

Parson to Person

1 Corinthians 16 (Part 2)

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.

I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted [addicted (KJV)] themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men.

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

The salutation with my own hand—Paul’s.

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.

O Lord, come!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (1 Corinthians 16:13–23).

The closing verses of 1 Corinthians are authoritative but tender; startling but inviting; direct but gracious; distant but heartfelt, intimate, and personal. One might suggest this is the flavor of the whole epistle.

Overall, Paul’s authority had been debated. Sectarianism had divided the carnal Corinthian loyalties between Apollos, Peter, Paul, and (within the “so-called, super-spiritual” community) Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:1–9). Some of the Corinthians had refused to recognize Paul’s authority *carte blanche*. (1 Corinthians 4:3). However, Paul maintained his unwavering leadership as the apostolic “parent” of the assembly (1 Corinthians 3:10; 4:14–15). Therefore, Paul was

enabled to rebuke, exhort, direct, and comfort these Christians—the way any good parent might instruct a child.

Without compromise, Paul directly addressed the multiple questions the Corinthians had asked (1 Corinthians 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12), while also providing needed teaching and correction they apparently failed to recognize and/or inquire about. Paul was the quintessential pastor/parent to these believers.

Therefore, the final abrupt, semi-random blast of commands and exhortations fits the Pauline style otherwise found in this letter.

When Paul wrote, *“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love,”* he was effectively saying, “grow up!” I love the King James Version here where Paul is said to say, “quit ye like men.” In other words, don’t be a child—it’s time to act like an adult.

With his exhortation, *“I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted [addicted (KJV)] themselves to the ministry of the saints,”* he was highlighting at least two things:

1) That Stephanas was among the first people in Achaia (Corinth being the capitol) to come to faith in Jesus.

2) That Stephanas was a foundational example of how they (and we) should engage in ministry. They were “addicted to the ministry of the saints.”

“That you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us” was a clear pronouncement of Biblical leadership and submission within the ecclesiastical system God has established.

His comment, *“I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they*

supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men,” proves that the Corinthians had neglected to return to Paul the due respect and honor Paul would have enjoyed from his “spiritual children.”

As a pastoral note, *“The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you.”* This notation shows us the intimacy felt by those who had served the Corinthians. Their then-present relationship was distant/strained, but nonetheless they maintained their love for the believers.

“Greet one another with a holy kiss” demonstrated that Paul desired that the Corinthians treat each other as he was treating them.

“The salutation with my own hand—Paul’s” signified his desire to let the Corinthians see his direct engagement and passion for these beloved believers. The letter was not “ghost written.” It was dictated and yet personal.

And then, a very sharp and contrasting exhortation: *“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!”*

Two things are in contrast here:

1) A curse upon those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word used here in Greek is “anathema.” It is an expression Paul used against false teachers (see Galatians 1). This is a hard expression that many Christians shy away from—with reason. We love the sinner but hate the sin. However, God is *“angry with the wicked every day”* (Psalm 7:11) and hates the evil doer (Psalm 5:5; 26:5; Proverbs 6:16–19). That said, *“God did not send His Son into*

the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Therefore, even the cursed may turn from their wicked ways and live (Ezekiel 33:11).

2) A call for the coming of the Lord.

The words Paul used here in Greek is "marana tha"—a transliteration of the Aramaic "maranatha." It means "O Lord Come." Therefore, the desire for the salvation of the "accursed" should not be motivation to ask the Lord to delay His coming. God does indeed wait upon those whom He knows will, in time, come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ—and are/will therefore be added to the number of the saved. *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9).

We should always look for and hasten the coming of the Lord (2 Peter 3:12).

Finally, Paul wrote, *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."* This should be the way we all send greeting and benediction to our fellow saints.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

I love you all,
Pastor Paul