

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Practical Faith

Full Transcript

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Introduction: The Church at Corinth

- 0:31 You know, we began our study in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians about 10 months ago. And so just as a reminder, or if you're brand new, let me walk you through a little bit about what this is really all about. Corinth was a highly traveled kind of a place.
- 0:49 Lots of business went through there. It was sort of a hub. In many ways, like if you had business and you wanted to sell or buy and you were coming from Asia, you would travel through Corinth. Or if you were in Africa and you wanted to come up from Africa, from the south, you would bring the same thing and you would come through Corinth. Or if you were in the west and you wanted to bring your stuff from all over Europe and stuff like that, you would again meet there. And so because so many things met there and money was free and things were just coming together, it kind of got a reputation as a place that was sort of out of control.
- 1:26 And in many ways, it probably was. It was in anything goes kind of, you know, moral kind of a sense there, which meant a lot of people didn't want to go there.
- 1:37 But remember, the Bible tells us that none of us are perfect. I don't know if you knew that or not. The Bible tells us that actually every single person is a sinner. Now you might think, oh, sinner, you meaning like a really terrible, awful, horrible person? No, no. Sinner, the word means that you missed that mark of perfection.
- 1:59 You're not perfect. Now you might say, OK, big deal. I'm not perfect, but I'm not bad like a bunch of other people. No, you're right about all of that. I get it completely. The only problem is, is that God's heaven is all based on perfection. There will be no sin in heaven.
- 2:19 Now you might sit there and go, well, I guess there's no hope for me. On your own, you're right. There would be no hope for you. You could do amazing works and all kinds of things. There would be no hope for you if God, who is a perfect, does not make a way for you, there is no hope. But here's the good news. That's exactly what he did. He sent his son, who would be the sacrifice. It would take all of our sins, the guilt of all of that, on himself.
- 2:51 And so there were groups of people that understood that. They got that. They knew that even if it was a bad place, it was a place that we need to go and take the hope of the gospel. And so, they did. And many of the Corinthians gave their lives to Christ and began to follow him. And they started a church and the church grow and grew. And it was growing continuously like churches around the world are doing even right now. But the problem with building a new church, just about any place is, you have to understand, is the culture. See, when you come into a new place, there's all these people and they're used to living their life a certain way.
- 3:29 And that culture is a worldly culture. First and foremost. And so what happens is, you come in and you decide you're going to follow Christ. Now, do you bring that worldly culture with you into the church?

3:45 Well, they had that issue. I mean, when is enough enough, right? So some believers that were in Corinth, they wrote Paul. Paul like calls them Chloe's people. They wrote Paul with some questions that they needed to have answers. And so the first letter to the Corinthians here is all about Paul answering those questions. That the believers there in Corinth were writing about what was going on in this new church there in Corinth and him answering those questions. Now, the church, or excuse me, the Corinthians asked about a couple of different things. For example, they asked about the fact that they had a couple of talented leaders, very, you know, sort of charismatic kinds of leaders, and those leaders seem to be going different directions.

The Issues Facing the Corinthian Church

- 4:34 Which meant you had division in the church. Now, I'll get more into this in a minute. But let me just implant this in your mind here. There are very few things, I want you to understand this, there are very few things that God hates more than division between brothers and sisters.
- 4:54 You just need to understand that. We'll come back to that in a minute. They also wrote about a member who was kind of right in the middle of the fellowship who was living in sexual sin, and it was a bad one, I mean. And no one seemed to be talking about it or dealing with it or addressing it. They talked about members suing one another, just about everything. I mean, Corinth had more lawsuits than probably any place in all of Europe, and people would just sue each other over ridiculous kinds of things. And so Paul really stops and he says, look, can you not just find someone who's wise to stop and just say, hey, could we tell you about this and you just help us what you think?
- 5:36 Rather than dragging it through court? They had questions about... Marriage, divorce, singleness, I mean, singleness was a no -no back in those days. They had questions about our freedoms in the church and as believers, or the order of how worship services took place or communion. I mean, they literally had, you know, people that would come to communion and they would eat their dinner of the communion.
- 6:08 And some people didn't even get to take and they're like, whoa, that's got to stop, this is way, you're missing the point of everything here.
- 6:15 Spiritual gifts, well, is that okay, is that okay? I mean, because there were a lot of amazing, miraculous, you know, things going on, but the biggest of which is, if you look through the book of 1 Corinthians, you'll see that everything sort of builds up until you get to chapter 15, and in chapter 15, he hits the one that has the most profound effect, and that is that people that were questioning, well, I don't think that the resurrection actually took place, and he will shoot them down hard.
- 6:47 Obviously, there's a lot here. You know, typically, when you come to the end of a long letter, or probably email today, I don't know if anybody even writes letters today anymore, but, I mean, if you come to the end of it, you have the typical, usual closing stuff, you know, say hello to the fam, and when I come around, I'll see you then, and God bless you all, hope everything's healthy, you know, that's typically how we do it. But that is not how Paul closes out the letter to the Corinthians. He's not going to waste time, he's not going to waste words, he

7:17

James 2:17

Faith without works is dead.

7:26 How do you have a practical faith? You see, faith in Christ isn't just about believing the right stuff.

Practical Faith: Faith That Works

7:36 James chapter 2 verse 17 says, faith without works is dead. There's nothing in our faith that says, we can simply find truth, and then just sit on it, and do nothing at all.

7:50 Now, I want to be clear here, works do not save you. I don't care what you've done. I mean, you could be sitting here right now, and let's say you gave a million dollars to feed the people on on the street, that's wonderful, and we would all applaud you, and that's awesome, you're a wonderful Samaritan, but again it does not fundamentally make you holy.

8:11 It will not get you into heaven. It will make you the best person in this room, but it won't make you holy.

8:20 That only happens by the mercy and the grace of Jesus. So works don't save us, but they do reflect a changed life. Real faith is transformative it moves us it it shapes us it affects our words our thoughts our values our love we begin to love things that we previously did not love well I was growing up in California I was racing motorcycles I I went with a friend because he invited me to to go to this meeting it was a youth for Christ meeting campus life like young life kind of thing and I went I heard the gospel and it made sense to me the guy said you're a sinner I said yeah I didn't go to

9:00 To church I knew I agreed with that went home and thinking to myself and I didn't go to church I'm thinking to myself I should be in church why no one told me I should be in church because the Holy Spirit inside me was saying because that's where your brothers and sisters are at

9:25 That's where you need to be we begin to think of different things in all of a sudden we have a love for God all of a sudden we notice people that are not in church and we're not in church and we're not in church and we're not not in church and we're not in church and we're not in church and we're not hurting we have a love for other things that is exactly what Paul will challenge the Corinthians and us with he's gonna give us four truths here at the end that are really important that you hold on to first of all he's gonna tell us that we need to be generous then he's gonna talk about saying he's gonna we need to be hospitable that we need to be steadfast and that fourthly we need to be loving

10:05

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Be Generous: Three Principles of Giving

- 10:41 Go also they will accompany me so Paul here first of all you can notice his heart the first thing he says is look I don't want to waste time when I get there I want to come there I want to preach the gospel and have fellowship with you I don't want to talk about raising money so here's what i want to say just start a simple process of putting something aside to be able to help the poor he
- 11:05 Wanted the issue to be the gospel again so we take up the collection now so when I come I don't have to worry about that now i will tell you that as a pastor i [This appears to be a repeated transcription error/ glitch - the speaker likely said something about the difficulty of talking about money, but this section is garbled and should be removed or clarified] get that talking
- 11:17 About money can be awkward some people even some people that have been around the church for a while will say well that's all the church wants is our money you could not be more wrong I'm sure you can go find some churches that that's what they want but
- 11:38 I will tell you this that when you come to faith in Jesus and you begin to grow you will begin to realize that giving is a spiritual issue it's
- 11:47 Not a financial one giving reflects my heart and what I love the most Paul
- 11:56 Here wants to make this really practical so again he's gonna give us three principles here about giving here's the first one if you go over to back to verse two he's gonna tell us that giving should be systematic he says on the first day of every week each of you is to put something aside and store it up so in other words giving should be regular and intentional and not impulsive you [This is a repeated transcription artifact that should be cleaned up] we don't give just simply because a need arises we give to faithfully build God's kingdom think of it this way anybody here like you do the hope you know flowers and you've got roses and plants and you know all those different kinds of things like anybody here okay my wife
- 12:36 And I put it this way my wife yeah that's better it's a more honest way my wife she like systematically just waters them and just knows and she's really got the wonderful green thumb and she grows them up she would never think like oh well I'll water it when it does this and hopefully it'll come back and do this no that's not a recipe for having you know healthy you know plants and making things grow the right way regular faithful watering is what makes it grow it's the same with giving it keeps our heart in tune with what God wants to do in us now the second thing he's gonna say here is it's not just systematic but it's also proportional look at verse 2 he said on the first day of the week each one of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper in
- 13:29 Other words God is not asking for equal amounts of giving but he is measuring the size of our hearts are we faithful with what we have I think there's a great story you probably remember in Luke chapter 21 about this old woman a widow and she came and and and Jesus said to her I'm going to give you a little offering Jesus just happened to be going through Jerusalem she watches you know what's going on and in this particular time somebody comes up and puts a lot of money in the offering and then somebody else

does too and this woman almost embarrassingly walks up with the two smallest coins you know that the Hebrews had at that time and she just drops those two little widow mites into the thing and then she walks away and Jesus stops and goes wait did you see that they're like what did you see we see what she gave out

- 14:19 Of faithfulness because she doesn't have anything that's all the Lord wants from us is to learn to be faithful with what we have the third thing here is not only are we to be systematic and not only be proportional but we should also be purposeful go back to verse 1 now concerning the collection collection for the Saints as I directed the church of Galatia you also are to do giving us about building God's Kingdom its kingdom minded it's building into someone or something you know if that I will just say this if giving becomes a burden maybe you it's time for you to ask what's changed it
- 15:02 Was it my bank account or is it my heart see our challenge here is there is a joy in giving whether it's our time our finances our kindness our service whatever the case may be and if we're not getting any joy out of that and all maybe we've drifted spiritually the
- 15:26 Reason why all this matters is because our God is a giver and the more I walk closely with him I take on his nature that's what I'm supposed to do giving is just part of loving the needy it's not throwing money at every single issue we don't do that I mean there were a lot of places that were hurting you know and and this but in this particular case the church in Jerusalem was under such incredible pressure that the church fathers had decided we're going to all come together and give
- 16:04 Here because these people are starving now there's a second thing here it's not just generosity that Paul's going to hit on in chapter 16 and that is hospitality we need to be hospitable look what he says starting in verse 9. he says I will visit you after passing through Macedonia for I intended to pass through Macedonia and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter so that you may help me on my journey wherever I go that that's a really big thing Paul lays out his plans there he hopes to see them maybe even spend the winter there and he longs for fellowship with him but I want you to see something that I didn't read there I want to go back to this I want you to see what he says in verse

Be Hospitable: Open Doors and Welcoming Leaders

- 16:46 9. he says for a door a wide door of effective work is open to me and there are many adversaries you already what he just said there he's in this place and and there's really a lot of people that are after him a lot of adversaries that are there and we tend to think adversaries mean the door is closed well God's not do anything there it's just too tough Paul says that's not the case at all the adversaries are the proof that the door is open adversaries doesn't mean that we abandon the work it means that we we need God to do something great and we need us to simply say yes Lord I'll be there see
- 17:37 Resistance often means you're right where God wants you to be that's why we miss Charlie Kirk Charlie knew exactly what his calling was in life go on to a campus where somebody would you know take him on in some kind of a debate but ultimately he went there so that he could tell them the gospel resistance

17:59 Is not a sign that God is dead it's a sign that the enemy is shaking go

18:09 To verses 10 through 12 here he's going to talk about Timothy and about Apollos he says when Timothy comes see that you put him at ease among you for he is doing the work of the Lord as am I so let no one despise him help him on his way in peace that he may return for I am expecting him with the brothers now what's really interesting here is that Timothy was a guy that was young he was timid he was half Jewish half Greek often underestimated and yet Paul says you know what encourage him

18:48 Put him at ease why why would he have to say that because Paul knows that ministry is hard enough he knows that he doesn't need God's people to be tearing down their leaders they need to be encouraging refreshing protecting the spirit bring him along walk beside him pray with him pray for him look

19:13 At verse 12 here he mentions Apollos he says now concerning our brother Apollos I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers but it was not at all his will to come now he will come when he has opportunity you know Apollos I will just tell you was a really big name in the church may not sound like a big name to you but he was considered the very best communicator preacher teacher whatever you want to call it there was I mean by far no one was even near okay and so he was a really big deal and yet Paul who is really like the apostle to the gentiles he could have simply said apollos i need you to go now and sort of exercises authority but he doesn't do that

19:56

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

Be Steadfast: Five Charges for the Church

20:38 Watchful stand firm in the faith act like men be strong let all that you do be done in love if believers if our church would simply live this out be watchful stand firm in the faith act like men be strong let all that you do be done in love god watchful stand firm in the faith act like men be strong let all that you do be done in love god would not be able to fit enough people in here now

20:56 There are five phrases here he mentions here in verse 13. the first one is be watchful in other words stay spiritually awake okay what are you watching for well if i go back through the book here i realize that the first thing that we're kind of told to be really watchful for is the danger of division that there would be a leader that would come along and divide the fellowship divide brothers and sisters in the lord now let me tell you why this is so important for us to be watchful in the spirit of the church because it's a really big deal because in first corinthians or excuse me in proverbs chapter 6 one of the things that he tells us in verses 18 and 19 is that there are six things the lord hates seven that are an abomination you cannot get any worse than that

21:37 And they build up to the last one being the most important creating division among brothers

21:47 That's the biggie we can't have that the second thing we should be watchful for is is doubt of the word of god that's not what we're talking about we're talking about the exaltation of god and the deception of god that's not what we're talking about we're talking about the exaltation of god and the deception of false

teachers that were running around in the church there and taking advantage and we see that happening in different places right now we have a large group of people that are getting ready to go to africa here just in about a week and a half or two weeks can i tell you one of the big issues there there are some theological issues there that would tell you that jesus is not the son of god that he was just a mere man and rose up that's a big problem you have millions of people that confess the

22:25 Name of christ they need some help they need some theological teaching to help you get a hold of the gospel [This is a repeated/garbled section that appears to be a transcription error] They need people to come alongside and build them up with good thoughts because there are false teachers there. You had the deception of the resurrection. People saying, no, I don't believe that he actually resurrected or I believe that he didn't really die. He sort of swooned and came back out of that whole thing. And then you had the failure of those that didn't love the brethren.

22:52 That's the things that we ought to be watchful of. Love. It's very easy for us to get lulled to sleep by society. It's one of the reasons why you not only need to be in a church that teaches God's word, but you really need to be in a small group or in a serving team. Something like that will constantly be challenging you and your faith. Secondly, in that statement, he says, stand firm in the faith. In other words, when temptation calls and culture shifts, hold your ground,

23:23 Learn how to answer. Okay. Thirdly, he says, act like men. Now let me tell you what that means. It means grow up. That's exactly what he's talking about here. Grow up. Stop acting like a spiritual infant, but grow up. Don't be offended by everything. Think things through. How can we build this together? What can we do? You know, stop quarreling, stop boasting. Many of the problems that happen in churches around the country. Today are due to pure infantilism and the churches need to grow up. They need to be, you know, fed God's word on a daily, you know, or excuse me, a weekly basis. So you need to come someplace where you're going to need to be in the word and hear exactly what the word does teach you.

24:16 Fifthly, he says, be strong, grow in your faith, understand what God's word has to say about these things. Excuse me. That's fourthly. Fifthly, he says, let all be done in love. That's fourthly. fourthly. Now, let me tell you where that comes from. If you were studying through first Corinthians, you'll realize that as you get to chapter 13, which is always called the love chapter, because it's all about love. If you remember what he's trying to do, he's building a case that they thought all these other things were really important. Then he comes along at the beginning of chapter 13, he says, look, if I had the ability to say to that mountain, be gone and do that, he goes, but I didn't love, I'd be nothing.

24:57 If I could speak in the tongues of men and angels, in other words, having unbelievable, you know, giftedness, but I don't love, I am nothing.

25:08 It doesn't sound like a really big deal to us, but the constant, you know, example of what, who we are, the distinguishing mark of who we are as a people is love.

Be Loving: Refreshing the Body of Christ

- 25:24 I can disagree and love you. We don't have to like the same music and we can, I can still love you.
- 25:39 Let all be done in love. Now. That leads to the fourth point. The final point here in verses 15 through 18, listen to what he says, because he's going to talk about love here a little bit. He says, now I urge you brothers, you know, that the household of Stephanas were the first who were the first converts in Achaia, that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints be subject to such as these and every fellow worker and labor. I rejoice in the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Acacius. Because they have made up for your absence for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people that let me, can I give you one little quick insight here about seminary?
- 26:23 This will, this will really help you a lot when you come to names like this, how you say them any way you want to. And then everybody go, oh, okay, that's it. I probably shouldn't have told you that Paul here commends the household of Stephanas because they, they refreshed him. Verse 18 says, I was thinking about that, you know, the last two weeks as I was preparing for this, I was thinking, what would I want people to say about me if they were going to actually write a letter about, you know, coming to Scottsdale for a while? And I can't think of, there'd be a better one than that, that
- 27:01 Man, when we hung out with Bob, we just got refreshed. He just built us up, just made us feel good. That's supposed to be the church. That's supposed to be us. That's supposed to be the church. That's supposed to be us. It's what godly people do. You know, when you're around someone that's like that, and you probably all can think of someone that's like that, you come away feeling lighter and encouraged and recharged. When Paul thinks about building the church, he thinks about having a church full of people that are refreshing. When we think about Highlands, we think about a church that when people come walking in and they, you know, they're there because listen, this has been a tough week, but it just seems like those people were so kind and refreshing.
- 27:45 And encouraging. And built us up. That's who we need to be. Look at verse 19. It says, The churches of Asia sent their greeting, Aquila and Prisca, together with the household, the church that meets in their house, sends you their hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brothers send their greetings, greet one another with a holy kiss, I, Paul, writing this greeting with my own hand, if anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Oh, Lord, come, the grace of the Lord Jesus be with us, and let us be blessed. us, and let us be blessed. My love be with you. My love be with you all, Christ Jesus. Amen. Did you catch verse 22 in the middle of that?
- 28:27 Let me go back and read that one to you again, because that one might be a little bit... If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed.
- 28:38 Wait a minute, I thought this guy was really loving. Well, that's a really important warning here. He's not talking about people outside the church. That's not what he's talking about at all. This letter is written to the church. What he's talking about is people who claim the name, who say, yeah, I'm a Christian, but they have no love for Christ, no changing foundational love for Christ in them. It's just empty religion.
- 29:13 Empty religion is not moved by love for the Lord or love for people. And that's a problem. That's why, you know, sometimes you'll hear things like, well, man, I love going to church. I love Jesus. That's awesome. It's those people I don't like.

- 29:30 I don't like, you know, people at church. Can I help you with something here? The church is considered the bride of Christ.
- 29:41 You better rethink that. Let me explain it to you in a more personal way. If you came to me and said, Bob, man, I love you, Bob. You're great. I mean, you know, I just think the world of you, but your wife, not so much. You and I won't be friends.
- 30:01 I mean, none of you here would be any different than that. You think God's okay with that? You think Jesus is okay with you insulting and disliking his bride? I don't think so.

Closing Challenge: A Roadmap for Everyday Faith

- 30:18 Change the fact that you realize that there are people within the body, people within the bride that are hard to deal with, people that need to grow, people that need to get past their infantilism, people that need to quit being legalistic. Yep, you're going to have some of that. But the church, this is the body of Christ.
- 30:46 Paul finally ends his letter as he started it with grace and love. He says, the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus, amen. That is the heartbeat of God's people. And so the Bible gives us a roadmap here for practical faith. This is not a throwaway.
- 31:06 This is a roadmap for everyday faith that he's going to tell you four things there I hope that you will take with you. Be generous, be hospitable, be steadfast, be a lover of God and people.
- 31:22 It's how the church flourishes. It's how Christ is glorified. It's how you and I grow. It's how we one day stand before him and he looks at us and he says, well done, good and faithful servant.
- 31:37 I'm praying that that'll be us. Would you pray with me? Father, thank you so much for your love. Your desire for us to be your servants, to make an impact on our world, to make a difference with how we respond to people. Pray that you'll move in our hearts, cause us to think and act differently because of your work inside of us and teach us to be refreshers, God, that we would refresh the souls of those around us, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen. There's going to be some people that will be down here in front. They would love to be able to pray with you, to pray for you. If you'd like to talk to someone, they will be there.
- 32:26 But let me just challenge you with one thing. As you leave here, if you believe you've trusted in Jesus Christ, you are the bride of Christ.
- 32:37 Let God use you to be refreshing to the body and other people, to build them up, to stand courageously against things that are wrong. Amen. Do it with love.
- 32:52 We don't have to fight on their level. We have to trust in the Lord.
- 32:59 Our prayer is that we'll do that and make a difference in this area right here and hopefully it'll go beyond that with the gospel. God bless you guys. Have a great day.