Sermon 81: Embrace Christian Community and be Ready for Christ: 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 in the final section of the epistle.

- **Encouragement 1: Be strong: 16:13** "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong…"
- **Encouragement 2: Be loving: 16:14** "Let all your things be done with charity…"
- **Encouragement 3: Embrace order: 16:15-16** "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…"
- **Encouragement 4: Embrace encouragement: 16:17-18** "They have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such…"
- **Encouragement 5: Embrace opportunity: 16:19-20** "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house…"

Encouragement 6: Be family: 16:20 "Greet ye one another with an holy kiss…"

- **A culturally appropriate way to affirm its brotherly love:**
    - **Romans 16:16** "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you…"
    - **2 Corinthians 13:12** "Greet one another with an holy kiss…"
    - **1 Thessalonians 5:26** "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss…"
- **Why the practice matters:**

    - **First:** The church is a family where people should experience a deep sense of community.
        - **Ephesians 2:19** "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God…"
        - **1 Timothy 5:1-2** "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters…"
        - **Romans 12:10** "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another…"
        - **Galatians 6:10** "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith…"
    - **Second: This expression of brotherly love was a powerful way to affirm unity in the church:**
        - Rich and poor
        - People with status and servants
        - Jews and Gentiles
        - The church is a body of believers united from many different walks of life.
- **Why brotherly love matters:** It is a clear mark of spiritual life:
    - **Philippians 2:1-2** "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind…"
    - **John 13:35** "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another…"
- **Internalizing the principle:**
    - How do you view the church?
    - Is it your family?
    - Are you actively seeking to establish deeper connections?
    - Are you willing to shoulder burdens?
    - Are you giving of yourself for the good of others?
    - Are you holding some at a distance for arbitrary reasons?

Encouragement 7: Be ready: 16:22 "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha…"

- **Being ready has two sides:**
    - **Side 1:** Do not be a hypocrite.
    - **Side 2:** The Lord is coming.
- **The two sides to this statement:**
    - **Side 1: Do not be a hypocrite:** "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ…let him be Anathema…"
        - **The word "anathema" is a strong term.**

- **It was a type of curse meaning "let him be dedicated to destruction:" Galatians 1:8** "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed…"
- **There are similar warnings in other epistles:**
  - **2 Thessalonians 3:14** "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed…"
  - **Titus 3:10** "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself…"
- **He is not suggesting we should have an arbitrary desire for unsaved people to be condemned:**
  - **1 Corinthians 9:19-23** "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you…"
  - **1 Corinthians 10:31-33** "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved…"
- **This is a sharp warning toward a specific kind of hypocrite within the church:**
  - **2 Peter 2:1-3** "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they

with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not…"

- **2 Peter 2:13-15** "They…count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam…who loved the wages of unrighteousness…"

- **Side 2: The Lord is coming:** "Maranatha…"
  - **This word means either "O Lord Come" or "Our Lord is coming:"**
  - **It is a deep expression of anticipation and longing for the immanent return of Christ.**
    - Not a tired and fearful man longing to escape duty.
    - A burdened man longing for God to make things right in His creation.
    - It expresses confidence that this will happen and we need to be ready.
    - It expresses tension that we have work to do and we long for the work to be done faithfully.

Encouragement 8: Be settled: 16:23-24 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen…"

- **A settled spirit has two sides:**
  - **Side 1: We are settled because of God's presence:** "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you…"
  - **Side 2: We are settled because of the godly people he has brought into our lives:** "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus…"
- **The two sides of this statement:**
  - **Side 1: We are settled because of God's presence:** "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you…"
    - **This grace is referring to a daily supply of God's strength.**
    - **2 Timothy 2:1** "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus…"
    - **Hebrews 4:16** "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need…"

        - **2 Corinthians 12:9** "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me…"
    - **Side 2: We are settled because of the godly people he has brought into our lives:** "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus…"
        - **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ…"
        - **Galatians 6:2** "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ…"

Application:

- **Be strong.**
- **Be loving.**
- **Embrace order.**
- **Embrace encouragement.**
- **Embrace opportunity.**
- **Be family.**
- **Be ready.**
- **Be settled.**