

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Epistles

February 26: 1 Corinthians 1-2 (Ryan Ingle)

2/26/17 ~ The Epistles ~ 1 Corinthians 1 & 2

Paul is speaking to the people of Corinth who were having some arguments or taking sides needlessly, they weren't focused on the true meaning of following Christ. Some of them were bragging that they were baptized by Paul or whomever and were missing the point, the true meaning of Paul's teachings about Christ. "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect."

1 Corinthians 1:17

The message of Christ dying for all was getting lost among all this arguing. This division was greatly troubling to Paul as it was forming divisions among them

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.""

(1:18-19)

Times don't change...we think that those in the world feel the message of the Bible is pure foolishness, both today and back in Paul's time. However, to believers, the message is salvation to us and shows us the power of God in forgiving our sins through his Son!! Those who "claim to know it all" will be destroyed (Pharisees and Sadducees).

...Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

"but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1:23-24). Paul was preaching the true message to help the people of Corinth to get refocused on the power of God. This is an example of how we as well can lose focus of God's message and need to be brought back into the fold again!

Let's also remember Romans 1:4 which states "and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

The remainder of the first chapter can be wrapped up in saying these individuals weren't the brightest or best God had to choose from to spread his message. They were the average people that had an extraordinary message of the power of God and the salvation through Christ type of message to be shared! We as well have that same message and need to remember, like the people of Corinth, not to lose focus of that message in trivial matters but to share it with others; the power of God!!

Ch. 2

Paul states that he himself did not come to them with great pride and fancy speech, the through the power in God's word. He spoke to them just like any normal "Joe" but the message he delivered was through God.

The message being delivered was of God's plan for man all-along. This message is not new but was new to those receiving it. The "experts" of this time had not a clue of God's plan as this is shown through them crucifying Christ.

"But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." (2:9-10, 12)

Man did not know the intentions of God's plan of salvation as we are men, not God. God delivered His message through the Holy Spirit to those who received it so man would know the gift God had given them. -This clearly showed them that man is so inferior to God!

We are able to understand God's message as we have the spirit who talks to us. Those in the world find it foolishness. They don't have the spirit.

John 15:15 sums it up for this passage!

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."

We have received God's message and have become close to God as a result...we are friends with Christ.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Ryan Ingle! You provided excellent thoughts covering these verses. My Bible had an insightful summary that I'd like to share: "This letter begins with a salutation and Paul's words of thanksgiving, which serve as more than customary courtesy, but actually introduce us to the content of the entire letter (1:1-9). He mentions the unity of the church (1:2), its purity (1:8), its spiritual gifts (1:7), and its future glory (1:7-8). This basically outlines the rest of the epistle. Chapters 1-4 will deal with the divisions which threaten Christian unity. Chapters 5-11 are concerned with the purity and sanctity of the church. Chapters 12-14 will elaborate on the use of their spiritual gifts. Chapter 15 discusses the resurrection and our future glory."

I often contemplate 1:31, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." Paul mentions this is quoted from Jeremiah 9:23-24. Do not boast of your wisdom, strength or riches. Only God and our knowledge and love for Him are worthwhile. We must glorify the Lord instead of ourselves. For wisdom – and all gifts – comes from above.

March 5: 1 Corinthians 3-4 (Randy Ingle)

1 Corinthians Chapters 3-4

Vs 1-9 Paul addresses the group in Corinth about how he had to speak to them as babies in the word because they were not ready to hear and understand in a way that was adequate. They were still concerned about who they were getting the message from rather than the actual message itself.

Paul tells them that while Apollos and himself may have planted and watered them with the truth they are no different in that they will also have to answer on their own, according to what they have done. Paul says we are God's fellow workers and you are the field. God's building.

Paul adds that he, through the grace of God laid the foundation for someone else to build upon. That foundation is Christ. Anyone coming after him needs to take heed of how they build on that foundation since they will have to answer for that. Each of us are tried by fire. If the work they do survives they will be rewarded, but if not and their work is burnt up they will suffer loss, but they may be saved but only through fire. This would apply to anyone who works for the Lord's Church.

16-17 Remind us that we are God's temples and need to conduct ourselves accordingly. It is mostly referring to how we teach here. That we teach the word of God and not something else than what Paul already taught. It would also be wise to reference this as a reminder not to cause destruction physically to one of God's temples as that would lead to our own destruction as well especially our own bodies. (such as suicide)

18-23 Reminds us not to think too highly of our own thoughts. We need to humble ourselves to be willing to listen to others who have wisdom and try those thoughts to scripture to make

sure they are pure. Whether it's life or death future or present are yours, but you are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Chapter 4

We should be more concerned about being servants of Christ and stewards over what he has given to us than what other men may think of us. Paul states that he does not even judge himself, and doesn't know of any accusations against him, but that does not make him guiltless. In the end judgement is God's to have. He will bring the secret things to light along with the purpose of our hearts. Our judgement will then be at hand.

6-7 Discuss how important it is not to go beyond what is written in the scriptures. Sticking to the word is highly important. Nobody has any right to get puffed up over one another. We each have received from God our gifts and abilities and would not have them of our own accord.

8-13 Paul further speaks to their high opinion of themselves and their abilities. He only wishes they were as advanced as they were in their own minds. He then referred to the hardships that he and others had to endure for the furthering of the gospel. He was not boasting in this but informing that maybe they would have a better understanding. It was going to be a point to Paul how many things he would have to suffer for Christ sake.

Paul makes sure they know in the end he wants them to know that he is telling them these things in love. Not that he wants to be the bearer of bad news but to help them with their frame of mind that it may be right before God. He tells them that Timothy has been given to them to be a reminder of the ways of Christ. He lets them know that he will Lord willing come back them again. He has others that he needs to see and help them with their issues.. He then asks them whether they would rather come in a way where it was gentle or with a rod. Remember the rod would drive their foolishness out from them.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Randy Ingle! It was good to be with you on this Lord's Day and we thank you for efforts w/the Seven Bible Studies lesson tonight! While considering chapter 3 & 4 I think it's good to be reminded of the History Of Church In Corinth. It was established at the end of Paul's second missionary journey, about 50AD (Acts 18), the church was a mixture of Gentiles and Jews from the very beginning. Silas and Timothy joined Paul shortly after his arrival. After his conversion, Apollos preached and built up the church in Paul's absence (Acts 18:24-19:1). He converted many of them (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6,22; 4:6). Unfortunately, Corinth elevated these teachers to a place that was not theirs. There is only one foundation: Jesus Christ (3:10-11). Paul warns, "Therefore, let no one glory in men!"

March 12: 1 Corinthians 5-6 (Randy Ingle)

1 Cor. 5-6 Epistle Study

Chapter 5 The Church is being chastised about how it is not handling one of it's unruly members who is sleeping with his father's wife. Even those outside the Church knew of it and would not do such a thing. This is a public matter and should have been handled promptly, but was not. Matt. 18:15-20 tells us how to handle these matters. Verse 5 speaks as to how Paul has judged him in this matter and chosen to deliver him to Satan in order that he might realize the error and change while there is still time. Leaven is used as an example of something that can be infectious to the whole group if it is to remain a part and not cut out. In this case as a comparison to sin.

He reinforces at the end that he is not meaning the world you can't associate with, but sinfulness in your own members. He wants us and them to know that you can't continue as normal, and nothing to see here attitude when sin is involved. Those who are outside of the Lord God judges, and those inside the body we are to watch over. Many people need to be mindful of these verses rather than Matt 7:1 than always is brought up when we are doing the righteous judgement memorize these for future referencing

Chapter 6 addresses some issues that needed to be dealt with at Corinth and I think it serves as an example to all of us as well. Apparently some of the members had taken issue with. Each other to the point that they were going to court against each other over it. What kind of example does it show to the outside world if we can't settle our own disputes amongst ourselves. That is what Paul was enforcing there.

Verse 3 talks of how we will judge angels, then how are we not able to judge ourselves of these trivial matters. He says that it is an embarrassment to them to have such a problem among them. He said you should rather be defrauded yourselves than to treat each other with this contempt for self gain at the other's expense.

They are then reminded that the unrighteous will not inherit heaven as a reward. The following sins are specifically listed as doomed to eternal punishment: fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, revilers, and swindlers.

He says some of them were involved with these activities, but have been forgiven and ceased these things through Christ and the Spirit of God.

The Body Is For God.

There are a lot of things that are ok to do, but are better of if we abstain from them. Things are better off if we are focused on God as our primary goal and not earthly things. He reminds us that our bodies are not for sin but for the Lord. Our bodies will be members of Christ. Our bodies can not be members with Christ and sin at the same time. Members of Christ can't be members with a harlot at the same time. We are to flee from sin, an immoral person sins against their own body. Our bodies are a temple and cannot be a home to sinfulness as well. We are not our own, but Christ's who purchased us with his blood. GLORIFY GOD in the bodies he gave us

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Excellent summary, Randy! Thank you so much. I agree with your thoughts on these 2 passages. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Christians should value their bodies as a sacred place where God dwells. Furthermore, Paul uses the illustration of God's high regard for the body when he mentions the resurrection of Christ's body and eventually all believer's resurrection. A body destined for resurrection should not be used for immorality. As you stated, honor and glorify God with your body! (I Cor. 6:20, Romans 6:12-13)

Comment:

Randy Ingle;

Ginger, you are always a great encouragement!

March 19: 1 Corinthians 7-8 (Ryan Ingle)

March 19, 2017 ~ The Epistles ~ 1 Corinthians 7 - 8

One of the questions asked of Paul from the Corinthians was regarding sexual immorality. Paul states that between a husband and wife sexual intimacy is needed. This question could have arisen as regarding relations between a believer and unbeliever in a marriage (vs 14 & 15). It was also brought up due to fornication being a problem of the Corinthian people. Marriage is still a "contract" or promise between the two individuals and God. The time to refrain from sexual activity needs to be agreed upon by both husband and wife during times of great need for devotion to prayer...and only for a time. Paul states that too great of time away from each other can lead to Satan tempting the relationship if too much time is spent away from sexual relations.

Paul, as we know, was not married and was able to devote himself towards serving God. If one is not able to resist their sexual desires, then it is best for them to marry but to be bound in purity to that spouse.

I would love to encourage a small discussion on vs 10 and 11. This is where I feel Paul is stating separation is not desired by God, but it would be allowed more than a divorce. Is that what others understand these two verses to mean?

If you are a believer and your spouse isn't, and they still wish to be with you, stay with them. You never really know the kind of influence you can have over them. Your handling of the situation could bring them back to God in the end. BUT if they leave, let them as you are not bound.

Please remember Hebrews 13:4 while reading these verses which states, 'Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.'

Vs 17 - 24

Come as you are...Don't worry about your past. Live your life for God and follow His commands! You were bought with a price!

The remainder of the chapter basically reemphasizes the importance of remaining devoted to God if you are unmarried as that...unmarried. You don't have the added complications of marriage that interfere with your walk with God. Again, if you can't refrain from your sexual desires, get married instead of fornicating!!

If your spouse dies, you are free to marry again if you feel you need to have that companion. However, they must be committed as well to God.

Ch 8

I love the 1st verse. "We all possess knowledge. But knowledge puffs up while love builds up". We need to stand back and make sure we treat each other with LOVE!! Love builds up! We all have knowledge but often our head gets bigger than it really should! When we become too proud, that's usually when we become humbled not necessarily by our choosing. It's also when we forget how to treat others, with love instead of feeling we are better than they are. There were some people who actually believe eating meat 'offered' to idols was wrong. Those who had knowledge to know that idols were...just idols and the offering of meat to them was meaningless to God should not look down on them. They are weak in understanding. Food does not draw us closer to God.

BE CAREFUL!! The weak-minded in Christ may see you, of whom having more knowledge, eat of this meat. This causes them to stumble seeing you eating this meat which they felt should not be eaten of. This weak member of whom Christ died as well for him will sin due to seeing you eat this meat.

In a nutshell, you eating this meat in turn causes him to sin which also causes you to sin as well by tempting him while he saw you as being more knowledgeable than himself. Instead, don't eat the meat if it causes another weaker member to stumble.

Let's remember Romans 14:15 as well. If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in LOVE. Don't by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.

We know this passage can be used in multiple cases where we should know our brothers and sisters well enough to try not to tempt them into sin.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Ryan! As for 7:10-11, my NIV reads "To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife."

There are 3 "must"s in there, no "you probably shouldn't"s or "it would be better if you didn't". Now what are some reasons a wife might want to separate (divorce) from her husband?"

1. He physically or mentally abuses her
2. He has sex with prostitutes
3. He is impotent and cannot give her children (Rachel: Give me children or I'll die.)
4. He is a habitual drunkard
5. He does not support the family
6. He chooses to worship idols or otherwise blaspheme against God
7. He leaves the toilet lid up

So what are the recourses left to a wife in these instances? How can she reconcile with her husband?

What are some reasons a man might want to divorce his wife?

1. She is a shrew (See Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew)
2. She is unfaithful
3. She still has her father's idols (You-know-who again.)
4. She emasculates him.
5. He no longer feels sexual desire for her
6. He wants a trophy wife as befits his rising social status
7. She does not maintain the house
8. She ignores his children
9. He comes home after a full day in the field, tired and hungry, only to find that the TV is warmer than the kitchen pots and pans.

Can a husband, using his authority, merely "order" a wife to mend her ways? In these situations, was it common to use an elder as an intermediary?

To me, a "trial separation" is a time when a quarreling husband and wife experience life as single people once again. Is it better than life with each other. Separation, then, is tantamount to an early divorce and, as such, is not condoned by God.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

Hello from Iowa everyone! Thanks Randy! For your thoughts! And you also Kevin! I would like to contribute more on the (7:10, 11) question, I do have an extensive study on this at home. I will try to chip in some more later. For now, just this; those two verses pertain specifically to two in a marriage where both are christians. There are specific instructions to specific circumstances in this chapter.

Charles Fry:

What recourses might a wife have? In extreme cases, I recall the story of Abigail defying her husband, to save him and others (1 Sam 25) or Bathsheba counseling with her husband, with the help of Nathan the prophet (1 Kings 1), and Hannah being ardent in anguished prayer (1 Sam 1). It appears to me that all of the polygamous marriages reported in the Bible were far from ideal, to say the least. Also, Isaac and Rebekah had some rather obvious problems, and I'm pretty sure the relationship between Samson's parents was challenging. I wonder how Chuza, working for Herod, felt about his wife Joanna following Jesus and financially supporting his travels and work?

In most instances the best thing to do for a damaged relationship is work on repair, even if it is hard. That may mean changing one's own attitude and behavior. It may mean seeking help together. In some extreme situations it may mean living apart, maybe in some circumstances even getting legal protection, physically or financially... But the mindset that the marriage covenant must not be broken by the child of God must not be discarded or diluted by worldly influences.

Michael Babb:

Kevin, With the exception of leaving the toilet seat up, why are the reasons separated by male or female? Wouldn't they apply to both sides? Just curious.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Ryan! These 2 chapters can be sensitive ones to cover. You did an excellent job conveying Paul's message. I find Paul's last comment a unique one: "and I think that I too have the Spirit of God." Paul believes he has the illumination of the Spirit on these topics. I like that because it shows Paul's humility and honesty. He was never arrogant about God's truth. When he had a word directly from the Lord (as in 7:10), he made no qualms about sharing it and enforcing it. When he had opinions that were apostolic (as in 7:12 & 25), he gave them with conviction. I have a lot of comments I would like to write about passages covering marriage but instead I'd like to mention life without marriage. The single life - as Paul says - is as much a gift and calling of God as is the married life. We need to encourage those in the church who find themselves in this state & able to focus fully on the Lord (not please self or spouse). There's a special privilege single persons have in which they can find an even higher fulfillment in their work before the Lord. They can be wholly for Him in whatever they do, as no married person can. They can give to their work before God an intensity of concentration that no married person can give. Last Labor Day @ PHill we put in a topic for this very purpose: to encourage those who are single/widowed to abound in the work of the Lord. Rick Sparks gave the lesson titled, "Married or Single?" I imagine those who have found themselves in that state were happy to not have to sit through another lesson on marriage for once. ;-)

March 26: 1 Corinthians 9-10 (Ryan Ingle)

3/26/17 ~ 1 Corinthians 9 & 10

Verses 1 - 18 speak of how one who dedicates their life to teaching the gospel of Christ should be able to earn a living wage for him and his family if needed. Paul, however boasts that he doesn't take money for his work in the gospel. His reward comes from bringing the word to those new believers free of charge.

Paul states in verses 19 - 23 that in order to share the gospel with different types of people, he had to become like those people...not in sin but to take their point of view so he could help them understand the gospel.

The remainder of the chapter is used quite a bit to help us as Christians to keep our focus on Christ. We need to train our bodies and minds to serve Christ. We don't want to be the "loser of the race" for Christ. Athletes train themselves with great attention and focus...dedication. This is how Paul describes himself...focused and determined. So we should be as well.

Chapter 10

Don't forget your past!! Paul tries to remind the Corinthians of their ancestors who were lead from slavery by a cloud God provided them and their passage through the Red Sea. God provided for them during this time as He was their "rock". However, God was very displeased, as he is with us as well, when they gave into temptation. They were scattered in the wilderness as a result of their sins.

Let their mistakes, their sins, be a lesson for you! Don't set you hearts on evil things!!! He warned them not to give into idolatry. Also, abstain from sexual immorality.

God sent snakes to kill these sinful

These Jews who were killed should serve as a reminder not to get too comfortable with your life. If you start becoming proud and think you have done nothing wrong, be extremely careful. No sin is new to this world.

Verse 13 is a widely used, comforting verse for Christians. God will not allow you to be tempted more than what you can handle. Remember that as you live your Christian life.

Flee from your sin [Idolatory]. Paul is assuming he is talking to mature people in Christ. Paul reminds us the cup of thanksgiving is a resemblance of Christ blood. Also, the bread representing Christ's body brings the 'many,' to becoming as one through Christ's death.

When the Israelites at the sacrifices, they were partaking with God. ~ This was a new thought to me regarding the sacrifices offered. I didn't really think about them eating the sacrifice after it was offered to God.

Be careful not to participate in the cup of blessing and also the cup of demons. Don't partake in what has been offered up to idols.

Yes, we are able to do what we so choose as an individual. Just because we can, does not mean we should. We should strive to help others instead of ourselves.

Paul tells the Corinthian people not to be so worried that they scrutinize every piece of meat before them. If an unbeliever invites you over, and you want to go, go. Eat. Enjoy your time. If they offer you a meal, don't worry about eating it unless they come out and say it was offered as a sacrifice. Then abstain from eating...

Be thankful God has provided you the food before you. Be concerned about what God thinks, not what man thinks. Do be watchful however, that you don't cause others to stumble. Do good for others and help where you can. We do this to help others in their life marching towards God.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Ryan! It is too easy to think of "idols" as being stick figures or engraved images that people worshipped "way back when." Certainly WE don't have any such things in our sophisticated culture. But an idol is what we give our allegiance to. In earlier times, you could tell what a city's cultural emphasis was on by looking at the size of the buildings. When the biggest edifice was a church, you knew that there was a high regard for God in that community. Today's biggest structures are skyscrapers devoted to business. I'm not advocating for bigger church buildings, just pointing out that our society turns more and more of its attention to profit and shareholder satisfaction.

If what is important to you is society's emphasis on buying a big house, having a new car every year, getting raises, climbing the social ladder, being "known" in the inner circles, maybe acquiring a trophy wife, and basically buying everything in sight, then idols are a big problem for you. It's not enough for God to be relegated to Sundays and ignored the other days. We cannot serve two masters. Whom will we choose to serve?

Certainly the experiences and failures of the Israelites are there for us to learn from but let us also learn from the failures of 1) ourselves and 2) those around us. Christians need the support of the brethren - none of us are above temptation.

Replies:

Ryan Ingle:

Well put Kevin!! We do make in today's society idols that are in various forms... We as Christians have to be careful on how we prioritize our lives! Thanks for your comments!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Ryan Ingle: As I mentioned tonight, these sets of verses made for an excellent Lord's Table from you this morning. Thank you! :-) The cup of thanksgiving and bread we break is a participation in Christ. We must never give up communing with one another; if we do, we stop participating in the Lord's Table and risk participation in the Table of Demons. There are so many great verses from these 2 chapters. I always have really liked 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. We

must discipline our body to serve Christ. Also, 1 Corinthians 10:13. God is faithful. He will not tempt us more than we can bear. He will provide a way out. We must believe this!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Ryan! Cos (cup) Brachah (blessing) "cup of blessing" Paul uses the very name for the cup that Jesus used at the Passover when he instituted his memorial.

April 2: 1 Corinthians 11-12 (Ryan Ingle)

4/2/17 ~ 1 Corinthians 11 - 12

Paul starts addressing the Corinthians in terms of the women not wearing head-coverings as was customary for them when they would pray or prophesy. They were to be in subjection to the man, not being equal with the man.

It was the Greek custom that a man would worship with his head uncovered as he was (vs. 7) the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. Verses eight through ten explain this further.

Verses 11 - 17

In the Lord, man and woman are not independent from each other as husband and wife and like in 1 Corinthians 7, there is a duty in that relationship.

A woman who prays to God should be showing their respect in having their head covered (i.e. Longer hair than a man).

Verse 15 states that a woman's long hair is her head-covering and to have it shave/cut short is to be a disgrace.

Any other thoughts on this group of verses would be encouraged.

17 - 34

Paul is not encouraged by how they came together for the Lord's Supper. They would 'come' together as a church but there was so much contention and division between them, they were not celebrating the true reason (Lord's Supper) of their worship.

Let's keep in mind what Paul stated in the first chapter, verse ten. "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.

Verse 21 talks of how before they would celebrate the Lord's Supper, they would eat separately. The rich would bring their 'healthy portions' while the poor would not have much. The excesses from this feast they would have before the Lord's Supper would then be used for the Lord's Supper.

I used to be worried about taking too much of the bread when it was passed around. Taking a bigger piece of the bread is not wrong. This supper was like a meal in these times.

Paul states his is simply delivering the message of the Lord's Supper to them. This set of verses are used multiple times to help remind and prepare ourselves for the Lord's Supper.

I believe in verse 27, the 'unworthy manner' I believe pertains to our mind and how we are focused. If we aren't thinking of the Lord's Supper, but just allowing our minds to wonder, and realizing it we don't try to refocus would be incorrect. We are all unworthy of what Christ did for us. Thank God He gave us this great sacrifice that we have the hope of making it to Heaven one day!!

Chapter 12

Paul moves on to reminding the Corinthians of their past in terms of idols. He addresses the Spirit of God handing out gifts to each individual a special talent. The talents/gifts vary from one person to the next but they all come from the same Spirit.

Verses 12 through 31 go into more detail here regarding the body having multiple parts that make the body complete. This obviously refers to those Christians in the body of Christ. We all have special talents given by God to help make the body complete.

"But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body." (18-20)

We shouldn't think less of others "parts" of the body. Just because we may be the eye, we shouldn't look down at the toe and think we have no use for the toe as it is of lessor value. God has given us our unique talents to make the body as one complete body. Let's never let pride come into the body but be willing to help each other become better and stronger so our body does not suffer from division and become ill. When one member suffers, we all suffer, when one member rejoices, we all rejoice!!!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Ryan Ingle! Very important chapters. Paul tells us that "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them" (v 4). No two gifts are the same and generally no two believers have exactly the same gifts but always these gifts are given for the common good of the church (v 7). Each and every believer has been given the indwelling of the Spirit of God, gifts of the Spirit (Acts 2:38). What we need to remember is that these gifts are given for the Body of Christ - to make the Body complete. These gifts are intended to edify, to strengthen, to feed, to exhort, to encourage and to have the Body of Christ empowered to do the work of Christ. These gifts are always to exalt Christ, to witness of God's power, to build up and to grow by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Likewise, the idea of headship and authority is important. One thing God looks for from man is voluntary submission. This is what Jesus showed in His life over and over again, and this is exactly what God looks for from both men and women, though it will be expressed in different ways. If we keep our focus on Christ though complete submission we will become as willing servants and use the gifts God has given to glorify the Kingdom.

April 9: 1 Corinthians 13-14 (Ryan Ingle)

4/9/17 ~ 1 Corinthians 13 - 14

Love! Love! Love! How perfect this chapter is to help remind us and center our focus on why God sent His Son to die for us. LOVE!

This chapter in a nutshell lays it right out there for us. It doesn't matter what talent you possess. It doesn't matter how faithful you are...even the faith to move mountains...without LOVE, it is nothing!!!

How many times do you think evil thoughts of others, including your spouse of what they did or didn't do, and you become so irritated. Remember LOVE! It is patient and kind; does not envy or boast (about who cleaned the dishes); it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth! LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS. BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS!!!

LOVE NEVER ENDS!!!!

You hear of an occasional story of an elderly couple who when one passes away, it's not long before the other spouse passes away. It's almost like they couldn't live without each other!!! That's what you call love.

Greater yet...(John 15:12-13) This is my command, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. We are to be as Christ, part of His body. If we don't have love, then how can we claim we know Him?

We see such a high divorce rate amongst those in the world ~ even some claiming to have Christ in their hearts ~ reason being...they don't know what true love is to help put aside their differences and to restore Christ as first in their marriage.

8 - 13

Times pass away...prophesying and speaking in tongues will pass as well as knowledge. Christ is what completes perfect love. Without Him, we would not understand love as we do now through His example.

When we were a child, we acted like a child and only saw limited through the eyes of a child. As we grow in our walk with Christ, we become more knowledgeable of Him. We will completely understand Him when we see Him in person.

Ch. 14

Prophesying was such a valuable spiritual gift to do as it took you being in-tune with the Holy Spirit and being close to God.

“On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.” (14:3)

Unless there was one who could interpret the speaking, speaking in tongue was usually only valuable for the person who was speaking.

“The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.” (14:4)

Who would want to listen to instruments being played if they were out-of-tune...not me! Trust me, I've heard my children play. Likewise, if when you speak in tongues, there is no one to interpret, then what good is it to anyone else? Speaking in tongues was meant to spiritually edify and uplift but to be able to prophesy personally brought you closer to God.

“There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.” (14:10-11)

When speaking in tongue privately in prayer, you needed to make sure your mind was engaged and understanding what you were speaking, otherwise, like when we pray even today, it is fruitless if we are just rambling a memorized prayer without thinking about it, just as it was for speaking in tongues.

“Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.” (14:13-14)

Verse 19 really brings home the importance here...that speaking was meant to edify others and not just yourself. “Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.” (14:19)

Paul lays it on the line here to the Corinthians! Most of them were just speaking in tongues and not developing themselves further in their connect to God. He essentially tells them to grow up!! What benefit if an outsider comes in and can't understand what is being said? But if the members there in in-tune with God through prophesying, they will feel the spirit amongst them and worship God.

This particular group of verses brought continues to reiterate “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” (13:11)

Orderly worship...

Paul iterates the importance of keeping the worship service in order here. Paul states that the instruction or song or whatever is presented is only done to edify and build up one another when they are together. Speaking in tongues was to only be done if they had someone to interpret.

Paul also wanted them to take turns if they were prophesying...not to hoard all the time. When the worship service was done correctly, God's message was easy to understand. Women were to be silent in the service as they were to speak later at home with their husbands if they had questions or something to say. ~ Would this imply women could not speak in tongues or prophesy then as if they could, why wouldn't they be allowed to share God's message?

At the end here, Paul states that what he is writing them here is the truth. It is to be followed. Paul flat out states anyone who can truly prophesy will know what Paul is writing here is from God. If they don't acknowledge it, then they aren't truly prophesying.

And finally, the scripture used to tell us that our service to God should be done in a "professional manner,"

“So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order.” (14:39-40)

Comment:

Debbie Bolinger:

Amen Brother Ryan!! Have A Blessed Lords Day! Headed to Church now!! When two Loved Ones die close to each other It is called BROKEN HEART SYNDROME! !! It's for Real!!!

Replies:

Ryan Ingle:

Could very well be but we all at times suffer from that one.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Ryan! I Corinthians 13 is probably one of the most familiar passages to the world, thanks to marriage ceremonies. However, we often forget the context of Paul rebuking the Corinth church and showing them a more excellent way to exercise spiritual gifts. They were proud (8:1), rude (11:18-22), delighted in evil (chpt 5) and self-seeking (10:24). Gifts that are not exercised in love are useless. It is love that makes gifts beneficial for the edification of others, rather than for the exaltation of self. The basic principle Paul insists on is whatever is done in the church must contribute to the building up of the body. In 12:7 a declaration is made that gifts are given "for the common good" - which follows the principle and action of love. In chpt 14 I believe Paul lays down guiding principles for the church: Mutual Edification (vs. 12, 26) Orderly Meeting (vs 40) and God-ordained Order (Submission: Woman to Man, Man to Christ). You mentioned women not speaking - We know there were women who prayed and prophesied (11:25) but in the assembly it shows submission as well as a fitting and orderly way of worship by them remaining silent.

April 16: 1 Corinthians 15-16 (Ryan Ingle)

April 16, 2017 ~ 1 Corinthians 15 - 16

Paul starts off by reminding the Corinthian people of the message he had brought to them. The message that all of them should hold fast to unless their belief in salvation is in vain.

Paul's message was of the death and resurrection of their Lord and Savior! Praise GOD!!! This resurrection is the foundation of Christianity. Without Christ's death AND resurrection, God's PERFECT plan for our salvation would not exist. If Christ would have bailed out like most of us would have, with going through what He went through, then our hope would have been lost. This resurrection was predicted from the Old Testament prophecies and came true.

Paul mentions how he was the least worthy to be an apostle. Paul always had a low opinion of himself as he persecuted the church of God. When we, as sinners, remember our prior sinful

life before the grace of God allowed our sins to be washed away; God causes this remembrance to help humble us and make us more faithful to Him.

12 - 19

There were many who did not believe in the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ was essential to prophecies being fulfilled. Paul is essentially saying that if Christ did not raise from the death, then all of what he has told them is a complete lie. There is no point to your faith if Christ did not raise and overcome death!

20 - 29

Death entered this world through Adam but life has been made possible through Christ! Christ will triumph over death as it is His last enemy. Christ will return God's kingdom to Him once he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

The Corinthians apparently would baptize a person in the name of a person who died unbaptized. Paul, by my understanding, is not saying there is meaning here behind doing such practice, but that there would be no purpose doing this if there was no resurrection from the dead. It would also seem those who were practicing this type of baptism did not believe in resurrection, which made no sense as to why you would baptize and not believe in the power of resurrection. I would gladly welcome any thoughts upon this verse if you would like to share your thoughts.

Paul continues by saying what is his purpose of teaching others if not for the resurrection that Christ's death provides us. His life was constantly at risk to share this message with others. Paul makes the point if there is no resurrection, "We eat, we drink, the next day we die" as there is no purpose to life if not for being resurrected in the end. Paul iterates here that being with those who did not believe in resurrection is like poison to yourself.

35 - 41

Paul states that some will ask, so how will the resurrected body look? He basically states how foolish of a question it is to ask. We don't have a way of knowing just exactly how the body looks. Paul states that our bodies will be different from what they currently are now.

"So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." (42-44)

45 - 50

Adam was made from the earth. His physical body was first. Then came the spiritual body that was made possible through Christ.

"And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man." (49)

50 - 58

Our physical body cannot enter into God's kingdom. It will be transformed at that last heavenly trumpet blow. Everyone will be clothed with immortality, including those who have died as they have also been raised from death. This transformation into immortality will be the final overcoming of death as our bodies will be imperishable.

"When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."" (54)

This was foretold in Isaiah 25:8, "He will swallow up death forever."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (55-57)

All I can say here is HALLELUJAH! Thanks to Christ and His power over death, He has made it possible for us to live eternally with Him, if we prove ourselves faithful to Him.

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (58)

1 Corinthians 16

1 - 4

Paul briefly gives the Corinthians instruction for the offering to be saved up and given upon the first day of the week. These offerings will then be taken by the chosen ones to Jerusalem. Paul portrays his desire to be with the Corinthian people for a good amount of time. He was currently residing in Ephesus where he is making great progress but is also experiencing resistance to his teachings.

Paul is strongly encouraged with Timothy and hopes he is able to visit the Corinthians. He has tried to no avail to get Apollos to visit them but Apollos wasn't able to at that time.

Verses 13 and 14 very much sums up the message Paul has delivered to the Corinthians in this letter..

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.” (13-14)

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ryan!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Regarding 1 Cor 15:29, I would connect Paul's phrasing here to his description of baptism in Romans 6. When we were dead in sin, we are buried with Christ in baptism in order to be raised to new life. Why be baptized (burying the dead man of sin) if there is no resurrection to new life? If Paul were referring to any aberrant practice, he would have corrected it. He offers no correction, just an oblique reference to an idea he assumed they understood.

John Chrysostom put it this way in the late 4th century in his discourse on the passage: "Sin has brought death into the world, and we are baptized in the hope that our dead bodies will be raised again in the resurrection. If there is no resurrection, our baptism is meaningless and our bodies will remain as dead as they are now." Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.2.

Replies:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you for your understanding here.

John Morris:

Hesitant to jump in here...but here goes. Had someone ask about this passage several months ago after it was discussed in a Bible class, and shared my understanding (what follows). This position makes sense to me, but please pick it apart, brethren, if you see holes in it.

As I alluded to in class, the words for "dead" in 1 Cor. 15:29 are plural; hence, an equally accurate translation throughout the verse could be "the dead ones." Additionally, the two appearances of "for" in the verse are the Greek word "huper," which in this construction (with the genitive) means "in behalf of." In light of all this, the verse could be rightly rendered: "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized in behalf of the dead ones, if the dead ones do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized in behalf of the dead ones?" In fact, unknown to me until I just now checked, the ESV actually reads: "Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?"

This, of course, raises questions, and I do not claim to be the last word by any means. Lots of explanations have been offered by commentators. But it seems that Paul is simply referencing some practice that was known to him and to his readers at Corinth. We know from extra-biblical references that proxy baptism was definitely being practiced in the second century, but

admittedly have no proof outside of the Bible that it was going on in the first century. Absence of evidence, however, is not always evidence of absence. =) Since the face value reading is generally the right one, I tend to lean in the direction that Paul is, in fact, highlighting an unscriptural rite that was being practiced by others—the “they” (notably, not “we,” “us,” or “you”)—just to help make his point.

But why would Paul mention a practice that is wrong without condemning it? Doesn't him referencing it basically equal an endorsement? That's the rub, I know, and I don't personally think so.

Two examples come to mind which may be analogous:

First, in 1 Cor. 9:24-25, Paul compares the Christian life to those competing in the Greek games (something with which his Corinthian readers would be quite familiar—they were celebrated every second year, and at the time of the epistle were either being hosted by Corinth or its nearby neighbor Isthmia. Corinth had, at the very least, hosted them recently, and for a number of years). The parallel is powerful, and makes his point well, but is Paul endorsing the games? Seems doubtful, since the games opened with a sacrifice to Poseidon (the local deity), and the male athletes competed in many of the events in the nude. Paul just alluded to the games as something the readers would be familiar with, to make a point with no insinuation as to rightness or wrongness.

Mt. 12:27 may serve as another example (though not as compelling, in my opinion). While arguing against the Pharisees' assertion that He cast out demons by the power of Satan, Jesus said, “And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons [i.e. your disciples] cast them out?” Interesting question. Was this reference to Pharisaic exorcists (which Josephus also mentions) an acknowledgement that they really had power? Possibly, but I'm hesitant to say so with certainty. Whether the Pharisaic exorcists had real power or not may not have been relevant to Jesus' argument. The Pharisees at least claimed and/or believed that their exorcists had power from God, and so that alone undermined their attempt to misrepresent the source of Jesus' power over demons.

Ultimately, if I haven't fallen prey to rambling, I think someone can allude to something in making a point without agreeing with it. If we thought long and hard about it, I'm pretty sure we could think of instances where we've done that sort of thing ourselves. Paul was trying to help the Corinthians see that a bodily resurrection was really coming someday. And along with many other arguments he cited, he seems to simply be saying in 1 Cor. 15:29, “If there's no coming resurrection, then why are those folks over there (“they”) going to the trouble to have baptisms on behalf of those who've already died? They obviously are expecting a resurrection one of these days.”

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, John & Charles. Good discussions & things to ponder upon. Please do not hesitate to jump in and offer feedback during our studies. Everyone's participation is truly edifying and sincerely appreciated. <3

Charles Fry:

John and Ryan, we've only scratched the surface of the 200 or so catalogued explanations for what Paul referred to in 1 Cor. 15:29. :)

I prefer what I already offered, but also have some admiration for the cleverness of connecting the baptism of 1 Corinthians 15:29 to that baptism mentioned in Matthew 20:22-23, the baptism of suffering, of martyrdom, in view of Paul's reference to danger and daily threats of death in v30-32.

John, in my opinion the strongest support for the idea that this is something practiced by someone outside the church is the "they" language, not "we" or "you" in v29. If it were any aberrant activity within the church Paul would surely have addressed it as such. It is hard to imagine who might be doing such a thing among pagans or Jews, but we don't know what we don't know.

I don't think we have any problem seeing that his point in mentioning it at all is to support belief in the resurrection of the dead, Jesus first, ourselves to follow, certainly not to vaguely teach or uphold any doctrine not presented elsewhere in scripture.

There certainly are instances of using "bad" things to illustrate truths, as when Jesus compared himself to a strong home invasion robber overcoming Satan in his household (Matthew 12:29) or the repeated references to the 2nd coming as like "a thief in the night" (Matthew 24:43, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3, 16:15). We have no trouble discerning that these illustrations are not an endorsement of robbery or theft.

The reference to running in chapter 1 Corinthians 9 can be understood somewhat similarly, a negative thing mentioned to highlight a need for discipline and dedication, yet there are included qualifiers in what Paul references there. The illustration clearly isn't intended to suggest Christians compete against each other, as he already wrote about that in chapters 1-4, and revisits it in 12-14. He clearly wasn't condoning paganism in the illustration, as he'd already commented about idolatry in chapter 8 and resumed that theme in 10. He'd already written about the holiness and sanctity of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and vessel of honor in service to God and in marriage in 6-7, so no one would think he was endorsing something quite contradictory to those doctrines in his sports illustration. Plus Paul plainly puts the Greek athletes in the "they" column in 9:25, not "we" or "you," which might reflect on the analogous language in 15:29.

I do have less uncertainty about Jewish "exorcists" and Jesus acknowledging that there were others who did in fact cast out demons. No one had the sort of power over demons that Jesus did, but then no one could heal diseases like Jesus could either, and we wouldn't understand his mention of physicians as obliquely pejorative. Josephus does indeed mention such things, attributing the wisdom to cast out demons to something passing along from King Solomon (but his glowing description of a Jewish exorcist performing for Emperor Vespasian really does smell like sleight of hand; see Antiquities 8.2.5). The reference in Tobit 8 (during the intertestamental period) also sounds less than credible, but affirms that there were efforts to exorcise demons. There are references to exorcism using psalms and herbs and ritual bathing in various sources including the Dead Sea Scrolls. No doubt there was fakery in that area, as also in "medicine," or other pretenses to power (like Simon the sorcerer) but I don't think there is any reason to suppose Jesus meant less than he said or that none of those who honestly invoked the power of God to cast out demons were ever successful (recall Mark 9:28-29).

I don't know if this constitutes "picking apart" your thoughts, John, but I hope not. Your take on the passage is very reasonable. I'd take pleasure in being able to talk about such things face to face from time to time.

Marc Hermon:

John Morris I lean more towards this view also. It seems that there was some group who had devised this type of baptism and Paul is simply pointing out that even "they" believe in a resurrection or "they" wouldn't be performing that "strange" practice. Perhaps he has even spoken against that practice to them before and is again referencing that group. We don't have a need for Paul to condemn them here to understand that the practice was incorrect. To me it is somewhat similar to when Paul was also proclaiming the resurrection of Christ to the Corinthians' neighbors 70 miles to the east in Athens.

"Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; "for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:"

Paul was not condoning their polytheism here or praising "their own poets" when he quotes them. He is simply again using some of the cultural ideology to point them to the truth.