

Quit You Like Men

I Corinthians 16:13

12/ 11/ 05

Intro

Paul, in this chapter concludes this letter to the church at Corinth. He has written a letter filled with spiritual insight and application. He has written to build them up in the faith, to admonish them where there was need and to teach them the truths they needed to become mature in the faith.

Here in this last chapter, Paul gives them a bit more of a personal message. He writes about his travel plans and personal friends he ministers with.

Paul writes about a collection they were to receive for the church in Jerusalem which was going through a very difficult time as the city was fraught with political danger.

We can see that Paul is being led of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't have it all planned out.

At this time, Paul is in Ephesus and though there are many doors for effective ministry, there are also many adversaries. Paul did not run from these adversaries, but readily faces the challenges before him.

But today we look at one verse in this chapter where he gives them some very specific principles for living out their faith.

These are principles of living out your faith.

I. Be on the Alert

A. Be spiritually ready

- The adversary lurks about waiting for the weak.

I Peter 5:8-9, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith,”

- The night that Jesus was arrested, he told his closest disciples to keep watching and praying because the flesh is weak

Matthew 26:41, “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

B. Be alert for spiritual apathy

- One of the most dangerous places spiritually is a place of spiritual apathy.
- This comes from spiritually neglecting our soul.
- It also comes from being so busy that we are no longer spiritually strong.

Illus – This happened to the church at Sardis.

Revelation 3:1-3, “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.”

II. Stand Firm in the Faith

A. Don't go backwards

- This is an important word for us because we live in a world that is filled with ungodliness.
- To stand firm means to hold fast, to not give way, he is referring to the commitment to the Lord within our hearts.

Illus – One of David's mighty men, Shammah, was asked to guard the lentil field. Everyone else fell back in retreat, but Shammah refused to give any ground.

II Samuel 23:12, "But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the LORD brought about a great victory."

I Corinthians 15:1-2, 58, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you... 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."

B. Compromise consists of small steps

- Some people believe that disaster strikes all at once, that the shipwreck was unpredictable.
- But more likely than not, disaster begins with small compromises.

Illus – trying to lose weight last year, I kept saying to myself that one little compromise wouldn't hurt, until I realized I was gaining a lot of weight.

Luke 16:10, "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."

C. God is preparing us for bigger things

- The troubles and trials in our lives are opportunities to stand firm, to be faithful in the little things. God uses these to prepare us for greater things to come.

Luke 19:17, And he said to him, "Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities."

- Love endures; it is able to persevere under trial.

Luke 12:48, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."

III. Act Like Men

A. Be men of substance

- This is the only place this word is found in the New Testament and it means to "be a man."
- Of course it applies to both men and women. It means to have substance, to have the character of the Lord within.

Ephesians 6:13-18 Put on the full armor of God

B. Put away childish things

- The key characteristic of childishness is selfishness.
- Children are focused mostly on themselves. It's only as we grow in maturity that we put away childish things and become men and women of great character.

I Corinthians 14:20, “Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.”

- Too many people are experts when it comes to worldly things and babes when it comes to spiritual things.
- The question is whether we are growing in spiritual things.

I Corinthians 13:11, “When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.”

C. Be made strong

- This is the literal translation of that word.
- Paul is not telling us to “pull ourselves up by our bootstraps,” but rather that we can only be made strong in the Lord's strength.

Philippians 4:12-14, “I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in

any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

- After Moses had died, the Lord spoke to Joshua and made him leader of Israel. The words of encouragement and strength He gave to Joshua also encourage and strengthen us...

Joshua 1:8-9, This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Conclusion

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” These are great words to live by.