come with a rod of discipline or with love and a spirit of gentleness. Being teachable, humble, broken and responsive to divine truth allows the apostle to come in a gentle, loving way.

Thomas Watson said: “The Lord has a golden scepter and an iron rod. Those who will not bow to the one will be broken by the other.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 5 of “**So Send I You**”:
“So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred, To eyes made blind because they will not see, To spend, tho’ it be blood, to spend and spare not; So send I you to taste of Calvary.”

September 26 — Sin In the Camp (1 Corinthians 5:1)

1 Corinthians 5:1: “It is actually being reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind that it does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone is having the wife of his father.”

Verse 1: The word “actually” is used twice in this passage – in verses 1 and 11.

“It is actually being reported.” This is public knowledge. It is a prominent story for anyone who wants to ruin a Christian’s witness. Dr. Henry Brandt reported that when the Jim Bakker story broke, it was a headline when he was in South Africa. Then, when he was in Holland, the Swaggart story broke and headlined.

“It is actually being reported that there is immorality among you.” This was not a typical story of immorality so the apostle adds: “and immorality of such a kind that it does not exist even among the Gentiles.” The Christian immorality was worse than the pagans.

Our world now has become so immoral that if it can be done, it has. Paul Powell in his book, *The Great Deceiver*, says:

The thrust of temptation is always the same: The one who is below us (Satan) appeals to that which is within us (our desire) to draw us from the one who is above us (God).

The apostle then defines the immorality among them: “someone is having the wife of his father.” In Genesis 35, we read that Reuben lost his birthright after he had relations with Bilhah (Rachel’s handmade and one of Jacob’s concubines). The word “having” is in the present tense and indicates

this was still occurring. This was probably a stepmother, but this had caused a divorce to take place and this man was living openly with this woman.

There have been several illustrations of distorted sexual relationships in the Scriptures.

After David was confronted by the prophet Nathan for his adultery with Bathsheba, he responded appropriately in Psalms 51:1-5: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Cleanse Me”**: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior; know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; Cleanse me from ev’ry sin, and set me free.”*

September 27 — Resistance or Repentance (1 Corinthians 5:2)

1 Corinthians 5:2: “And you have become arrogant, and have you not mourned instead, in order that the one who has done this deed might be taken out of your midst.”

Verse 2: They have become “arrogant” when faced by this disgraceful sin in their midst. When sinful people respond in arrogance, it is usually because of these four thoughts:

1. I am being attacked. I need to defend myself.
2. I have excuses and reasons for my response and actions.
3. I am being broad-minded and tolerant.
4. This relationship is platonic. It just looks like something more.

John MacArthur points out:

The church of Thyatira in many ways was a model church. It was strong in “love and faith and service and perseverance” and was growing in good deeds. But it was tolerating “the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit immorality” (Rev. 2:19-20).

“And you have become arrogant, and have you not mourned instead.” Mourning would have been the proper response to finding out about this situation.

James 4:7-10: “Be subject therefore to God, but resist the devil and he

will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy into gloominess. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

In this last phrase of the verse, we see the purpose behind the proper response to mourning: “in order that the one who has done this deed might be taken out of your midst.” This is a reference to applying church discipline.

John 15:2: “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.”

Lewis B. Smedes in *Forgive and Forget* says it well:

If we ignore the “moral hindrance” as if it did not really matter, we take our first step into an opiated life where nobody really gives a damn.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**Cleanse Me**”: *“I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin. Fulfill Thy Word, and make me pure within. Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame. Grant my desire to magnify Thy Name.”*

September 28 — Already Judged (1 Corinthians 5:3)

1 Corinthians 5:3: “For I, on my part, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who thus did this thing, as though I were present.”

Verse 3: In this verse, Paul provides the reason he’s made such a drastic statement of how the church should respond in the previous verse. Although he is bodily absent from them, he is with them in spirit. He informs the Corinthians he has already judged the individual who committed this immorality as if he were with them physically.

I believe we can assume the previous steps documented in Matthew 18 have already been attempted, but with negative results. Therefore, this is the reason for the drastic action the apostle has recommended.

Matthew 18:15-17: “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of “**Cleanse Me**”: *“Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine; Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride. I now surrender; Lord, in me abide.”*

September 29 — Power of Our Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:4)

1 Corinthians 5:4: “In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are gathered together, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus.”

Verse 4: In this verse, the apostle instructs the Corinthian Christians on how to handle this situation: “In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are gathered together (for your services), and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus.”

The *Daily Walk Bible* says: “God has linked two things together which cannot be separated: obedience and power.”

Lord, I pray that Your presence and Your power would be real to us.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 4 of “**Cleanse Me**”: *“O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee. Send a revival - start the work in me. Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need. For blessings now, O Lord, I humbly plead.”*

September 30 — Delivered To Satan (1 Corinthians 5:5)

1 Corinthians 5:5: “I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, in order that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.”

Verse 5: In verse 3, Paul stated: “I have already judged him.” In this verse, he continues: “I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan.” Satan is behind this sin in the congregation. However, if you want to tear something down, you call the ultimate destroyer—Satan himself.

“I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan.” The reason for this delivery is “for the destruction of his flesh.”

In Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose of Christmas*, he says:

The symptoms of being at war with God are easy to spot: irritability, a quick temper, insecurity, impatience, manipulation, arrogance and boasting, holding grudges, and many other attitudes and habits that the Bible calls the “*works of the flesh*.” The Message translation of the Bible gives this paraphrase: “It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness ... cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be love; divided homes and divided lives ... the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; ... uncontrollable addictions.” Galatians 5:19-21

Alan Redpath comments on this verse:

Paul did not say “the destruction of the body,” he said, “the destruction of the flesh.” It was the flesh which had mastered this man.

The Daily Walk Bible included this anonymous quote: “Sinning wouldn’t be so popular if its wages were paid immediately.”

The purpose for this discipline is: “in order that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.” The apostle wants and believes the best about this individual. He wants his spirit to be saved.

1 Corinthians 3:15: “If any man’s work shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Just As I Am”**: *“Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”*

October 1 — A Little Yeast (1 Corinthians 5:6)

1 Corinthians 5:6: “Your boasting is not good. Are you not knowing that a little yeast is fermenting the whole lump of dough?”

Verse 6: “Your boasting is not good.” This links to the apostle’s statement in verse 2: “you have become arrogant.” In the remaining verses of this chapter, Paul will ask three questions and issue three commands. The first question is in this verse:

1. Are you not knowing that a little yeast is fermenting the whole lump of dough?

The apostle references the Feast of Passover to make his illustration. Galatians 5:9: “A little leaven is leavening the whole lump.”

In Our Daily Bread, we read this poem:

Little sins, like “leaven,”
Work their evil through,
Soon pervade the “whole loaf”—
Touching all we do. —G.W.

In his book *Just Like Jesus*, Max Lucado says:

All pledged loyalty, and yet all ran. From the outside looking in, all we see is betrayal. The disciples have left him. The people have rejected him. And God hasn’t heard him. Never has so much trash been dumped on one being. Stack all the disloyalties of deadbeat dads and cheating wives and prodigal kids and dishonest workers in one pile, and you begin to see what Jesus had to face that night. From a human point of view, Jesus’ world has collapsed. No answer from heaven, no help from the people, no loyalty from his friends.

Jesus, neck deep in rubbish. That’s how I would have described the scene. That’s how a reporter would have described it. That’s how a witness would have portrayed it.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**Just As I Am**”: “*Just as I am, and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*”

October 2 — A New Lump (1 Corinthians 5:7)

1 Corinthians 5:7: “Clean out the old yeast, in order that you may be a new lump of dough, even as you are without yeast. For indeed, Christ our Passover was slain.”

Verse 7: We had our first question in the previous verse. In this verse, we have the first of three commands:

Command #1: Clean out the old yeast.

2 Corinthians 7:1: “Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, bringing about holiness in the fear of God.”

In this situation, Paul tells them to “clean out” instead of condoning. It is for the purpose: “in order that you may be a new lump of dough, even as you are without yeast.” This is the requirement for the Feast of Unleavened Bread that follows the Passover celebration.

This verse concludes with the reason: “For indeed, Christ our Passover was slain.”

The apostle includes himself with the word “our.” “Christ our Passover was slain.” He died for the sins of the whole world on Calvary’s cross. For Passover, they slew the little lamb and sprinkled the blood on the doorposts so they might be protected when the death angel passed over.

The word “indeed” indicates Paul’s emotion. He is emphasizing that a little can affect a lot. The church cannot prevent evil, but it can exercise discipline. We need to cleanse continuously so the infection of sin doesn’t have a chance to take over.

Hebrews 12:15: “Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled.”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 3 and 4 of “**Just As I Am**”? *“Just as I am, tho’ tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt, Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”*

October 3 — Pure Motives (1 Corinthians 5:8)

1 Corinthians 5:8: “Let us therefore be celebrating the feast, not with old yeast, nor with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of pure motives and truth.”

Verse 8: Paul includes himself with the phrase “Let us.” This verse includes the second command:

Command #2: Let us be celebrating the feast.

“Let us therefore (in light of what has been said) be celebrating the feast,” negatively, “not with old yeast, nor with the yeast of malice and wickedness,” but, positively, “with the unleavened bread of pure motives and truth.”

The apostle mentions three aspects of the divided congregation using the Feast of Unleavened Bread illustration: (1) not with old yeast, (2) not with the yeast of malice, and (3) not with the yeast of wickedness. His goal is for the Corinthian church to experience the Lord’s blessing and true celebration through pure motives and truth.

In *Our Daily Bread*, we read this poem:

The house of God should be a place
For praise and reverent prayer;
Let holy thoughts your spirit fill
Each time you enter there. —H.G.B.

Then, it ends with the statement: “If you want to be spiritually fed, go to church with a good appetite, not with a bad attitude.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 5 of “**Just As I Am**”: *“Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”*

October 4 — Immoral People (1 Corinthians 5:9)

1 Corinthians 5:9: “I wrote to you in my letter not to be associating with immoral people.”

Verse 9: In this verse, Paul reminds them of a previous letter he wrote to them that wasn’t preserved in the New Testament text. He had encouraged the Corinthian church to not associate with immoral people.

These Christians seem to have misunderstood his meaning and believed they should be totally separate from all other people in the world, as well as immoral people in the church.

Jesus said in Matthew 9:12-13: “But when He heard this, He said, ‘It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But

go and learn what this means, I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

We hear Jesus’ final instructions to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

In Paul’s final words to Timothy, we read in 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.”

These are Jesus’ last words before he ascended into glory in Acts 1:8: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

John 15:8: “By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Lord, Lay Some Soul”**: *“Lord, lay some soul upon my heart And love that soul through me And may I nobly do my part To win that soul for Thee.”*

October 5 — Focus on Your Witness (1 Corinthians 5:10)

1 Corinthians 5:10: “I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world.”

Verse 10: Paul continues his instruction from the previous verse and emphasizes that he did not mean the immoral people of the world or those who are covetous, swindler, or idolaters. He provides this reason at the end of the verse: “for then you would have to go out of the world.”

Let’s meditate on John 17:14-20—Jesus’ prayer before He went to the cross: “I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.”

Jesus spent much of his time with immoral people, those who are

covetous, swindlers and idolaters. The religious leaders often criticized and accused him for this conduct.

Mark 16:15: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.’”

Luke 24:45-49: “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’”

John 20:21: “Jesus therefore said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 1 of “**Love Divine**”: *“Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav’n to earth come down; Fix in us Thy humble dwelling; All Thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art; Visit us with Thy salvation; Enter ev’ry trembling heart.”*

October 6 — The So-Called Brother (1 Corinthians 5:11)

1 Corinthians 5:11: “But actually, I wrote to you not to be associating with any so-called brother, if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or an abusive person, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to be eating with such a one.”

Verse 11: The apostle emphasizes this immoral person is a “so-called brother” in the church. He is referring to someone the church is disciplining, and through that process they are taking him out of their midst as Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:5: “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh.”

“Not to be associating with any so-called brother.” The apostle had believed the best regarding the situation in verse 5, but now he is unsure. His response to the disciplining process will eventually reveal whether or not this individual is a real brother in Christ.

When Paul spoke of the sin in the world in verse 10, he gave four categories: (1) immoral, (2) covetous, (3) swindlers and (4) idolaters. In this verse, he extends the lists to six categories of sin among believers: (1) immoral, (2) covetous, (3) idolater, (4) abusive person, (5) drunkard and (6) swindler.

The apostle encouraged the Corinthian church to “not even to be eating with such a one.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **"Love Divine"**: *"Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into ev'ry troubled breast! Let us all in Thee inherit, Let us find that second rest. Take away our bent to sinning, Alpha and Omega be; End of faith, as its Beginning, Set our hearts at liberty."*

October 7 — Judging within the Church (1 Corinthians 5:12)

1 Corinthians 5:12: "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Are you not judging those who are within the church?"

Verse 12: In this verse, we have Paul's second and third questions in this passage. (The first was in verse 6.):

1. Are you not knowing that a little yeast is fermenting the whole lump of dough?
2. What have I to do with judging outsiders?

When the apostle speaks of outsiders, he is referring to those who have not come into the family of God through a belief in Jesus Christ.

1. Are you not judging those who are within the church?

Believers have a responsibility to sinning brethren within the church. They are required to exercise the discipline necessary so these brethren can be restored to ministry and fellowship. Paul believes some of the problems experienced by the Corinthians are a result of them not fulfilling their responsibility to sinning brothers and sisters in God's family.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of **"Love Divine"**: *"Come, Almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive; Suddenly return and never, Nevermore Thy temples leave: Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above, Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love."*

October 8 — God Is Judging Outsiders (1 Corinthians 5:13)

1 Corinthians 5:13: "But those who are outside God is judging. Drive out the evil man from among yourselves."

Verse 13: In this verse, Paul emphasizes he is not involved in judging outsiders. God handles those outside of His family. When the apostle uses the term "outside," he means those who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ: "But those who are outside God is judging."

Revelation 20:11-15: “And I saw a great white throne and Him who is sitting upon it, from whose face earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which had been written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. And each one was judged according to their works. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone was not found having been written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

The apostle gives the third command in this verse:

Command #1: Clean out the old yeast.

Command #2: Let us be celebrating the feast.

Command #3: Drive out the evil man from among yourselves.

This evil man was to be (1) taken out of their midst in verse 2, (2) delivered over to Satan in verse 5, and (3) driven out from among them in this verse.

I believe “drive out” involves rejection, repentance and restoration.

Paul calls this individual “an evil man” in this verse, but he called him a “so-called brother” in verse 11. The apostle recognizes the evil in this situation. This man is labeled evil due to the sin, selfishness, sex and Satan involved in his life.

As His children, God really wants us to walk in faithfulness, bear fruit, be in fellowship and have a future.

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 4 of “**Love Divine**”: *“Finish, then, Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be; Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee: Changed from glory into glory, Till in heav’n we take our place, Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise.”*

October 9 — Settling Legal Matters (1 Corinthians 6:1)

1 Corinthians 6:1: “Is any one of you, when he is having a case against his neighbor, daring to be going to law before those who are unrighteous, and not before the saints?”

Verse 1: The apostle brings up this point so we will handle our matters correctly. This violates how God desires his children to handle conflict with one another.

Luke 10:27: “And he answered and said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength,

and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

John MacArthur says in his commentary on this verse:

Christians are not to take other Christians to worldly courts. When we put ourselves under the authority of the world in this way, we confess that we do not have right actions and right attitudes. Believers who go to court with believers are more concerned with revenge or gain than with the unity of the Body and the glory of Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 19:18: “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

Nancy Leigh DeMoss in *Choosing Gratitude* says:

Just think how many rifts and breaches could be mended, how many relationships restored and strengthened, if our gratitude for God’s grace eclipsed our bitterness and overcame those relational barriers.

Imagine the impact in a world characterized by isolation, selfishness, and fractured relationships, if we were to adorn the gospel we profess to believe, with a culture of mutual care, concern, generosity, and sacrifice. The truth we proclaim would become believable. And God would be glorified.

Andrew Murray in 199 *Treasures of Wisdom on Talking with God* says:

Through prayer, God lovingly reveals areas in our lives that need to change.

He says further:

Though everything may appear cold, dark, and strained—may I be faithful in talking with my heavenly Father.

Robert Fulghum said: “Don’t worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.”

Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost For His Highest* asks:

Can Jesus Christ see the agony of His soul in us? He can’t unless we are so closely identified with Him that we have His view concerning the people for whom we pray. May we learn to intercede so wholeheartedly that Jesus Christ will be completely and overwhelmingly satisfied with us as intercessors.

It is hard to be critical of someone when you are praying for them.

In chapter 5, the Corinthians weren’t judging an obvious situation they needed to address. In chapter 6, they are judging one another but taking their issues before the heathen courts. It was important for Paul to address what they were doing and correct them.

In verses 1-11, Paul addresses the Corinthians going to court against their Christian brothers. In verses 12-20, he instructs them on their moral responsibility.

You can't live in disobedience and expect God to bless you!

The first of 15 questions asked over the next 20 verses is in this verse:

Question #1: Is any one of you, when he is having a case against his neighbor, daring to be going to law before those who are unrighteous, and not before the saints?

This is a family matter and should be resolved within the family of God so you don't ruin your witness. The word "daring" is in the present tense and expresses the apostle's concern for how these situations are being handled. They are positively, "going to law before those who are unrighteous," but, negatively, "not before the saints."

Why can't Christians handle their own matters? The world doesn't need to see us fighting.

Paul uses the phrase "are you not knowing" six times in the 20 verses of this passage.

Jesus provides an outline for how to handle a brother involved in sin in Matthew 18:15-17: "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 1 of "**Love Lifted Me**": *"I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more; But the Master of the sea, Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help Love lifted me."*

October 10 — Trivial Cases (1 Corinthians 6:2)

1 Corinthians 6:2: "Or are you not knowing that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is being judged by you, are you not competent to settle trivial cases?"

Verse 2: In this verse, Paul asks two additional questions and includes that key phrase: "Are you not knowing?"

Question #2: Are you not knowing that the saints shall judge the world?

We must remember what we are and to whom we belong. In verse 1, the apostle used the term "saints" when he spoke of them "going to law before those who are unrighteous and not before the saints." He uses the

term “saints” again in this verse: “or are you not knowing that the saints shall judge the world?”

Revelation 20:4: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who did not worship the beast nor his image and did not receive the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ one thousand years.”

Question #3: If the world is being judged by you, are you not competent to settle trivial cases?

Ray Stedman in *The Wrong Way to Right Wrongs* says of this verse:

You can see Paul’s argument then: “Is it not rather ridiculous that you people who are going to have to deal in such difficult and hidden and subtle matters as the judgment of the world and of angels cannot even settle these little squabbles among yourselves?”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Love Lifted Me”**?: *“All my heart to Him I give, Ever to Him I’ll cling, In His blessed presence live, Ever His praises sing, Love so mighty and so true Merits my soul’s best songs; Faithful, loving service, too, To Him belongs. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help Love lifted me.”*

October 11 — Judging Angels (1 Corinthians 6:3)

1 Corinthians 6:3: “Are you not knowing that we shall judge angels? How much more the ordinary matters of this life?”

Verse 3: Paul continues his questions. The argument is similar in verses 2 and 3. It moves from the greater to the lesser and involves two questions in each verse. However, the focus is different for each verse. In verse 2, the greater focus is on the world, but it is on angels in verse 3. Then the lesser focus is settling trivial cases in verse 2, but the ordinary matters of this life in verse 3.

Question #4: Are you not knowing that we shall judge angels?

This verse also includes Paul’s key phrase: “Are you not knowing?”

“We shall judge angels.” Notice Paul includes himself. 2 Peter 2:4: “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, being reserved for judgment.” Jude 1:6: “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

Question #5: How much more the ordinary matters of this life?

J. Vernon McGee in his commentary on this passage says:

This certainly opens up a whole new vista of truth. I do not understand what this means; it is beyond my comprehension. All I know is that man was made a little lower than the angels, and through redemption man was lifted into a place of fellowship with God, a position above the angels. Also, God permitted man to fall. He never would have permitted that if it would not work out for good. It will result in bringing man into a higher position. The old bromide is not true that says that the bird with the broken wing never flies so high again. Man flies higher. We are going to be above the angels. We are going to judge them and have charge of them. May I say again, this is beyond my comprehension, but I believe it.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 3 of **“Love Lifted Me”**: *“Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves; He will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves. He’s the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey; He your Saviour wants to be, Be saved today. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help Love lifted me.”*

October 12 — Legal Issues & the Church (1 Corinthians 6:4)

1 Corinthians 6:4: “If then you are having law courts dealing with the ordinary matters of this life, are you appointing as judges men who have no standing in the church?”

Verse 4: The apostle includes his next question in this verse. He also repeats the phrase “the ordinary matters of this life.”

Question #6: Are you appointing as judges men who have no standing in the church?

A man who has standing in the church has made a declaration of his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. He has stepped out of spiritual darkness into spiritual light.

Colossians 4:5-6: “In wisdom be ordering your behavior towards those outside, buying up for yourselves the time (making the most of the time). Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, to the end that you know how you ought to answer everyone.”

James 3:13-17: “Who is wise and learned among you? Let him show by his praiseworthy way of life his works with humility of wisdom. But if you are having bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, stop boasting and lying against the truth. This wisdom is not the wisdom coming down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and

selfish ambition are, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, kind, obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free from insincerity.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of “**My Jesus, I Love Thee**”: *“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; For Thee all the follies of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”*

October 13 — Deciding between Brethren (1 Corinthians 6:5)

1 Corinthians 6:5: “I am saying this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren?”

Verse 5: The apostle used the word “daring” in verse 1, but uses the word “shame” in this verse.

Genesis 13:8: “So Abram said to Lot, ‘Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.’”

1 John 3:10-11: “In this it is made visible: the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who is not practicing righteousness is not of God, and the one who is not loving his brother. Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should be loving one another.”

Question #7: Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren?

James 1:5: “And if any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him keep on asking from God, who is giving to all generously (without reserve) and who does not reproach, and it shall be given him.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**My Jesus, I Love Thee**”: *“I love Thee, because Thou has first loved me, And purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”*

October 14 — The Big Question (1 Corinthians 6:6)

1 Corinthians 6:6: “But brother is going to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?”

Verse 6: This is a powerful question. It brings the problem into focus. Paul has brought their wrongful practices out in the open. The word “going” indicates this is present tense. It is happening at the time of this letter.

Question #8: But brother is going to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

This is a violation of love between brothers, but also a violation of obedience and responsibility to our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“My Jesus, I Love Thee”**?: *“I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death, And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath; And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.”*

October 15 — Wronged & Robbed (1 Corinthians 6:7)

1 Corinthians 6:7: “Actually, then, it is already an utter defeat for you, that you are having lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be robbed?”

Verse 7: The apostle continues his 15 questions in this passage.

“Actually, then, (in view of what is happening) it is already an utter defeat for you.” Notice the words “utter defeat.” These lawsuits were ruining their witness for Christ.

Romans 12:19: “Do not be avenging yourselves, beloved ones, but give room for the wrath (of God), for it has been written: ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay’, says the Lord.”

Plato said: “The good man will always choose to suffer wrong rather than to do wrong.”

John MacArthur told this story:

An attorney friend of mine says that over the years he has counseled dozens of Christians to drop lawsuits against each other. In some ninety percent of the cases, he has been successful, and he reports that, without exception, those believers have been blessed. Also without exception, those who insisted on resolving their disputes in court became bitter and resentful—whether they won or lost their cases. If they went to court, they always lost spiritually.

Question #9: Why not rather be wronged?

Question #10: Why not rather be robbed?”

Lewis B. Smedes in *Forgive and Forget* said:

So we need to forgive the unrepentant for our own sake. We need to forgive people who do not care if only so that we do not drown in our own misery.

Why not be wronged and robbed rather than daring to go to court against your brother or sister in the body of Christ, and bringing on yourself shame and utter defeat? Though it may cost you in the interim, you will protect your witness for Jesus Christ. That should always take priority over personal consideration.

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 4 of **“My Jesus, I Love Thee”**: *“In mansions of glory and endless delight, I’ll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright; I’ll sing with the glittering crown on my brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”*

October 16 — Your Brethren (1 Corinthians 6:8)

1 Corinthians 6:8: “On the contrary, you yourselves are wronging and robbing, and that your brethren.”

Verse 8: At the present time, they are acting contrary to what Paul has suggested in the previous two questions:

Question #9: Why not rather be wronged?

Question #10: Why not rather be robbed?”

In this verse, the apostle accuses these Corinthians of “wronging and robbing” their fellow brethren. They were “wronging” these brethren by taking them to court when they were commanded to love them. They were “robbing” these brothers and sisters in the body of Christ by taking away opportunities for ministry and fruit.

Matthew 5:38-42: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

Let’s join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Pass It On”**: *“It only takes a spark to get a fire going, And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing; That’s how it is with God’s Love, Once you’ve experienced it, Your spread the love to everyone You want to pass it on.”*

October 17 — Stop Being Deceived (1 Corinthians 6:9)

1 Corinthians 6:9: “Or are you not knowing that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Stop being deceived; neither one who is practicing sexual immorality, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals.”

Verse 9: The apostle uses his phrase again: “Are you not knowing?”

Question #11: Are you not knowing that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

Psalms 1:4-6: “Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

After his question, Paul instructs them: “Stop being deceived.” The apostle then lists ten individuals who will not be inheriting the kingdom of God in this verse and the next, the unrighteous.

When we are fighting with each other, we lose our witness to unbelievers and it may actually keep them from coming to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. A godly life is always the best advertisement for Christianity.

In this verse and the next, Paul outlines those practicing ten characteristics of the unrighteous who will not be inheriting the kingdom of God. The characteristics being practiced in this verse are:

1. Sexual immorality.

Ephesians 5:3: “But immorality and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be named among you, as is fitting among saints.”

2. Idolaters.

We create a grim example of idolatry when we try to make religion easier by making something visible as a representation of someone’s god. 1 John 5:21: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

3. Adulterers.

Any sexual relationship outside the bounds of marriage.

4. Effeminate.

This is the Greek word “malakoi.” It means “*soft*.” It is used two ways in the New Testament: (1) of clothes—soft clothes or fine garments, or (2) of people—soft or effeminate. It would refer to men and boys who are used homosexually.

In William Barclay’s commentary, he said:

The word (*malakos*) literally means those who are soft and

effeminate; those who have lost their manhood and who live for the luxuries of recondite pleasures; the word describes what we can only call a kind of wallowing in luxury in which a man has lost all resistance power to pleasure. When Ulysses and his sailors came to the island of Circe they came to the land where the lotus flower grew. He who ate of that flower forgot his home and his loved ones and wished to live forever in that land where “it was always afternoon.” They had no more any of the stern joy that comes from “climbing up the climbing wave.” The sensualist desires this life in which it is always afternoon.

5. Homosexuality.

God rained fire and brimstone on the cities of the plain—Sodom and Gomorrah. This very sin was dominant among the people.

Romans 1:24-27: “Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to viciousness (impurity), that their bodies might be degraded among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the one who created, who is to be praised forever. Amen. Because of this God gave them over to disgraceful (degrading) passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is against nature, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing shameless acts and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**Pass It On**”: *“What a wondrous time is spring, When all the trees are budding The birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming; That’s how it is with God’s love, Once you’ve experienced it. You want to sing, it’s fresh like spring, You want to pass it on.”*

October 18 — The Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10)

1 Corinthians 6:10: “Nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor abusers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Verse 10: Paul continues his list of ten characteristics of the unrighteous who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1. Thieves.

Earlier in this passage in verse 8, Paul has accused the Corinthians of robbing their brothers and sisters in Christ by

taking them to courts of law: “On the contrary, you yourselves are wronging and robbing, and that your brethren.”

2. The covetous.

This is the greedy desire to have something or an advantage that belongs to another.

3. Drunkards.

Ephesians 5:17-18: “On this account do not be foolish, but be understanding what the will of the Lord is and do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”

4. Abusers.

5. Swindlers.

Thieves, covetous and swindlers are key words that stand out in reference to this present situation that involves going to court against others in the body of Christ.

In verse 9, Paul began: “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Then he listed these ten characteristics of the unrighteous. He concludes after this list that none of these “shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of “**Pass It On**”? *“I wish for you my friend This happiness that I've found; You can depend on Him It matters not where you're bound, I'll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know The Lord of love has come to me I want to pass it on.”*

October 19 — Washed & Sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11)

1 Corinthians 6:11: “And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”

Verse 11: As a Christian, this is our triumphant shout: “And such were some of you.” God gave us another chance.

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.”

“And such were some of you,” but in contrast: (1) “you were washed,” (2) “you were sanctified,” and (3) “you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”

“You were washed.” Titus 3:5: “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

“You were sanctified.” 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, bringing about holiness in the fear of God.”

“You were justified.” Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been made right by faith, we are having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

All of this marvelous work took place in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He provides the foundation for us being (1) washed, (2) sanctified, and (3) justified “in the Spirit of our God.”

Please join me this morning as we sing together verse 1 of **“Heaven Came Down And Glory Filled My Soul”**: *“O what a wonderful, wonderful day, Day I will never forget; After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate Friend He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, (filled my soul) When at the cross the Savior made me whole; (made me whole) My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! (filled my soul).”*

October 20 — Not Mastered By Anything (1 Corinthians 6:12)

1 Corinthians 6:12: “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.”

Verse 12: In the previous verse, Paul addressed our cleansing, but he addresses our conviction in this verse.

He quotes a phrase used by the Corinthians many times to excuse their lax living twice in this verse: “all things are lawful for me.” However, the apostle adds negative statements to this phrase:

1. “All things are lawful for me,” but, negatively, “not all things are profitable.” They are not productive or rewarding.
2. “All things are lawful for me,” but, negatively, “I will not be mastered by anything.” I will not be enslaved, dominated or ruled by anything going on in my life.

Ray Stedman in *What Are Bodies For?* comments on this passage:

The difference between legalism and true Christianity is right at that point. The legalist looks at life and he says, “Everything is wrong unless you can prove from a verse of Scripture that it is right.” That is legalism. It is a negative approach to life; it clamps a prohibitive hand upon everything that is fun and says it is all either illegal, immoral or fattening. But New Testament Christianity comes at it differently.

It says everything is right: God made the earth and everything in it and everything is right except what the Word of God labels is wrong. That is an entirely different point of view, opening the whole world to exploration and discovery and enjoyment, except for a very limited part that Scripture clearly labels wrong.

Romans 12:1-2: “I am urging you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And stop being fashioned to this age, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what the will of God is, that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect.”

Let's join together in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Heaven Came Down And Glory Filled My Soul”**: *“Born of the Spirit with life from above Into God's fam'ly divine, Justified fully thru Calvary's love, O what a standing is mine! And the transaction so quickly was made When as a sinner I came, Took of the offer Of grace He did proffer He saved me, O praise His dear name! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, (filled my soul) When at the cross the Savior made me whole; (made me whole) My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! (filled my soul).”*

October 21 — The Body is For the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:13)

1 Corinthians 6:13: “Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”

The apostle uses an illustration here to summarize his last points in verse 12: “Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them.”

Philippians 3:18-19: “For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”

“God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”

We have a negative and a positive here in this last phrase. Negatively—“the body is not for immorality.” Positively—“it is for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”

Humanity is made to be indwelt by God. We are to be receivers and

responders to the Lord to find maximum fulfillment and happiness and to use the body the way it was designed.

2 Peter 1:3-4: “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”**: *“O what a wonderful, wonderful day—Day I will never forget; After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate friend—He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day—Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!”*

October 22 — Through His Power (1 Corinthians 6:14)

1 Corinthians 6:14: “Now God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up through His power.”

Just as Jesus Christ experienced a victory over death and the demise of the body, so we will be “raised up...through His power” in a similar fashion. Accountability because of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57: “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Please join me in worship and praise singing verse 1 of my favorite Easter hymn, **“He Lives”**: *“I serve a risen Saviour, He’s in the world today; I know that He is living, Whatever men may say; I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer, And just the time I need Him He’s always near. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and He talks with me Along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives: He lives within my heart.”*

October 23 — May It Never Be! (1 Corinthians 6:15)

1 Corinthians 6:15: “Are you not knowing that your bodies are members of Christ? Having taken away then the members of Christ, shall I make them members of a harlot? May it never be!”

Now in verses 15-20 we shall examine 3 reasons they are to not commit fornication.

The key phrase is “Are you not knowing” occurs in verses 15, verse 16 and verse 19.

The apostle here in verse 15 raises 2 more questions. Question #12: “Are you not knowing that your bodies are members of Christ?”

We are brought into the most intimate of relationships when we are born again of the Spirit into God’s family. We are members of Christ.

Question #13: Paul then in the second question is asking if we then take “the members of Christ, shall I make them members of a harlot?” or a prostitute? It is so repulsive that he says “May it never be!”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“He Lives”**:
“In all the world around me I see His loving care, And tho my heart grows weary I never will despair; I know that He is leading Thro’ all the stormy blast, The day of His appearing Will come at last. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and He talks with me Along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives: He lives within my heart.”

October 24 — One Body with a Harlot (Prostitute) (1 Corinthians 6:16)

1 Corinthians 6:16: “Or are you not knowing that the one who is joining himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He is saying, ‘The two will become one flesh.’”

Here the apostle amplifies it further in verse 16 in pointing out the fact “that the one who is joining himself to a harlot is one body with her.”

He then quotes from the Genesis: “The two will become one flesh.”

Question #14: “Or are you not knowing that the one who is joining himself to a harlot is one body with her?”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“He Lives”**:
“Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, Lift up your voice and sing Eternal hallelujahs To Jesus Christ the King! The hope of all who seek Him, The help of all who find, None other is so loving, So good and kind. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and He talks with me Along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives: He lives within my heart.”

October 25 — One Spirit with the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17)

1 Corinthians 6:17: “But the one who is joining himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”

Just as in the physical relationship, the “two will become one flesh,” so when we join ourselves to the Lord, we are “one [in] spirit with Him.”

One writer said: “What we worship determines in large measure what we become.”

A. W. Tozer in *The Pursuit of God* said:

Sound Bible exposition is an imperative must in the Church of the Living God. Without it no church can be a New Testament church in any strict meaning of that term. But exposition may be carried on in such a way as to leave the hearers devoid of any true spiritual nourishment whatever. For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself, and unless and until the hearers find God in personal experience they are not the better for having heard the truth. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts. (10)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of “**O That Will Be Glory**”: *“When all my labors and trials are o’er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore Will through the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, (O that will be glory for me,) Glory for me, (Glory for me,) glory for me! (glory for me!) When by His grace I shall look on His face. That will be glory, be glory for me!”*

October 26 — Be Fleeing! (1 Corinthians 6:18)

1 Corinthians 6:18: “Be fleeing immorality. Every act of sin which a man may do is outside of his body, but the one who is sexual immorality is sinning against his own body.”

Our verse begins with a present tense command: “Be fleeing immorality.” This is a practice from everyday discipline, that your eyes and your mind are focused on what the Lord wants for us in this regard.

Job says in Job 31:1: “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.”

Jesus says in Mark 7:20-23: “And He was saying, ‘That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders,

adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Genesis 39:11-12: “One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, ‘Come to bed with me!’ But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.”

1 Timothy 6:11: “But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue after righteousness, godliness, faithful, love, perseverance and gentleness.”

Max Lucado pictures this scene:

So up the hill we trudge. Weary, wounded hearts wrestling with unresolved mistakes. Signs of anxiety. Tears of frustration. Words of rationalization. Moans of doubt. For some the pain is on the surface. For others the hurt is submerged, buried in a rarely touched substrata of bad memories. Parents, lovers, professionals. Some trying to forget, others trying to remember, all trying to cope. We walk silently in single file with leg irons of guilt. Paul was the man who posed the question that is on all of our lips, “Who will rescue me from this body of death?”
(*No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*, 90)

One writer said: “Sin produces a moment of gratification and an eternity of remorse.”

Another writer said: “Choice, not chance, determines destiny.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**O That Will Be Glory**”: *“When by the gift of His infinite grace I am accorded in heaven a place, Just to be there and to look on His face Will through the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, (O that will be glory for me,) Glory for me, (Glory for me,) glory for me! (glory for me!) When by His grace I shall look on His face. That will be glory, be glory for me!”*

October 27 — The Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

1 Corinthians 6:19: “Or are you not knowing that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you are having from God, and that you are not your own?”

Here we come to the third reason they are not to commit fornication. We are having the little phrase for the third time: “Or are you not knowing?” The first was in verse 15: “Are you not knowing that your bodies are the members of Christ?” The second was in verse 16: “Or are you not knowing that the one who is joining himself to a harlot is one body with

her?” Now the third here in verse 19: “Or are you not knowing that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?”

This is Question #15 in the whole series of questions in the passage. The word for “temple” is Holy of Holies. It is that innermost sanctuary, the dwelling place of God.

Our “body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” and we are having the Spirit of God and we are not our own.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”

1 Peter 1:18-19: “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

Please join me this morning in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“O That Will Be Glory”**: *“Friends will be there I have loved long ago; Joy like a river around me will flow; Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know, Will through the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, (O that will be glory for me,) Glory for me, (Glory for me,) glory for me! (glory for me!) When by His grace I shall look on His face. That will be glory, be glory for me!”*

October 28 — Purchased with a Price (1 Corinthians 6:20)

1 Corinthians 6:20: “For you were purchased with a price. Now therefore glorify God in your body.”

They were commanded back in verse 9: “Stop being deceived.” Now he commands them here in verse 20: “Now therefore glorify God in your body.”

The apostle always brings his hearers back to the cross.

One writer said: “Sin is so big that it takes a Christ with a cross to measure it.” Another writer said: “God who needs nothing brings into existence only unnecessary creatures so that He may love and perfect them.”

Jack Mayhall said: “The longer I live, the more convinced I become that the difference between a godly person and an ungodly one is not that one sins and one doesn’t, both are going to sin. But the godly person admits his sin, takes responsibility for it and confesses it to God.” (source unknown)

1 Peter 1:18-19: “knowing that not with perishable things as silver or gold were you ransomed from your futile ways of life inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (DAV)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **“Ten Thousand Angels”**: *“They bound the hands of Jesus in the garden where He prayed; They led Him thro’ the streets in shame. They spat upon the Savior so pure and free from sin; They said, ‘Crucify Him; He’s to blame.’ He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels, But He died alone, (alone), for you and me.”*

October 29 — Now Concerning (1 Corinthians 7:1)

1 Corinthians 7:1: “Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

The apostle begins this section with the little phrase “Peri De” or “Now concerning.” This indicates that Paul is writing from a list of questions that they have asked of him in a letter that has been brought from Corinth.

What we are going to have in this chapter is the contrast between the good and the better.

The word “touch” is a Greek word that refers to sexual intercourse.

The apostle Paul does not have a low view of marriage. He is handling questions that have come from Corinth.

I think it would be beautiful for us this morning to look at C. S. Lewis as he was trying to tell us about his friendship with his wife when he wrote:

A good wife contains so many persons in herself. What was Helen not to me? She was my daughter, my mother, my pupil, my teacher, my subject and my sovereign; and always holding all these in solution, my trusty comrade, friend, shipmate, fellow-soldier. My mistress; but at the same time all that any man friend (and I have good ones) has ever been to me. Perhaps more. If we had never fallen in love we should have none the less been always together, and created a scandal. That's what I meant when I once praised her for her masculine virtues. But she soon put a stop to that by asking how I'd like to be praised for my feminine ones. (*Magnificent Marriage* by Gordon MacDonald, 56)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“Ten Thousand Angels”**: *“Upon His precious head they placed a crown of thorns; They laughed and said, ‘Behold the King.’ They struck Him and they cursed Him and mocked His holy name. All alone He suffered everything. He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels, But He died alone, (alone), for you and me.”*

October 30 — Because of the Immoralities (1 Corinthians 7:2)

1 Corinthians 7:2: “But because of the immoralities, let each man be having his own wife, and let each woman be having her own husband.”

Now the apostle in contrast to the previous statement in verse 1, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” Now he gives the reason: “because of the immoralities, let each man be having his own wife, and let each woman be having her own husband.”

The external forces that are created by the environment in which these believers live—the apostle to provide a safeguard against immorality tells them each to have a wife and a husband.

We can define the “immoralities” by the four following words: (1) pressures; (2) permissiveness; (3) the power of sex; and (4) problems of interpersonal relationships.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-7: “Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.”

One writer said: “The man who has no inner life is a slave to his surroundings.”

Another writer said: “Our sense of sin is in proportion to our nearness to God.”

The word “let” occurs 15 times in this passage. This indicates that we are in a highly instructional passage in response to the question that they have asked of the apostle.

The first “let” in the passage: “Let each man be having his own wife.” The second “let”: “Let each woman be having her own husband.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of “**Ten Thousand Angels**”: “*When they nailed Him to the cross, His mother stood nearby; He said, ‘Woman, behold thy son!’ He cried, ‘I thirst for water,’ but they gave Him none to drink. Then the sinful work of man was done. He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels, But He died alone, (alone), for you and me.*”

October 31 — Sensitive to Each Other (1 Corinthians 7:3)

1 Corinthians 7:3: “Let the husband be rendering to his wife that which is due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.”

The verse starts out with the third occurrence of “let”: “Let the husband be rendering to his wife that which is due her.”

Back in verse 2 the recommendations were: “each man and each woman.” Now the word has been changed from “having” to “rendering”: “Rendering to his wife that which is due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.”

Studies of marriage relationships include the definition of what is due to the wife and to the husband. The majority of women would say what was due her has to do with communication and what was due him was the physical.

The word for “sex” in verse 1 was “touch.” The word for “sex” in verse 3 is “rendering.”

We need to notice that this is in the present tense so it is going to be on a continuous and regular basis.

What does the apostle mean when he says: “that which is due her”? What is due? The answer to that is sexual satisfaction.

It is not self-gratification but the fulfillment of the mate. That is the duty which each one has to the other.

Sex as God intended is other-oriented. It is not what I’m getting, but what I’m giving.

Ray Stedman said:

One thing is clear from this passage: sex in marriage is given to us for the mutual pleasure of those involved. It is the highest form of physical ecstasy, without a doubt. (136)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 4 of “**Ten Thousand Angels**”: *“To the howling mob He yielded; He did not for mercy cry. The cross of shame He took alone. And when He cried, ‘It’s finished,’ He gave Himself to die; Salvation’s wondrous plan was done. He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels, But He died alone, (alone), for you and me.”*

NOVEMBER

November 1 — Who Has the Authority? (1 Corinthians 7:4)

1 Corinthians 7:4: “The wife is not having authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise also the husband is not having authority over his own body but the wife does.”

Ephesians 5:21: “and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

In the marriage bond, each partner makes a gift of themselves to the other to satisfy them and to bring them pleasure in the marriage relationship.

Larry Crab and Dan Allender in the book *Encouragement: The Key to Caring* said:

I am persuaded that one of the key culprits responsible for the lack of self-control is our cultural emphasis on the desirability of self-expression. Our values revolve too much around ideals like openness, authenticity, transparency, assertion, fulfillment, and genuineness. And we tend to regard as outdated concepts like sacrificial giving, self-discipline, self-denying love, obedience, and willing endurance. (42-43)

Sexually our responsibility is to render what is due and not deprive.

One writer tells the story of a letter he found that a husband wrote to his wife in jest, surfacing the issue of rejection through lame excuses:

To My Loving Wife:

During the past year I have tried to make love to you 365 times. I have succeeded only 36 times; this is an average of once every 10 days. The following is the list of the reasons why I did not succeed more often: It was too late, too early, too hot, too cold. It would waken the children, the company in the next room, or the neighbors whose windows were open. You were too full; or you had a headache, backache, toothache, or the giggles. You pretended to be asleep or were not in the mood. You had on your mudpack. You watched the late TV show; I watched the late TV show; or the baby would cry.

During the times I did succeed the activity was not entirely satisfactory for a variety of reasons. Six times you chewed gum the whole time; on occasion you watched TV the whole time. Often you told me to hurry up and get it over with. A few times I tried to waken you to tell you we were through; and one time I was afraid I had hurt you for I felt you move.

Honey, it's no wonder I drink too much.

– Your loving husband

I require the Johnson Temperament Analysis test from couples that want me to marry them.

One of the things that is a give-me in the temperament analysis is a high degree of selfishness. This is normal because up until now, they have had to live and consider their own things. Now they are bringing another person into their lives.

Understanding the Lord developed the marriage relationship so we could learn how to sacrificially serve others. He did that in the upper room when He washed the disciples' feet.

I tell every young couple, life is like a triangle. The Lord Jesus is at the top of the triangle and the husband on one of the two corners and the wife is on the other. The closer you get to God, the closer you get to each other.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn that expresses the triangle of relationship, **“Let Us Break Bread Together”**: *“Let us break bread together on our knees; Let us break bread together on our knees. When I fall on my knees; With my face to the rising sun, O Lord have mercy on me.”*

November 2 — Mutual Consent (1 Corinthians 7:5)

1 Corinthians 7:5: “Stop depriving one another, except it be by mutual consent for a time in order that you may give yourselves to prayer, and come together again in order that Satan may not keep on tempting you because of your lack of self-control.”

Verse 5 starts with a present negative imperative. “Stop depriving one another” tells us that sex is for pleasure as well as for procreation.

God is basically saying: “Go for it!” It’s not distorted. It’s not dirty. It’s not something you don’t do.

This command is in the present tense indicating the fact that they probably were depriving one another in their marriage relationship after they became Christians, not fully understanding the part the physical plays in such a relationship.

This is the third word that is used for the physical relationship. We have seen the words “touch” in verse 1, “rendering” in verse 3, and now “depriving” here in verse 5.

Following the negative command is an exception to the rule. We read in our text: “except it be by mutual consent for a time in order that you may give yourselves to prayer.”

There are 3 things said here that can be an exception to the rule. Sexual restraint can only be by “mutual consent,” for a good purpose, and for a short time.

The apostle continues in the verse to say: “and come together again in order that Satan may not keep on tempting you because of your lack of self-control.”

Paul speaks of this self-control in 1 Corinthians 9:27: “but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Bishop Andrewes said it well: “To win possession of my vessel in sanctification and honor is my goal.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**Let Us Break Bread Together**”: “*Let us drink the cup together on our knees; Let us drink the cup together on our knees. When I fall on my knees; With my face to the rising sun, O Lord have mercy on me.*”

November 3 — A Concession (1 Corinthians 7:6-7)

1 Corinthians 7:6: “But this I am saying by way of a concession not by way of command.”

Paul is saying in verse 6: “I am saying [this] by way of a concession not by way of command.” This is a *may* and not a *must*.

The word “concession” takes us back to verse 2 in the passage: “but because of the immoralities.” Paul found it necessary to be addressing these issues.

There is a positive and a negative here in verse 6. Positively Paul says “this I am saying by way of a concession.” Negatively, “not by way of command.”

Gary Thomas in his book *Sacred Marriage* says:

According to pollster George Burna, self-described “born again” Christians have a higher rate of divorce than nonbelievers (twenty-seven percent to twenty-three percent). Those who adopt the label “fundamentalist Christian” have the highest divorce rate of all (thirty percent). We can’t carry a message well if we don’t live it first.

How can I tell my children that God’s promise of reconciliation is secure when they see that my own promise doesn’t mean a thing? (35)

1 Corinthians 7:7: “Yet I am wishing that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man is having his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.”

Paul is using the word “concession” in verse 6 and now he is using the word “wishing” here in verse 7. What Paul is saying is that you can solve a lot of problems staying single. And all the married men say “Amen!”

Paul in this first statement of principle is saying: “However, each man is having his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Let Us Break Bread Together”**: *“Let us praise God together on our knees; Let us praise God together on our knees. When I fall on my knees, With my face to the rising sun, O Lord have mercy on me.”*

November 4 — Let Them Marry (1 Corinthians 7:8-9)

1 Corinthians 7:8: “But I am saying to the unmarried and the widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.”

Whereas the apostle has made a statement of the purpose of marriage in verses 1-7, now in verses 8-24 he is going to be talking about the problems of the married.

Paul in verse 7 says: “I am wishing.” Now in verse 8 he says: “I am saying.” He is addressing these remarks to the two-fold audience: “the unmarried and the widows.”

Paul says: “It is good for them if they remain even as I.”

1 Corinthians 7:9: “But if they are not able to exercise self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to be burning with sexual desire.”

Back in verse 2 we had the external force: “because of the immoralities.” Now we have the internal force: “not able to exercise self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to be burning with sexual desire.”

The picture is one of literally being on fire with sexual desire.

Lois Mowday in her book *The Snare* said:

Paul addressed this issue in 1 Corinthians 7:8-9: “Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

Many Christian singles are doing neither—marrying or burning. Instead of marrying, there is an attitude among many to “put off” that binding commitment. And instead of burning, they take part in illicit sex because they are “only human.” (108)

Song of Solomon 8:6-7: “Place me like a seal over your heart, or like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, and its jealousy is as

enduring as the grave. Love flashes like fire, the brightest kind of flame. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can rivers drown it. If a man tried to buy love with everything he owned, his offer would be utterly despised.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **“Where He Leads I’ll Follow”**: *“Sweet are the promises; kind is the Word, Dearer far than any message man ever heard. Pure was the mind of Christ—sinless, I see. He the great example is, and pattern for me. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow all the way. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow Jesus ev’ry day.”*

November 5 — The Lord’s Instructions (1 Corinthians 7:10)

1 Corinthians 7:10: “But to those who have married I am giving instructions, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not be separated from her husband.”

Here the apostle turns his message from the “unmarried and widows” to those “who have married” in verse 10.

The Lord’s teaching on this is in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 and also Matthew 19.

Ray Stedman said:

I saw a cartoon in the newspaper that showed a father speaking to his daughter just before her wedding. He said, “Try to make it last, dear, at least until I can pay for the wedding!” (140)

The overriding general principle then is “that the wife should not be separated from her husband.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“Where He Leads I’ll Follow”**: *“Sweet is the tender love Jesus hath shown, Sweeter far than any love that mortals have known. Kind to the erring one, faithful is He. He the great example is, and pattern for me. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow all the way. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow Jesus ev’ry day.”*

November 6 — Let Her Remain (1 Corinthians 7:11)

1 Corinthians 7:11: “But if she should be separated, let her remain unmarried or let her be reconciled to her husband, and the husband let him not be putting away his wife.”

There are two options in case this happens: (1) “remain” and (2) “be reconciled.” You will notice the little word “let” occurs 3 times in this verse: (1) “let her remain unmarried”; (2) “let her be reconciled to her husband”; and (3) “let him not be putting away his wife.”

One writer said: “Patience is accepting a difficult situation without

giving God a deadline for removing it.”

Another writer said: “God never commands and commissions without providing grace to obey.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Where He Leads I’ll Follow”**: *“List to His loving words: ‘Come unto me.’ Weary, heavy-laden, there is sweet rest for thee. Trust in His promises, faithful and sure; Lean upon the Savior, and thy soul is secure. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow all the way. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow Jesus ev’ry day.”*

November 7 — Unequally Yoked (1 Corinthians 7:12)

1 Corinthians 7:12: “But to the rest I myself am saying, not the Lord, if any brother is having a wife who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to live with him, let him not be putting her away.”

The apostle has spoken to the unmarried and the widows back in verses 8 & 9, in verse 10 to those who have married, and now in verse 12 he is speaking to the rest. Paul is saying to the rest, “I myself am saying, not the Lord.”

There are those who feel that this is Paul’s personal opinion and it can be treated as such. This, however, is not the case. The Lord hasn’t taught on this kind of circumstance. The Lord does not address Himself or recognize these distortions of relationship.

One thing we can say for sure is that Paul recognized when he was speaking and when the Lord was speaking.

Paul could recognize the voice of his beloved: “My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely” (Song of Solomon 2:14).

Here we have a Christian brother who is a husband to a wife who is an unbeliever.

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)

One writer said: “If you marry a child of the Devil you are bound to have trouble with your father-in-law.”

Here is an individual who has become a Christian and his wife is still an unbeliever. Instead of “putting her away” by terminating the marriage relation in this situation, “if she is willing to live with him, let him not be putting her away.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of that great hymn, **“Yield Not to Temptation”**: *“Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin; Each vict’ry will help you Some other to win; Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue; Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through. Ask the Saviour to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.”*

November 8 — Unequally Yoked (1 Corinthians 7:13)

1 Corinthians 7:13: “And a woman who is having an unbelieving husband, and he is willing to live with her, let her not be putting her husband away.”

Paul in verse 12 addresses the men and now here in verse 13 he addresses the woman.

Peter addresses this issue in 1 Peter 3:1-4: “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be external only—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“Yield Not to Temptation”**: *“Shun evil companions, bad language disdain; God’s name holy in rev’rence, Nor take it in vain; Be thoughtful and earnest, kind-hearted and true; Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through. Ask the Saviour to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.”*

November 9 — Sanctified by Your Mate (1 Corinthians 7:14)

1 Corinthians 7:14: “For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.”

The reason Paul has given these two other instructions is now stated here in verse 14: “For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband.”

The word “sanctified” means *“set apart in a place of privilege.”*

“An unbelieving husband [or] wife” living with a believing mate is in a

very special place of privilege. It is a sphere of special conviction.

The principle is you don't live with somebody in the most intimate of relationships without being affected. Spiritual sanctification is living with the Lord and being progressively changed into His likeness.

He then states the second reason: "for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy."

MacArthur points out:

The Christian need not fear that the children will be unclean, defiled by the unbelieving father or mother. God promises that the opposite is true. They would otherwise be unclean if both parents were unbelievers. But the Lord guarantees that the presence of just one Christian parent will protect the children. It is not that their salvation is assured but that they are protected from undue spiritual harm and that they will receive spiritual blessing. Because they share in the spiritual benefits of their believing parent, they are holy. Often the testimony of the believing parent in this situation is especially effective, because the children see a clear contrast to the unbelieving parent's life, and that leads them to salvation. (167)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **"Yield Not to Temptation"**: *"To him that o'ercometh, God giveth a crown; Thru' faith we will conquer; Though often cast down; He who is our Saviour, Our strength will renew; Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through. Ask the Saviour to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through."*

November 10 — God Has Called Us to Peace (1 Corinthians 7:15)

1 Corinthians 7:15: "But if the unbelieving one is separating, let him be separating; the brother or the sister is not bound (as a slave) in such cases, but God has called us to peace."

Paul has stated the general principle earlier and there is ***no separation***.

But now the apostle says: "if the unbelieving one is separating, let him be separating." Don't try to stop him. You are not bound to insist upon the relationship.

"The brother or the sister is not bound (as a slave) in such cases."

The apostle does not address the issue of infidelity as our Lord does in Matthew 19 when divorce granted on the basis of infidelity frees the innocent party to remarry because the previous marriage ended with infidelity.

The real question that comes before our mind here is: What does Paul mean by the word “bound” here in verse 15?

We already know that the overriding principle is: ***If at all possible, stay together.***

We learn here that there are circumstances where we are not “bound” to insist on the relationship.

Stedman says: “...not bound,” means that the marriage has ended and that remarriage is permitted.”

The devastating effects of divorce are felt by both the children involved and the mate who is left.

God has called us to peace. It is a difficult interpretation. Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.” Colossians 3:15: “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of one of my favorite hymns, **“Living for Jesus”**: *“Living for Jesus a life that is true, Striving to please Him in all that I do; Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free, This is the pathway of blessing for me. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne, My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.”*

November 11 — The Big Question (1 Corinthians 7:16)

1 Corinthians 7:16: “For how are you knowing, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how are you knowing, O husband, whether you will save your wife?”

Now a reason is given here in verse 16 for recognizing the fact that there are some serious ramifications to the marriage relationship. It could be that in the midst of this conflict that God will use you to bring your separating husband or wife to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who have no place for divorce in this passage feel that you would have a much better chance of winning your mate if you were living together.

V. Raymond Edman said:

Delay never thwarts God’s purpose; rather, it polishes His instrument.
(*The Disciplines of Life*, 80)

He says further:

Delay does not forget God’s servants nor cause His faithfulness to fail; rather, it fortifies their souls and vindicates His name. (81)

One writer said: “Many a man has turned and left the dock just before his ship came in.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of “**Living for Jesus**”: *“Living for Jesus wherever I am, Doing each duty in His holy name; Willing to suffer affliction and loss, Deeming each trial a part of my cross. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne, My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.”*

November 12 — Assigned and Called by God (1 Corinthians 7:17)

1 Corinthians 7:17: “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each one, in that way let him be walking (ordering his manner of life). And so in all the churches I am giving orders.”

In these verses from verse 17 down to verse 24 we are going to see circumstances at the time of salvation that affect the way we conduct ourselves after becoming saved.

The first principle was stated back in verse 7: “However, each man is having his own gift from God.”

Now the second statement of principle is here in verse 17: “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each one, in that way let him be walking (ordering his manner of life).”

Here the apostle uses the words “assigned” and “called” and then he says: “let him be walking (ordering his manner of life)” in that way.

The principle is: ***Don’t try to change relationships at the point of salvation in order to become more spiritual.***

The word “called” is used seven times here in these final verses.

“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:9).

Paul says here in this verse “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each one, in that way let him be walking (ordering his manner of life). And so in all the churches I am giving orders.”

This principle not only fits for those in Corinth but the apostle is giving the same orders to all of the churches.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**Living for Jesus**”: *“Living for Jesus through earth’s little while, My dearest treasure, the light of His smile; Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem, Bringing the weary to find rest in Him. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne, My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.”*

November 13 — Stay as You Are (1 Corinthians 7:18-19)

1 Corinthians 7:18: “Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised.”

Here the apostle is giving illustrations of not trying to change things that don't need changing. He is also showing how ridiculous some people are in trying to undo the past.

He will use circumcision and slavery as two illustrations of this point.

Ray Stedman says:

Circumcision, uncircumcision, tattooed, untattooed—it does not make any difference. The key to your life is not your outward looks, but what is going on in your heart between you and the Lord and the relationship you have to Him. (149)

1 Corinthians 7:19: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision but keeping the commandments of God (is what counts).”

Now we have a statement of the third principle in this passage: “keeping the commandments of God (is what counts).”

Paul says that obedience is primary.

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” (James 1:22).

In Matthew 7:24-25 Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with these words: “Therefore every one who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blow, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall; for it had been founded upon the rock.”

Join me in singing verse 1 of “**Sitting At the Feet of Jesus**”: *“Sitting at the feet of Jesus, O, what words I hear Him say! Happy place! so near, so precious! May it find me there each day! Sitting at the feet of Jesus, I would look upon the past; For His love has been so gracious, It has won my heart at last.”*

November 14 — Changing the Situation (1 Corinthians 7:20-21)

1 Corinthians 7:20: “Let each one be remaining in that situation in which he was called.”

Here in verse 20 we have the statement of the fourth principle.

1. In verse 7: “However each man is having his own gift from God.”
2. In verse 17: “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God

has called each one, in that way let him be walking (ordering his manner of life)."

3. In verse 19: "keeping the commandments of God (is what counts)."
1. Now in verse 20: "Let each one be remaining in that situation in which he was called."

The key words are "remaining" and "called" here in this principle.

1 Corinthians 7:21: "Were you a slave when you were called? Stop letting it be a concern to you. But if you are able also to become free, rather take advantage of the opportunity."

Paul is saying, whether you are single, separated, divorced or widowed: "Stop letting it be a concern to you."

In contrast to this, "if you are able also to become free, rather take advantage of the opportunity."

The Lord will provide opportunities for His will to be made known as we grow in our relationship to Him and He will give wisdom to make the right decisions in light of His will as we simply trust Him.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of "**Sitting At the Feet of Jesus**": *"Sitting at the feet of Jesus, Where can mortal be more blest? There I lay my sins and sorrows, And when weary, find sweet rest; Sitting at the feet of Jesus, There I love to weep and pray, While I from His fullness gather Grace and comfort ev'ry day."*

November 15 — Christ's Slave (1 Corinthians 7:22)

1 Corinthians 7:22: "For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave."

We know that the great truth of Scripture is recorded in John 8:32: "and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Yes, we have been set free from the slavery of sin and death when we come to know Jesus Christ! But we also know that in loving acts of commitment and lordship, we give ourselves over to Christ as His servants or slaves.

God can work and use us right where we are. That is the overriding principle that is stated here in these verses.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of "**Sitting At the Feet of Jesus**": *"Bless me, O my Savior, bless me, As I sit low at Thy feet; O look down in love upon me, Let me see Thy face so sweet; Give me, Lord, the mind of Jesus, Make me holy as He is; May I prove I've been with Jesus, Who is all my righteousness."*

November 16 — Bought with a Price (1 Corinthians 7:23-24)

1 Corinthians 7:23: “You were bought with a price; stop becoming slaves of men.”

Paul is saying here in verse 23 we were bought with a horrible price—the precious blood of Jesus Christ upon Calvary’s cross.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 he touched on the same issue: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

1 Peter 1:18-19: “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

One writer said: “Two quick ways to disaster are to take nobody’s advice and to take everybody’s advice.”

1 Corinthians 7:24: “Brethren, let each man be remaining in the presence of God in that situation in which he was called.”

Paul concludes this section in verse 24: “Brethren, let each man be remaining in the presence of God in that situation in which he was called.”

You can know if you are experiencing the presence of God in your life that you are walking in the center of His will. The sense of peace and wellbeing that comes from knowing you are doing what He desires you to do.

He uses the word “remaining” again. He says for us to “be remaining ... in that situation in which [we were] called.”

Our prayer is often, “Lord, change my circumstances.” The Lord’s answer is, “No, but I’ll change you to suit your circumstances.” That is what the apostle is trying to get across in these verses as it relates to the stress of distorted and difficult marriage relationships.

In Psalm 51:17 David says: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of that great hymn, “**And Can It Be That I Should Gain**”: “*And can it be that I should gain And int’rest in the Savior’s blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! how can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me.*”

November 17 — The Virgins (1 Corinthians 7:25)

1 Corinthians 7:25: “Now concerning the virgins: I am having no command from the Lord, but I am giving an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.”

The little phrase “Now concerning” takes us back to the first verse of the chapter.

1 Corinthians 7:1: “Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

“Now concerning the virgins.” This word occurs six times here in verses 25, 28, 34, 36, 37 and 38.

“Now concerning the virgins: I am having no command from the Lord.”

The Lord did not speak to this issue and so the apostle Paul, now under divine inspiration, is going to be giving his opinion in this matter.

Because Paul is giving his opinion, this does not make this portion of Scripture any less inspired because the Apostle Paul is one of the instruments God is using to communicate His message to man.

I think we need to go back to 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Our verse concludes by saying: “but I am giving an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.”

You can circle two words there. Because (1) “mercy” of the Lord has been exercised in the life of the Apostle Paul, he is a (2) “trustworthy” instrument to be used in communicating God’s will in these matters.

One of the most difficult things to cope with in the single life is the plaguing problem of loneliness.

Max Lucado in his book *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior* has this to say:

I am writing to those who know this cry firsthand. I’m writing to those of you whose days are bookended with broken hearts and long evenings. I’m writing to those of you who can find a lonely person simply by looking in the mirror.

For you, loneliness is a way of life. The sleepless nights. The lonely bed. The distrust. The fear of tomorrow. The unending hurt.

When did it begin? In your childhood? At the divorce? At retirement? At the cemetery? When the kids left home?

Maybe you, like Judy Bucknell, have fooled everyone. No one knows that you are lonely. On the outside you are packaged perfectly. Your smile is

quick. Your job is stable. Your clothes are sharp. Your waist is thin. Your calendar is full. Your walk brisk. Your talk impressive. But when you look in the mirror, you fool no one. When you are alone, the duplicity ceases and the pain surfaces. (46)

Hebrews 13:5: “Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’”

Psalm 102:7: “I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof.”

Matthew 27:46: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“And Can It Be That I Should Gain”**: *“Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature’s night; Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray, I woke the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me.”*

November 18 — Stay by the Stuff (1 Corinthians 7:26)

1 Corinthians 7:26: “I am thinking then that this is good in view of the present crisis, that it is good for a man to be just as he is.”

The phrase “I am thinking” does not communicate uncertainty but is the settled opinion—the result of being directed by the Spirit. Paul is communicating his settled thoughts on this matter. “I am thinking then that this is good.”

“I am thinking then that this is good in view of the present crisis.” The question comes: to what is Paul referring to when he speaks of the “present crisis”?

David Mace in his book *Love and Anger in Marriage* says the following:

The Chinese character for the word *crisis* is a combination of two separate characters—one meaning “danger,” the other “opportunity.” Our object will be to avoid the danger and to seize the opportunity—the opportunity to improve the relationship and to use the crisis as a growth point. (104)

Just the fact that we have become a Christian presents us with numerous crises.

“The Christian life is hard enough without a wife” could probably summarize what Paul is referring to here.

Ray Stedman says:

...Adam and Even left the Garden of Eden, he turned to her and said,
 “My dear, we must understand that we live in a time of transition.” (153)

While in Washington, DC, the chairman addressed the audience in view of world turmoil by saying: “Mr. Chairman and fellow passengers aboard the *Titanic*...”

Phillips translates this verse: “My opinion is this, that amid all the difficulties of the present time you would do best to remain just as you are. Are you married? Well, don’t try to be separated. Are you unattached? Then don’t try to get married. But if you, a man, should marry, don’t think that you have done anything sinful. And the same applies to a young woman. Yet I believe that those who take this step are bound to find the married state an extra burden in these critical days, and I should like you to be as unencumbered as possible. All our futures are so foreshortened, indeed, that those who have wives should live, so to speak, as though they had none!”

One of the great needs at the time of crisis is for stability in the midst of the storm.

A great hymn to be singing at this time of crisis is “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 5 of **“And Can It Be That I Should Gain”**: *“No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach th’ eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me.”*

November 19 — Don’t Mess with Your Marriage (1 Corinthians 7:27)

1 Corinthians 7:27: “Have you been bound to a wife? Stop seeking to be released. Have you been released from a wife? Stop seeking a wife.”

Here in this verse the apostle asks two pointed questions and then gives two negative commands.

Question #1: “Have you been bound to a wife?” This word takes us back to 1 Corinthians 7:15: “But if the unbelieving one is separating, let him be separating; the brother or the sister is not bound (as a slave) in such cases, but God has called us to peace.”

The apostle follows this first question with a negative command: “Stop seeking to be released.” This is a present negative command and so we can assume that this is going on in Corinth. “Stop seeking to be released.”

The apostle is saying here: ***Don’t try to get a divorce after you’ve***

become a Christian.

It sounds like a great title for a cowboy country song: “A Time to Love and a Time to Quit.”

Oswald Chambers knew that when he wrote: “The test of a man’s religious life and character is not what he does in the exceptional moments of life, but what he does in the ordinary times, when there is nothing tremendous or exciting going on...Don’t give in because the pain is bad just now; get on with it, and before long you will find you have a new vision and a new purpose.” (*Secrets of Staying Power: Overcoming the Discouragements of Ministry* by Kevin A. Miller, 66)

The apostle continues in verse 27 with a second question: “Have you been released from a wife?”

He follows this then with the fifth negative command in the passage: “Stop seeking a wife.” This is something that is obviously going on in Corinth and he wants to put a stop to it. ***Don’t try to get married just because everyone else is.***

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **“I Know Who Holds Tomorrow”**: *“I don’t know about tomorrow; I just live from day to day. I don’t borrow from its sunshine, For its skies may turn to gray. I don’t worry o’er the future, For I know What Jesus said; And today I’ll walk beside Him, For He knows what is ahead. Many things about tomorrow, I don’t seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand.”*

November 20 — Sparing Trouble (1 Corinthians 7:28)

1 Corinthians 7:28: “But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.”

Paul wants to make it clear that entering into the bonds of matrimony does not mean that one has sinned in any way.

Ray Stedman says:

I remember a cartoon in the paper recently of two men who were discussing marriage. One of them said, “Well, I’m still single, thanks to Marriage Anonymous.” The other man said, “What’s that?” “Well,” said the first, “when you get to feeling that you want to get married you call this number and they send over an ugly woman in cold cream and curlers and she nags you until the feeling disappears!” (153)

John MacArthur points out:

Those who are already married, however, must not seek to be

released. Marriage is a lifelong bond that can be broken only by death, adultery or divorce by an unbelieving spouse. Other problems, no matter how severe, are never grounds for divorce.” (180)

Paul is saying that those who are married “will have trouble in this life.”

The word “trouble” is the word for pressed together or under pressure.

The sea of matrimony is rough even under the most favorable circumstances.

Our daughter Julea sent a card not too long ago that said “Into every life a little rain must fall...followed by high winds and damaging hail.”

The struggles to communicate, to change, to work toward closeness in communion are a major project.

Phillips paraphrases this verse: “Yet I do believe that those who take this step are bound to find the marriage state an extra burden in these critical days.”

Dr. Robert Anthony said: “If you and your partner always agree, one of you is unnecessary!” (source unknown)

Anthony also said: “If you want to make an enemy, try to change someone.”

Francine Klagsbrun said:

Marriage is a process because it is always in flux; it never stays the same and it never completes itself. It is a process of changing and accepting change, of settling differences and living with differences that will never be settled, of drawing close and pulling apart and drawing close again. Because it is a process that demands discipline and responsibility, it can bring frustration and pain, but it also can plumb the depths of love and provide an arena for self-actualization as nothing else can. (*Married People*, 16)

Ruth Harms Calkin titles this little piece “A Growing Marriage”:

Lord, we're still growing
In our marriage
And that's so good!
We're even doing better
When we criticize each other.
Like a gentle kitten
Courtesy is creeping in.
We feel the paws
Not the claws. (*Lord, I Just Keep Running in Circles*, 56)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**I Know Who Holds Tomorrow**”: “*Ev’ry step is getting brighter as the golden stairs I climb; Ev’ry*

*burden's getting lighter; Ev'ry cloud is silver-lined. There the sun is always shining,
There no tear will dim the eye, At the ending of the rainbow, Where the mountains
touch the sky. Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand; But I know
who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand."*

November 21 — The Time Has Been Shortened (1 Corinthians 7:29)

1 Corinthians 7:29: "But this I am saying, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who are having wives should be as though they are not having them."

Remember it always takes two to tangle!

Paul addresses them as "brethren" as he did back in verse 24. Paul now makes reference to "the time has been shortened."

A man was leaving his wife for another woman and he left this note for her: "Sell the Mercedes and send the money." She in her bitterness sold the Mercedes for \$25 and sent the money.

Back in verse 26 he made reference to "the present crisis." Here the apostle is making a contrast between temporary and eternal things.

Paul refers to this in Romans 13:11-12: "And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

Paul is saying here that time is getting away from us. We need to get our acts together and with proper priorities, please the Lord in the wise use of our time.

Psalms 90:12: "Teach us to remember our days aright that we might gain a heart of wisdom."

We are here to glorify God and not to seek our own happiness.

One writer said: "About the time you're face clears up, your mind begins to go!"

Ruth Harms Calkin titles this piece "Urgent Request":

Lord, You said in Your Word
I could talk to You
About anything—
Just anything, Lord.
So right at this precise moment
I have a very urgent request.

Will You please help me
Find my glasses soon enough
To remember why I needed them
In the first place? (*Lord, I Just Keep Running in Circles*, 23)

Paul is saying in these verses that it is okay to marry but with the assumption of the marriage vows also comes trouble in life. Paul is wanting to spare them of this trouble.

As time inevitably marches, I find myself being more able to relate to the poetic piece titled “Little Mixed Up”:

Just a line to say, I’m living
Though I’m not among the dead
Though I’m getting more forgetful
And more mixed-up in the head.

For sometimes I can’t remember
When I stand at the foot of the stair,
If I must go up for something
Or I’ve just come down from there.

And before the “frig” so often
My poor mind is filled with doubt
Have I just put food away, or
Have I come to take some out.

And there’s time when it is dark out
With my nightcap on my head,
I don’t know if I’m retiring
Or just getting out of bed.

So, if it’s my turn to write you
There’s no use getting sore,
I may think that I have written
And don’t want to be a bore.

So remember—I do love you
And wish that you were here
But, it’s nearly mail time
So, I must say, “Goodbye, Dear.”

There I stood beside the mailbox
With my face so very red,
Instead of mailing you my letter
I opened it instead. (source unknown)

The conflict between the call of God and one's commitment to marriage is very real.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“I Know Who Holds Tomorrow”**: *“I don’t know about tomorrow, It may bring me poverty, But the One who feeds the sparrow is the One who stands by me. And the path that be my portion May be thro’ the flame or flood, But His presence goes before me, And I’m covered with His blood. Many things about tomorrow, I don’t seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand.”*

November 22 — Perilous Times (1 Corinthians 7:30)

1 Corinthians 7:30: “And those who are weeping as though they are not weeping, and those who are rejoicing as though not rejoicing; and those who are buying, as though they are not possessing.”

When you commit yourself to marriage, you are going to commit yourself to trouble. Trouble involves the pressure of priorities. How does your wife fit into these things? You also can expect that there are going to be some tears involved.

You can expect trouble and tears as a part of marriage.

Psalms 126:5-6: Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.”

There is a glorious anticipation that one of these days soon “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Paul is saying that you have got to keep your emotions under control.

In view of the fact “the time has been shortened”: (1) We must be those who have a proper priority in our marriage relationship and ministry; (2) There needs to be triumphs in our tears; and (3) “those who are rejoicing as though not rejoicing.” You can’t always live on a high.

There are going to be times of great joy and high exhilaration. Recognize it is only temporary. We will not know the fullness of joy until we have entered His presence and seen our Savior face to face.

Along with the marriage vows, also go all the credit cards.

Matthew 6:33: “But seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we enter the Thanksgiving season. Let’s sing verse 1 of one of my favorite Thanksgiving hymns **“Come, Ye Thankful People”**: *“Come, ye thankful people come, Raise the song of harvest-home: All is safely gathered in, Ere the winter storms begin. God, our*

Maker, doth provide For our wants to be supplied: Come to God's own temple, come, Raise the song of harvest-home."

November 23 — Passing Away (1 Corinthians 7:31)

1 Corinthians 7:31: "And those who are making use of this world, as though not making full use of it; for this world in its present form is passing away."

Paul tells us in verse 33 that "one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife."

Part of being married is a commitment to be using the benefits of this world. Paul is saying be "making use of this world, as though not making full use of it."

He then states the reason: "for this world in its present form is passing away."

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

John MacArthur points out:

None of the five areas about which Paul warns is inherently bad.

Marriage, sorrow, rejoicing, possessions, and pleasure all have a proper place in the Christian life. In fact, each is a part of God's provision for life here. (183)

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless," (2 Peter 3:10-14)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **"Come, Ye Thankful People"**: *"All the world is God's own field, Fruit unto His praise to yield: Wheat and tares together sown, Unto joy or sorrow grown. First the blade, and then the ear, Then the full corn shall appear: Lord of harvest, grant that we Wholesome grain and pure may be."*

November 24 — Free From Concern (1 Corinthians 7:32)

1 Corinthians 7:32: “But I am desiring you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is caring about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;”

Happy Thanksgiving!

The apostle said back in verse 28: “I am trying to spare you.” Now he is saying here: “I am desiring you to be free from concern.”

Matthew 13:22: “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

Paul exhorts young Timothy: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

“But I am desiring you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is caring about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.”

The single person has a single priority in his life as a believer. That is: “how he may please the Lord.”

Please join me in worship and praise on this Thanksgiving day by singing verse 3 of “Come, Ye Thankful People”: “For the Lord our God shall come, And shall take His harvest home: From His field shall in that day All offenses purge away; Give His angels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast, But the fruitful ears to store In His garner evermore.”

November 25 — The Things of the World (1 Corinthians 7:33)

1 Corinthians 7:33: “but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife.”

The contrast between the married and the unmarried is that the unmarried has a single priority in his life and the one who is married has a double priority.

Paul says in verse 32 he wants them “to be free from concern.” In verse 33 he says the “one who is married is concerned about the things of the world.” He defines that as meaning “how he may please his wife.”

This commitment is a foregone conclusion in the marriage relationship that the husband is to live with his wife according to knowledge and seek to please her.

Back in the previous verses, Paul has pointed out that marriage brings trouble, tears, rejoicing, buying and making use of the world. Now he points

up the frustration this brings to one who is deeply desirous of serving the Lord. The married person has a double priority in his life.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn **“Count Your Blessings”**: *“When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done. Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your blessings, See what God hath done; Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, See what God hath done.”*

November 26 — Divided Interests (1 Corinthians 7:34)

1 Corinthians 7:34: “And his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried and the virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, in order that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”

Paul says here, because of this double priority, “his interests are divided.” Ruth Harms Calkin writes a little piece called “Divided Heart”:

Lord
 I am so often tormented
 By my lack of clear direction—
 So often disturbed
 By my divided heart.

I am like a little child
 Who wants to rock her doll
 And jump rope at the same time.
 I want to obey You in part
 If I choose the areas of obedience.
 I want to be real except at those moments
 When compromise is more appealing.

I want to be half-motivated
 And Half-satisfied with things as they are.
 I want to walk a straight path
 If now and then I can enjoy
 A few side trips into the far country.
 I don’t want to be a miserable sinner
 But neither do I feel excited
 About being a stoic saint.
 I want to be partly Yours

And partly my own.

But in the secret chamber

Of my divided heart

I am so often disquieted

By the pointed question:

“Why do you so foolishly

Mix weeds with seeds?” (*Lord, Don't You Love Me Anymore?*, 67)

In contrast to the divided interest of the married individual, the apostle continues in verse 34: “And the woman who is unmarried and the virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord.”

The purpose is then stated in the rest of the verse: “in order that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”

There is a tremendous advantage to the single life stated in the purpose clause: “in...that she may be holy both in body and in spirit.”

Ray Stedman said:

That is the climax of what Paul has to say about the single life. He says it makes possible a degree of dedication and devotion, of commitment to the work of Christ, that married life does not allow. Now he does not mean there is anything wrong with a husband trying to please his wife, or a wife trying to please her husband. God has said elsewhere that this is what marriage is for. What Paul is saying here is that if you have the gift of celibacy, of singleness, then for you it is better not to be married. For others it is better to be married, but for you it is not. Your highest fulfillment with respect to the things of God can be discovered if you remain single instead. (157)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**Count Your Blessings**”: *“Are you ever burdened with a load of care? Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear? Count your blessings, ev’ry doubt will fly, And you will be singing as the days go by. Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your blessings, See what God hath done; Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, See what God hath done.”*

November 27 — Without Distraction (1 Corinthians 7:35)

1 Corinthians 7:35: “But this I am saying for your own benefit, not in order that I may throw a noose over you (put a restraint upon you) but for what is proper, and that you might adhere faithfully to the Lord without distraction.”

Paul is saying he is not doing this with a hidden purpose in mind: “that I may throw a noose over you (put a restraint upon you).”

The picture here is of the bit and bridle that is put upon the horse to control the horse’s actions—the leash of restraint to keep the pet under control.

Paul is saying positively: “this I am saying for your own benefit.” Negatively, it is not in order that I may throw cold water on your plans or restrain you from something which is good but rather: “for what is proper, and that you might adhere faithfully to the Lord without distraction.”

The reason I am giving this instruction: (1) “for your own benefit” and (2) “for what is proper.” He finishes by saying: “and that you might adhere faithfully to the Lord without distraction.”

Actually, this is the fourth and final key phrase in this section: (1) “I am trying to spare you” (verse 28); (2) “free from concern” (verse 32); (3) “for your own benefit” (verse 35); and now (4) “that you might adhere faithfully to the Lord without distraction” (here in the later part of verse 35).

The Lord says to Martha in Luke 10:41-42: “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one: for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

We can say: ***Marriage makes Marthas out of Marys.***

John Newton said: “If it were possible for me to alter any part of his plan, I could only spoil it.”

Jerry Bridges said in his book *Trusting God*:

We, too, if we would speak of the Lord’s great faithfulness, must turn from our circumstances to the Lord. We must see our circumstances through God’s love instead of, as we are prone to do, seeing God’s love through our circumstances. (149)

Peter Lord is transparent when he says:

It is easy to understand where these fellows were in their thinking. I’ve done this over and over again. Possibly you have, too. I tell God what the problem is—and then, when he gives the solution, I explain to him why his idea will never work. (*Hearing God*, 108)

Ruth Harms Calkin said:

God, You are relentless.
 I have yielded
 Everything to You—
 Everything but one small exception—
 An exception so small
 I'm truly amazed
 You would even take notice.
 Yet it is invariably
 To that one small exception
 That You keep bringing me
 Back, and back, and back.
 Why does it matter so much to You?
 My child—Why does it matter so much to you?
 (Lord, Don't You Love Me Anymore? 39)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Count Your Blessings”**: *“When you look at others with their lands and gold, Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold; Count your many blessings, money cannot buy Your reward in Heaven, nor your home on high. Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your blessings, See what God hath done; Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, See what God hath done.”*

November 28 — Let Them Marry (1 Corinthians 7:36)

1 Corinthians 7:36: “But if any man is thinking he is acting improperly toward his virgin daughter, if she should be of full age, and if it must be so, whatever he is desiring, let him be doing. He is not sinning; let them marry.”

The apostle is dealing with a problem in Corinth where the culture of the times has affected some of the Corinthian Christians and they are confused as what needs to be done.

It was the father contracted for the marriage of his children, and some of these fathers have not made that contract because they were desirous to have their daughters remain virgins all their lives.

John MacArthur said:

It is likely that many of the girls did not have the gift of singleness and were struggling with their desire to get married and their desire to please their fathers and the Lord. The problem was among those mentioned in the church's letter to Paul (7:1). (185)

Jesus said in Matthew 22:30: “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**Count Your Blessings**”: *“So, amid the conflict, whether great or small, Do not be discouraged, God is over all; Count your many blessings, angels will attend, Help and comfort give you to your journey’s end. Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your blessings, See what God hath done; Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, See what God hath done.”*

November 29 — A Firm Stand (1 Corinthians 7:37)

1 Corinthians 7:37: “But he who has taken a firm stand in his heart, having no constraint upon him, but is having authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to be keeping his own virgin daughter, he will do well.”

There are four things we see in this that Paul makes reference to:

1. Convictions—having “taken a firm stand in his heart.”

Daniel 1:8: “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine...”

In the book *The Snare* by Lois Mowday we read: “You can’t feel yourself into a new way of acting; you have to act yourself into a new way of feeling.” (125)

2. Pressure—“having no constraint upon him.”

First of all, we examined convictions in the first phrase: having “taken a firm stand in his heart.” Now we are examining the pressure: “having no constraint upon him.”

I love the way Phillips translates Romans 12:2:

Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.

3. Self-Control—“but is having authority over his own will.”

4. Decision—“and has decided this in his own heart.”

Here’s a man who has made a decision in light of how he feels God is leading him.

The decision he has made is “to be keeping his own virgin daughter.” Paul affirms this father by saying: “he will do well.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of Martin Luther’s great hymn, “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing; Our Helper He, amid the flood Of mortal*

ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal."

November 30 — Do Better (1 Corinthians 7:38)

1 Corinthians 7:38: "So then both he who is giving his own virgin daughter in marriage is doing well, and he who is not giving her in marriage will do better."

Here in verse 38 we have the key to the whole passage—the contrast between the "doing well" and the "do[ing] better." To do well is to allow the marriage. To do better is to remain free from the bonds of marriage that we might more effectively serve the Lord.

"So then" points us to the conclusion of this matter. As far as Paul is concerned, the one who "is giving...in marriage is doing well" and the one "who is not giving...in marriage will do better."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of Martin Luther's great hymn, "**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**": *"Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle."*

∞ DECEMBER ∞

December 1 — Free to Marry (1 Corinthians 7:39)

1 Corinthians 7:39: “A wife is bound as long as her husband is living; but if her husband dies, she is free to marry whomever she is desiring only in the Lord.”

Again we run into the word “bound.” We saw it back in verse 15, again in verse 27, and now here in verse 39.

The apostle says “she is free to marry whomever she is desiring.” The only stipulation he puts on that is that it be “in the Lord.”

In other words, the person must be a Christian.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“And tho this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.”*

December 2 — Having the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 7:40)

1 Corinthians 7:40: “But in my opinion, she is happier if she remains as she is; and I am thinking that I also am having the Spirit of God.”

Paul again uses the word “remains” even as he has back in verse 24 when he says: “Brethren, let each man be remaining in the presence of God in that situation in which he was called.” He then uses the word in verse 20: “Let each one be remaining in that situation in which he was called.”

He concludes this verse with the words “I also am having the Spirit of God.”

John 16:13: “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“That word above all earthly powers, No thanks to them, abideth; The Spirit and the gifts are ours Thro him who with us sideth; Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still; His Kingdom is forever.”*

December 3 — Love is Edifying (1 Corinthians 8:1)

1 Corinthians 8:1: “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we are knowing that we all are having knowledge. Knowledge is making arrogant, but love is edifying.”

The little phrase “Now concerning” appears again here at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 8. The phrase indicates a change in subject or the addressing of another problem that the church at Corinth is facing.

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols.”

1 John 5:21: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

Psalms 115:2-8: “Why do the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’ Our God is in heaven; [He does whatever pleases Him] But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.”

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we are knowing that we all are having knowledge.”

John MacArthur says of this verse:

The statement was true but egotistical. It reflected a feeling of superiority. The believers who made the claim were not suggesting they were omniscient, but that they had more than enough knowledge and understanding of God’s Word to know that pagan gods and idols were not real and that food sacrificed to them was still just food. They knew that eating the food could not contaminate them spiritually, that it had no affect on their Christian lives. They felt free to eat whatever they wanted, no matter what others thought. (191)

This “knowledge” is that there is only one God and that idols are nothing.

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we are knowing that we all are having knowledge. Knowledge is making arrogant.” The word is “proud” or “puffed up,” “selfish.”

John MacArthur then says:

But they are reminded that knowledge makes arrogant. Those believers were mature in knowledge, but were not mature in love. Love edifies, or builds up others; and that edification they did not have. They were solid in doctrine but weak in love. They were strong in self-love but weak in brotherly love. (191)

They were strong on basic doctrine, weak on charity. Why is it sometimes the greater our knowledge, the less our love?

The choice in the passage is to emphasize “knowledge” or “love.”

You can focus on knowledge or love in conflict over convictions. The choice is between beliefs or the brethren.

Top priority in all the gray areas ought to be love for God and our fellow believers.

Knowledge focuses on concepts and love focuses on relationships. Knowledge is focusing inward and “making arrogant” and love is reaching outward and “edifying.”

How does love manifest itself in this kind of a controversy? The word “edifying” is the word for “building up.” You can see this in being sincere, sensitive and a servant. You can see this in care, concern and compassion. You can see this in exhort, encourage and being an example.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **“I’d Rather Have Jesus”**: *“I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I’d rather be His than have riches untold; I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand. Than to be the king of a vast domain And be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.”*

December 4 — Loving God (1 Corinthians 8:2-3)

1 Corinthians 8:2: “If anyone is thinking that he has come to know anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;”

If they had more real knowledge they would have been less confident.

It is the man of superficial knowledge who is ready to solve all the problems.

In the *International Critical Commentary*, the last phrase in that verse is paraphrased: “But do not let us forget that knowledge may breed conceit, while it is love that builds up character.” (162)

Phillips says: “...that while knowledge may make a man look big, it is only love that can make him grow to his full stature.”

The Living Bible paraphrases verse 2: “If anyone thinks he knows all the answers, he is just showing his ignorance.”

1 Corinthians 8:3: “but if anyone is loving God, the same has been known by Him.”

The one who loves God is the one who can really solve the question about food offered to idols.

Ray Stedman speaks of it this way:

Someone has expressed this well in the following verse:

Isn't it odd
That a being like God
Who sees the facade,
Still loves the clod
He made out of sod?
Now, isn't that odd? (167)

Max Lucado says:

He was touchable, approachable, reachable. And what's more, he was ordinary. If he were here today you probably wouldn't notice him as he walked through a shopping mall. He wouldn't turn heads by the clothes he wore or the jewelry he flashed.

"Just call me Jesus," you can almost hear him say.

He was the kind of fellow you'd invite to watch the Rams-Giants game at your house. He'd wrestle on the floor with your kids, doze on your couch, and cook steaks on your grill. He'd laugh at your jokes and tell a few of his own. And when you spoke, he'd listen to you as if he had all the time in eternity.

And one thing's for sure, you'd invite him back. (*God Came Near*, 54-55)

Dick Innes said:

Love is relationships, not rules. Love is unconditional acceptance of others whether they agree with me or not. Love is a commitment to the other person's growth, not his enslavement to my controls. This doesn't imply that we go to the other extreme and disregard rules altogether. Not at all. (*I Hate Witnessing*, 27)

John Powell in his book *The Secret of Staying in Love* says:

For now let us say only that love does at least these three things:

1. Love esteems and affirms the unconditional and unique value of the one loved.
2. Love acknowledges and tries to fulfill the needs of the one loved.
3. Love forgives and forgets the failings of the one loved. (28)

He says further:

I will try to read your heart, not your lips. I will always try to understand you rather than judge you. I will never demand that you meet my expectations as the price of admission to my heart. (32)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“I’d Rather Have Jesus”**: *“I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause; I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause; I’d rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. I’d rather be true to His holy name Than to be the king of a vast domain And be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.”*

December 5 — No God But One (1 Corinthians 8:4)

1 Corinthians 8:4: “Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we are knowing that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.”

The apostle now starts this verse with the word “Therefore,” in view of the fact that “knowledge” has the potential of “making arrogant.” “Love,” on the other hand has the potential for assisting in the solving of the problem there in Corinth.

Back in verse 1 the apostle had said: “We all are having knowledge.” Now here in verse 4 he is spelling out that knowledge which “we all are having.” It is two-fold:

1. “there is no such thing as an idol in the world” and
2. “there is no God but one.”

And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with the inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:22-23)

Back in verse 1 Paul said: “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols.” Now he spells it out a little bit more in verse 4: “Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols.” This had become a problem because some of the Corinthian Christians felt like there was still some mystical power in idolatry.

The more legalistic brethren among the Christians there were taking a stand and saying, “I won’t and you shouldn’t.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“I’d Rather Have Jesus”**: *“He’s fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He’s sweeter than honey from out the comb; He’s all that my hungering spirit needs, I’d rather have Jesus and let Him lead Than to be the king of a vast domain And be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.”*

December 6 — So-Called gods (1 Corinthians 8:5)

1 Corinthians 8:5: “For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,”

As Paul takes a survey of the religious scene and is aware of the Greek culture, he knows that they have a god or goddess for just about any happening in life.

J. Vernon McGee points out:

In Corinth the people brought sacrifices of animals to offer to the idols. They would bring the best animals they had. The meat was offered to the idol, but it didn't stay there long because they believed that the spirit of the idol ate the spirit of the animal—and that finished the meal for the idol. Then they took the meat to the shambles or stalls around the temple, which was the meat market where the meat was sold. If you wanted to buy a fillet or the best steaks or the best prime rib roast in Corinth, you had to go to one of those shops at the temple to get meat which had been offered to idols. (37)

The conflict in Corinth was surrounding this meat offered to idols. Question: Should a real Christian participate in buying meat that had been offered to idols?

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing the Promise Keepers song **“Let It Be Said of Us”**: *“Let it be said of us That the Lord was our passion That with gladness we bore Every cross we were given That we fought the good fight That we finished our course Knowing within us the power of the risen Lord. Let the cross be our glory And the Lord be our song By mercy made holy By the Spirit made strong. Let the cross be our glory And the Lord be our song ‘Till the likeness of Jesus Be through us made known Let the glory And the Lord be our song. Let it be said of us We are marked by forgiveness We were known by our love And delighted in meekness. We were ruled by his peace Heeding unity’s call Joined as one body That Christ would be seen by all.”*

December 7 — The Father (1 Corinthians 8:6)

1 Corinthians 8:6: “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we [are existing] for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we [are existing] through Him.”

Phillips paraphrases verse 6 by saying: “...there is only one God, the Father, from whom everything comes, and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom everything exists, and by whom we

ourselves are alive.”

It is interesting in this verse to follow the four prepositions: (1) “**FROM** whom are all things”; (2) “**FOR** Him...Jesus”; (3) “**BY** whom are all things”; and (4) “**THROUGH** Him [Jesus].”

“Yet for us [as believers] there is but one God, the Father.” Then we have the four prepositions: (1) “**FROM** whom are all things”; (2) “we [are existing] **FOR** Him”; (3) “one Lord, Jesus Christ, **BY** whom are all things”; and (4) “we [are existing] **THROUGH** Him.”

It is **FROM** and **FOR** the Father and it is **BY** and **THROUGH** the Son. We came **FROM** Him and we were made **FOR** Him.

“And He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” (Col. 1:15-18)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of Fanny Crosby’s “**Draw Me Nearer**”: *“I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

December 8 — Conscience Being Weak (1 Corinthians 8:7)

1 Corinthians 8:7: “However, not all men [are having] this knowledge; but some, the consciousness that this is an idol until now, are eating as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is soiled.”

The problem is with the word “However” in verse 7, the apostle begins to address the problem in Corinth. The problem is that “not all men [are having] this knowledge.” But, in contrast: “some, the consciousness that this is an idol until now.”

The weaker brother is one who does not have knowledge of the fact that there isn’t any change in the meat.

There is no such thing as an idol that is representing a real god.

In view of this thinking, then, they are violating their conscience when: (1) “[they] are eating as if it were sacrificed to an idol” and (2) “their conscience being weak is soiled.”

What does it mean to have a weak conscience? This is probably a reference to one who is less mature in the faith. The one having knowledge is

the strong one in Romans 14 and 15.

Both kinds of meat originate with God and are acceptable by Him.

The problem is, if the strong one eats, it defiles the weak and if the weak one eats, it defiles his own conscience.

What is happening here is that these Corinthian Christians are still imposing pre-salvation ideas on these things.

What does it mean a “conscience being weak is soiled?” I would say, first of all, that conscience is ignored and violated. As a result, there is a feeling of being “soiled” or dirty.

I have often heard young people who have violated their moral principles say, “I feel so dirty and unclean as a result of what happened.”

Our first key word in this passage is “soiled.”

“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.” (Isa. 64:6)

Our Daily Bread said one morning:

I hear a little whisper

When I am doing wrong;

It guides me on the path of right

And keeps my purpose strong. (Anonymous)

The thought for the day: “Conscience is like a pencil; it must be sharpened to be useful.” (Unknown)

Acts 24:16: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.” (NASB)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, By the pow’r of grace divine; Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, And my will be lost in Thine. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

December 9 — Diet is Not a Priority (1 Corinthians 8:8)

1 Corinthians 8:8: “But food will not bring us before [the judgment seat of] God; neither if we do not eat are we falling short. Neither if we eat are we having more [of divine approval].”

The apostle turns from the problem in verse 7 to the teaching in verse 8. There are three major points that are made in verse 8:

1. “food will not bring us before [the judgment seat of] God”

2. “neither if we do not eat are we falling short.”

This is a matter of personal preference and to eat or not to eat does not make any difference when it comes to the time for the judgment seat of Christ.

3. “Neither if we eat are we having more [of divine approval].”

There’s no spiritual benefit involved in eating of the meat.

So we see in Paul’s teaching here that he has been operating on the principle of “love which is edifying.”

He has handled all the arguments with these three statements:

- (1) ““food will not bring us before [the judgment seat of] God”; (2) “neither if we do not eat are we falling short”; and (3) “Neither if we eat are we having more [of divine approval].”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“There are depths of love that I cannot know Till I cross the narrow sea; There are heights of joy that I may not reach Till I rest in peace with Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

December 10 — Taking Heed (1 Corinthians 8:9)

1 Corinthians 8:9: “But be taking heed lest this right of yours does not possibly become a stumbling block to those who are weak.”

We have the problem presented in verse 7, the teaching in verse 8, and now a warning in verse 9.

The warning is: “be taking heed lest this right of yours does not possibly become a stumbling block to those who are weak.”

We must become sensitive to those who are believers among us who would allow our freedom in Christ to become a stumbling block to them.

Here in this passage we have seen two of the seven key words in the teaching. Back in verse 7 the word was “soiled” and now here in verse 9 we have “stumbling block to those who are weak.”

At the conclusion of *Our Daily Bread* one morning I read these words:

We cannot live our lives alone,
For other lives we touch
Are either strengthened by our own
Or weakened just as much. (Anonymous)

No man has a right to do as he pleases,
unless he pleased to do right. (Unknown)

Phillips paraphrases this verse: “You must be careful that your freedom to eat meat does not in any way hinder anyone whose faith is not as robust as yours.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing that little prayer chorus **“God Is So Good”**: *“God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He’s so good to me! Jesus is real, Jesus is real, Jesus is real, He’s so real to me! He saved my soul, He saved my soul, He saved my soul and He made me whole! I praise His name, I praise His name, I praise His name, He’s so good to me!”*

December 11 — Witness to the Weak (1 Corinthians 8:10)

1 Corinthians 8:10: “For if someone sees you, the one having knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of the one who is weak be built up to the place where he will be eating the things sacrificed to idols?”

Paul describes the process to Timothy: “by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.” (1 Tim. 4:2)

The Living Bible says: “You see, this is what may happen: Someone who thinks it is wrong to eat this food will see you eating at a temple restaurant, for you know there is no harm in it. Then he will become bold enough to do it too, although all the time he still feels it is wrong.”

Here the apostle is giving an illustration of becoming a “stumbling block” to the one who is weak.

Let’s just say that someone who is weak sees you, “the one having the knowledge,” that “there is no such thing as an idol in the world and that there is no God but one,” “dining in an idol’s temple.”

I’m sure there were all kinds of restaurants on the hill. The most elegant of all of the restaurants available was the Mobile Five-Star restaurant *Aphrodite’s*, the *Lover’s Roost*; and then there was *Jumpin’ Jupiter’s* that had a hot band; and *Zeus’ Bar and Grill* that was famous for seafood; *Corinth’s Carnal Café and Coffee Shop* serving steak and eggs twenty-four hours a day; and the *Greek Odyssey*, famous for international cuisine.

What happens when this weaker brother sees you “dining in an idol’s temple”?

The rest of the verse tells us with a question: “will not the conscience of the one who is weak be built up to the place where he will be eating the things sacrificed to idols?”

Now we come to the third key word in our passage: “be built up.” “[To] be built up” means that he will rationalize the inner voice away by witnessing your conduct.

It is **conformity** rather than **conviction** that is the problem here.

There is a very real possibility that this weaker believer will quench the voice of the Spirit of God who is using his conscience to guide him in this situation.

The Living Bible puts it this way: "...Then he will become bold enough to do it too, although all the time he still feels it is wrong."

"A sanctified conscience is the holy whisper of God in the soul."
(Unknown)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **"He Touched Me"**: *"Shackled by a heavy burden, 'Neath a load of guilt and shame Then the hand of Jesus touched me, And now I am no longer the same. He touched me, O He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole."*

December 12 — Knowledge is Ruining the Weak (1 Corinthians 8:11)

1 Corinthians 8:11: "For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died."

Here the apostle states the second reason for the warning in verse 9. The first reason was in verse 10: "For if someone sees you, the one having knowledge, dining in an idol's temple. The second reason is now in verse 11: "through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined."

Phillips puts it this way: "Surely you would not want your superior knowledge to bring spiritual disaster to a weaker brother for whom Christ died?"

We now have the fourth key word here in verse 11.

1. verse 7—"soiled"
2. verse 9—"stumbling block"
3. verse 10—"be built up" and
4. verse 11—"ruined."

The apostle adds one final word: "the brother for whose sake Christ died."

Using my freedom in Christ can have some serious ramifications.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **"He Touched Me"**: *"Since I met this blessed Savior, Since He cleansed and made me whole, I will never cease to praise Him I'll shout it while eternity rolls. He touched me, O He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole."*

December 13 — Wounding Their Conscience (1 Corinthians 8:12)

1 Corinthians 8:12: “And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you are sinning against Christ.”

The word “And” connects us with what the apostle has had to say in verse 11. As a result of operating through your knowledge of freedom to do this, you are: “sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, [and] you are sinning against Christ.”

The result, then, is “sinning against the brethren.” It is not only “sinning against the brethren” but also “wounding their conscience.”

We come now to the fifth word here that stands out in the passage:

1. verse 7—“soiled”
2. verse 9—“stumbling block”
3. verse 10—“be built up”
4. verse 11—“ruined” and
5. verse 12—“wounding.”

Flaunting my freedom can result in “sinning against Christ.”

Doing what I want to do, although there is nothing wrong with it, can end up being a “stumbling block” to my brother or sister in Christ and a sin “against Christ.”

This is one of those times when a man who has light, sins against the light which he has.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 & 3 of “**Be Still, My Soul**”: *“Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; In ev’ry change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend Thro’ thorny ways leads to a joyful end. Be still, my soul: thy God doth under take To guide the future as He has the past. Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; All now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.”*

December 14 — Causing My Brother to Stumble (1 Corinthians 8:13)

1 Corinthians 8:13: “Therefore, if food is causing my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, in order that I might not cause my brother to stumble.”

The apostle stated the problem in verse 7, the teaching in verse 8, and the warning in verse 9. In verses 10-12, he gives two reasons. Now he concludes the teaching in verse 13: “Therefore, if food is causing my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again.”

The apostle is pointing out that love is preeminent instead of light.

1 Corinthians 10:23: “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.”

The sixth and seventh key words are in verse 13 and they are the same word: “stumble.”

Let’s review for a minute:

1. verse 7—“soiled”
2. verse 9—“stumbling block”
3. verse 10—“be built up”
4. verse 11—“ruined”
5. verse 12—“wounding” and
6. verse 13—“stumble” used two times here.

Stephen Brown in his book *When Your Rope Breaks* says:

If you understand the rules of a game, you may not like the rules but you’ll play a lot better. Most people, however, seem to be playing a football game with baseball rules; that is, they are living in a world with a whole set of presuppositions (I’m supposed to be happy; the world centers around me; I’m more important than anything else) which simply aren’t true. (34)

Gordon MacDonald said:

Bottom line #13: The freest person in the world is one with an open heart, a broken spirit, and a new direction in which to travel. (*Rebuilding Your Broken World*, 153)

John MacArthur helps us make a decision in some of these questionable areas:

...a good checklist to follow.

1. **Excess.** Is the activity or habit necessary, or is it merely an extra...?
 2. **Expediency.** Is what I want to do helpful and useful, or only desirable?
 3. **Emulation.**
 4. **Example.**
 5. **Evangelism.** Is my testimony going to be helped or hindered?
 6. **Edification.** Will I be built up and matured in Christ?
 7. **Exaltation.** Will the Lord be lifted up and glorified in what I do?
- (197)

I would add an eighth “E” to the list—Enslave. Does this doubtful matter enslave me?

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing several verses of that wonderful hymn, “**Amazing Grace**”: *“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see. ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed! Through many dangers, toils, and snares; I have already come; ‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home. When we’ve been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise Than when we first begun.”*

December 15 — Four Questions That Cut to the Quick (1 Corinthians 9:1)

1 Corinthians 9:1: “Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?”

The apostle has been dealing with the marriage problems in chapter 7, the meat offered to idols in chapter 8, and now in chapter 9 he lets us see the principle practice that he has been teaching in the previous verses.

The International Critical Commentary titles this chapter and then says:

The Great Principle of Forbearance

I have not asked you to forego more rights than I forego myself. For the sake of others I surrender, not only what any Christian may claim, but what I can claim as an Apostle. (174)

Giving up our rights and becoming servants is the whole story. Earning the right to share.

Ray Stedman points out:

He is saying, “Even though I am an apostle, and have this knowledge that is greater than yours, nevertheless I do not exercise all my rights. You object to giving up some rights for the sake of others. Well, I have been doing that for you for a long time.” (171)

The apostle begins with four questions here in verse 1, reminding them of his relationship to them.

The answer to these four questions is the same:

1. **Yes**, he is free.
2. **Yes**, he is an apostle.
3. **Yes**, he’s seen Jesus our Lord.
4. **Yes**, the Corinthians are his work in the Lord.

Phillips says: “Is there any doubt that I am a genuine messenger, any

doubt that I am a free man? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord with my own eyes? Are not you yourselves samples of my work for the Lord?”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 1 and 3 of Fanny Crosby’s great hymn, **“Rescue the Perishing”**: *“Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying, Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; Weep o’er the erring one, Lift up the fallen, Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save. Down in the human heart, Crushed by tempter, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore; Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness, Chords that are broken will vibrate once more. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”*

December 16 — The Seal of My Apostleship (1 Corinthians 9:2)

1 Corinthians 9:2: “If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.”

Paul says: “There is the possibility I am not an apostle to others but I am at least to you folks in Corinth.” Then he gives the reason: “for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.”

John MacArthur points out:

In ancient times seals were used on containers of merchandise, on letters, and on other things to indicate the authenticity of what was inside and to prevent the contents from being substituted or altered. (201)

Ephesians 1:13: “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

Francis Lyall said in *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles*:

The Holy Spirit’s presence in the Christian indicates a finished transaction to which nothing can be added. He authenticates God’s acts. He is the badge and proof of God’s ownership. He changes the character by the impress of Christ. And, safe in him, the Christian can await the final redemption with absolute confidence. (152)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **“He Giveth More Grace”**: *“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more strength when the labors increase. To added affliction He addeth His mercy; To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”*

December 17 — My Defense (1 Corinthians 9:3-6)

1 Corinthians 9:3: “This is my defense to those who are investigating me.”

Phillips paraphrases verse 3: “This is my real ground of defense to those who cross-examine me.”

As Paul finds himself in a situation of being investigated for the authenticity of his ministry, he uses the results of the ministry in Corinth as part of his defense.

1 Corinthians 9:4: “Are we not having a right to eat and drink?”

The little word “right” occurs six times here in the chapter and helps us understand what Paul is driving at in his argument. Paul’s apostleship and his “right” to be supported because of his position in Christ is something he argues for. Then because of his love for them and the Lord, he voluntarily surrenders that right.

You will find in these verses that Paul surrendered a lot of these rights to make an impact.

“To this very hour we are hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless.” (1 Corinthians 4:11)

1 Corinthians 9:5: “Are we not having a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?”

1 Corinthians 9:6: “Or are only Barnabas and I not having a right to refrain from working?”

John MacArthur says:

Paul and Barnabas had as much right as the others to get their livelihood from the ministry, without having to work on the side. They did not pay their own ways because they were obligated to do so. They did it voluntarily. (202)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**He Giveth More Grace**”: “When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father’s full giving is only begun. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”

December 18 — Five Questions to Reveal Our Plan for Corinth (1 Corinthians 9:7-8)

1 Corinthians 9:7: “Who at any time is serving as a soldier at his own expense? Who is planting a vineyard and is not eating the fruit of it? Or who is shepherding a flock and is not using the milk of the flock?”

Here in verse 7 we have three illustrations given by Paul to sustain his right, as a minister of the Gospel, to be supported by that ministry:

1. “[The] serving as a soldier”
2. “[The] planting [of] a vineyard”
3. “[The] shepherding [of] a flock.”

So we have a soldier, a farmer, and a shepherd here as an illustration of what Paul means when he says that one who serves ought to benefit from his service.

1 Corinthians 9:8: “I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or is not the law also saying these things?”

Phillips paraphrases this verse: “This is, I know, an argument from everyday life, but it is a principle endorsed by the Law.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we return to Fanny Crosby’s great hymns, **“He Hideth My Soul.”** Let’s sing verse 1 this morning: *“A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, A wonderful Savior to me; He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, Where rivers of pleasure I see. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, And covers me there with His hand.”*

December 19 — For Our Sake it was Written (1 Corinthians 9:9-10)

1 Corinthians 9:9: “For it has been written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.’ Oxen are not a concern to God, are they?”

The International Critical Commentary says: “...Do you think that it was merely out of consideration for the oxen that God caused that to be written?” (175)

John MacArthur says:

The comment that God is not concerned about oxen does not mean that He has no interest in the welfare of animals. The Lord “prepares for the raven its nourishment” (Job 38:41) and “He gives the beast its food” (Ps. 147:9). Jesus spoke of the heavenly Father feeding “the birds of the air” (Matt. 6:26). In spite of that, ultimately God’s concern

is not for animals but for people. If He wants to be certain that oxen are “paid” for their work, how much more is He concerned that men be compensated for theirs. (203)

Ray Stedman says:

God *is* concerned about oxen. He does not want animals abused, beaten and mistreated, and that is why he said this in the first place. (172)

J. Vernon McGee tells kind of a humorous story:

I heard a story about a preacher in Kentucky who drove a very fine, beautiful horse, but the preacher himself was a very skinny fellow. One day one of his church officers asked him the question (which had been a matter of discussion), “How is it, preacher, that your horse is so fine looking and you are such a skinny fellow?” The preacher answered, “I will tell you. I feed my horse, and you are the ones who feed me.” (41-42)

1 Corinthians 9:10: “Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, that he who is ploughing ought to be ploughing in hope, and he who is threshing ought to be threshing in hope of sharing the crops.”

Paul here states that God was speaking of those who minister for the cause of the Gospel when he makes reference to this illustration of the ox not being muzzled while he is threshing.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of “**He Hideth My Soul**”: “*With numberless blessings each moment He crowns, And, filled with His fullness divine, I sing in my rapture, O glory to God For such a Redeemer as mine! He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, And covers me there with His hand.*”

December 20 — Putting Up With All Things (1 Corinthians 9:11-12)

1 Corinthians 9:11: “If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we shall reap material things from you?”

In verse 11 we had a statement of the key question to the entire study. Paul has characterized his ministry as “planting” back in 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

Stephen Brown in his book *When Your Rope Breaks* says:

Someone tells of a large company where the president set a goal that everyone would contribute to the United Fund. So everybody in the

company gave, except one man. The other employees tried their best to convince the man to give. They appealed to his philanthropic nature; they told him about the great needs in the community; they told him how important it was to be a part of the team. He still refused to give.

The president of the company finally called the man into his office and said, “Sam, it is my desire that this company be a part of the United Fund, and it is my desire that our participation be 100 percent. There are two ways we will reach that level of giving. If you give, we will meet my goal, or if you don’t give, I will fire you and we will meet my goal.”

“Of course, I’ll give,” the man responded. “It’s just that nobody ever explained it that way to me before.” (24-25)

1 Corinthians 9:12: “If others are sharing the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless we did not make use of this right, but we are putting up with all things in order that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.”

Paul focuses on the word “right.” The answer to this question is because they are Paul’s work in the Lord. There are three key phrases in the remaining verses that stand out. This is the first of the three: “we did not make use of this right.”

What the apostle Paul says is that we voluntarily surrendered this right in this situation and the reason is expressed in the rest of the verse. By contrast: “we are putting up with all things.” The purpose behind that is: “in order that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.”

What Paul is saying is our witness is primary and uppermost. What are the hindrances? (1) selfishness; (2) lack of sensitivity; and (3) unwillingness to be a servant.

Paul’s primary concern was not for his own selfish comforts but that in no way would he put a hindrance in the way of the “gospel of Christ.”

Phillips paraphrases the verse: “Yet we have never exercised this right and put up with all sorts of things, so that we might not hinder the spread of the gospel.”

What Paul is saying here is that selfish demands for one’s own personal needs can prove ultimately to be a “hindrance to the gospel of Christ.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“He Hideth My Soul”**: *“When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise To meet Him in clouds of the sky, His perfect salvation, His wonderful love, I’ll shout with the millions on high. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, And covers me there with His hand.”*

December 21 — Deriving Their Living (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)

1 Corinthians 9:13: “Are you not knowing that those who are performing sacred services are eating the food of the temple, and those who are attending regularly to the altar are having their share with the altar?”

Now the apostle gives us a religious illustration here in this verse.

In this verse Paul focuses on “those who are performing sacred services.” They are provided for because they “are eating the food of the temple, and those who are attending regularly to the altar are having their share with the altar.”

1 Corinthians 9:14: “In the same manner also the Lord directed those who are proclaiming the good news to be deriving their living from the good news.”

Here in verse 14 the apostle now makes application. Just as the law stipulated that those who were involved in “sacred service” would be eating from the “food of the temple” and those who were attending the altar would have their “share with the altar.”

“In the same manner also the Lord directed those who are proclaiming the good news to be deriving their living from the good news.”

In their book *Your Work Matters to God*, Doug Sherman and William Hendricks say:

I am thinking of the increasing commercialization of the gospel. As an acquaintance of mine put it, Christianity began in Palestine as a relationship; it spread throughout the Roman empire as a movement; across Europe and Northern Africa it became a culture; today in the West it has become an enterprise.

One wonders at times when donating to a ministry whether he is underwriting God or Mammon. As a consequence, many people are now giving much less, some have stopped giving altogether. (195)

Ruth Harms Calkin has this little poem “Indictment”:

O God
When I think of Your
Tremendous goodness to us
Your continual poured-out blessings
Suddenly I am overwhelmed
With a convicting thought:
Everything You do
For my husband and me
All Your love and kindness

So lavishly bestowed
 Become an indictment
 Unless we willingly
 Allow each blessing
 To flow through us to others.
 All Your abundance
 Must constantly be on the move
 Or we will stagnate
 In a sea of plenty. (124)

Joseph Aldrich in his book *Life-Style Evangelism* says: “The person who is selfish in the area of material things cannot be giving in interpersonal relationships.” (148)

“Now this I am saying: He who is sowing sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who is sowing bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God is loving a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, in order that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of “**His Eye Is on the Sparrow**”: *“Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come, Why should my heart be lonely And long for Heav’n and home When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. I sing because I’m happy, I sing because I’m free, For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.”*

December 22 — I Have Used None of These Things (1 Corinthians 9:15)

1 Corinthians 9:15: “But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things in order that in this manner it should be done in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one.”

Now the apostle gives us our second key statement in the passage: “But I have used none of these things.”

The first key statement was back in verse 12: “we did not make use of this right.”

Paul has not taken advantage of the benefits which were his in the ministry. He says: “I am not writing these things [with a purpose in mind]

in order that in this manner it should be done in my case.”

“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19)

The apostle, in the last part of the verse, states the reason for this: “for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one.”

Ray Stedman comments on this phrase:

...“Look, I would rather die than have you take away my right to give up my rights.” (175)

Won't you please join me in singing verse 2 of **“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”**: *“Let not your heart be troubled, ' His tender word I hear, And resting on His goodness I lose my doubt and fears; Tho' by the path He leadeth But one step I may see; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free, For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.”*

December 23 — Under Compulsion (1 Corinthians 9:16)

1 Corinthians 9:16: “For if I am preaching the good news, there is nothing for me to boast about, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not proclaim the good news.”

The word “For” at the beginning of this verse states the reason why he hasn't used his rights.

Margaret Clarkson says it so well in her hymn, **“So Send I You”**: *“So send I you to labor unrewarded, To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown. To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing. To labour long, and love where men revile you. So send I you to toil for Me alone.”*

Paul met Jesus Christ on the Damascus road and following his dramatic conversion, he was commissioned to take the Gospel to “the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.”

The impact of all of that probably hit him hard enough to knock the teeth out of a sausage grinder.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”**: *“Whenever I am tempted, Whenever clouds arise, When songs give place to sighing, When hope within me dies, I draw the closer to Him, From care he sets me free; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He cares for me; His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He cares for me. I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free, For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.”*

December 24 — Voluntarily (1 Corinthians 9:17)

1 Corinthians 9:17: “For if I am doing this voluntarily, I am having a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.”

Paul is saying there are two possibilities here:

1. “if I am doing this voluntarily, I am having a reward”—in other words, he is doing it without pay.
2. “but [in contrast] if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.”

I’ve got a responsibility. I must work to proclaim the message of the Gospel and fulfill my obligations.

Today is Christmas eve and Jesus Christ voluntarily emptied Himself of all but love and came to provide salvation to the whole world.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing that wonderful Christmas carol, **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**: *“O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold Him, born the King of angels: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing all ye bright hosts of heav’n above; Glory to God, all glory in the highest: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv’n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.”*

December 25 — Without Charge (1 Corinthians 9:18)

1 Corinthians 9:18: “What then is my reward? That when I am proclaiming the good news I may give out the good news without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”

Paul is saying that his reward is: “proclaiming the good news...without charge.”

The last phrase in verse 18 then is: “so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”

This is the sixth and final usage of the word “right.”

Let’s meditate a minute:

1. verse 4—“are we not having a right to eat and drink?”
2. verse 5—“are we not having a right to take along a believing wife?”
3. verse 6—“are only Barnabas and I not having a right to refrain from working?”

4. verse 12—“if others are sharing the right over you.”
5. verse 12—“we did not make use of this right.”
6. verse 18—“so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.”

This is Christmas day and we rejoice in a ***Gift Too Wonderful for Words!*** (2 Corinthians 9:15) God came down the stairs with a baby in His arms! God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son!

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we celebrate Christ’s birth by singing all four verses of **“Joy to the World”**: *“Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King; Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room, And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns: Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy. No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love.”*

December 26 — That I Might Win the More (1 Corinthians 9:19-21)

1 Corinthians 9:19: “For, being free from all men, I make myself a slave to all in order that I might win the more.”

Phillips paraphrases verse 19: “For though I am no man’s slave, yet I have made myself everyone’s slave, that I might win more men to Christ.”

Paul, in these three verses, says this way he is available to everybody and his purpose and philosophy of ministry is to serve everybody in order to win all the more to Christ.

Rebecca Manley Pippert says this in her book *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World*:

There was a part of me that secretly felt evangelism was something you shouldn’t do to your dog, let alone a friend.

To evangelize, it seemed, required insensitivity and an inclination to blurt out a memorized gospel outline, without inhaling, to every stranger you met. ...

I witnessed like a Pavlovian dog. The bell would ring, I would get ready, activated, juices running and then BAM! I'd spit it out.

Our problem in evangelism is not that we don't have enough information—it is that we don't know how to be ourselves. We forget we are called to be witnesses to what we have seen and know, not to what we don't know. The key is authenticity and obedience, not a doctorate in theology. (16-17, 24)

We have the thought that we lure the fish into the stained glass aquarium so the great fisherman can throw a few lures from the pulpit in hopes of catching a few.

1 Corinthians 9:20: “And to the Jews I became as a Jew, in order that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, in order that I might win those who are under the Law;”

Paul in verse 19 said that he becomes “a slave to all in order that he might win the more.”

Now as we get to verse 20 he spells this out in four different audiences that he works with in his ministry:

1. Jewish audience—“and to the Jews I became as a Jew.” The purpose behind that is “in order that I might win Jews.”
2. next audience are “to those who are under the Law”—“as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, in order that I might win those who are under the Law.”

Paul makes it clear here that he is not “under the Law” since he came to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

Joseph Aldrich in his book *Life-Style Evangelism* says:

Making a place in your life for non-Christians neighbors demands effort, thought, and at times risk. Bridges are harder to construct than walls. But that doesn't alter this reality: Outsiders to the faith are first drawn to Christians and then to Christ. (11)

1 Corinthians 9:21: “to those who are without law, as being without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.”

The third audience he is talking about is:

1. “those who are without law”—He specializes his ministry to this particular group, understanding where they are coming from.

He makes it clear that he is: “not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 1 and 2 of **“Take My Hand, Precious Lord”**: *“Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, help me stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; Thru the storm, thru the night, Lead me on to the light; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home. When my ways grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone; Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home. When my ways grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone; Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.”*

December 27 — All Things to All Men (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)

1 Corinthians 9:22: “To those who are weak, I became as one who is weak, in order that I might win those who are weak; I have become all things to all men in order that I may by all means save some.”

The fourth group that Paul ministers to is:

1. “To those who are weak”—Paul says he “became as one who is weak” with the purpose that he might “win those who are weak.”

Let’s sum up the four audiences Paul is spending his time witnessing to. They are:

1. the Jews,
2. “those who are under the Law,”
3. “those who are without Law” and
4. “those who are weak.”

Paul, in the latter part of verse 22, makes a summary of his ministry when he says: “I have become all things to all men in order that I may by all means save some.”

This now is our third and final key statement in this particular study.

1. verse 12—“we did not make use of this right”
2. verse 15—“I have used none of these things”
3. verse 22—“I have become all things to all men in order that I may by all means save some.”

Paul had more nerve than an abscessed tooth.” Wherever he found himself, he was always accommodating himself to that audience in order that he might have the opportunity of turning the conversation around and sharing Jesus Christ with them. No matter where you threw him, he came up witnessing.

Robert Coleman writes: “Education without evangelism makes

Pharisees; evangelism without education makes fanatics.” (*Dry Bones Can Live Again*, 123)

Coleman also writes:

I am reminded of Charles Spurgeon’s comment after reading the following passage: “And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them.”

“Yes,” he said, lifting his eyes with a kindly glance around the crowded gallery, “that is still the case. Some of us are always plowing, breaking up the fallow ground, preparing the ground for good seed. And others are feeding. I know some of you dear people. You would not miss a service if you could help it. Feeding, everlasting feeding. It is good to feed, it is necessary to feed, but do a bit of Gospel plowing as well, for the health of your souls and the glory of God. The oxen were plowing, but he asses were feeding!” (42)

1 Corinthians 9:23: “And I am doing all things for the sake of the good news in order that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”

Paul wraps up his thoughts on this matter by saying in verse 23: “And I am doing all things for the sake of the good news in order that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”

“I am doing all things.” Back in verse 22 he says: “I have become all things.” Now, “I am doing all things for the sake of the good news.” His purpose is this: “in order that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”

Paul gets more satisfaction in preaching the Gospel free of charge than of receiving the gifts due him for his ministry.

To the apostle it’s kind of like Christmas. He’s just really excited about giving and it’s more blessed to give than to receive.

The big question comes to each of us: ***What rights are you giving up for the cause of Christ? How are you being an affective witness?***

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing one of my favorite hymns, “**Day by Day**”: “*Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here; Trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment, I’ve no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what He deems best. Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest. Ev’ry day the Lord Himself is near me With a special mercy for each hour; All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me, He whose name is Counselor and Pow’r. The protection of His child and treasure is a charge that on Himself He laid; As your days, your strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made. Help me then in ev’ry tribulation So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I lose not faith’s sweet consolation Offered me within*

Thy holy Word. Help, me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting, E'er to take, as from a father's hand, One by one, the days, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land."

December 28 — Run to Win (1 Corinthians 9:24)

1 Corinthians 9:24: "Are you not knowing that those who are running in a race are indeed all running, but one is receiving the prize? Be running in such a manner in order that you may win."

There is a personal determination on Paul's part to act in accordance with the principles that he has outlined.

Give up his rights for the sake of the Gospel and oneness, to surrender and become a servant. That takes commitment.

Paul has a burning desire in the passage to secure an all-out Corinthian commitment to Christ. A commitment that would have no reservations, but a willingness to pay whatever price necessary to hear. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

The choice is really a choice between **carnality** and **commitment**.

Where do we learn about commitment and an all-out effort? Athletics.

Paul must have been a real sports fan.

These last four verses of chapter 9, we have called: ***The Rules for an Effective Commitment to Christ***. They are God's training rules, if you please.

Let's look more closely at verse 24. The first rule is to **Run to win**.

He starts with a question: "Are you not knowing that those who are running in a race are indeed all running, but one is receiving the prize?"

The question is then followed by a command: "Be running in such a manner in order that you may win."

Paul's life has a goal and a purpose. He is running to achieve. He wants to be a winner. He has found in the process that life has become a desire rather than a dread.

Paul's command is in the present tense: "Be running in such a manner in order that you may win."

This ought to be going on right now on a daily basis. Today is the first day! Get after it now!

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

Philippians 3:13-14: "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the

upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 5:7: “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 and 2 of “**He Is So Precious to Me**”: *“So precious is Jesus, my Saviour, my King, His praise all the day long with rapture I sing; To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious to me, For He is so precious to me; ‘Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me. He stood at my heart’s door ‘mid sunshine and rain, And patiently waited an entrance to gain; What shame that so long He entreated in vain, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious to me, For He is so precious to me; ‘Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me.”*

December 29 — Discipline Produces Reward (1 Corinthians 9:25)

1 Corinthians 9:25: “Now everyone who is engaging in the contest is exercising self-control in all things. Those, to be sure, in order that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown.”

Rule #1: Run to Win.

Rule #2: Discipline Produces Reward.

In this verse Paul talks about two things: (1) the price and (2) the prize.

Notice these verbs are in the present tense: “Now everyone who is engaging in the contest is exercising self-control [in all respects].”

It is a mystery as to whether the Corinthians had really ever considered the price. Could it be that theirs was a commitment of lip without life?

The attitude of the Corinthians finds its counterpart in much of what we see today in enjoying everything to the fullest—eat, drink and be merry.

The trained and disciplined athlete has found success and fulfillment in self-control in every area of his life.

There is no other way to an effective commitment than through discipline of the total life of the individual. This discipline must penetrate the spiritual, the physical, the social, the mental and the emotional part of the person.

Show me a man who walks with God and I’ll show you a disciplined individual.

Success means putting duty before pleasure.”

Determination, not desire, controls our destiny. There is that inherent desire within each of us to achieve. But the only way to achievement is to pay the price of discipline. As we are disciplined, our determination is

increased, and thus, we realize our desire.

Paul not only speaks of the price but also the prize.

“Those, to be sure, in order that they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown.”

2 Timothy 4:8: “in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

These Corinthians were wanting to take the easy way and there has never been a man who has ever gotten anywhere without the sternest of self-discipline.

It's giving it your best shot on a daily basis.

Epictitus said: “Thou must be orderly, living on spare food, abstaining from confections, making a point of exercising at the appointed time in heat and in cold, nor drink cold water or wine at hazard. In a word, give yourself up to your training master as to a physician and enter on the contest.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 1 and 4 of “**He Leadeth Me**”: *“He leadeth me, O blessed thought! O words with heav’nly comfort fraught! Whate’er I do, where’er I be, Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me. He leadeth me, He leadeth me! By His own hand He leadeth me! His faithful foll’wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me. And when my task on earth is done, When by Thy grace the vict’ry’s won, E’en death’s cold wave I will not flee, Since God through Jordan leadeth me. He leadeth me, He leadeth me! By His own hand He leadeth me! His faithful foll’wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.”*

December 30 — Find the Goal and Hit the Mark (1 Corinthians 9:26)

1 Corinthians 9:26: “As for myself, therefore, I am running that way, not aimlessly, as one who has no fixed goal; I am boxing that way, not as one who is punching the air.”

In verses 26 and 27 the apostle uses a personal illustration here.

Please note that the verbs are in the present tense for this is something he is disciplining himself to do daily. “Running” and “boxing” are the two verbs.

The words “I,” “me,” “my,” and “myself” occur nine times in these two verses.

Rule #1: Run to win (verse 24)

Rule #2: Discipline produces reward (verse 25)

Rule #3: Find the goal and hit the mark (verse 26)

The challenge has been issued in Rule #1, run to win.

Rule #2, the pattern of discipline has been followed so that we might

receive the prize.

Now in Rule #3, we are running for the goal. We are fighting to hit the mark. It is purposeful participation, if you please.

In this verse we are in the heat of the battle. We are not just going through the pre-training period. This is the actual contest. Here we prove what we are made of. Here all of our training habits are exposed. It is here that we display how much the prize means to us.

In this particular rule, Paul has two contests in mind: one of running and the other of boxing or fighting.

Here in this rule, where you are headed and what you are going to do. First of all, he uses the illustration of running: “As for myself, therefore, I am running that way, [negatively] not aimlessly, as one who has no fixed goal.”

Philippians 3:14: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

The man who is going somewhere is the man who has found his ideal, married it and is now raising a family. Paul’s life has direction and purpose because he has found a goal. Like the runner, he is running straight toward the goal.

Proper priorities and God-given goals lead to godliness and Christlikeness.

Paul goes on to say in verse 26: “I am boxing that way, [negatively] not as one who is punching the air.”

Paul doesn’t play around in the contest.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing all three verses of that great hymn of commitment, **“Lead One, O King Eternal”**: *“Lead on, O King Eternal, The day of march has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest Your tents shall be our home, Through days of preparation Your grace has made us strong, And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song. Lead on, O King Eternal, till sin’s fierce war shall cease, And holiness shall whisper The sweet Amen of peace; For not with swords loud clashing, Nor roll of stirring drums, With deeds of love and mercy The heav’nly kingdom comes. Lead on, O King Eternal, We follow, not with fears; For gladness breaks like morning Where’er Your face appears; Your cross is lifted o’er us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might.”*

December 31 — Extra Effort Produces Excellence (1 Corinthians 9:27)

1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Again you have the graphic present tense in this verse as something that is going on daily. In verse 25 there is “exercising of self-control.” Now here in verse 27 Paul says: “I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me.”

Where would we be today if Jesus had said “Father, this is too hard”?

He’s doing it now and he’s doing it daily. The reason he is doing this is: “lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Rule #1: Run to Win (verse 24)

Rule #2: Discipline Produces Reward (verse 25)

Rule #3: Find the Goal and Hit the Mark (verse 26)

Rule #4: Extra Effort Produces Excellence (verse 27)

The challenge has been issued to **Run to Win**. We cannot win apart from the **Discipline which Produces Reward**. Then in the heat of the contest, we are to **Find the Goal and Hit the Mark**. As the contest comes to a conclusion because our strength has been spent and we have grown weary in battle, it is awfully easy to relax. It is at this critical point that the contest can be won or lost, depending upon the attitude of the contender.

Vince Lombardi said: “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.”

“Failure is not fatal; success is not permanent; but it’s courage that counts.”

Paul says: “But I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me.”

When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

One writer said: “We drench ourselves with the grace of exhaustion and the ecstasy of knowing we are worthy to receive it.”

Another writer said: “The runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment.”

Paul’s secret in his successful service is he is surrendering his rights and is content to be a servant.

Bobby Richardson, a New York Yankee baseball player said:

Your name may not appear down here in this world’s hall of fame,

In fact, you may be so unknown that no one knows your name.

The Oscars here may pass you by and neon lights of blue,

But if you love and serve the Lord, then I have news for you.

This hall of fame is only good as long as time shall be,
 Keep in mind God's hall of fame is for eternity.
 To have your name inscribed up there is greater yet by far,
 Than all the halls of fame down here and every man-made star.

This crowd on earth may soon forget the heroes of the past,
 They cheer like mad until you fall, and that's how long you last.
 But God, He never does forget, and in His hall of fame,
 By just believing in His Son, inscribed you'll find your name.

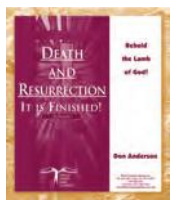
I tell you friend, I wouldn't trade my name however small,
 That's written there beyond the stars in that celestial hall.
 For any famous name on earth or glory that they share,
 I'd rather be an unknown here, and have my name up there.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing all three verses of Stuart Hamblen's wonderful hymn, **"Until Then"**: *"My heart can sing when I pause to remember, A heartache here is but a stepping stone Along a trail that's winding always upwards, This troubled world is not my final home, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home (calls me home). The things of earth will dim and lose their value If we recall they're borrowed for a while And things of earth that cause the heart to tremble, Remembered there will only bring a smile, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home (calls me home). This weary world with all its toil and struggle May take its toll of misery and strife The soul of man is like a waiting falcon, When it's released it's destined for the skies, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home (calls me home)."*

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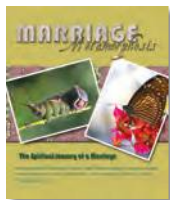
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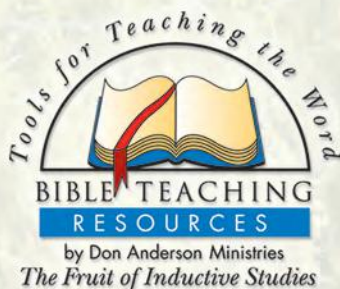
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