

1 Corinthians 16:15-24

Before Paul signed off in his letter to the Church at Corinth, he was compelled to recognize and commend some of his helpers, co-laborers; I would like to call them "tenacious saints". They were as "determined" as the Apostle Paul for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, and they are examples to us for our generation! Brethren, we should emulate their determination and tenacity!

Who were these saints? Stephanas (and his family), Fortunatus, Achaicus, Priscilla and Aquila. And finally, Paul's sobering warning to the church.

1 Corinthians 16:15-16: The house of Stephanas:

While Paul was busy preaching the gospel of Christ, ministering to the souls of the saints, and contending with enemies of the gospel, Stephanas and his family were "in the background", ministering and caring for the needs of the saints so that they could attend upon the Lord without distraction and be strengthened in the faith of Christ!

This family was among the "first families" saved in Corinth, and they were also of that small number of converts whom Paul had personally baptized.

1 Corinthians 1:14-16

There's much for us to learn from "the house of Stephanas", In (V15) Paul called them "ministry addicts".

They had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints"

Beloved, what is written of Stephanas and his family ought to be true of all of us! Paul made it clear in his apostolic writings that the churches were undergirded and strengthened by "MANY" devoted hands and hearts.

How often do we look "singularly" at the Apostle Paul, and commend him, as if he singlehandedly bore the work and burdens of the churches of that time?

If Paul were here, I have no doubt that he would point to Stephanas, and many other devoted servants of Christ, who were not apostles, pastors, or preachers, BUT WHO WERE INSTRUMENTAL in ministering to the saints and therefore strengthened the churches and furthered the gospel!

They were devoted, determined and tenacious servants, helpers, laborers, ADDICTS for Christ!

Do any of these adjectives describe YOU to the ministry of the saints here in Springfield? Paul wrote: "Ye KNOW the house of Stephanas", does the church KNOW YOU like this?

I know there are limitations to what some can do, and yet, every member of the body should be a "helper" to the saints? I have no doubt if you attended the church at Corinth just one time, it would not be long before you WOULD KNOW Stephanas and his family! Therefore, Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 16:16: "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helpeth with us, and laboureth"

Stephanas and his family earned Paul's trust! Because they had devoted themselves to the ministry the saints, Paul was able to wholly devote himself to the gospel ministry. He didn't have to ask; did you remember to take care of this family or that family's needs? That is why Paul commanded the church to SUBMIT to them and them in all their labors!

They have my trust! They are faithful servants of Christ!

Paul's apostolic ministry to the churches (and to us today) DEPENDED on the help and ministry of Stephanas and his family.

They were "fire and forget" Christians!.
(a missile able to guide itself to its target once fired)

Beloved, let us follow their example to be "addicted to the ministry of the saints".

"I am glad a the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus"

These men probably brought the letter from the church at Corinth to Paul with the church's questions for him. (7:1):
"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me" (your questions)

They were (to Paul) "personal and familiar faces" of the church, (they brought the letter from the church), but they also brought a face-to-face report to Paul. They also brought good news which refreshed and encouraged Paul!

1 Corinthians 16:17B-18: "For that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore, acknowledge ye them that are such"

These men probably carried Paul's letter back to the church at Corinth. Think of the "continuing ripple effect" of their faithfulness to the ministry of Christ, THEY CARRIED this letter, "The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians", which is in now in our Bibles. They carried the Word of God to the church!

Little did "the reach" of their faithfulness and ministry!

Beloved, every one of us are called to put a "gospel stamp" on this, our generation for the Kingdom of Christ! What is the ripple effect, THE REACH of your Christian life and your faithfulness to Christ to those in your own personal society? To those whom your life touches?

We have the 1st Corinthian letter, not only because of Paul the Apostle, but also, because of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus!

"Acknowledge ye them that are such, (or honor servants like these) in the church, who are ministering to the saints in the background!"

**There are (2) more saints I want you to meet: 1 Corinthians 16:19:
"The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you
much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house"**

This husband and wife "team" were Paul's tentmaking friends from Corinth: Acts 18:1-3. Paul took them to Ephesus and left them there "to help" the church at Ephesus: Acts 18:18-19.

While they were at Ephesus, they heard Apollos preaching in the synagogue, he was instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit, BUT he only knew the baptism of John. Acts 18:24-28, Romans 16:3-4.

Paul trusted this "spiritual couple" in Ephesus!

Both Aquila and Priscilla WERE instrumental in the furtherance of the gospel, it wasn't Aquila or Priscilla (individually), it was both of them, serving Christ together.

Ladies, Priscilla is mentioned FIRST in Romans 16:3.
She is called Prisca, 2 Timothy 4:19, where she is also
mentioned first.

Consider the gospel ministry of Paul had this HUSBAND AND WIFE not laid down their own necks for the sake of his life.

Like Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus; Priscilla and Aquila were greatly used of God for the furtherance of the gospel!

1 Corinthians 16:20-22: Final greetings, Paul authenticated the letter with his signature, and a final and sobering warning!

Comments on (V20-21): 1 Peter 5:14, "a kiss of charity". And finally, Paul issues this sobering warning to the church, specifically to those who have no love for Christ!

"If any man (or woman) love not the Lord Jesus Christ,
let him be Anath-ema Maranatha".

This is not the only time Paul used harsh language like this, in Galatians 1:8-9, he wrote of those that were "perverting" the gospel; let them be "accursed", saith Paul, who come to you with another gospel!

Accursed: Anathema

So here, if any man "love not" the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, or "Accursed when Christ comes".

If any man or woman LOVE NOT, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Is it possible to have "the right gospel", to have all of your Biblical theology correct, to be a hater of sin and wickedness, but at the same time, to have no genuine and sincere love for Christ in your heart? Revelation 2:1-6

Ephesians 6:24: "Grace be with all (of) them who love
our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

In sincerity meaning incorruptibly, so that the manner of your life MATCHES your profession of faith and profession of love to Christ. What did the Lord Jesus teach us in John 14:21?

"He that hath my commandments, AND KEEPETH THEM, HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him"

So ends the 1st letter of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians with many powerful gospel lessons for sincere lovers and servants of Christ!

Are you a determined and tenacious saint, devoted to the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ? Are you addicted to the ministry of the saints?

Romans 16:1-12 (If time)