

Stand Firm in the Faith

I Corinthians 16:1-24

11/25/01

Intro

- Our trip to Russia and adopting our boys.
- Pray for our President and our nation.

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Paul is concluding his letter to the church at Corinth in this last chapter of I Corinthians. It has been a powerful letter full of great insights and personal application.

But in this last chapter, Paul gives more personal insights. There are comments about his travels that give us insight into his heart and character. Such as...

1. Paul wants the church in Corinth to take a regular offering for the church in Jerusalem. Apparently, the church in Jerusalem was going through a difficult time and Paul wanted to bless them.
2. Paul has an attitude of just waiting on the Lord's direction. He doesn't have it all planned out. Paul is a good example of a person who anticipates being led by the Spirit in all things.
3. Paul was to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (about June). There was an open door for effective service and there were many adversaries. *Paul did not run when there were adversaries. Instead, he readily faced the challenges.*

Illus- This reminds me of Caleb who wanted the mountain country where the great Anakim lived in fortified cities.

In this chapter we also have Paul's strong counsel on how to live out our faith well in a non-Christian world.

Illus – There is deep oppressive spirit in Moscow. What an example of a non-Christian world.

In this chapter we focus on some very specific principles for living out our faith well in a non-Christian world.

I. Be on the alert.

I Cor 16:13

A. Watch for the prowling lion.

I Pet 5:8

- Your adversary lurks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom He may devour.

B. The prowling lion especially desires to devour the young ones.

- We need to be like Job who prayed for his children lest they curse God in their hearts.

C. We need to be alert for spiritual apathy.

Rev 3:1-3

- The church at Sardis was asked to wake up from **spiritual dullness!!**

II. Stand firm in the faith.

A. No going backwards.

- We should not compromise our faith.

Illus- One of David's mighty men, Shammah by name, was asked to guard the lentil field.

B. The fallacy of the slippery slope.

- Compromise consists of small steps.

Illus- Donald Barnhouse once led a young man to the Lord who served in the military during WWII. He immediately told those who served with him about his new faith. But after the war ended was concerned that he when he went back to his old friends that he might compromise his faith...

III. Act like men.

A. In the original, this means to "acquit yourselves like men."

- The only place this word occurs in the Bible, but it is a very strong word.
- Be men of substance (act like men).

B. Paul had said earlier that, "when he was a child he reasoned as a child...., but when he became a man he put away childish things..."

- Paul considers worldly things to be childish because they focus so much on "me."

C. Be strong.

- Literally it means to **be made** strong.
- Made strong by what we receive from the Lord. (I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.)
- Ps 27 "The Lord is the strength of my life.

IV. Let all you do be done in love.

Illus – The director of the orphanage (Boarding School) is motivated by love.

A. Love is a great balance to Paul's comments on courage and strength.

B. God has awesome power and might, but He chooses to express Himself in His love.

C. This is what Paul calls, "A More Excellent Way."

Conclusion

These insights are so needed today. We need to be alert and to stand firm in the faith like never before. Without question it would be good to receive Paul's word to "act like men" and to do all in love.