

Corinth

“Places in the life of Christ”



“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

I Corinthians 13:1-2

If a man walked into your town and more specifically your church, and told you about a man who was so wonderful that he could change your whole life, would you listen to him, especially if you thought he had somewhat of a shady past.

Then after he left and went on to another town, he would start writing letters to you telling you everything you were doing wrong. He would sprinkle enough encouragement in, but he really thought you needed to change your life style. That was the way some must have seen Paul in Corinth.

After all it was well known that Paul was born a Jew and a Roman citizen. He had a very high place in their government, and he had changed his name for some reason from Saul to Paul. Sure he might have said he was blinded and then had his sight returned by this new guy he was professing to follow. How did the people of Corinth know he was telling the truth? He frequently wrote to the people of Corinth and his thoughts were Christ centered. However, if the people of Corinth changed as Paul would have them change they might lose their livelihood or even their life. They had a lot to consider. However, if they followed what he said, they had everything to gain.

Much of what we know about Corinth and its role in the spreading of God’s love is found in the letters that Paul wrote to the Corinthians. The letters were supportive in many ways, but they also showed Paul’s displeasure with the way the people were acting. Paul tried to tell the people that the only way they could find happiness was by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Paul arrived at Corinth he found a city in shambles. Rome had tried to destroy it, but they were not totally successful because the city had so much going for it, not only with the strong people but the location of the city with two major harbors. This is perhaps the reason that Paul chose to go to Corinth. The city had a diverse population

of sailors, rich merchants, slaves, people from various cults, and some Christians. Paul seemed to have more problems at Corinth than at any other town he visited.

While Paul was in Corinth, he met with two other very important Jewish refugees from Rome. They were Priscilla and Aquila. They were tentmakers like Paul. He asked if they were willing to work with him and they became key figures in his work. The people at that time didn't have churches as we know them today. They often met in homes, and according to what we are told in Scripture, the meetings were often held in the home of Priscilla and Aquila. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla went with him to Ephesus. These two and many others that are barely mentioned in the Bible were very instrumental in helping Paul spread the Good News of salvation.

Much that was written in the letters to the people of Corinth is used as lessons for us still today. Paul did not shrink from his job. He may have offended people, but he felt he was doing it for their good. I'm sure at times people were upset with him.

Paul didn't pretend to be something he wasn't, but he did "shoot from the hip" as they say. He told the people of Corinth he had heard about their disagreeing with each other. "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought." 1 Corinthians 1:10. But then he had already told them "He (Jesus Christ) will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." In effect he was saying that when it comes right down to the end of your time on this earth Christ will forgive you, but you need to work at doing His will in the meantime.

He didn't mince any words to the people of Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 Paul tells them "Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals." Then a few chapters later, he wrote "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" 1 Corinthians 15:3.

Did he love the people of Corinth? I think he did or he wouldn't have cared for them. He wanted them to know that Jesus Christ was their salvation and the way to a much better life. We have those same promises today. Yes, we are also good at sinning! That didn't apply only to the people of Corinth. We also have the same salvation though. Perhaps the fact that we are so much like the people of Corinth is why we still read those letters of Paul so often. We need to know the love of Christ every day, but we also need to know that we are not perfect.

Prayer: Jesus, You gave Your life, that we might have eternal life with You. We don't understand how it all works and how we should prepare for it. You have taught us to pray and You have told us that we will be extremely happy. But it is too much for our finite minds to comprehend. Help us to show Your love by the way we live every day, and by the way we treat others. Please guide us as you guided those who followed Your

teachings so many years ago and help us to be prepared to enter into Your Kingdom when our time on this earth has ended. Amen

1. If you review some of Paul's life, you will see that he ended up in prison several times, and was asked to leave certain towns. In fact, he sometimes had to escape by night. Are we willing to go that distance to help someone know about God's love?
2. What can we do to help in some small way to show that we know we have a wonderful life waiting for us when we leave this earth?
3. Do you know people like Priscilla and Aquila who are there to help, but never in the limelight?
4. Each of us has been given at least one talent. Paul seemed to have so many. How can you use your talents in everyday life?

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