

The Churches of Christ Salute You

Lesson Six

(Romans 16:16)

April 13, 2008

LESSONS FROM THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

Overview:

1. Paul wrote to the Romans about the “churches of Christ.”
2. A plurality of churches did not mean a number of different denominations.
3. Instead, each was a local body of believers that belonged to Christ.
4. Since we also are a church of Christ, there are many lessons to be learned from these early churches.

Introduction:

1. Corinth was a wealthy city of around 600,000 citizens.
2. It was well known throughout the Roman Empire for its immorality and debauchery.
3. There were over 1,000 religious prostitutes who lived at the Temple of Aphrodite.
4. To this city, Paul came with the Gospel of Christ.
5. And in this city, the Lord’s church was established...

I. The Church Founded (Acts 18:1-11)

- A. After preaching in Philippi and Thessalonica, Paul traveled to Berea, Athens and then to Corinth.
- B. The church at Corinth was founded with unity.
 1. Paul was a Jew from Antioch, educated in Jerusalem.
 2. Aquila and Priscilla were Jews from Pontus (a large province in northeastern Asia Minor, along the southern coast of the Black Sea) who had recently lived in Rome, Italy.
 3. Silas was likely a Hellenistic Jew.
 4. Timothy was the son of a mixed marriage (his mother was Jewish, while his father was Greek) who likely hailed from Lystra.
 5. Yet, they all came together and worked diligently to establish the church in Corinth.
 6. What a powerful lesson this should have been for the Corinthians!
- C. The church at Corinth was founded by work.
 1. Paul labored to preach the Gospel in the city of Corinth – staying for a year and a half.
 2. However, he also worked as a tentmaker to support himself while preaching (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1-18; 2 Corinthians 11:7-9).
 3. Aquila and Priscilla also were employed at this occupation.
- D. The church at Corinth was founded upon truth.
 1. Paul reasoned with and persuaded the Jews with Truth (1 Cor. 1:21-24)
 2. He gave solemn testimony that Jesus is the Christ (1 Cor. 2:1-2).
 3. He taught the Truth without compromise, fear or favoritism (1 Cor 2:3-5)
 4. He continued teach for a year and a half.
- E. The church at Corinth was founded in obedience.
 1. The Corinthians heard the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4).
 2. The Corinthians believed the Gospel.
 3. The Corinthians obeyed the Gospel (1 Cor. 1:14-17; 6:9-11; 12:13).
- F. The church at Corinth was founded through sacrifice.
 1. Paul, Aquila and Priscilla had all faced persecution for the Gospel.
 2. Justus and Crispus gave up position to become Christians.

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- II. The Church Fractured (1 Corinthians)
 - A. The church at Corinth had been built upon a solid foundation.
 - 1. They heard and believed the Gospel of Christ.
 - 2. They obeyed the Gospel – including repentance and baptism.
 - B. However, as they built upon this foundation they abandoned the wisdom and instruction of God for the wisdom of men (1 Corinthians 2:4-10; 3:3-15).
 - 1. Whenever people begin to follow men instead of God, division occurs.
 - 2. The reason for such division in the religious world today is the same.
 - C. Thus, this church became plagued with a lack of love and a surplus of pride.
 - 1. This created a lack of unity (1:10-17).
 - 2. This created a lack of maturity (3:1-2).
 - 3. This created a lack of respect (4:7-16).
 - 4. This created a lack of discipline (5:1-13).
 - 5. This created a lack of shame (6:1-8).
 - 6. This created a lack of restraint (6:12-20).
 - 7. This created a lack of compassion (8:1-13).
 - 8. This created a lack of sacrifice (9:1-27).
 - 9. This created a lack of submission (11:1-16).
 - 10. This created a lack of fellowship (11:17-34).
 - 11. This created a lack of cooperation (12:1-31).
 - 12. This created a lack of edification (14:1-40).
 - 13. This created a lack of hope (15:1-57).
 - 14. This created a lack of work (15:58 – 16:4).
 - D. The solution to the problems at Corinth was a simple one – learn to love.
 - 1. Love will motivate action (13:1-3).
 - 2. Love will neutralize pride (13:4).
 - 3. Love will eliminate selfishness (13:5-6).
 - 4. Love will activate patience (13:7).
 - 5. Love will endure (13:8-13).
 - E. Could the Corinthians learn to love and change their behavior?
- III. The Church Fixed (2 Corinthians)
 - A. Thankfully, the Corinthians (like Apollos [Acts 18:24-26]) were teachable.
 - B. They were willing to learn from their mistakes and change.
 - 1. They were given time to change (1:23-24).
 - 2. They were given encouragement to change (2:1-3).
 - 3. They were given compassion to change (2:4).
 - C. They learned the blessings that come from repentance (7:8-11).
 - 1. Forgiveness (2:6-7a)
 - 2. Comfort (2:7b)
 - 3. Relief (2:7c)
 - 4. Love (2:8)
 - 5. Liberty (3:17)
 - 6. Glory (3:18)
 - 7. Heaven (5:1-11)
 - D. However, they still had room for improvement.
 - 1. In separation from sin and sinners (6:14 – 7:1)
 - 2. In giving (8:1 – 9:15)
 - 3. In discerning truth from error (11:1-15)

Conclusion: The church at Corinth teaches many powerful lessons for us today.