

Sermon 79: Final Words of Encouragement: Strength and Love: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Text: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24 "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity. I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen..."

Introduction: There are eight basic encouragements.

- **We will look at the first two tonight:**
 - Be strong
 - Be loving
- **There is overlap between what Paul says here and in other epistles: Ephesians 6**
- **Many of these concepts were developed more fully earlier in the letter: 1 Corinthians 13**

Summary: Be strong in the faith and walk in love in every area of your life.

Encouragement 1: Be strong: 16:13 "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong..."

- **Be Vigilant:** "Watch"
 - **Don't be drowsy:**
 - **Acts 20:31** "Watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears..."
 - **1 Peter 5:8** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour..."
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:8** "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation..."
 - **Be engaged:**
 - Watch and remember

- Be sober and vigilant
 - Be awake
- **Hold on to sound doctrine:** "Stand fast in the faith"
 - **In other epistles:**
 - **Galatians 5:1** "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage..."
 - **Philippians 1:27** "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel..."
 - **2 Thessalonians 2:15** "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle..."
 - **Most thoroughly developed in Ephesians 6: Put on each piece of the armor with prayer:**
 - Prayerfully prepare your mind for conflict by focusing on what is true.
 - Prayerfully remind yourself who you are in Christ and live like that person.
 - Prayerfully focus on the cross and remember that you have peace with God through that sacrifice.
 - Prayerfully embrace the collective strength of the church when your faith is tested.
 - Prayerfully fix your eyes on the finish line.
 - Prayerfully fill your heart with scripture.
- **Be courageous:** "Quit you like men..."
 - **Stand your ground: Ephesians 6:13-14** "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..."
 - **Don't run: 1 Samuel 4:9** "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight..."
- **Let God strengthen you:** "Be strong..."
 - **This is a strength that comes through maturity:**
 - **Two examples in the gospels:**
 - **John the Baptist: Luke 1:80** "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel..."
 - **Christ: Luke 2:40** "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him..."

- **An example in the epistles: Ephesians 3:16** "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man..."

Encouragement 2: Be loving: 16:14 "Let all your things be done with charity..."

- **This should be all-encompassing: "All things..."**
 - **Matthew 22:37-40** "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets..."
 - **Romans 13:10** "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law..."
- **The root motive must be Christian love: "Done with charity"**
 - **Why is Christian love so important? 1 Corinthians 13:1-3**
 - Service done without it is just noise.
 - Service done without it cannot make us something that we are not.
 - Our future reward is lost without it.
 - **What does it look like practically? 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
 - **He defined it positively by what it does:**
 - It is patient
 - It is kind
 - It delights in what is true
 - It does not give up
 - **He defined it negatively by what it does not do:**
 - It is not envious
 - It is not boastful
 - It is not harsh
 - It is not overbearing
 - It is not easily angered
 - It does not keep meticulous records
 - It does not enjoy seeing others suffer
 - **What sets it apart from all other virtues? 1 Corinthians 13:8-13**
 - It endures while other gifts do not.
 - It will continue to have value when other gifts will not.
 - As we mature, we will grow to appreciate its value to a greater degree.
 - Our comprehension of this principle will be partial till we meet Christ.

- Not only is it the highest gift, but it is also the highest virtue.

Application:

- Set your heart to stand your ground.
- Don't become complacent or careless.
- Keep your heart engaged in what is going on around you.
- Know what is true and hold fast to it.
- Be courageous, not timid.
- As you grow in maturity, let God strengthen you.
- Walk in love in every area of your life.
- Don't allow your heart to become cold and complacent.