

The Last Impression

A Look at the Conclusions of Various Epistles

I Corinthians

Initial Meeting

Recorded in **Acts 18:1-17**. In Corinth, Paul first meets Aquila and Priscilla who had moved away from Italy because Claudius, the Roman Emperor, ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. They were tentmakers as he was. He worked with them, not only on tents, but for the gospel. Once Silas and Timothy show up, Paul dedicates himself exclusively to preaching Jesus as the Christ. Here, Paul shook out his clothes in protest resolving to be apostle to the Gentiles. The Lord appears in a vision at night to encourage Paul to speak boldly in spite of opposition because God had many people there.

Current Situation

Written from Ephesus about 53-54 A.D. to new Christians, like the vast majority of congregations at this time, but for a host of reasons, even though they were blessed in every way as to their speaking and knowledge, they weren't living faith in best of ways. Paul addresses many major issues of Christian living, as well as clarifying many things that Christians need clarification about if they're going to walk in step with the Spirit. This church had many gifts and many problems!

Last Impression

I Corinthians 16:5-24

After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. ⁶ Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. ¹⁰ If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. ¹¹ No one, then, should refuse to accept him. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers. ¹² Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity. ¹³ Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. ¹⁴ Do everything in love. ¹⁵ You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, ¹⁶ to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. ¹⁷ I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. ¹⁸ For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition. ¹⁹ The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. ²⁰ All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. ²¹ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. ²² If anyone does not love the Lord—a curse be on him. Come, O Lord! ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴ My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1. This send-off sounds almost as though Paul is thinking out loud to the Corinthians. Doesn't that indicate a high level of comfortability between Paul and congregation? This begs the question, how close are pastor and parishioners to be with one another?

2. Why doesn't Paul want to make a brief visit? Why does he want to stay in Ephesus?
 - Most likely, God won't reveal to us where the open doors for effective work for us are. How can we find them, throw them wide open, and go through them?

3. This about vs. 10-11. Why would Timothy have had something to fear from them? See **I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-7**.
 - How can we foster a culture of respect for our leaders in the Lord without putting them on a pedestal?

4. What value would Apollos have been to the Corinthians?

5. What exhortations does Paul give in **v. 13**? The same things which plagued the Corinthians plague us. How do we guard against them without being Puritans?

6. **Verse 14!** Do everything in love. Why? How?

7. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (**I Corinthians 8:1**) Paul's doing a loving thing by recognizing the dedication of those mentioned in **vs. 15-18**. How can we cultivate a culture which appreciates and builds up those who serve, especially those who don't receive public recognition for their service?

8. The conclusion includes a shout out from Aquila and Priscilla, the whole church that meets in their house, and the rest of the family of believers, as well as another mention of greeting each other with a holy kiss. Tenderness is often confused with weakness. How do personal touches like this and expressions of love and care contribute to a strong and resilient group of Christians?

9. Is Paul being petty in **v. 22** or stating a reality?

10. What's your last impression of I Corinthians?