

OpenTheo

1st Corinthians Overview (Part 2)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this overview of 1 Corinthians, Steve Gregg emphasizes the importance of unity within the church. While there may be differing interpretations of scripture, Christians should strive for unity in Christ and avoid division. Paul's writings should be viewed as inspired truth conveyed through the unique personalities and vocabularies of individual writers. Gregg also touches on topics such as church discipline, the importance of love, and the resurrection of the dead as foundational doctrine. Throughout the overview, he encourages Christians to prioritize their role as servants of God over personal gain or interests.

Transcript

This is a great book. So, as I said, we're just going to breeze through all the chapters of 1 Corinthians. You now have an idea of what the kind of an overview of the book looks like.

In chapter 1, he has his typical greetings. I'm not going to go verse by verse simply because that's not what we're doing tonight. But at verse 10, he introduces his first concern, which is unity in the church.

And he says, Now this sounds like a really impossibly high standard. I mean, if you want to have unity in the church, how do you do that? Well, here's how you do it. All say the same thing.

And all be joined together with the same opinion on everything. Well, wait a minute. Is that really possible? I mean, I suppose it could be if Paul was here telling us what the right opinion was.

The problem is all the denominations that exist with different opinions, they all think they're saying what Paul said. That's the problem we have that they didn't have in the first century. That we have Paul's writings to interpret.

They had Paul. He could interpret his own writings if it was unclear. Now you want to say, but we have the Holy Spirit.

That is true. We do have the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit does not give the gift of omniscience.

He leads us into all truth, but it's a little bit at a time. And, you know, it's a lifetime of learning as the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. And yes, he does so from giving us insight into the writings of Paul and other biblical writers.

The problem is that we need some things that the original readers didn't need. And sometimes we don't have, at least not everyone who reads the Bible has it. For example, knowledge of the Greek language, which they spoke and read.

That was their language. Koine Greek is a dead language today. If you're going to learn it, you have to learn it, a language that no one speaks anymore.

In Greece, they don't speak Koine Greek. It's a different Greek now. I mean, it's a dead language.

It takes specialized study to know Greek. Fortunately, we who are English speakers have an incredibly large amount of Greek resources. You know, lexical resources, Greek and English dictionaries and things like that.

I mean, lexicons. We have tremendous access, which, say, people who speak Swahili don't have because there aren't a bunch of lexicons and commentaries and stuff in the Swahili language. There's tons of them in English.

So we really have a tremendous opportunity to get behind the meaning of the Greek words. But it's not our language, and it was theirs. They didn't have to look things up to know what the words mean.

They learned it from their mother's breasts. It was their native language. We have to study Greek in order to know what it means, and that's a bit of a disadvantage we're at compared to them.

Another thing is they knew what all the nuances were of the allusions he made to things in their culture. We might be able to learn them from studying ancient Greek culture, but they lived it. He didn't have to explain to them.

And there were things in their world that aren't in our world, like in 1 Corinthians 15 where he says, well, what shall those people do who are baptized for the dead if the dead don't rise at all? Well, what do you mean people who are baptized for the dead? I don't know anyone who does that. What are you talking about, Paul? Well, he's not here to answer that question. They didn't have to ask.

They knew who the people were that he's alluding to. There were some - I mean, they - he was talking about something they were familiar with, something people being

baptized for the dead. That's - we don't know what that is.

We aren't there. They had local customs, local issues going on. As I mentioned earlier, they knew whether the man living with his father's wife was actually - whether she was his mother, his father's widow, his father's current wife.

I mean, we don't - we can guess. We can speculate. They knew.

What we - we're reading somebody else's mail, and they lived in the world he's describing. We can learn much about it by special study, which many people don't do. But even by special study, there's things that we just don't have external information about.

We don't know. So that's why, even though we have the Holy Spirit, there are people who have different opinions about what some of this stuff, this background was or whatever. And while the Holy Spirit can correct us, the problem is we all think that the insights we're getting are those that the Holy Spirit's giving us.

So the dispensationalists and the millennials and the post-millennials all think that the Holy Spirit is showing them what Paul was talking about or what John was talking about. The Calvinists, the Arminians, the Pelagians, they all believe their Holy Spirit's showing them what the Scripture says. That's the problem.

And therefore, we have to be somewhat more humble about our opinions. We need to be aware that we might have to be lifetime learners in things that they would know instantly. There's a good case we made for being a diligent Bible student these days when a simple person who simply read their native language could understand back then.

So this is why - this is what we're up against. It doesn't mean we can't know the truth. It does mean, though, there are probably some things that they knew that we might never know for sure.

We might come to a high degree of confidence that we know what they're talking about, but there's some other possibilities that we'll just have to say, okay. Fortunately, not everything needs to be known. Not everything is essential for us to know.

We're curious, and it's good to be curious. We should try to find out as much as we can. But if we get to a place where, I don't know, this guy thinks it means this, this guy thinks it means that, this guy thinks it means that, I guess maybe I won't know.

That very statement about those who baptized for the dead, one commentator said that he had encountered in his study 40 different opinions about that verse. 40! I don't know any other verse that has four - there's four views of Revelation. You know, I could write a book on four views of Revelation, but 40 views of 1 Corinthians 15, 28, or 29, whatever

that is, that'd be quite a big book.

So, I mean, there's things that we have to say, well, I think it probably means this, but I could be wrong. But fortunately, all that we need to know we can. But still, this is quite a thing.

I want you to all speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together in one mind and one judgment. Okay, if we're going to get the church together like that, who's going to decide what that one thing is we all say? Are the Calvinists going to be okay with me deciding what we're all going to say? Am I going to be satisfied with them saying what we all have to say? Now, here's the problem. I used to read this saying, there's no way we could do this today.

We can't expect the church to all say the same thing. But I was misunderstanding what Paul was talking about because I wasn't connecting it to the following verses. After he says that, he says in verse 11, They're not all saying the same thing about who they are of.

You see, you don't have to have the same doctrines, you have to know who you're of. I'm not of Calvin, I'm not of Arminius, I'm not of Pelagius, I'm not of Chuck Smith, I'm not of... You name it, I'm not of, you know, Kenneth Hagen. I'm not of them.

I'm of Christ. And if they're Christians, so are they. In other words, every Christian can say the same thing if we're saying, Who are you of? Oh, I'm of Jesus.

What denomination are you? I follow Jesus. Well, don't you have a denomination? Oh yeah, the church I go to has certain beliefs, but that's not who I am. I'm of Jesus.

I fellowship with people who are of Jesus. Some of them are Calvinists, some are Arminian. Some are dispensationalists, some are cessationists, some are charismatic.

If they're of Jesus, that's our identity. My identity is not I'm of Paul, or I'm of this theological camp or that theological teacher. If that's how I'm thinking, I'm contributing to the division that Paul's trying to get rid of.

He says, one of you is saying I'm of Paul. One's saying I'm of Paul. Say the same thing.

Well, what's the thing we're supposed to all say? I'm of Christ. And we know that that's what Paul's getting at because of what he says next. He says in verse 12, now this I say, we read that, verse 13.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul? Now, he could have said the same thing about Apollos or Cephas. Were you baptized in the name of Apollos? Was Cephas crucified for you? He uses his own case in order that he's rebuking the people who are saying they are of him. He's trying not to alienate

those in the other groups.

I'll just talk to those of you who are saying you're of me. You're not of me. I wasn't crucified for you.

You weren't baptized by him. Well, then whose name were you baptized in? Who was? Was it Apollos? No. Paul? No.

Cephas? No. Well, then who did? Oh, it was Christ. So, you should all say I'm of Christ.

Because if Paul was crucified for you, and if you're baptized in the name of Paul, you should then say I'm of Paul. You know, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that the Israelites who went through the Red Sea, they were baptized into Moses. They were of Moses, of his movement.

He was their spiritual leader. Christ is my spiritual leader. There's lots of people who give me spiritual counsel or teaching or insight, but I'm not of them.

The head of every man is Christ. We should all say that same thing. We don't all have to have the same doctrines on every point.

And this is why it is the immaturity, and Paul refers to this as immaturity over in chapter 3. He says in the opening verses of chapter 3, And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual people, but carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not solid food. What was the problem? He says, well, in verse 3, You're still carnal for where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you.

Are you not carnal, behaving like men? For when one says I'm of Paul and another I'm of Apollos, are you not carnal? Now, this is the state of the modern church in many respects. In some respects, it's improving over a generation ago, but for many centuries, especially since the Reformation, people, their identity was I'm a Lutheran, I'm a Presbyterian, I'm a Catholic, I'm an Episcopalian, I'm Baptist, I'm whatever. And that might have been true in the sense that that's what, that may describe the cluster of beliefs that they happen to hold.

But there was this identity with your denomination or your theology. And that's what divides people. If I can have different theology than you, I can appreciate different authors and teachers than you appreciate.

But that doesn't divide us. If I'm following Christ and you're following Christ, we're walking on the same path. We're learning.

Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me. Okay, well, if you're a Christian, you've taken his yoke upon you. So have I. That means we're learning from him.

We're on the path. We're on the road to find out. We're actually learning from Jesus.

It's a lifetime of learning. And some people are ahead of me on that path and they've learned things I haven't learned yet. And others are behind me on the path and haven't learned some things I've learned.

That means they disagree with me on some things and I disagree with the people ahead of me on some things. But the people ahead of me are right and I'm wrong. The people behind me are wrong and I'm right.

It doesn't matter where I'm on the path because we're both... If Jesus is at the front of the parade and if we're all following him, we're all going to be led into all truth. It's just some people are closer to it than I am. And some people are probably further than I am.

But if we're moving, if we're moving forward in what Christ teaches us, we're moving into the direction that is called all truth. When the spirit comes, he'll lead you into all truth. And that's what he's doing.

And people say, well, the Holy Spirit's leading us into all truth. How come there's so many different opinions? Well, first of all, some of us are slower learners. We're at different stages on the path.

And frankly, some of us came with different baggage at the beginning. We all had our presuppositions, either theological or philosophical, before we were Christians. And now we've got to unlearn a lot of that stuff as well as learn new stuff.

And we're all unlearning different things. It's a process. It takes time.

We don't just get saved and then suddenly there's a big USB port stuck into your top of your head and you download all the truth from the Holy Spirit. This is a relational walk as you relate with the Holy Spirit, as he opens your understanding to understand the scriptures, as you obey, as you learn. You know, we're moving.

We're not going to be able to say all the same things on every subject until we know as we are also known. Until then, we know in part and we prophesy in part, Paul said. So he's not arguing for a perfection of agreement on all points, just the one that matters.

Who do you belong to? You belong to Jesus? So do I. Well, then I can't reject you if God doesn't. If Christ accepts you, how can I not? You might not like me. You might not like what I believe.

But if Christ accepts me, you got to accept me. That's what it is. Romans 14 or 15, Paul said, receive one another as Christ has received you.

OK, well, if Christ receives me and receives you, neither of us can reject each other. We have to receive each other as Christ has received us. So this is what Paul's arguing, this kind of unity.

Now, he does say, and I bring this up frequently sometimes because it's so jarring. It was so jarring to me at one point in verse 14. I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I baptized in my own name.

Now, why was that so jarring to me? Because of the next verse. Oh, yeah. I also baptized the household of Stephanas.

Besides, I don't remember whether I baptized anyone else. Now, why is that a problem? I have to say when I was raised, very fundamentalist, I assumed that every word in the Bible was like dictated straight from God and the very words of the Holy Spirit. But why would the Holy Spirit make a mistake here? Paul made a mistake.

He said he did. It's not like I'm accusing him. He tells us he made a mistake.

He said, I only baptized among you Crispus and Gaius. That's the whole number. Then he said, oh, I just remembered there's some more.

Household of Stephanas. There might be a few others I'm not remembering now, but you know, that's what he says. So what does that do to my doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture? Well, it doesn't destroy it.

It simply makes me rethink how does that work? How is the Scripture inspired? You know, I think a lot of times conservative Christians like me, very high view of the Scripture, have a tendency to see the inspiration of Scripture like automatic writing. You know, there's an occultic book called A Course in Miracles, which claims to be Jesus dictating it. A woman who wrote it speaks in the first person as if she's Jesus.

Oh, big, big book, a big occultic thing. But it's like Jesus is, you know, channeling or she's channeling Jesus. That's not how the apostles wrote.

Jesus didn't channel them or they didn't channel him, I should say. He revealed truth to them and they wrote in their own terms. That's why Paul has his own favorite vocabulary.

And so does John. John's writings stand out like a sore thumb from the other writers because he has his favorite terms, his favorite words. And Paul uses certain words like no one else does.

Do you know the concept of the body of Christ is only in Paul's writings? All the writers talk about the church, but only Paul has the body of Christ. That's his concept. The in Christ phrase is Paul's phrase.

Why do these different writers have different things about them? So different, in fact, that sometimes people say 2 Peter couldn't have been written by the same author who wrote 1 Peter because the style is so different. Well, there's better ways to understand it.

I think Peter wrote both of them.

But many people in church history, including mainstream people, thought that the same person who wrote Revelation couldn't be the person who wrote the Gospel of John. Why? The style is so different. Well, I think there's other ways to talk about that.

But the thing is, these writers aren't all the same. Jeremiah's style and personality are very different than Isaiah's. Moses is different than Luke, you know, or something like that.

These are inspired writers. But why do they sound like themselves as individuals so much? I believe it's because the Holy Spirit inspired them with the knowledge of what they're writing. But they wrote it as, you know.

But it's not like he made them into machines that only write what he's channeling there. If that was so, Paul wouldn't make a mistake and say, I mean, the Holy Spirit wouldn't make a mistake. The Holy Spirit wouldn't say, well, you only baptize Christians and gays.

Put that down. Oh, wait. I remembered.

Household of Stephanos, too. Clearly, Paul's not even claiming to be writing like that. He's writing as a concerned father in the faith who knows God, who's had revealed to him from the Spirit, the mysteries of God.

And he knows them well. And he's presenting them. And that's why it's inspired material.

But sometimes I think people have a real simplistic idea. I had no idea of what it means for them to be an inspired writer. Like, OK, every word was like coming right down and through the arm and onto the page.

It's not quite the way the process worked, apparently. But we see he goes on to say how the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, which is why he doesn't try to accommodate them. He says, we preach Christ crucified.

That's foolishness to the Greeks, he says. And it's weakness to the Jews. The Jews look for a sign.

The Greeks look for wisdom, he says. And he says in verse 26, consider your calling, brother. Not many wise of you.

There's not many wise among you, according to flesh or noble or mighty, etc. He says God has chosen the weak things and the foolish things to confound the wise and the strong. So he's saying I'm not coming to this philosophically oriented society and accommodating their their obsession with philosophical wisdom.

I'm just coming in the power and the anointing of the gospel. And I'm just trusting the

power of God to make converts. And that's why he says in chapter two, I, brethren, when I came to you did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom.

But in the demonstration of the spirit and power so that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Now, what's interesting about this? Some churches think it's very noble to say we preach nothing but Jesus and him crucified because Paul said that's all he preached with them. But we already saw in chapter three, he couldn't give them anything but milk because they were immature.

So when he preached nothing but Christ and crucified, that's the milk. So I fed you with milk and not me because you were not able to bear strong food. I had to give you milk because your babes in Christ, you're immature, you're carnal.

But notice in chapter two, verse six, he says, but we speak wisdom among those who are mature. I didn't do this when I was with you, Corinthians, because you weren't mature. You're babes, you're carnal.

I couldn't do this. I couldn't give you solid food. I had to give you milk.

I had to keep it simple. Jesus and him crucified. That's pretty much the extent of what I was able to tell you because you were not able to go beyond that.

But when I'm with mature Christians, I do speak wisdom to them. Now, not the wisdom of this age, nor the rulers of this age. But he says in verse seven, we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages for our glory.

So he's saying, I didn't do this when I was with you because you weren't the people I'm now talking about. There are mature people out there. Believe it or not, you and Corinth, you're this little bubble here with a bunch of immature, carnal people outside of your church.

There are some churches where there's some mature people. And when I'm with them, I actually do teach wisdom, not worldly wisdom, the wisdom of God. Stuff I can't really share with you.

I'd love to, but you're not able yet. You're not able to stomach it. You need to grow into that.

And so, chapter three, of course, he says, I couldn't do that with you. I wish I could. But then in verse five, he kind of gets back to Apollos and himself.

Which, as I said, he might have been in a rather subtle way. Talk about Apollos himself, even up to this point, about the wisdom and not preaching the wisdom and so forth. But he says, who then is Paul and who is Apollos? But servants, that's what the word ministers means, servants, through whom you believe.

As the Lord gave you to an eye planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now, he who plants and he waters are one.

Apollos and Paul were one. We're on the same project. Partners, partners.

It's God's project, not ours. And each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For, now this is a key verse here, verse nine, for we are God's fellow workers.

We, in this instance, means Apollos and Paul. Because he contrasts that with you, the church. You are God's field.

You are God's building. Now, the church is compared with a field of growing grain, ripening, hopefully, hopefully to maturity. It's like into a building also being constructed, as Peter says in 1 Peter 2, 5, we're like living stones being built up into a spiritual house.

Paul sees the church as a field and a building, and he says, now, Apollos and I, we're both on this project. I plant the seeds and Apollos watered them. And that's on the field, and God gives the increase.

So you're a field, I came, I planted, Apollos watered, and there's something growing there. Change the metaphor, you're also a building. When you change the metaphor, I'm the one who laid the foundation.

Just like a farmer, on the farm, I planted the seeds, on the building, I laid the foundation. I got here first, no one else did, so I laid the foundation. And another builds on it.

Now, he doesn't say Apollos. But we know he's thinking of Apollos. Because that's what he's talking about.

We are partners, Apollos and I. You're the field we're working on, you're the building we're working on. I planted the seeds, I laid the foundation. Apollos watered, and Apollos and others will come and build on this foundation.

He's not talking about building up this individual spiritual life, he's talking about building the church. The temple of the Holy Spirit, the building of God. And here's why I think a lot of people missed the meaning of this.

One guy keeps calling me on the air, he's called me out three times. I disagree with you on this point, but what I'm about to make. I pointed out to him, he still doesn't see it, so that's okay.

If you can't see it, you can't see it. But, he says, according to the grace of God given to me as a wise master builder, I've laid the foundation. Another builds on it.

Now, another is Apollos, and others. There will be others after Apollos. Others come and build on the foundation of the church that Paul planted there, that Paul laid that foundation.

Now, if anyone builds on this foundation, oh, he says, no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Meaning, no one can come and start another church in this town. There's only one church.

The foundation I laid is Jesus Christ. Others may come, they may preach, they may build, they may edify the church, but they've got to build on this foundation. It's going to be the same church I started, not another one.

There's not going to be two competing churches or three competing churches in one town. You are the building of God in this town. I laid the foundations, other people will build it.

You're going to be built up by the ministries of others who will come in. But they're not going to start another building. Not going to start another church.

There's only one foundation. No one can lay a different one. Then he says, now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one's work will become clear.

For the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test it. Each one's work of what sort it is, if anyone's work which he has built endures, he'll receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so is by fire.

Now, I always heard this taught, I think most people who've heard it taught at all heard it taught this way. The foundation is Jesus in your life when you're converted. And your life and the choices you make and the path you take is building on that foundation.

You're building your life. You might be building it with wood, hay, and straw, which is perishable stuff. That's if you're living a carnal life.

You know, if you're living a worldly life, you're not building a spiritual building. But if you build with gold, silver, precious stones, that's because you're following Jesus and you're meditating on the Word of God and you're doing the work of God. And this is usually taught as an individual growth kind of thing.

When you're converted, the foundation of Jesus is in your life. You'll never lose it. You may lose things, but you'll be saved yet is by fire if you lose everything.

That's because they say your works will be tested on the day of judgment. If you're a Christian and all your works are bad, you'll go to heaven, but with nothing else. Your works will perish.

If you are doing the right thing in your Christian life, you'll have an enduring reward in heaven. Now, this is not what Paul's talking about. There may be truth or not in that idea.

It's not Paul's idea here. Paul's talking about the church corporately is the field. The church corporately is the building.

Paul planted the church. He laid the foundation of the church. Others nurture that field or add to that building.

And those who do are the preachers and the teachers who come in and build it up like Apollos did. After Paul left, others come and they will add to it. They'll water those seeds more too, and they'll also build on that building too.

But they better be careful how they build. And I don't know, but this might be a slight backhanded thing about Apollos too. He says if they build with gold, silver, and precious stones, when their work is tested by fire, it'll be fine.

But if they're building the church with wood, hay, and stubble, then when that church is tested by fire, it won't be fine. They may be saved. No question.

Apollos is a saved individual. But if he's not building the church with the right kind of materials, there may be nothing left when it's tested. Now the fire, we might think of it as the day of judgment, but Paul doesn't say it is.

Christians are tried by fire in this life. And there are churches that build huge congregations with chaff by preaching, tickling people's ears, gathering people in who aren't really converted, but they like what they hear on a Sunday morning, self-help stuff. And they have these big mega churches that they build saying what people want to hear, but not what really converts people.

So they've got a building there. It looks like a good big building, very impressive. But when the tests of the church come, when persecution comes, when disasters come, these people bail like rats off a sinking ship because they never had any connection to Jesus anyway.

They came because the preaching tickled their ears and was what they wanted. But if you preach the gospel uncompromisingly and you teach people what it means to follow Christ, to be a disciple, you're not going to attract a lot of people who aren't interested. You're going to chase them off, more or less.

But the ones who are there are going to be solid. They're going to be gold and silver and precious stones. The fires of trials will just improve them.

They'll just be improved by testing. But the man who builds a church by pleasing crowds, by giving them what they want to hear, may get a bunch of people in there who aren't even converted, but they don't even know they're not converted. He's not even teaching them what it means to be converted.

And he may not know they're not converted, and he may think he's a very successful pastor. But when the trials and persecution come, he may find he's standing there with an empty church because they've all burned up, not literally, but they've all bailed because they weren't ready for that fire. They weren't the right stuff.

You can build a church with the right stuff, which would be real converts, real disciples, or you can build it with people who are just, you know, kind of interested in spiritual things a bit. And this guy is fun to listen to, and there's good music and so forth. So you build a big group.

But if it's not made of solid converts, it's not a permanent work. Now, I'm going to skip over here to chapter 4, verse 4-1. Let a man so consider us, that is, Apollos and me.

He's still talking about Apollos and him. He says in verse 6, he makes it clear he's still talking about Apollos and him. He said, let a man so consider us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

So we've been given a ministry of the Word of God. We're stewards of that. Apollos and I are, and we're servants.

We're not bosses. We're not bigwigs. We're not the people that you are of.

We are simply servants of God, who you are of. Moreover, it's required in stewards that they be found faithful. He says, with me it's a small thing that I should be judged of you.

Which indicates that he senses that he is being judged by them. He doesn't think that they're as impressed with him. And he says, that's no big deal.

I don't care if I'm judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I don't even judge myself, ultimately. Later he does say we should judge ourselves, but he means it differently.

In chapter 11 when he says, if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. In fact, when we're judged, we're chastened by the Lord, so we won't be condemned of the world. He's talking about you need to look at your own behavior and see if you're doing something wrong here.

You need to judge yourself and correct yourself and repent. Here he's saying, when it comes to my self-esteem and what I think about whether I'm valuable to God or not. I'm

not going to make that judgment.

I'll let God make that judgment. I'm not the one who has the competence to that. He says, for I know nothing against myself, yet I'm not justified by this.

So I can't think of anything I'm doing wrong, but I might be doing something wrong. It doesn't justify me just because I can't think of what I'm doing wrong. He who judges me is the Lord.

Therefore, he says, judge nothing before the time until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the heart. Then, of course, he does talk there about he kind of summarized that whole thing with the Apollo thing. But then he kind of rebukes the church for being so worldly and being interested in worldly things.

He says in verse eight, you're already full. You're already rich. You've reigned as kings without us.

Now, I know preachers who say we should do that. I know preachers say we're king's kids. We should live like king's kids.

We shouldn't be living humble, poor lives. We should be glorifying God by showing the world how well he treats his kids. We should be driving the best cars, wearing the best watches, the best rings, the best clothes, the best houses.

I mean, there's preachers who say that you should be rich. You're a king's kid. You should be reigning on Earth.

And I've heard lots of preachers preach that they're the wrong kind of preachers. But Paul says he's scolding him. You're already full.

You're already rich. You're reigning on Earth already. And there's a bit premature, man.

So I wish you were reigning literally because I'd be reigning with you then, too. But I'm not because it's not time for that. We are the king's kids, but the king is at war.

His kids are in the trenches. They're not in the palace. When the war is over, we'll go live in our palace, but not now.

You're jumping ahead of the game here. You're already rich? I don't get it. How'd that happen? How are you reigning already? I'm not reigning.

How come you are? So I wish you were legitimately because I'd be reigning with you. For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last as men condemned to death. For we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. A little sarcastic, he means this. We are weak, but you are strong.

You are distinguished, but we are dishonored. To the present hour, we both hunger and thirst, etc., etc. I'm not going to go further, but he makes it very clear that his lifestyle is what he believes is normative.

In fact, then he says after this, be imitators of me. You are not imitating me. You're living like worldly people, just like the worldly neighbors.

You want all this in heaven too? I don't have these things. Be like me, he says. Because I'm your father in the faith, imitate your father.

You have 10,000 instructors, he said in verse 14. But only one father in Christ, I've begotten you through the gospel. Now of course, some people say, didn't, didn't, uh, they says, therefore, brethren, imitate me.

Like a child imitates, so he says, imitate me. Didn't Jesus say, don't let anyone call you father, or don't call yourself father? Yeah, but I mean, Jesus is talking differently to that. When I talk to my Catholic friend on the air, Tom from Monterey, he always says, well, you object to us calling the priest father, but, you know, Paul said he's their father, and don't you call your own dad father? You know, I say, yeah, but there's a difference.

If someone really is your father, calling them father is appropriate. Your priest is not your father. Now, if he led you to the Lord, then he is your father in the Lord, like Paul was to the Corinthians.

But most people who go to the Catholic Church didn't become converted by the priest of the parish. And if they, if they go to another parish, where they didn't even know the priest and call him father, he didn't lead them to the Lord. Paul is saying, I have actually fathered you through Christ in the gospel.

He's not saying, call me father, because I get off on those honorific terms like father. But I'm just telling you, I'm your, literally, I'm your spiritual father. I led you to the Lord, and you know that.

So imitate me. Now, chapter 5, as I said, is about the sin of the man, labor of his father, father's wife. The only thing I want to say about this is that this is a classic passage on church discipline.

Paul makes it very clear that the church is not to be a den of thieves or a den of fornicators or a shelter for the wicked. Now, some people say, but the church, isn't it a hospital? And shouldn't everyone, you know, all the people who are spiritually sick, shouldn't they be there? It's a hospital. No, the church is not primarily a hospital.

The church might be an orphanage for baby Christians who need to be fed. It may be an army of soldiers who need to be taught how to wage the war. It may be a school where, you know, believers are learning the ways of God.

It's not supposed to be full of cripples. It's not supposed to be full of people who don't have any morality. It's, the church is a fellowship of believers, and believers are those who have repented and renounced their sin.

It doesn't mean they never fall into sin, but they've renounced their sin. They're not, they don't agree with their sin. Christians sometimes are known to sin, but they don't justify it.

They don't say, oh, well, nobody's perfect. Well, it may be that nobody's perfect, but you don't talk that way if you're a Christian, because you want to be perfect. If you're a Christian, you want to be perfect.

You know you're not. But when you're not, you don't say, oh, well, no big deal. It is a big deal.

If you sin, that's a big deal. When you have unbelievers in the church, they don't care if they sin, but the church is not a haven for unbelievers. Evangelism of unbelievers took place in the early church out in the unbelievers' yard, in their territory, out where they were.

The church was a gathering of the people of God. They got together to edify one another with their gifts and to be built up. The church is an alternative society.

It's not made up of just a cross-section of all the sinners in town, although modern churches often are and often welcome that. In fact, they're so accustomed to having unconverted people that they often, many churches, just preach the gospel and try to convert the people in the congregation. I grew up in a Baptist church, and it could have been any other evangelical church.

It would have been often true. They didn't teach us how to be disciples of Jesus. They assumed that everyone in the church, or at least many people in the church, needed to get saved.

Every sermon was an evangelistic sermon. Every church entered with an altar call. Why? Because they assumed that the people there are not Christians.

They knew some of them were, but they assumed there must be some significant number who are not. The early church assumed that those who were with them were Christians because that's what the church was, the body of Christ, the family of God. They didn't have to be evangelized in the church.

They didn't come to church unless they were already evangelized and baptized. So, here's a church that's supposed to be made up of followers of Jesus, and this guy is no follower of Jesus. We have to assume that he was confronted prior to this without repentance because in Titus chapter 3, Paul says, those who are unruly, after one or two warnings, be done with them.

Jesus said, if your brother sins, go to him privately. If he doesn't repent, then go with two. If it doesn't work, then take him before the church.

After that, he's like a pagan. He's out. If people who call themselves Christians are allowed to live in fornication and sin, it's simply thumbing your nose at Jesus.

You're saying, I'm wearing the name of Jesus, but my life means I'm taking his name in vain. I wear his name, but I'm not really a follower of his. It's an empty claim to be a Christian, and if you're going to be no Christian, don't call yourself a Christian because it only besmirches Jesus.

And that's what the church has been often doing. They like bodies. They like when they pass the bag that it goes by quite a few wallets, and I don't mean to be overly cynical, but I've been in church all my life.

Churches, many churches, and frankly, there's not very many pastors I know that would say, hey, if you're not interested in serving Jesus, go out. This is a meeting for people who love Jesus. We're here to talk about Christ.

We're here to follow Jesus. I mean, I'm not saying you can actually monitor that might be a good thing to do. So I put Jesus did in John six.

You know, you just came for the food. Get out of here. You don't want to chomp on my flesh and drink my blood, you know.

So, I mean, churches are not for unrepentant sinners, and I've heard pastors say, well, if we just if we discipline sinners, our churches will be empty because we're all sinners. That pastor should find another job. He doesn't know what repentance is.

We're all sinners, but real Christians repent. We're repentant sinners. We're imperfect.

And so we sometimes say, but when we do, we repent. That's that's the nature of having a new heart. That's the nature of being born again.

Having a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone, having the laws of God written in our hearts. We want to obey God. We don't because of weakness, the flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.

And these we don't do what we want to do. But when we don't do it, we repent of it. If you have somebody who's living in sin and confronted, they don't want to repent.

Then they don't have one of those hearts. They aren't born again. They don't belong there.

They're not part of this family. They can become part of the family. But as long as they're unrepentant, they're not.

And yeah, everyone in the church, you can find some sin in the life they've done. But if there are Christians, they've repented of it. So you find someone who's living in fornication, living in drunkenness, living in just, you know, theft.

You know, they're stealing from people or whatever. And they're not repenting. Well, they're not what we call a Christian.

A Christian might steal or fall into a sin on one occasion or another. But that's not how they live. That's not what they approve of.

And this guy, obviously, had been given other chances, and he hadn't agreed, and so Paul said he gave up. Now, Paul, in this context, says a little leaven leavens the whole lump. This is part of the justification for church discipline.

You allow some compromise from some unrepentant sinner of the church, and other people say, Well, if he can do it, I can do it. You know, I guess if that's okay. You know, that's the problem with having compromise in the church.

There's always people who really want to be a Christian, but they kind of look over and say, I guess Christians can do that too. Well, I kind of want to do that. I kind of like doing that.

And then it spreads like a cancer in the body of Christ. Paul says, of course, he tells them, deliver that person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of Christ Jesus. What does that mean? It means removing from the church, which is Paul perceives to be a place of some measure of protection from Satan's kingdom outside.

You flee from Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of God and become part of the church. You have the fellowship of the saints. You've got the oversight.

You've got exhortation. When you're drifting away, you've got people who pray for you. There's a spiritual covering of some kind there for you.

And if you're thrown out of that, you let the devil at you. We're not going to stop him. And then when you get beat up, maybe you'll repent and come back and your spirit will be saved in the day of Jesus Christ.

This is disciplinary. It's not hatred. It's not anger.

It's it's discipline. You're a disobedient person. You claim to be a Christian.

Well, I don't know if you are not. We'll find out if you're a child of God, you'll get disciplined and you come back, you know, but. And so Paul actually ends up at the end of the chapter saying, put away from yourself that evil person.

That's what church discipline is. Now, of course, every every church that discipline someone hopes that they'll repent and come back, but they're not going to compromise. They say, oh, you can be here even if you don't repent.

No, you can't be a Christian if you don't repent and you're not part of this family. If you're not a Christian, you know, you can be a very, very imperfect Christian. But if you're not a Christian, you don't belong in this family.

Now, Chapter six, of course, he's talking. He's rebuking them for going before courts. Christians should not take each other to court.

Now, of course, what about a corporation? What if you're part of a class action suit or what if you're suing a corporation? Judy, Paul doesn't discuss that. What Paul's concern mainly about is that Christians do not put their own interests, including financial interests or well-being above that of other Christians in the church. There may be reasons to or not to become involved in a lawsuit that's not personal.

You know, you know, there may be there may be something to be said for suing a corporation that if you win, you'll save a whole bunch of people from being wronged by them, too. You know, there's it's Paul's not talking about these big kind of issues. We would have to if we're in one of those issues have to decide whether how that applies.

But but in the case where somebody wronged you. And you can either turn the other cheek and let it go or you can take him to court. And if they knocked your eye out, they get their eye knocked out.

They knocked out your tooth. They get their tooth knocked out. That's justice.

But as a Christian, do you really want to do that as a Christian? I was listening to somebody on the radio today and a preacher and he was talking about how, you know, we're not supposed to avenge ourselves. But let God avenge us. And he made jokes that but we really want God to avenge him hard.

You know, I think, really, is that how you feel that I've had people terrible things to me, terrible betrayals, terrible damage to my ministry. I've never once wished to harm on them. But I guess that maybe that's how I'm a Christian.

You know, when you're a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit and Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is love. But I'm always surprised you could say, you know, I wish I could

retaliate against that person. I mean, really, why do you, you know, you're not perfect.

Why do you feel like you can judge that person that way? You know, I mean, I don't understand it. I can't imagine taking a Christian to court. I had a wife was killed in an accident.

And it was very much the fault of the person who owned the truck. And a lot of Christians are used to sue him. This is a wrongful death thing.

You probably get a million bucks, probably more than that now. But this was back in 1980. I'm not going to sue the guy.

I didn't even know if he was a Christian. It turns out the guy was a Christian, the owner of the truck. He wasn't driving it, but the owner was.

And he'd be the guy liable. I'm glad I didn't sue him. But I mean, I didn't know if he was a Christian.

I just thought, I don't wish harm on this person. It's not like he did that on purpose. You know, I don't understand wanting to take somebody to court and retaliate.

And Paul says, why don't you just let yourself be defrauded? Isn't that the same thing as turning the other cheek? Isn't that what Jesus said? Why do you have to get vengeance? Leave that to God. That's what Paul says in Romans 12. Brethren, do not avenge yourself.

Leave that to God. God said, I will avenge. Therefore, if your enemy hungers, give him food.

If your enemy's thirsty, give him drink. This is Paul's applying that teaching. It's a teaching of Christ, but he's applying it here to the court case.

So if you got to get this settled, if this is something that can't just blow over, go before a wise Christian. Let them make the decision. Don't go before the pagans over it.

And then, of course, that business about the eating meat and fornication not being the same thing, that's what the second half of chapter 6 is about. I've already talked about that in the first part. Chapter 7, he talks about things they've asked him about.

They apparently asked him if it's better to stay single or to get married. And Paul was single, so they might have thought, well, Paul must think being single is the right way to go. And Paul said, well, I'd love it if everyone could be single like me and, you know, be as free as I am from all, you know, family constraints.

You could just serve God with your whole heart. He actually says that a man who's single can just serve God with all his time, all his energy. Where he says a man who's married,

he's got to be concerned about some of the things of the world, how he can please his wife.

And he says the same reverse. A woman who's a virgin can give herself wholly to God, serve him all the time. But if she's married, she has to be concerned about things of the world, how she can please her husband.

So Paul says marriage is complicated, obviously. And if you have children, it gets even more complicated, but that's a good thing. And he says, I would like it if everyone could be like me, but that's not really everyone's gift.

He says one man has this gift, one has another. By that he means God gives some people the gift of a marriage and other people a gift of not being married. There's advantages in both, different advantages.

But he says, but to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband. So even though he says, I kind of, I lean toward the singleness as a really, you know, logistically a great thing for those who are in ministry. But frankly, I also know there's something realistic here.

There's a thing called fornication, there's temptation to avoid fornication is to let everyone have the spouse. Now, he says, I say this by concession, but not as but not as a command. So he just leaves it up as, you know, there's wisdom in being single.

If you want to be unencumbered, there's also wisdom in being married. If you want to be, you know, not falling to temptation and then even talk about married people. If you are married, don't deprive each other of this because less the devil tempt you for that.

And it's you, the husband and wife get married to each other for more than one reason. But one of the reasons God has is so that they can have a sexual union that can remain within their, in their relationship and not be tempted with stuff outside. He says, even in the relationship, don't neglect this better sex because by being married, you're protecting your spouse from temptations outside.

If you don't have a warm, physical, intimate relationship, you're not protecting them and they may fall because of their weakness, he says. Now, he also talks about divorce in chapter in verse 10. He talks about to the married I command yet not I but the Lord.

He says, don't get divorced. If you're if you're separated, don't get remarried. Stay single.

But then he says in verse to the rest, I not the Lord speak and he gives different instructions. Now, what's the difference between to the married? I speak yet not I, but the Lord, but to the rest. Who's the rest? The unmarried? No.

He's talking about the rest are Christians, married to non-Christians. I mean, that's the scenario. He says to the rest.

I speak this. If a brother is married to an unbeliever, if you have a husband or wife that's unbelieving, then don't divorce him. But if they want a divorce and won't stay with you, let him go.

You're not under bondage. Now, what's interesting there is the to the rest. The first group is the married.

The second is the rest. But the rest are married to the rest are Christians, very denounced. Who are the first group of married that Christians married to Christians? The assumption is that Christians will not be unequally yoked.

Therefore, most Christians be married to Christians. And that's the married. He's talking to don't leave your spouse.

If you leave, be reconciled or remain single. But there's others. There's Christians who got saved after they were married to unbelievers, got married, one of them got saved.

The other one didn't. So they think, well, should we divorce our, our unsaved spouse? No, don't do that. Stay with them as long as they want.

If they don't want to be there, then you can be out of it. Now, he says about the first group, I don't say this. The Lord says this.

And what he means is this is not originated with me. Jesus said this. This is what Jesus taught.

But the second group, he says, now, Jesus didn't say anything about this group because Jesus never talked to people who were in mixed faith marriages. See, all his audience were Jews married to Jews. He never addressed anyone who was married to pagans.

So he says, now, the rest of you, Paul did what Jesus didn't do. He left Israel and preached among the Gentiles. And because there were marriages where one partner would get saved, and now there's a situation Jesus never addressed because he never confronted it.

A pagan married to a believer. So now Jesus didn't say this. So I have to give my, I'll give it.

You know, stay together as long as you can. If they leave, that's gone. But he's making it very clear that the instructions Jesus gave were to people married within the faith to the same faith person.

That is what Jesus said about divorce would apply if you're a Christian married to a

Christian. But if you're a Christian married to a non-Christian, then what Paul said about it here addresses that which Jesus' words do not apply to. That's what he's saying.

Then he goes on and talks about, you know, different scenarios. But basically, his teaching in chapter seven is it's great to be single if you can handle it, if you can contain yourself. If you can't contain yourself, it's better to marry than to burn, he said, which apparently means to burn with unfulfilled lust.

So instead of always being distracted by sexual temptation as a single person, find a good wife, get married to avoid fornication, let everyone have their own husband or wife. But if you can handle it without it, more power to you. Paul could handle being single.

And if you can handle it, stay single, he said, because then you're unencumbered. Now, chapters eight through ten are one discussion. It's about meat sacrifice to idols.

Now, here's what they were facing. In the pagan world, there were lots of temples to false gods. These temples, like the Jewish temple, featured animal sacrifices.

And animal sacrifices involved burning part of an animal to the deity and then having a feast with the rest of the animal. That was true of the Jewish sacrifices too, in Jerusalem. But in the pagan world, they'd offer sacrifices to a demon, and then the extra meat that wasn't burned was sold in the marketplace to make money for the temple, or they'd just have a public feast with it.

Now, as a very normal part of the Greek culture to be participating in these idol feasts, they were big social events. They were held at the temple of the idol. And the meat that was served was remnants of the animals that had been sacrificed to the demon gods.

And even if you bought meat in the regular meat market, you weren't always sure if that was a remnant of an animal that was offered to a pagan god or not. Now, because of that, the Jews simply often would not—they either would not buy meat in pagan lands, they'd be vegetarian, or they'd have their own kosher Jewish butchers that they'd use. But the Corinthians, who were not Jews, were saying, okay, we're not idolaters anymore.

But Paul said all things are lawful when it comes to food, so it's okay for us to go to these idolatrous feasts and eat meat. We're not worshipping the others, we're just eating. Is that a bad thing? And Paul, in chapters 8, 9, and 10, basically says this.

God doesn't care what you eat. An idol isn't anything at all. Meat sacrificed to idols is not magically corrupted.

It's just a superstition, and you don't have to worry about that superstition. But many people do. Many people take that seriously.

Many people see you eating meat sacrificed to idols, and they'll see you as an idolater.

Jews, for example, would. And perhaps even some pagans would misinterpret it.

So he said, it doesn't matter if you eat meat sacrificed to idols, but it matters if it's going to stumble your brother. You might have somebody in your church who's really struggling with his temptation to go back to idol stuff, and he stays away from the idol temples, but then he sees you going to the feasts there, and you've got a clear conscience about it because you're not tempted with idolatry. But he is tempted, and he kind of follows your example, moves back in, and then he stumbles and falls, and you've destroyed your brother for whom Christ died, he said, which is a disproof of limited atonement.

You destroy a brother for whom Christ died, and that's what he says at the end of chapter 8. In chapter 9, he says, follow my example about this. I have lots of rights to do things that I don't do. I have the right to be married and take a wife with me.

I have a right to eat and drink what I want. I have the right to be paid for the ministry. He said other apostles do some of those things, but I don't because I don't want to become a stumbling block.

I don't want to prevent the gospel from being readily received, so I don't do these things, though I have the right to. And what he's saying is be like me. You have the right to eat meat, sacrifice idols, but maybe you shouldn't if it's going to hinder the gospel.

That's what he says. That's what he's saying in chapter 9, and it continues in chapter 10 the same way. And in fact, he says, you know, even though eating meat, sacrifice idols itself is not a bad thing.

For example, he says, if you go to someone's house and they serve you meat and you don't know if it's sacrificed, just eat it. Don't worry about it. It might be, it might not be.

Don't worry. But if they say it was, then don't eat it because they think that should be important to you. They think more of it than you do.

And if you eat it, it could communicate something to them that you don't want to communicate. So, I mean, if they make an issue of it, you make an issue of it. If they don't, you don't.

It doesn't matter to God. But in chapter 10, he says, if you actually go to the idolatrous feast, you're eating at the devil's temple. He says in chapter 10, verse 10, he says, don't you know that the things that the heathens offer, they offer not to God but to demons? Actually, it's not verse 10, it's verse 20, I think it is.

Yeah. He said in verse 20 of chapter 10, rather, the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I don't want you to have fellowship with demons.

You can't drink the cup of the Lord in the cup of demons. You can't partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? What he's saying is when we take communion, it's a fellowship meal.

We're fellowshiping over our common faith. If you go to the pagan temple and fellowship with the pagans in their temple over their common faith, you know, that's, you can't do both of those things. You can't be joined in fellowship with demons and with Jesus too.

So, although there's nothing magically or superstitiously dangerous about eating meat that was sacrificed, if you bought it in a store or some service, but if you go to the temple, that's really, that's beyond the pale. You shouldn't be doing that. That's the wrong thing to do.

Now, in chapter 11, he's got two issues he deals with briefly. Apparently, some of the women in the church were casting off the local custom in the Greek world, where pious women would wear a head covering and long hair, uncut hair and a head covering when they prayed and prophesied, or when they were doing pious things going to church. Men did not do that.

Men didn't wear long hair. Men didn't cover their heads when they prayed. This is all Greek custom.

And because some of these Corinthians were feeling their liberty, some of the women say, I don't need to, I don't need to wear a covering anymore. And Paul says, well, again, it's the same issue with the meat sacrifice. You're going to give the wrong message to people.

It's like a woman saying, I don't need to wear a wedding ring just because I'm married. Well, you don't have to, but you might communicate something to people that you're not really wanting to communicate. A woman with her head uncovered would be communicating something by that act of rebellion against custom.

And Paul says, if she's not going to wear a covering, might as well just shave her head too, which is apparently what the prostitutes did. Prostitutes had their heads shaved to be immediately recognizable by the sailors when they came to town. So you might as well just go all the way.

I mean, he's really talking about decorum and not giving the wrong message. We could say the same thing about certain ways people dress. You know, some men, especially some women, dress in ways that they're advertising something that they don't think is really for sale.

But onlookers don't know they're communicating by what they wear. Messages that aren't really the messages they want to communicate, but people are reading it that

way. And so he says, no, you women keep wearing those head covers and so forth.

But in verse 16 of chapter 11, he says, but if anyone seems contentious or they don't, you know, they want to fight about this. He says, we don't have this custom. We don't have such customs like this, nor do the churches of Christ.

Now, he's saying this is a local custom I'm advising you to observe. But we don't have that custom. Who's we? Well, he said we or the churches of Christ.

The other churches in other cultures that don't have the head covering thing in their culture, they're not doing it. And certainly the Jewish people didn't. Paul covered his head.

Jews did. Jewish men covered their heads when they prayed. But Greeks would have been inappropriate.

Paul even grew his hair long. We don't know how long he grew up, but he took a Nazareth vow. You don't cut your hair when you have a Nazareth vow.

And it was not a shame for a man to have long hair in the Jewish culture. If men had long hair, he was probably a Nazareth, like John the Baptist or Samuel or Samson or any number of people like Paul who took a Nazareth vow. They'd grow their hair during the vow.

So having the long hair was not a shame everywhere, but it was in Corinth. It was like a man adopting a female style. It's like a man wearing a dress today in our society.

Now, if dress has become the common unisex style for everyone a generation or two from now, like pants are for women now, well, then it's not distinctive sexual. You know, it's not cross-dressing. Women who wear pants are sometimes criticized in old fashioned churches.

They say, oh, women shouldn't wear what pertains to a man. Well, you're right. A woman shouldn't wear what pertains to a man.

But do pants really pertain to man anymore? At one time, perhaps they did. But that was a long time ago. And most women's pants, no man would be caught dead in them, unless he's a trans.

You know, I mean, a lot of women's pants styles are not the same as men's pants styles. But there was a time when pants were a male thing and dresses were a female thing. That was a long time ago.

The culture is different. God doesn't dictate cultural dress. He just says, whatever culture you're in, don't wear the style of the other side.

And if a generation or two from now, wearing dresses is everybody's style, men and women, just like pants are now, then wearing a dress for a man wouldn't be the same issue. But it is an issue now because wearing a dress is a distinctively female style. Even though some men put them on, it's still recognized as female style.

So, I mean, there are, you're not supposed to cross dress. Drag queens are in flagrant violation of this, but so are transsexuals and a number of other people who are deliberately trying to identify as the opposite sex. And Paul's saying that's an abomination.

In Corinth, if a man grew his hair long, that was so much against the customs, that was a woman's hair length. But in many countries, long hair on men was not strange throughout history, even among the Jews. So, Paul is giving instructions and he says, I'm advising you to not stumble people, not give their own message, comply with the local customs, but if anyone's really having a hard time with this, wants to contend about it, that's not a universal custom.

We're not going to start a war over this. You're not going to be excommunicated for it. Like if you live with your father's wife, you'll be excommunicated.

If you're a woman who doesn't wear a head covering, we're not going to excommunicate you over that. It's just a custom. We don't have that custom, but your town does.

And therefore, it might be misunderstood if you do the wrong thing. Now, the other part of this chapter is about the Lord's Supper. The one thing we can get about this that's so valuable to us is we can see the Lord's Supper was not a ritual that they tagged on to a church service where everyone's sitting in pews looking forward and the ushers passed out little thimbles of wine or grape juice and a little bit of a cracker.

It was a meal. We know this from this passage. We know it from the early church fathers.

The church fathers testify, many of them do, that the church regularly had a meal called the agape feast. And at the agape feast, they would take bread and wine and commemorate the body and blood of Jesus. But it was only part of the feast.

It was at a table full of food. It wasn't just something that was symbolically taken as a ritual that didn't really, no one was really going to satisfy any hunger by it or thirst. It was just ritual as it is today, but not then.

Back then, they drank, even when Jesus set it up, as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show forth the Lord's death. What cup? The Passover. That bread was part of a full meal.

The cup was part of a full meal. It was not taking a little symbolic sip of a drip and a crumb. It was a meal, a fellowship meal.

And the early Christians had this agape feast regularly, and they took this, what they called the Eucharist at it, which is the Lord's Supper. Now we see that in Paul, not just the church fathers, but also in Paul, because Paul said, you guys are not being very considerate. In fact, what you're doing shouldn't even be called the Lord's Supper.

He says, when you come together, that's not the Lord's Supper that you're doing. And that's something else, because everyone's taking his own food first, and some are going away hungry, and others are going away drunk. Now, going away hungry is not supposed to happen if there's a meal in front of you.

And some are taking too much food, so there's not enough for everyone else. And too much wine makes them drunk. By the way, it means they weren't using grape juice.

You can drink a lot of grape juice without getting drunk. But they were using wine, and some were going home drunk. Some were taking too much, some were getting this.

He said, this is not Christian. This is just you indulging your appetite. He says, I want to remind you how Jesus did.

Jesus said, when he was at, he said, he took bread, and he gave it, and he said, take, eat, and he took the bread, take and drink. He didn't say, give me mine. He says, here, let me give you some.

Let me break some bread, see that you get some here. You take and eat. You take and drink.

That's what Jesus did. You're saying, here, give me, give me. It's the opposite.

He says, the way you are doing this is such a shame that God is disciplining the church. He said, some of you have gotten sick. Some have even died.

And he said, this is the discipline of the Lord on the church for the desecration of your love feast. He says, if we would judge ourselves, if we would look at our behavior and say, hey, that's wrong. I'm not going to do that anymore.

Then we wouldn't be judged. But when we are judged, as they were being, because some were sick and died, when we are judged, we're being chastened by the Lord that we might not be condemned with the world. So he's saying, this church has actually lost some members, and some are sick and on their way out, as a discipline from God, a judgment on them, so they'll repent because of what they were doing here.

Okay, now, chapters 12 through 14, real quick. These are about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He begins in chapter 12 saying, you know, when you were pagans, you served dumb idols.

Your gods didn't talk. You didn't have living gods who talked. They didn't communicate.

They were dumb, mute idols. But that's not the truth anymore. You now worship a God who does communicate, sometimes through prophetic words.

But I want you to know that every prophet who says Jesus is Lord is speaking by the Holy Spirit. Every spirit that's, or prophetic utterance says Jesus is accursed is not from the Holy Spirit. He says there's several different ways that God gifts people to communicate with the body of Christ.

There's the word of wisdom. There's word of knowledge. There's faith.

There's the working of miracles. There's gifts of healings. There's prophecy.

There's discerning of spirits, which is a strange translation. It should be translated, there's judging of spirits. And spirits means prophetic utterances.

There's people who prophesy and there's who judge prophetic utterances. There's tongues and there's the interpretation of tongues. See, some of these gifts have companion gifts.

There's a gift of prophecy. The next thing I mentioned is those who judge prophecies. And actually two chapters later he says, let the prophets speak two or three and let the others judge.

These prophecies have to be judged. That's why some have the gift of prophesying, some have the gift of judging it. Some have the gift of tongues, some have the gift of interpreting tongues.

These are just different kinds of gifts. He gives nine in this, but it's not the whole number. In fact, in Romans 12 he gives another set of lists.

There's seven gifts there, only prophecies on both lists. The other one has things like teaching, exhortation, leading, helping, giving. There's another one I'm forgetting, but there's seven in the other list.

But neither list is comprehensive. These are just samples. There's this kind of stuff are the gifts that God gives the church.

And he says he doesn't give everyone the same gift. This is where Paul for the first time introduces the concept of the body of Christ. It's in the context of gifts.

He says eyes and hands don't do the same things. Because the eye is not of the hand, it doesn't do the same thing as the hand. He's not of the same body.

Yes, he's of the same body. The head can't say to the feet, I have no need of you. Why? Even though the head is very different than feet, it does different things.

It's still the same body. So Paul's saying unity does not require uniformity. We are one body, that's unity.

We have different functions, that's non-uniformity. We're not uniform, we're different. We have different gifts.

And, you know, these differences are not disunity. They can be done for the benefit of the whole body. And Paul's advice is that that's what they do.

In the middle of that discussion, he has that famous chapter 13 about love. And starts out by talking about gifts. If I have gifts, if I can speak in tongues, if I don't have love, I'm just making noise.

If I can prophesy, if I can move mountains with my faith, but don't have love, I'm nothing. Love is the thing. Love is more important than how many gifts you have.

It's how loving are you and how much is love governing the way you use your gift. Are you using your gift to make a name for yourself, to get notoriety, to shout people down and get all the attention? Are you using your gift to serve the needs of the body of Christ? If so, he says in chapter 14, what you need to do is make sure that only a few of you really get a chance to speak every time. Because too much is too much.

He said, let the prophets speak two or three, the others judge. And if someone judges there's something wrong with it, then he's got to stop talking. Because the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophets.

But he said, speak in tongues two or three, one at a time, only if there's interpretation. You never find churches that follow this, unfortunately. But that's what he said to kind of reign it in.

They were a little wild and unrestrained. And it meant that not everyone's going to speak. Not everyone's going to share.

There's going to be people who might have something they'd like to say, but they don't get to. Now, I wanted to see here. Chapter 14, he goes into some detail on prophecy in tongues and says that prophecy is more desirable than tongues, unless the tongue speaker interprets.

Because the important thing is that people need to be edified. And frankly, if you speak in tongues and don't translate, no one's going to be edified. He said you might edify yourself, which, by the way, is not wrong.

Edify means build yourself up. We're actually told to do that in the Bible. In Jude, verse 20 says, build yourselves up in the most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Paul used the term praying in the spirit for praying in tongues. So, Jude, it's not wrong to

build yourself up, edify yourself. But that's not what the church services for.

Paul says if there's no interpreter there, then just speak yourself into God. Don't get up and get people's attention. There's a limited number of minutes in our meetings.

We don't want to fill any of it with something that doesn't edify everyone. You don't just need to be edifying yourself all the time. Now, in verse 26 of chapter 14, this is often misunderstood.

First Corinthians 14, 26. How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

I have had many, many people say this is a normal church service. Everyone should have something to say. Everyone should have a hymn or a psalm or a tongue or an interpretation so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

That's not what Paul's saying. Paul doesn't say do this. He says how is it with you people? It's this way.

You all want to talk. Let me tell you how it should be. Everything that's done should be done to edify everybody.

The first part is not imperative. It is descriptive, not prescriptive. The descriptive thing, how is it, brethren? This is how it is.

When you come together, everyone wants to say something. Everyone has a psalm or hymn or interpretation they want to give. What you need to do is make sure that nothing happens except what edifies people.

That's going to mean you're not all going to share a tongue. You're not all going to share a revelation. You're not all going to get to talk.

We're going to have two or three of this, two or three of that. We're not going to let everyone speak. You just all want to.

But that's not how it should be. That won't be edifying everybody. Anyway, near the end of that chapter, he talks about women in the church.

And, of course, he says, let your women keep silent in the churches. It's not permitted for them to speak. Tells them if they want to ask anything, let them ask their husbands.

This, we have to understand, is, I believe, addressing, again, like most of the book, something that was going wrong in the church. He's trying to bring order where there's disorder. Apparently, there were women who wanted to ask questions.

And they wanted to ask them in the middle of the church. Now, it's not clear whether they were asked. You know, raise their hand.

Stop. Would you please explain that to me? And Paul says, listen, don't disrupt things. Just ask your husband at home.

Or some people say that the church met with the women on one side and the men on the other side. And the women were asking their husbands, hey, hey, what did you mean by that? You know, in the middle of the service. That would be really disruptive.

I don't know what way it was going on. But he was saying, listen, your women are causing a disturbance here. Here's how we fix it.

If they got questions, wait. Wait until it's all over. Wait till you're at home.

Talk to your husband. You can get it straightened out. Don't interrupt the church over it.

Now, the last chapter we need to deal with is chapter 15. And it's about the resurrection doctrine. And it's a very long chapter.

We don't need to spend a really long time on it. One of the basic doctrines of the church, of Christianity, is the resurrection of the dead. And by this, we don't mean the resurrection of Jesus, although that's obviously very basic too.

But the resurrection of the dead in general. In Hebrews chapter 6, it says the foundational things, the milk, that you don't want to lay the foundation over and over again. You don't want to move on from the milk to the meat.

He says, here's the foundation. Repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment. Those six things, these are the basic foundations of Christ.

It's a basic foundational doctrine that the dead will rise. This is something that we sometimes have lost sight of because people have been given the impression that when we die, we all go eternally to heaven or hell. As far as we know, nobody's going to be eternally in heaven.

The Bible never promises that. Paul did say that when I'm absent from the body, I'll be present with the Lord. That's in heaven.

But I'm not going to always be absent from the body. That's not permanent. At the last day, Jesus is going to come back.

He's going to raise the dead. He'll bring, it says in 1 Thessalonians 4, 14, he'll bring with him those who have died. And so when we die, we go to be with the Lord.

That is our spirit does. Our body doesn't. Our body is still in the ground.

You can prove that to yourself by digging up a grave anytime you want. There's no one. No bodies have gone to heaven there.

But the spirits of Christians have. But when Jesus comes back, he's going to raise the bodies, glorify the bodies, immortalize the bodies to live on a perfect heaven and new earth. And especially new earth, because earth is the habitation God made for people to rule.

And Jesus is going to rule the earth. The Bible indicates that, you know, the father said to Jesus, ask of me, I'll give you the nations for your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. That's the promise to Jesus.

And Jesus said, blessed are the meek. They'll inherit the earth. Paul said in Romans 4, 13, the promise that God made to Abraham and his seed that they would inherit the world was not on the basis of the law, but on the basis of faith.

So it's inherit the world in Revelation 5, 10, that the inhabitants of heaven say we shall reign on the earth. That's what God has in mind. That's what Adam and Eve were made to do, to have dominion and reign on the earth.

They sinned and interrupted that plan. Jesus came as a second Adam, redeemed that plan. And he, as the second Adam, and all of us who are in him are going to reign with him on the earth.

That's the plan. That's why, see, people say, why do we need a body if we've already gone to heaven? Why do we need those bodies? Because we're going to live on a physical planet. The bodies will be physical, like Jesus's physical body.

Paul said that he's going to change our vile body into the likeness of his glorious body. The body that Jesus had when he rose again is the prototype of the resurrection bodies all Christians will have. That's the doctrine.

It's throughout the scripture. Christians often have not been taught that apparently because I've met Christians say, well, we're going to have our bodies again? I thought we were just going to go to heaven. No, that's not what the Bible teaches.

But Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 says there's some people in Corinth, Greeks, of course, they have a problem with the idea of physical resurrection because the body's bad and the spirit's good. And we know that that was a big problem for Greeks. But Paul says, now there's some people among you who are saying there's no resurrection of the dead.

But do you remember how I preached the gospel to you? I said that Jesus died for our sins according to scriptures. He was buried. Did he rose again on the third day according

to the scriptures? And he was seen after that by Peter and by the twelve and even by me eventually, he says.

He says, now, if it is preached and you receive the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, how can anyone say there's no resurrection of the dead? So that's his argument. His argument is I don't have to prove the resurrection. You already accept it as in the case of Christ.

You're just failing to make the connection. He's not the only one. He's the first fruits of a general harvest.

He's the first born from the dead. That's what the Bible calls him. Jesus rose from the dead.

You already accept that. So you should have no barriers to accepting the resurrection of the rest of us from the dead. And yet it was in conflict with Greek philosophy, but it was a very basic Christian teaching.

Now, Paul does address some of the questions they have about it, like what kind of bodies will we have in the resurrection? He basically says, you fool, you know, the body that we'll have isn't going to be the same as this one. It's going to be different, different ways. We don't know how.

So when you plant a seed, you can't guess what the plants will look like for that seed. Unless you're already familiar with the plant, of course. But if you're not, you see a seed, you'd never be able to guess what that's going to look like when it grows.

You plant it in the ground, it comes up with whatever body God gives it. It could be wheat or some other plant, he said. He said like the celestial bodies, there's different bodies in the heavens.

Some brighter, some have more glory than others. The glory of one is brighter than the glory of another. Our bodies too, they're going to be glorified, but not all the same probably.

We don't know. Basically, it's a foolish thing to ask. We don't know.

We just know that it's going to happen. He said, if it's not going to happen, then why do I live the way I do? He said, why do I wrestle wild beasts in Ephesus if there's no resurrection of the dead? Why do I face death every day if there's no resurrection of the dead? He said, if there's no resurrection of the dead, we're of all men most miserable. And so he rebukes them for listening to bad philosophers who are contradicting Christian doctrine.

But that's a very long chapter. It's the most complete chapter in the Bible on the

resurrection of the dead. So Paul then has addressed all the issues they wrote to him about.