

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 03 October 2021  
**Services:** Across the diocese  
**Series:** **God's church** - 1 Corinthians  
**Title:** **Everything in love**  
**Passage:** 1 Corinthians 16  
**Outline:**

- 1. Generosity**
- 2. Hospitality**
- 3. Clarity**

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So we come to the final portion from 1 Corinthians... and I trust and pray that it has been a blessing – that you will be able to go back and read the book and understand it – and importantly – continue to work on applying it...

The last two weeks have taken us back the very centre of the Christian faith – that matter upon which Christianity stands or falls...

...the resurrection of Jesus Christ

And we saw that BECAUSE the resurrection is REALITY – than we must stand firm, give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord, assured that nothing we do for the Lord is ever in vain!

As Paul finishes this great work, he turns in brief to some practicalities and some matter of recap that flow out of all his has been writing about...

But he's doing more than just tying up loose ends...

He's helping us to see that the truth of God in the end must make a difference in our lives...

If belief is believable, it must be seen in our behaviour – it will be seen in our behaviour...

Doctrine must issue in discipleship...

And so there are three areas I want to show you from this passage, where we see truth meeting life...

- 1. Generosity**
- 2. Hospitality**
- 3. Clarity**

First;

**1. GENEROSITY**

Have a look with me a vv-1-2 - *Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 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.*

Now this collection was a big deal in the life of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church...

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And we see it mentioned and commended in Romans 15:26, in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and Acts 24:17

Paul was commending that Gentile Christians who had benefited greatly in spiritual terms from the Jews, should bless Christians from a Jewish background materially, for the Jews in Jerusalem were doing it tough financially.

Why was that?

Jer – was a poor city. Jer was not sustained by the giving of the people within its walls but by the gifts of Jewish people who lived beyond Jer. Jews were poor. Those who had come to faith in Jesus were less well off... the Jews didn't give them any... annoyed by these crazy Christian people. They were once doing fairly well BUT they had encountered Jesus and his grace and his goodness... and as a result they were beaten up, couldn't get decent jobs and were at the bottom end of the scale – therefore says Paul – we need to pay attention to the need, and I want to make sure that you participate in giving to them.

Jer church had led the way in following Christ. Acts 2:42 – had everything in common – they supported each other... you can only keep that going for so long... need an inflow. When converted – even those who had been prosperous in the past, were now in dire straits.

The collection then was a tangible expression of the oneness of the body of Christ.

You know it is actually in our giving that we express one of the key evidences of God's work in our lives...some have said that one of the last parts of our lives to be converted is our wallets – I'm not sure that's right – I think it is often one of the first... that if you've really grasped God's great generosity to you in Christ... than you become a generous person.

Notice that the gift was to be set aside on the first day of the week... the resurrection of Jesus had become the day the Christians met to continually celebrate that glorious news...

And so it was convenient that their generous gift be received on that day... a matter of practicalities

Note Paul doesn't say how much they should give? Giving in the NT is never stipulated... it's never 10% - that related to the Old Covenant and was more about taxes than free-will offering...

No – giving in the NT is discretionary – and you might say 'what a relief' – but that would only mean that you haven't understood... 10% - way too little for many of us who can afford very much more than that...

And can I talk about practicalities?

I know many of you love to actually put money in the plate... and see the minister ask God's blessing over it etc.

But brothers and sisters this most recent lockdown has seen giving in many of our churches drop again.

We need people to switch their giving over to happen automatically through the bank... if your church is going to survive financially – direct giving – internet or organised at your local branch – do you know that research shows that when people give like that – because it is prayed through – because it is regular – because it continues through lockdowns or when you can't make – that offertory over all increases by a significant percentage... will you please consider giving via the bank? Churchwardens or treasurer can help you get it sorted if you don't use the internet

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...and of course another key way for you to be generous is for you to leave a portion of your estate to your local church or the diocese... that is a gift that can make a great difference to the life of a church....

Are you generous?

Has the generosity you've received from God – through the generous sacrifice of the Lord Jesus – has that inspired you to be a generous person? Generous in your grace to others...? Generous in your giving to the Lord's work in your local church – and to the poor?

Generosity; now

## **2. MINISTRY**

Vv5-12 – have a look with me.... Not going to read them – but cast your eyes over the passage... it seems just to be about practical matters of a visit etc... and Paul's plans to visit the Corinthians... and Timothy's visit... and Apollos – and then down further – a few other people...

What is here for us??

But actually – we see quite a few things of importance along the way – important things about ministry

Did you know ministry won't always be easy or comfortable?

For example – have a look at Paul's plans regarding Ephesus – v8 – he wants to see the Corinthians BUT - *But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.*

Now I don't know about you – but I think I'd be writing – Ephesus – not hanging around there because there are a great many who oppose me – not really into that – I'm out of here and over to you ASAP!

Not Paul

It's the opposite

You see the two statements belong together – ironically – a great door has opened to me... is he actually saying a door has opened – BECAUSE of those who oppose him?

I think he might be!

Because if there are those who oppose him – it means they are not lifeless apathetic unthinking people who don't care about matters of truth and life...

If they oppose him – he can engage with them – argue with them – challenge them – converse with them!!

It won't be comfortable... won't be easy – won't be pleasant... but he trusts that the Lord has brought him to Ephesus for a reason – so instead of running from those who oppose him which is what I'd do – he hangs around to engage them...

Ministry friends – your or mine – won't always be easy or comfortable... but either was Jesus' ministry – who left the glory of his Father to enter the muck of our world... and being found in human likeness took the nature of a servant and was obedient even to death on a cross...

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Sacrifice... servant hood – defines the Christian life – and defines Christian ministry...

And then Timothy – have a look with me at vv10-11 - *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. <sup>11</sup> No one, then, should treat him with contempt.*

Timothy – we know from elsewhere in the Scriptures – he was timid, he was sickly – having to take a little wine for his stomach's sake... and he was only young... Paul says to him directly – don't let any one look down on you because of your youth...

Now here – Paul has to warn the Corinthians about how to receive him – yes he's timid, yes he's weak – yes he's young – but guess what? – he's carrying on the Lord's work – just as I am... it's the same work... so see to it he has nothing to fear and don't treat him with contempt!

How we treat our leaders is so important...

It doesn't matter how old they are, or even whether you like them or not.... The question is – are they doing the Lord's work... is that what they're on about – then support and love them... encourage and bless them... don't treat them with contempt!

Ministry – ministry as we've seen this year is for everyone... it is the calling of each of us in the body of Christ...

It won't always be easy or comfortable... but we are called to serve one another and the Lord...

And those who are in respected positions of leadership – clergy and lay ministers – remember – don't exalt them – they are only servants – we saw earlier in the epistle – one plants one waters – but they are only servants...

...but also – don't treat them with contempt – they are over you in the Lord – see how you can be a blessing to them and help them in their work!

That brings us finally to

### **3. CLARITY**

Have a look with me at vv13-14 (we won't get to all the detail in vv15-21)...

But 13-14 – the closing imperatives of the book – and they call us to stability as a church – to maturity and clarity about what we're on about...

It's true – Jesus did rise from the dead... *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. <sup>14</sup> Do everything in love.*

#### **1. Be on your guard**

Stay awake, alert, avoid carelessness, indifference. Keep your eyes open. Learn to see what you're seeing.

Changing of the guards... well trained to guard Buckingham Palace – gaze is straight forward... they are guards and they are guarding...

Imposter..... sitting on the end of the queen's bed

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From the outside it appeared they had the guarding issue down part

It was a cover for the ineffectiveness of their security system

Some of us – looking good on the outside... way we pass ourselves off – we're on guard

But if people were to see inside our minds or see how we drive or join us on business trips – forgiven to think while we have the externals right – but the guarding is ineffective

Matt 26:41 – watch and pray that you won't fall into temptation

Stay awake stay alert – or you'll slip. 1 Peter 5- roaring lion

naïve to say we have no reason to stay alert.

It is imperative. Your effective for Jesus this week starts and ends on the issue of guardedness.

In one unguarded moment you could be like Peter – no I don't know Jesus

In on unguarded moment – you could sell you marriage down the river

Or in business ruin your reputation

I am at my most vulnerable when I'm unaware how vulnerable I am

1 Cor 10:12 – if you think you are standing – take care lest you fall

If you don't think you don't need this – you need it more than anyone else

Be on your guard.

## **2. Stand firm in the faith**

Men and women – were facing all kinds of false teachers who were distorting and weakening the truth

Time is coming and has now come when we are being asked to bow down to all kinds of idols... and only those who are firm in the faith will know enough to stand against the foe

Those who say – just go on about love – and we'll all be fine... and you think that sounds like a great idea – then I want you to know that we still have a long way to go in teaching you to stand firm in the faith

We do not set aside doctrine to unite

Great need for us to stand firm

## **3. Be courageous**

Bravery

Unflinching courage

people of courage – to be an example to the church

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Be strong and take heart all you who hope in the Lord

Place and priority of the Word of the Lord...

Eph 4 – edify – built up not blown about

**4. Be strong**

**HOW** am I to be on guard, stand firm and be strong?

Where does my strength come from?

My help cometh from the Lord

Chronical of despair simply to be told to ‘be strong’

Weight room at the gym – I will be strong – can’t decide to be strong

Key – Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength

Possible to be live a contented life – I can do all things through Christ who makes me strong

When I am weak, then I am strong

Isaiah 40 – they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength

Some of us here this morning – at the end of our tether – not strong – as soon as it is hard we fall

Here is the great promise that they that wait upon him will renew their strength

**5. Do everything in love**

Guarded, brave, courageous, strong... but if we have not love as Paul reminded us earlier – than we’ve lost the plot!

Paul – no – do everything in love –

Phrase in USA – ‘may I have it on the side please’

You can’t have love ‘on the side’ ... it’s supposed to permeate everything

When I’m on guard and strong and courageous – love has to be through the whole mixture...

Love is the curry powder of Christian experience...

Not looking for it with magnifying glass

Front door – whole place pervaded with it

If it is truth which prevents love from degenerating into sentimentalism

Love prevents truth from sliding into rigid dogmatism

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What a great way to finish this book...

Lives utterly transformed by what we read here...

Clear – focused – energised in the service of Christ...

And yet everything – totally soaked and pervaded by love....

So let the last words of the book be my last words of this message

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.*

<sup>24</sup> *My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

NEXT WEEK – Mark’s gospel – series I’ve called “Questioning Jesus” Read ahead for next week – Mark 10:17-31

# questioning Jesus

<b>OCT 10</b>	<b>What must I do to be saved?</b>	<b>Mark 10:17-31</b>
<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>Who is the greatest?</b>	<b>Mark 10:35-45</b>
<b>OCT 24</b>	<b>Will you open my eyes?</b>	<b>Mark 10:46-52</b>
<b>OCT 31</b>	<b>Should we pay taxes?</b>	<b>Mark 12:13-17, 28-34</b>
<b>NOV 7</b>	<b>Flashy or humble?</b>	<b>Mark 12:38-44</b>
<b>NOV 14</b>	<b>When will the temple fall?</b>	<b>Mark 13:1-11</b>
<b>NOV 21</b>	<b>When will the King return?</b>	<b>Mark 13:12-37</b>