

MAIN POINT: Let everything y'all do be done in love.

FIVE COMMANDS (BOUND TOGETHER) (vv. 13-14)

- Paul commands the Corinthians to be alert to errors in their midst, and when such errors arise they are to stand firm in the faith (cf. Jude 3).
 - While standing firm in the faith, the Corinthians are also called to be courageous and strong (cf. Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:9; **2 Sam. 10:9-14; Pss. 27:13-14; 31:23-24**).
- The four commands in v. 13—and everything else Paul has called the Corinthians to in this letter—are to be done in love (v. 14).

THREE MEN (AND A HOUSEHOLD) (vv. 15-18)

- Those in the household of Stephanus, which may have included Fortunatus and Achaicus (v. 17), were the firstfruits of Paul's ministry in Achaia (which is where Corinth is located) (v. 15).
 - Paul had baptized those in Stephanus's house (1 Cor. 1:16), and afterward they devoted themselves to serving the saints in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:15).
 - Such devotion should characterize leaders within the church, and the Corinthians are to submit to such leaders (v. 16).
- Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (perhaps the co-laborers and co-toilers Paul had in mind in v. 16?) traveled to Paul from Corinth (vv. 17-18), and likely carried Paul's letter to the Corinthians back home.

FIVE GREETINGS (FROM NEAR AND FAR) (vv. 19-21)

- Far greetings from the churches in Asia (Minor) and in Ephesus—including the one meeting in the home of Aquila and Prisca—along with all those with Paul, and even Paul himself, are offered to Corinth (vv. 19-21).
- Near greetings are encouraged within the church at Corinth, as Paul calls the Corinthians to a familial love (i.e., the holy kiss [v. 20]).
 - This common first-century expression of familial love is chastened by holiness and never self-gratifying. These principles—culturally appropriate, constrained by holiness, care for the well-being of others—should guide our familial displays of affection today.

THE FIRST ADAM, THE LAST ADAM (vv. 45-49)

- A cry for the Lord's justice and his soon return, along with a request for grace upon the Corinthians is found in vv. 22-23.
- Paul's first letter to the Corinthians ends in an unusual way: my love be with y'all in Christ Jesus (v. 24).
 - It's as if after nearly 7,000 words of greetings, rebukes, challenges, encouragements, and gospel-saturated truths, Paul says, "P.S. – I love you," not as an afterthought but as a last-word reminder of his affection.

Recommended Reading:

Why We Love the Church by Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck

Sermon Questions

Please Read I Corinthians 16:13-24

1. How do the five commands Paul gives in vv. 13-14 fit together? What might it look like if a local church lived consistently with these commands (be specific in your application)?
2. Friendships are hard to come by, and good friendships even more so. Good friendships in the Lord, however, both delight the heart and refresh the soul. In what ways did Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus demonstrate such friendship to Paul *and* in Corinth?
3. How would you respond if you knew that churches around Indianapolis and Greenwood were eager to greet you in the Lord? Are you eager to greet them in return?
4. What do you make of Paul's calling on the Lord to judge in v. 22? How does that relate to Paul's prayer, "Our Lord, come!"?
5. Paul ends his letter, a very long letter, with grace and love in Christ Jesus. How would you end a letter to a congregation you loved? Or, more specifically, how would you end a letter that you wrote to LifePoint?