

1 Corinthians Chapter 16 v 13 & 14

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[0 : 00] chapter 15. In fact, tonight, God willing, is our last sermon in the series on 1 Corinthians. But we're going to look at just some verses together to consider the Lord Jesus Christ as we come to worship him. So 1 Corinthians 15, if you've got the church Bible, that's page 1156.

Page 1156. And we're going to read from verses 20 to 28. Verses 20 to 28, which centre our thoughts particularly on the Lord Jesus, his resurrection and his coming again.

Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who've fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive, but each in turn. Christ the firstfruits, then when he comes those who belong to him, then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for he has put everything under his feet. Now when it says that everything has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

When he had done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him, who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. The glorious truth is that this evening, our Lord Jesus Christ, as we read there, is ruling and reigning in authority and power. And we know the day is coming when he shall return, when he shall return and every knee shall bow and confess that he is Lord.

[2 : 11] And that's our first hymn, it's number 304 in our hymn books. At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow. We have this wonderful, glorious goal, hope Christ will come again.

304, let's stand as we sing. Let's come in that wonderful name of Jesus. Let us come to God in prayer. We thank you, O Lord our God, our gracious Father in heaven, that there is no name so marvelous, so delightful to us, your children, than the name of our great elder brother, your true son, your one and only begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ. For Jesus is to us a name so dear.

It speaks of his love that speaks of his love that brought him from heaven to earth. It speaks of his commitment to us and our salvation that it took him to the cross to suffer and die in our place.

And that name of Jesus is the name which is to us the name of power, the power over death, over hell, over sin. That name which is above every name.

For he is the one who rules and reigns over all, not only rising from the dead, but ascending to your right hand, seated upon his throne, seated there in glory and majesty and might, just as he read, bringing all his enemies under his feet, bringing them to submission, bringing them to defeat, bringing them to that place where they acknowledge him as he truly is.

[3 : 52] We thank you, O Lord, that we once were enemies of God. We once were at enmity with you in our minds by our sinful behavior and attitudes. We once walked the other way.

We once, Lord, were far from you and cut off from you by our own wickedness and selfishness and sin. And yet, Lord Jesus, what have you done? You've brought us to that place where we gladly kneel at your feet and gladly acknowledge you as our Savior and our Lord and our God.

We are, Lord, brought and have been brought into that friendship with you. We have made peace with God. We thank you for that peace that exists so that we can come to you in prayer and bring all our needs and concerns, all our anxieties and fears.

We thank you, O Lord, our God, that you are the one who is with us and for us and will never leave us nor forsake us. Help us even this evening, O Lord, we pray as we study your word, as we bring our worship and prayer, as we hear your word read, we ask that in all things that we might know that we are in the very presence of the living God.

Come, Lord, and bless us and do us good. Even if that means, Lord, that you need to prune us, even if that means, O Lord, you need to work in such ways as conviction in our hearts and lives, Lord, we know that all your works are good and all your ways are just.

[5 : 20] And so, Lord, we renew our faith and trust in you this evening and ask, O Lord, that you would prove your faithfulness to us and that you would make us faithful followers of Jesus.

In whose name we ask these things now. Amen. I wonder if, Richard, if you could bring the notices for the coming week. Thank you, Richard. For this session, anyway, for this time.

So, we're going to read 1 Corinthians 16. We read it last week and looked at most of it last week, but we're going to look at two verses in particular in a few moments. So, 1 Corinthians and chapter 16, that's page 1157.

If you go on to the Church Bibles, page 1157. We'll read the whole of the chapter. Now, about the collection for the Lord's people, do what I told the Galatian churches to do.

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up so that when I come, no collections will have to be made.

[6 : 37] Then, when I arrive, I'll give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you, for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go.

For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord just as I am. No one, then, should treat him with contempt.

Send him on his way in peace, so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers. Now about our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers.

[7 : 46] He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity. Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous.

Be strong. Do everything in love. You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia. And they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to submit to such people, and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you.

For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition. The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings.

Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord. So does the church that meets at their house. All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

[8 : 50] I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed. Come, Lord.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you. In Christ Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, if you'd like to open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 16.

1 Corinthians 16. That's page 11, well, 1157, 1158. And we're going to look particularly at two of the verses in that chapter by way of conclusion to our study through, and an overview, really, of our study in 1 Corinthians.

If you can remember being back in school, and one of the tests I seem to remember that we often had at school or homework we had to do was we'd have to take a book home, read the book, and then the next week you'd have to give a paragraph to summarize the whole of the book, to give the outline or the overlay or the idea of that book.

Well, we've been through 16 chapters in 1 Corinthians, and I wonder, could you sum up the whole of 1 Corinthians in five encouragements, five instructions, five exhortations?

[10 : 19] Well, I couldn't, but I believe that Paul does. And that's what we have in verses 13 and 14. I think that what we have there is Paul bringing together five direct instructions for God's people, reflective, I believe, of what we've been looking at in the church.

Now remember, the church in Corinth was a church which had many problems. And I think that these five encouragements put their finger upon five of them, the major five ailments.

And here we have, I believe, a preventative from us following in the example of the church in Corinth, following in their foolish, even sinful, footsteps.

So that's what we're going to do. Look at these words together. Verses 13 and 14. Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.

Do everything in love. So let's just take them one at a time. Be on your guard. Watch out for. What are we to be on our guard against?

[11 : 29] We're not told, are we? What are we to look out for? Well, any soldier who's put on guard duty is to be alert. To keep a watch out, of course, for the enemy.

To keep a watch out for anyone who is seeking to bring harm to or destruction to or damage to or to attack the company.

So here Paul is commanding the Corinthians to be prepared to fend off someone or something that has the potential to destroy the church.

An enemy which is so destructive and harmful we have to be on our guard against. What is it? Well, as we've been going through this letter, there's been one particular enemy of the church which has raised its head again and again and it is simply this division.

Division. A spirit of division. From the very start in chapter 1 Paul tackles this after his introduction verse 10 he says, 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.

[12 : 53] The problem had been brought to Paul's attention by these people Chloe's household verse 11 Some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

What were they quarreling about? What were they divisive about? What I mean is this he says verse 12 One of you says I follow Paul Another I follow Apollos Another I follow Cephas Still another I follow Christ.

cliques sects as it were groups within the church had come up and grown up around certain teachers including even Paul himself.

He mentions this problem again in chapter 3 where he says to them You are still worldly for since there is jealousy and quarreling among you are you not worldly?

For when one says I follow Paul and another I follow Apollos are you not mere the AV men mere human beings mere people that division which was to do with teachers different viewpoints different emphases different themes was a very very dangerous one because from that division other divisions grew up as we've been through the letter we've seen that in chapter 6 they were so divided against one another that some of them were taking others to court to civil court to sue them Christians they had arguments with one another and acted selfishly over the matter of meat sacrificed to idols in chapter 8 when they came together to share the Lord's Supper Paul speaks about their bad behaviour and their meeting in that way doing more harm than good in chapter 12 he talks about their misuse of the spiritual gifts for one upmanship in chapter 15 divided over the teaching about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the body division after division after division divisiveness in a church is the greatest enemy

[14 : 57] I believe and we've seen it sadly dear Christians if we've been in any church for any considerable time how dangerous it is once it is in it is very hard to eradicate like Japanese knotweed it never seems to go away but how do we keep this command well Paul has told us to be on our guard and I've said I believe that he's talking about division be on our guard against divisiveness in the church how can we guard against division well firstly I believe that we need to recognise it notice remember that this be on your guard is look out for it look out for it during the second world war and various posters were put around train stations other places with various slogans but also there was posters which had silhouettes of enemy aircraft so if you saw one in the sky you could recognise it that's a Junkers 88 or whatever it may be do we recognise divisiveness particularly in our own hearts because that's where it starts doesn't it do we recognise it even before we begin to say it even before we begin to manifest it do we recognise in our own hearts something perhaps of a grudgingness against someone or a divisive spirit against someone in the church or an attitude which means that we treat them differently we need to recognise it there first dear friends but do we also see possible areas of division in the fellowship in the church as in Corinth every church has the potential for multiple divisions multiple problems why?

because we are all individuals we're all different different backgrounds different characteristics different personalities the matters of music how we dress what sort of language we use or Bible translation or tradition the potential is there for division but what can we do when we recognise it when we recognise it in our own hearts we need of course to seek Christ's forgiveness forgiveness it's a sin it's a sin for us to be divisive against any other believer we need to seek Christ's forgiveness and we need to seek his grace that we might love one another that we might truly have a right spirit towards our brothers and sisters in Christ when we see it in the fellowship or the potential for it in the fellowship we need to prevent it from spreading and getting a hold we need to be peacemakers wasn't that what

Jesus told us in the Beatitudes blessed are the peacemakers one thing is very clear from God's word and from experience here in Corinth that division once it takes root will grow and grow and grow until it splits the church open dear friends we must take Paul's word seriously be on our guard how does Paul deal with this we have we have looked at this already so we are not going to go over it all again but chapter 12 particularly is how he deals with the whole problem of division within the church he points the believers back to the unity that they have in diversity in Christ look there in chapter 12 and verse 12 just as a body though one has many parts but all its many parts form one body so it is with Christ in other words so it is with you he goes on to talk about how we need one another every single part whether it be the eye or the foot or the hand needs the other parts we cannot live without it we must trust and depend upon one another to be of one heart and one mind our unity in Christ means verse 26 if one part suffers every part suffers with it one part is honoured every part rejoices with it you are the body of Christ each one of you is a part of it how do we deal with division we recognise that dear friends whoever we are whatever differences of character or background or temperament we have as believers in a local church we are one because we are united in Christ and in Christ we have a part to play we need one another we depend upon one another that's the first thing then division in the church be on your guards secondly he says stand firm in the faith now Paul has urged this before just at the end of chapter 15 if you look there verse 58 therefore my brothers and sisters stand firm let nothing move you it's not exactly the same language that's used here but it has the same sense it conveys the same instruction stand firm in the faith that's a very important phrase the faith it isn't talking about our faith but exercise of trust in the Lord

Jesus the faith is shorthand in the New Testament for all that we believe the essentials of the gospel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ Jude Jude in his little letter at the end of the New Testament writes this I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people the faith is that which we have believed and the church of Jesus Christ has always believed through all the ages it's not changing and developing it is certain and solid and fixed Paul has talked about that as well earlier on when he was talking about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus he spoke about the essentials of the gospel chapter 15 verse 1 now brothers and sisters I want to remind you of the gospel I preached you which you've received on which you've taken your stand standing firm by this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word

I preached you otherwise you've believed in vain then he goes on to say for what I received I passed on to you as of first importance talks about Christ's death his burial and his resurrection there are essentials non-negotiables when it comes to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and we are to stand firm upon that faith what does it mean to stand firm upon the faith or stand firm in the faith it means this we're not to give it up we're not to change it we're not to stop trusting in and believing in the essentials of the gospel we're to keep on holding to that effective God given Christ anointed gospel see in Corinth where Paul was we're told there were these false teachers weren't they false teachers particularly who had doctrines which were harmful and destructive to the church one particularly was the one he has to deal with in chapter 15 this false teaching about resurrection chapter 15 verse 12 if it is preached that

[22 : 35] Christ has been raised from the dead how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead all the way through the new testament every single letter we read we find that there are false teachers having to be stood firmly against resisted because they were teaching things which were not in accord with the faith once delivered in our day that's the case just as much so if not more so teachers and false teachings distorting the faith either adding to it and saying these things are absolutely necessary for salvation or taking away from it somehow to make it more appealing so they think to those who are outside of Christ do away with the cross do away with hell do away with atonement do away with sin to reduce the gospel to take away from it is something very serious indeed so much so that when

Paul writes to the Christians in Galatia in his letter he has these very severe words to say evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ but even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preach to you let them be under God's curse as we have already said so now I say again if anybody is preaching to you a gospel strong words aren't they because the preservation of the gospel the preservation of the faith is so essential to the future of any local church how many chapels do we see if you drive around the moors and drive around the villages how many chapels that once preached the gospel are closed are houses or holiday homes why almost certainly because at some point or another the gospel of

Jesus Christ was not preached faithfully but here's the question if we're to stand firm in the faith do we know the faith would we recognize false teaching were it to come if someone was to stand up here and proclaim certain things you've not heard before which may be very interesting entertaining even how would we know that they were true or false only dear friends surely if we know the faith if we study God's word and more than that we read dear friends it's important upon us that we make sure that we know what we believe that we understand that we are taught well hopefully we will get good teaching here and in our local church but we need to study for ourselves we need to read we need to go deeper in the things of God we need to stop being satisfied with just a superficial grasp of the gospel that's what Paul is saying that's why he's written this long letter he wants them to stand firm in the faith and and thirdly

Paul says be courageous be courageous when do we need courage when do we need bravery we need it when we're in a conflict when we're in a battle and as the saying goes there's a war on you know there is a war a spiritual war a spiritual battle that we are engaged with every single Christian every single follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is in his army and in a spiritual battle with the enemy of our soul Satan he's real he's not a pretend imaginary sort of pixie he is indeed the very enemy of God's people he's the one from whom we've been saved and from his kingdom Paul speaks about him in chapter 5 about this man who had given himself over to sin saying well he needs to go back as it were to live as he is as a man living under Satan's domain as he once did he talks about him in chapter 7 as well about not giving

Satan the opportunity to tempt us into sin he talks about the real danger of offering to idols which he speaks of as being worshipping demons there's a real battle a real battle that we're engaged with as Christians a real battle that Paul was engaged with for even in the chapter we've read in chapter 16 he speaks of many who oppose him the devil's work is to do just that to oppose God's people and the gospel sadly when we read the New Testament we find that much of what we consider to be false teaching finds its origin in Satan himself in his second letter in 2 Corinthians he talks about those false teachers being like angels in light but really being messengers of Satan without knowing it unwittingly the Bible teaches us that men and women who live lives in opposition to

[28 : 02] Christ are living under the influence of Satan himself acting like his own children following his example dear friends it's becoming more and more necessary for us as Christians to be courageous to stand up for our faith as we're finding that again and again Christian faith true Christian faith is being pushed into a corner in the political world in education in every sphere to be a true Bible believing Christian to love Jesus and speak for him is something which is scorned and we need courage we need bravery to be able to do that in this hostile world but where do we get our courage from again the answer I believe is here in this passage our courage comes from our confidence in what we read at the very start of our service concerning the Lord Jesus chapter 15 and verse 25 or rather verse 24 the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to

God the father after he has destroyed all dominion authority and power for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet that's what Christ is doing now he is king now he is ruling and reigning over this world now he is bringing to an end the dominions and the authority and the power of the evil one and he is ultimately bringing his enemies to heel until they are all defeated at his return this world is not in a state of chaos this world is not spiraling out of control this world is under the supreme sovereign authority of our king of Jesus Christ our lord so whatever the world has to say to us whatever the world thinks of us we have one who is powerful and rules and reigns we know we can put it this way that we are on the winning side so that should give us courage in spite of the slings and arrows of discontent fourthly then

Paul speaks about be strong be on your God we said against division stand firm in the faith for the truth of the gospel be courageous in the fight and the battle that we have but be strong what do we need strength for is it to do with the same as courage now I believe that Paul is talking here that we need strength to resist temptation strength to resist temptation now there was real temptation in the church in Corinth in fact one of the things that sort of would upset the sensibilities of our day is the church was an immoral den of iniquity all sorts of evil and sexual promiscuity was taking place we know that that's why Paul had to speak so severely against the man who was caught in the act not just of adultery but of incest sleeping with his father's wife and the church was accepting these things the church thought these things were okay

Paul had to write them again and again I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people not at all meaning the people of this world in other words the sexually immoral in the church the city of Corinth was a byword for sexual devency the numerous pagan temples around the city all had male and female prostitutes and many of those early Christians had in their former lives before coming to Christ indulged in those promiscuous and immoral practices Paul tells us so in 1 Corinthians 6 he says do not be deceived neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God and that is what some of you were and those who have been engaged in that sort of promiscuity and immorality it's a very strong temptation to draw back again dear friends we live in a sex mad world we know that we just have to look anywhere and we see that sexual temptation is drawing men and women the pornography that's on the internet the way that men are often involved in that and hooked upon that we need strength to stand against the temptation that the world has and pulls how do we do that well we have the warnings of course of Paul here as I've already read but they come all the way through chapter 6 and verse 18 flee from sexual immorality chapter 7 and verse 9 where he talks about the immorality of fornication it's better if they burn he says sorry in verse 9 if they cannot control themselves they should marry it's better to marry than to burn with passion chapter 10 and verse 8 where he warns against the immorality that took place amongst the Israelites we should not commit sexual immorality as some of them did and in one day 23,000 of them died he calls us to be very wary of thinking that we stand and that we've got our own strength and own power to resist temptation no we see here that our strength comes from two things our strength to resist temptation comes from the knowledge of who we are in Christ chapter 6 verse 11 where he's spoken much about these things remember those who were sexually immoral before some of you were those people but you have been washed you've been sanctified you were justified in the name of the Lord

Jesus Christ there's been pardon and cleansing and forgiveness you've been set free from those things but he goes on to say later on in that chapter verse 19 do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you whom you've received from God you're not your own you were bought at a price therefore honour God with your bodies recognising that we do not have the freedom to do whatever we want with our bodies they don't belong to us anymore they've been bought at a price they belong to Jesus I belong to Jesus what I do with my body and my life reflects upon who I am in relation to him I can't use it in that perverse or wrong way but also our strength comes from the fact and the assurance and the promise that we have help from the Lord when temptation comes in chapter 10 he's spoken much about this particularly there in verses 13 no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind and God is faithful he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear but when you are tempted he will also provide a way out so you can endure it temptation feels strong it feels almost irresistible but Paul reminds us that the Lord is faithful he will provide a way out the trouble is of course for many of us we don't want the way out we want the sin but the Lord promises that we will not be tempted beyond what we can resist he gives us the strength and he gives us the way out temptation to sin aren't these things very up to date aren't they relevant to us today just as relevant as they were for God's people one last commandment one last encouragement one last exhortation verse 14 do everything in love now here's a command that doesn't need any explanation does it it doesn't need us to try and work out what it applies to because it's covered everything do everything in love and if there's one chapter in 1 Corinthians that everybody knows better than any other chapter or knows about at least it's chapter 13 that wonderful chapter of love that glorious exalted poetic description of love of its importance of its power of its glorious character but think about it think about those warnings we've had already isn't love the cure for every division isn't love the foundation upon which we can stand and never be shaken doesn't love make the coward heart brave doesn't love hold back the hand that wants to sin love for

[37 : 12] Christ produces love love for one another love in our lives which is a mark that we are Christ perhaps that's why Paul speaks so very severely in verse 22 of this chapter if anyone does not love the Lord let that person be cursed the person who does not love Jesus is under a curse according to Jesus himself for love for Christ is to believe and trust in him to follow him and own him as Lord back in the gospel of John in chapter 3 verse 18 whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they've not believed in the name of God's one and only son if we love Christ then we will do all things in love I wonder has anybody got this verse written on a card on their desk a memory verse here's a memory verse to remember isn't it simply four words it's that sort of verse that you could embroider and put up above your mantelpiece do everything in love it's a verse for us to engrave upon our hearts and carry with us every day wherever we go it's four words that if we would only think on them before we opened our mouths how our speech would be different how differently we would live if we did everything in love how different our churches would be if we did everything in love how different our witness our service our daily routines would be if we did everything in love let me put it to you dear friends that if you want to sum up not just the book of 1

Corinthians not just the letters of Paul not just the New Testament if you would sum up all of God's teaching concerning the will of God for our lives all of his commandments for us in this world if you were to put together all what it is to live the Christian life it's simply those four words do everything in love may we leave this study of 1 Corinthians with those words ringing in our ears do everything in love that we might be the church that really is of Jesus Christ let's sing together our final hymn dear friends it's a hymn which again calls upon the Lord to give us such love such genuine spirit filled love 379 gracious spirit holy ghost taught by you we covet most of your gifts at

Pentecost holy heavenly love based upon that 1 Corinthians chapter that we've been thinking of 379 let's stand now may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep equip you with everything good for doing his will and may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever amen him thank you thank you