

1 Corinthians 16:1-24 Ministry 101

We have spent the last 4 weeks looking at one of the most fascinating chapters in the NT. – Chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians

A) All about the importance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and what it means to us as his followers.

B) Based on the reality of the Resurrection and the life and power and victory that comes to us because Christ is Risen

C) Paul ended his teaching on the Resurrection with these words:

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Be steadfast - the idea is fixed – consistent – not wavering up and down in our commitment to Christ

Be immovable – Standing firm in the midst of opposition – Feet dug into the truth that is found in the Resurrection of Jesus

Always abounding – Being fruitful – my life connected to and revolving around the life of Jesus Christ

A) Committed to his work his kingdom – knowing that our labor for the Lord is not in Vain

B) To put it another way the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ - should infuse our lives – with Focus – Stability and Purpose.

C) As Paul finishes up here in Chapter 16 Paul is going to give them some practical examples of what that looks like.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, **storing up as he may prosper**, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

⁴ But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

The First area that Paul encourages them to be **steadfast immovable and abounding in the work of the Lord is in their giving. Be givers**

A) Paul was going through the region and collecting money for the believers in Jerusalem **who were feeling the effects of a famine in their region**

B) Here in these verses Paul gives some important principles as it relates to giving in the Church.

C) **#1 Their giving is to regular** – On the first day of the week – On Sunday
When they gathered for worship.

D) The early Church in the first century began meeting on Sundays rather than Saturday as was their Jewish custom -

1) Because Jesus rose again on Sunday. –

2) To commemorate the Resurrection – Sunday became sort of the formal day for gathering -

3) Although in the book of Acts we actually see the early church **meeting every day in the temple and from house to house**

E) But Sunday was set aside as a special day of worship

#2 Giving is to be an act of worship.

A) By linking it to the worship service on the first day of the week – **Paul is revealing that the giving of tithes and offering is an act of worship.**

B) Why does God want his people to give? Does God need our money?

C) Giving is not God's way of raising funds it is his way of raising kids.

1) God is giver and he wants his kids to be givers too.

Jesus taught that where your treasure is your heart will be there also.

A) God wants our treasure to be in Him and in the things of his Kingdom

B) Giving is one of the ways that we invest in the things of the Lord - storing up treasure in heaven.

C) Our Giving is to be a worshipful response to all that God has done for us

#3 Our giving is to be proportionate - On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, **storing up as he may prosper**

A) The people in that day – got paid every day for the work they did that day.

B) Paul is admonishing them to lay something aside each day to bring for **the offering on the first day of the week.**

C) But their giving was to be in proportion to how they had prospered

Often times when giving is talked about – the amount that gets put out there is 10% of your income.

A) The reason for that is the word tithe = tenth.

B) Now some people try to say that tithing is an OT mandate established in the law –

1) Where we see the People of Israel gave a tithe of the tenth of their first fruits as an offering to the Lord

C) But the first place that tithing shows up is in the book of Genesis 14 – way before Law was even established –

Cc) Abraham gave a tithe or a tenth of the Spoil to the Melchizedek.

1) Who was a King and the priest of the most high God.

D) Later in Genesis 28:22 we see Jacob promising to give a tenth of the blessing he had been given by the Lord

1) Another example of this principle of the giving of the tenth or a tithe long before it was instituted in the law of Moses.

And then later in the NT Matthew 23 Jesus validates the idea of tithing a tenth

A) When actually commends the religious leaders for giving a tenth of their spices

B) But rebukes them for neglecting the weightier matters of Justice and mercy.

C) So Biblically the giving of a tenth of your increase is a good model to follow.

D) But here with the Corinthians Paul is basically saying - don't limit it to a tenth.

E) Let your giving be in proportion to your increase.

You see for some people giving a tenth can be a real challenge – a real sacrifice.

A) But for others it is nothing. A drop in the bucket.

B) Paul is suggesting a different attitude toward giving – let it be in proportion to how you have been blessed.

1) I have heard of people who have been so blessed they actually give 90% of their income and live on 10%

C) That would be impossible for most of us - but that is a good example of giving in proportion to how you have prospered

1) A person says I can comfortably live on 10% or 20% or whatever – I am going to give the rest to the Lord.

¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. Malachi 3:10 ESV

D) This is the only place in the Bible where God says- test me – is in the giving of our tithes and offerings

E) Now the idea behind Malachi 3:10 IS NOT- as some have suggested that we give in order to get
1) The principle is more of the Lord saying – trust me in this area of your life – you will find you can never out give God.

So the first place that Paul is admonishing them to be steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord is in their giving

2nd Area is in following God's leading – V.5 ⁵ Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). ⁶ And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while **with you, if the Lord permits.**

Paul had learned the importance in his ministry of being led by the Lord

A) He had Desires – places that were on his heart that he wanted to go but he was hindered by the Lord.

B) In Acts 16 Paul really wanted to go into Asia and take the gospel to that part of the world – we read **“He was prevented by the Holy Spirit.”**

1) The Lord instead would send Paul into the region of Macedonia

C) From that experience and others Paul learned to say – This is what I want to do if the Lord permits

Psalm 37:4 Principle

Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

A) Delight in him – we are aligning our hearts with his heart and he in turn aligns our desires with his desires

Proverbs 3:5-6 Principle

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, **and lean not on your own understanding;** In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

B) This year has been so unsettling for most of us – so hard to plan –

1) So much living day to day – break out of our routines and comfort zones

C) But I think for most of us it has been good – more seeking -more leaning in and allowing the Lord to lead

D) Daily Planner – Gaylord – quit using one –

1) because I found that so many of my days were filled with Divine interruptions

2) Annoyed or an opportunity

E) Paul had learned in his life – that the roadblocks and interruptions **were actually Divine opportunities** for God to do something new in his life

3rd Principle that Paul teaches us here is that in order to be steadfast immovable and always abounding... Lord - we need to learn to press through opposition

v.8 ⁸ But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁹ For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are many adversaries.*

A) Paul says something here that I think is surprising to many - **He says a great and effective door has been opened to him –**

1) But at the same time there are many adversaries

B) Often times we think that if God is opening a door – there is going to be smooth sailing – lack of conflict

C) Often times the opposite is true why? -

When God opens a door for ministry sharing the gospel – the Devil gets alarmed

A) He immediately seeks to oppose- bring opposition

B) Here is a life or a city or an area of the world that has been in his stronghold – God opens a door for the gospel

C) The Devil is not going to just roll over – No he is going to rise up in opposition

During the years when we were going regularly to Russia and Eastern Europe – a great effective and open door

A) The Harvest was ripe - The outreach – in Kaluga 2500

B) The people were hungry – but the opposition was heavy too.

1) GOVT officials not happy we were there –

2) Orthodox religious leaders were not happy either

C) But we pressed through

Effective ministry happens when God opens doors

A)When a door isn't open - we can find ourselves striving – like running into a brick wall

B)But when God opens a door – there are opportunities – **Hunger and responsiveness – but there will also be opposition**

C)Paul had learned to press through in the midst of opposition –

1)He wasn't going to run in the face of opposition he was planting himself in Ephesus at least until Pentecost – until the Lord moved him.

4th Principle that Paul shares with us about being steadfast immovable and always abounding...

Lord - Is don't be a lone ranger – don't do it alone.

A)Paul was a big believer in team ministry.

¹⁰ And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. ¹¹ Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

¹² Now concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

B)Paul mentions two men here that he enjoyed doing ministry with. -**Timothy was his son in the faith –**

C)Paul said of Timothy that he was like minded and had a similar heart

D)Timothy was younger and Paul was asking the church in Corinth not to despise him but to support him

E)Apollos was a gifted teacher who HAD also ministered there in Corinth and Paul encouraging him to return.

One of the things that I personally love about Paul is that he was a big believer in team.

A)Over the years I have come to value more and more – team aspect of ministry.

B)When I first got into ministry I was taught that the people **around you – your staff** are there to assist you in caring out your mission/vision

C)You are here on staff as a Youth Pastor because Pastor Chuck doesn't have time to do it

1)This is his ministry - you exist to assist him
Real encouraging and validating

I have since changed my view of that model -

A)I see us now as a team working together to fulfill a mission and vision.

B)We each bring something unique and special to the table

C)We each have giftings and roles to play - but we are in it together working together –

1)Striving together one heart, mind, goal and purpose.

Years ago I used to do 95% of the teaching here at CV

A)That was the model I saw in Pastor Chuck and others- rarely ever out of the pulpit

B)I even remember one time – I was coming back from a mission trip in Russia 10 days of awesome ministry- **long days and nights**

C)I was flying back into San Diego on a Wednesday afternoon around 4pm

D)I foolishly decided- I would teach our Wednesday night service that night

1)Left the airport - bite to eat - straight to the church

Now understand - flying back from Russia into San Diego with stops layovers and everything was like 24 hour ordeal

A)And I cannot sleep on an airplane

B)So by the time I arrived at church that night I had been awake for like 40 straight hrs

1)I was literally delirious - My mind was so frazzled

C)I remember standing here thinking – I have no idea what I am saying right now.

1)I no doubt taught some heresy that night ☺

D) Later as I went home – I thought – that was one of the stupidest things I have ever done –

1) NEVER AGAIN

E) Now I really enjoy sharing the teaching with others.

1) Seeing others using and growing in their gifts –
2 Corinthians in Jan – team approach

If you are going to be steadfast immovable and abounding in the things of the Lord - you can't do it ALONE.

A) As we come to verses 14-15 Paul sums up what he has been saying with this word of exhortation

¹³ Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

¹⁴ Let all *that you do* be done with love.

B) Watch, stand fast, be brave, and be strong are all military terms that reminding Paul's readers that the Christian life is not a playground

1) But a battleground

C) We need to always be on guard if we are going to remain steadfast, immovable..... Lord

D) We have to take seriously our calling – and the battle that we find ourselves in.

1) Standing in the strength and power that is ours because Jesus is Risen/ He is alive -he is in us

E) So we are fighting not for our Victory but from a position of victory

1) That is how we can be BRAVE AND STRONG

What Paul says in V.14 almost seems to be in stark contrast to what he said in V.13 –

A) In V.13 He is describing a commando – soldier Love is not usually associated with that picture.

B) Picture a football coach – Big game speech - “Watch – stand fast - Be brave – be strong - YOU GOT THIS -

C) And let everything you do be done in love – WHAT?

D) The picture that Paul is painting here is that of Meekness - meekness is not weakness -

1) Power under control -

E) Jesus was the most powerful human being who ever lived - Wind and Waves obeyed him -

1) Demons fled - dead raised - death defeated

2) Arrested – I AM – all the guards fell back

But Jesus was also the picture of Meekness - His power was controlled

A) Love was the guiding force -

B) He wants us to walk in that same reality. -

1) Power in Jesus –

C) Tempered by love- we know that our battle is not against flesh and blood but principalities/ powers

1) On guard and Strong in the battle against the enemy -but loving toward people

D) Realizing they are hurting and lost – broken in need of mending

Wrap up final words and Salutations

A) He begins with some examples of those who are Steadfast..... Lord

¹⁵ I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—¹⁶ that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.

B) The word devoted in v.15 can be translated addicted – such a great picture -

C) This guy Stephanas was so given to the ministry of the Lord

1) His whole family his household was addicted as well.

D) You want your kids to be given to the work of the Lord -

1) You be given to it and create opportunities where they can serve with you.

¹⁷ I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. ¹⁸ For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. ¹⁹ The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

When Paul first went to Corinth, he lodged with fellow tentmakers, Aquila and his wife, Priscilla.

A)Not only did Aquila and Priscilla become believers, but they became strong in the faith

B)So much so that when Paul went to Ephesus,
1)he left Aquila and Priscilla in charge of the fellowship (Acts 18:18).

C)After ministering in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla joined Paul in Rome,
1)where a church met in their house (Romans 16:5).

D)Then they returned to Ephesus to help Timothy, who would eventually become the pastor at Ephesus.

E)Aquila and Priscilla were a couple who were on the move, flexible,

1)determined to serve the Lord in any way possible—wonderful models for you and me.

Final words

²⁰ All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.²¹ The salutation with my own hand—Paul's.

²² If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!

²³ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

²⁴ My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen