

1 Corinthians (starting book)

10/14/18

Sunday Morning

Starting a new book reminds me of when I was a boy living in West Frankfort, Illinois. That was a coal mining town & trains left there all day & night, loaded w/ coal. In the winter we had snow & ice & trains starting were heard all day & night – slipping on ice & then getting traction again

1. We just finished Exodus – studied the Law – learned a lot about Who God is & how He thinks
2. But as we move into 1 Corinthians a lot has happened –!
 - a. God became a man
 - b. He was born into the Jewish race but the nation rejected Christ
 - c. They crucified Him
 - d. In less than 20 years after writing this book the nation of Israel will no longer exist
 - i. For 2000 years there would be no such thing as Israel
3. But in Paul's day Israel still existed & the Jews kept the old Mosaic system
4. Paul & Barnabas were in Antioch preaching – about Christ – when some men came from Jerusalem saying you still must live according to **Exodus**, i.e. follow the Law of Moses to be saved
5. Paul, Barnabas, their entourage & those men all went to Jerusalem – where other apostles were – to pray & ask God what He wanted – it became clear; the Mosaic system was out!
6. So, Paul & Silas left Jerusalem & took the message (of Grace) to other churches/places

Acts 16:4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.

⁵ So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

⁶ And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;

⁷ and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;

⁸ and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

V.9 (NP)

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

1. That man turned out to be a woman
 - a. The first European convert was made – Lydia
2. Because of the turmoil the Gospel creates Paul ends up in Athens, Greece waiting on Silas & Timothy to show up there **Acts 17:16**

17:16 Now while *Paul was waiting for them at Athens*, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols.

1. "Paul was waiting for them at Athens"
 - a. Paul is restless in his spirit & begins telling people about Christ
 - b. After preaching in Athens at Mars Hill w/ very limited success it's just a short distance to Corinth, so Paul went to Corinth

Acts 18:1 After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth.

² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

³ and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers.

⁴ And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul *began devoting himself completely* to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

⁶ And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles."

⁷ And he departed from there and went to the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.

⁸ And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.

⁹ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent;

¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city." **V.11 (NP)**

¹¹ And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

1. "Do not be afraid any longer"

- a. Why did God say that? Because he was afraid
- b. How afraid?

1 Corinthians 2:3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

- c. Why was he so afraid?
- d. Look at Corinth!

1. In 146 b.c. Lucius Mummius (Roman statesman/general) destroyed the entire city
 - a. Some say he killed every man, woman, child
 - b. Others say he killed all the men & sold the women & children into slavery
 - c. All the statues, paintings and works of art were taken and shipped to Rome
 - d. Then he burned the entire city to the ground
2. Julius Caesar restored it in 46 b.c., and it grew so rapidly that it was made Achaia's capital and the seat of the proconsulship by Augustus Caesar
3. So, by the time Paul got there the city was only 100 years old
4. But it was already the **4th largest city** in Rome
 - a. I've read its population was anywhere from 90,000 to 400,000
5. Why did it grow so fast? – Its **geographical uniqueness!**
6. Its strategic location made it the mecca of trade between the East and West.
 - a. Its topography made it gateway from east to west & north to south
7. Corinth had a land bridge (an isthmus) of less than 5 miles between Aegean Sea and Adriatic Sea
 - a. It was called the "City of Two Seas"
 - b. The "Bridge of the Sea"
 - c. The "Acropolis of Greece"
 - d. It was known as "the eye of Greece"
 - e. It was the 'Vanity Fair' of the Roman Empire
8. Ships (with sails) could take a dangerous 200 mile trip around Southern Greece or go 4-5 miles by land thru Corinth

9. That meant that every culture in the world stopped at some point in Corinth
 - a. The sins from the east met w/ the sins of the west there!
10. They would either unload a ship & carry its payload 4 miles to another ship or drag the smaller vessels on rollers from one sea to the other
11. The city derived rich income from the transport of cargoes across the narrow isthmus
12. The **communication** between with the eastern and the western world converged there
13. It meant that seamen who had been at sea for a long period of time would have a layover at Corinth
14. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Nero (who turned the first spade of dirt with a golden shovel) realized the practicality of digging a waterway between the seas. But all ancient attempts failed and were abandoned.
15. It wasn't until 1881-93 was the present canal dug, saving a perilous two-hundred-mile trip around the stormy southern Greece
 - a. The modern engineering feat is four miles in length, spanned by the 170-foot-high bridge.
16. The Isthmian games were played every 2 years & only surpassed in importance by the Olympic games
17. It had military value also
18. It was known for its immorality
19. The **Temple of Aphrodite** had 1000 "Ministers"
20. There were temples to Apollo, Hermes, Heracles, Athena, Poseidon, Asclepius, Hygiea, Emperor cult
21. Aristophanes coined the Greek verb *korinthiazomai* – "to act like a Corinthian" as a synonym for sexual immorality
 - a. Greek plays of the day often depicted Corinthians as drunkards and reprobates.
22. A public theater that seated 14,000
23. The city streets were wide & modern
24. **So, Why was Paul so afraid?** You don't step into that kind of spiritual battle w/out fear **1 Corinthians 2:3 x (NP)**

1 Corinthians 2:3 x And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

- e. Paul wasn't afraid of dying, big cities, sin or pain
 - i. But there is a healthy fear – a fear that keeps you from depending on your own strength

2 Corinthians 1:9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves **in order that** we should **not trust in ourselves**, but in God who raises the dead;
 - ii. So, the next time you are afraid look at it as though God is reminding you to trust Him!
 - iii. Being afraid is no sin
 - iv. Allowing fear to control your life is!

Acts 18:11 x And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

- 1. "he settled *there* a year and six months"
 - a. After 18 months he left there to go to Jerusalem stopping briefly at Ephesus
 - b. After some time in Jerusalem, he went to back to Ephesus & stayed 3 years
 - c. While in Ephesus he received a letter from Corinth

1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.
 - d. **1 Corinthians** is his response to their letter
 - i. He wrote it from Ephesus in about a.d. 54 or 55

1 Corinthians 16:7 For I do not wish to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.

⁸ But I shall remain in Ephesus until Pentecost;
 - e. With that in mind open your Bibles to **1 Corinthians 1:1**

1 Corinthians 1:1 (NP)

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

1. "called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God"

- a. Paul was chosen by God's sovereignty
- b. Paul was the least likely person to be used by God
- c. He admits that very thing

1 Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

d. Paul doesn't apologize – "...by the grace of God I am what I am..."

- i. He could have spent the rest of his life feeling inadequate as an apostle – not deserving to be one

e. He does something else instead – he chooses to work harder than any of the other apostles

- i. Where **sin** abounds – **grace** abounds the more – where grace abounds the more – **gratitude** abounds even more still

f. God has called you – gifted you – if you realize the grace God has shown you – nothing can slow you down or keep you from living for Him

- i. True gratitude produces its own natural response

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

g. Because God has done so much for every believer – He has put it in our heart to serve Him

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

- i. Sin has to work to squelch the natural desire to live for Him

2. "Sosthenes our brother" (NP)

2. "Sosthenes our brother"

a. We know little about him – maybe leader of synagogue in Corinth

i. Sosthenes of **Acts 18**

Acts 18:17 And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and *began* beating him in front of the judgment seat. And Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

ii. "...our **brother**" – indicates there was a special bond between Paul & Sosthenes

V.1 x Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

V.2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

1. "to the church of God which is at Corinth"

a. There is an important word in that phrase – "at" or "in" Corinth

b. It **isn't** the church "of" Corinth – Otherwise their identity would have been Corinth

i. That is what Paul is going to help them stay away from – identifying w/ Corinth

ii. How odd – the word "**Corinth**" stands for the vilest of sin

iii. The words "**Church of God**" should stand for purity

c. Their **physical** location was in Corinth – their **spiritual** location was in Christ

i. We are in the world – but we are not of the world

John 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

ii. Their/our identity & life was/is to be in Christ

iii. The "Church of God" – saved by God, ruled by God, obedient to God, praying to God, living the life of God, following the will of God

d. Both Corinth & church of God dwelling together in same location

- e. The problem is: how to keep the Church separate from Corinth
 - i. The Church of Corinth had problems
 - ii. They didn't go out into the world – they let the world's influence come into the Church
- f. Today the world's influence is in the Church
 - i. Even the way we "**market**" Christianity has become worldly
 - ii. Listen to Paul & how he presented Christ – he didn't "**market**" Him at all

1 Corinthians 2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

⁴ And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

⁵ **that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

iii. Let's keep the world out of the Church!

- 2. "who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus"
 - a. Perfect passive participle of ἀγιάζω
 - i. Perfect tense means completed action – never changing
 - ii. Passive voice – God did it – we didn't do it
 - b. **Positional in nature** – our standing before God is set forever

- 3. "saints by calling"
 - a. Same root word is the same word as "sanctified" (above)
 - i. We have been set apart in Christ Jesus
 - b. Holy by calling
 - c. Look at **V.1**

V.1 x Paul, **called as an apostle** of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother

- 1. Paul was **called** to be an apostle

V.2 (NP)

V.2 x to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints by calling**, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

1. The **church** is called to be separated from the world
 - a. Go to **V.9**

V.9 God is faithful, through whom **you were called into fellowship** with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. The **individual believer** is **called into fellowship** w/ Jesus Christ
2. You & I have a calling – let's not miss that calling
3. This is our only chance to show our love for Christ w/ sin all around

