

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 1 Corinthians 16:1-24

Lesson 17-An Offering, Ministry Matters, and Farewell

- **A “first day” Bible text and an offering collection. What does this mean for us? (v.1-4)**
 - There was **a special offering being collected from many churches for those saints who were in Jerusalem (See Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-28)**
 - Some have suggested that this was a command to take up an offering for some Sunday morning church service. However, **the Bible makes it very clear to us that this is not talking about some kind of a Sunday morning worship service, as we can surely see.**
 - There are **only eight texts in the New Testament** that even mention the **“first day of the week.”** Six of them are in the four gospels. They merely record the historical fact that Jesus rose to life on that day and saw his disciples that evening. One of them tells us that Jesus met with his disciples in the upper room on that same Sunday evening in which he rose. They had been gathered together there “for fear of the Jews.” (refs. Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:1-4; Mark 16:1-4; Mark 16:9-11; John 20:1, 19). The last two of these texts are **1 Corinthians 16:1-3**, and also Acts 20:7-11, which mentioned a preaching and breaking bread ceremony that happened as the believers in one particular place were saying their final goodbyes to Paul. It happened actually late on a Saturday evening which would have been considered the “first day.” They broke bread together too, which was something that the Christians often did every day, and referred to eating a meal, not just to the communion service—other references for this last verse are Acts 2:46; 27:33-35). Note: Sabbath or “seventh day” is mentioned 56 times in the New Testament.
 - **Notice: None of the few “first day” texts ever even once mention Sunday as being “blessed”, “made holy,” or “sacred.” Nor, do they give any reason for such a thing to happen (we just cannot find such a statement or evidence).**
 - **The “Seventh-day Sabbath” however has VERY CLEAR Bible reasons for its observance.** The Bible tells us this day was **“blessed” and “made holy”** from the very first week of Creation (Genesis 2:1-3), and it was to be kept Holy in remembrance of the Creation and rest of God, the Bible tells us. We are commanded to remember and keep holy the **“seventh-day Sabbath” right in the heart of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11).**
 - **Jesus kept the Seventh-day Sabbath Holy, and always worshipped God at Synagogue (church) on that day (Luke 4:16).** Jesus never broke the Sabbath commandment as some falsely accused him of doing—that would have been sin, of which Jesus was never guilty (John 15:10,11; 1 John 3:4,5). **Jesus Christ was a Sabbath reformer and He taught people how to rightly observed the Sabbath “according to the commandment”** and not according to some false Jewish restrictions that had been imposed (See **Mark 2:27,28**).
 - **Jesus’ closest followers kept the Sabbath at the time of Christ’s death (Luke 23:54-24:1).** **The Early church** shows us a record of Sabbath keeping (Acts 13:42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4).
 - **To the Christians, the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath day (of those commands) were very important (Notice 1 Corinthians 7:19; Romans 3:31; 7:12; James 2:10-12).** You can imagine the situation in the early church—the issue of circumcision became a huge matter in the early church between the Jewish and the non-Jewish believers (it sparked an entire church counsel meeting, Acts 15). The letters of Paul talk much about the matter of circumcision not being important any more. And yet, all of the New Testament is silent upon the matter of any sort of Sabbath change. Could you imagine the controversy that would have arisen if they had said not to keep the Sabbath or the Ten Commandments anymore??!!
 - **Where did Sunday, or first day worship start with Christians (seeing it’s not mentioned in the Bible)?** You can trace this matter back to the church of Rome in the 4th Century especially. The Roman church became

one of the largest and most influential branches of the Christian church, but they did not remain in faithful adherence to the teachings of the Bible. They started their own traditions and will proudly tell us so. This is where so many Christians received the tradition of Sunday worship—from Rome, not the Bible! Sunday was originally the Pagans day for worshiping the Sun—Sun-day!

- **How does Jesus feel about men trying to change His Holy Law?** Does He approve or allow of it? (In Daniel 7:25 it was predicted that a corrupt power would “think” to change God’s set times and laws; **Mark 7:6-13**). Jesus himself did not come to change anything in the law, but rather to fulfill it in regards to the Sacrificial offerings (ref. Matthew 5:17-19). If we know the real truth about these matters, Jesus would like us to follow His example and truth; not the traditions of men. Reform in the Christian church, to adhere to God’s holy teachings is required by Jesus (John 14:15,21; James 4:17; Acts 17:30; Matthew 28:19,20). Please understand, there are people who love Jesus in every church. There are people who are in a saving relationship with Jesus within all of the churches. However, when we know what is right to do, and then do it not, that is when it becomes a sin, and can separate us from Jesus. When we know better, and yet, we “set aside” the commandment of God to keep a tradition of men, then we are committing the same sin as the Pharisees in Christ’s day. If you are struggling over this issue, knowing what is right to do, but feeling pressures from work, or tensions or church family issues, please talk with someone about it, pray for God’s help, and let’s do something to help you walk freely in the will of God.
- **Ministry Travel plans and Gospel workers (v.5-12)**
 - (v.8)-Paul was writing this letter from Ephesus, where he had been laboring to share the good news of Jesus Christ with many! (v.9) A great opportunity had opened where Paul was and he should take advantage of it (but there were many adversaries too). Whenever the gospel is preached as it ought to be, there are generally two groups that form—(1) those who are thankful for it, (2) those who hate and oppose it!
 - (v.12) Apollos was a man who was “mighty in the Scriptures” and who had been laboring in Ephesus too. He was quite a faithful preacher for the Lord in the early church (ref. Acts 18:24-28). He was really wrapped up [busy] with the Lord’s work at Ephesus at the time Paul was writing this letter.
- **Final instruction and commendations (v.13-18)** *Be thankful for and refresh those faithful workers who are working hard for the Lord, Paul instructs the brothers and sisters.*
- **Farewells and greetings passed along (v.19-24)**
 - (v.19) simple church meetings were being held in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. It’s VERY important for Christian brothers and sisters to meet together, to pray, fellowship, be instructed in the words of God, to encourage one another, and to be organized for God’s service to reach the lost. We must always meet to worship the Lord and to keep the fire of God’s message ever burning, and growing brighter (Hebrews 10:25 further instructs us on this point).
 - (v.20) “...a holy kiss.” A common greeting for the people of these times and places was to give each other a kiss (like on the cheek). Even Judas greeted Jesus Christ with a kiss (although his intentions were evil, not of love or truth) (ref. Luke 22:47,48). A “holy kiss” is in opposition to an “unholy kiss” which would have had nothing to do with a godly greeting.

Question (s) for the Heart:

Is it your desire to faithfully follow Jesus wherever He leads you, and to have His grace and peace in your heart? _____