**BCM Bible Study: February 26/27, 2020**

**1 Corinthians 16: Closing Exhortations**

Looking Back: Has the resurrection mindset changed the way you have thought about daily life?

The Jerusalem Collection: To understand the first section of ch. 16, we need some background information. Paul has been collecting money from churches across Europe and Asia to give to the impoverished church in Jerusalem. **Read 1 Cor. 16:1-4**.

* To what extent is the spiritual discipline of giving a part of your life?
* Why is it spiritually and practically important for us to give?

Unfortunately, Paul’s charge here is not enough to encourage the Corinthians to give generously. He has to address this again in his second letter. **Read 2 Cor. 8:1-15, 9:5-15.**

* What does it mean to give according to your means (8:2)?
* What does Paul say is the spiritual motivation of worshipful giving?
* Paul famously says that God loves a cheerful giver. Does this mean that we shouldn’t give if we don’t feel cheerful about it? Why not?
* What makes generous giving difficult for you? How does Paul speak into these difficulties in ch. 9?

Paul says more about this collection in his letter to the Romans. **Read Romans 15:25-27**.

* Why do the primarily-Gentile churches “owe” the offering to the primarily-Jewish church in Jerusalem?
* Jewish Christians were known to be wary of Gentile Christians. Paul frequently rebukes them for this, encouraging them to make it easy for the Gentiles to be a part of the church. In light of this, how does this collection demonstrate Christ-like love?
* What can the church do to demonstrate love and unity to the world? How can we be a part of that on this campus?

Paul’s Travels: **Read 1 Cor. 16:5-12**

* Paul frequently discusses his travels plans in his letters but he always holds them loosely. How do you see that mindset in these verses?
* James reflects the same mindset: **Read James 4:13-17**.
* How does this principle impact the way we plan for the future?
* What would it look like for you to both make plans and hold them loosely?

In verse 8, Paul gives a brief glimpse into *how* he determines his plans.

* What principle does he give here? In what way is this paradoxical?
* Consider these verses in 1 Peter: **Read 1 Peter 2:11-12, 4:12-16**.
* How does this shape your thinking about what it may look like to recognize a “wide door for effective work.” (v.8)
* We are people who tend towards the path of least resistance. Do you see this tendency in your own life? Has this impacted your relationship with God or others?

Final Comments: **Read 1 Cor. 16:13-24**

* The third phrase in v.13 is difficult to translate, but it was a Greek phrase typically given to soldiers to act with courage and strength. This is why some translations say “act like men.” How does v.14 qualify what it means to act this way?
* Why would doing things in love take courage?
* Is this different than the way we typically think about strength and courage?
* What does it look like to “give recognition” (v.18) and “be subject” (v.16) to servants of the gospel?

One notable aspect of ch.16 is that the global church comes into view. Paul sees the body of Christ not just as individuals or individual churches, but as a living organism that works together across continents.

* Do you often think of the global church? Why or why not?
* Why is it important to keep this perspective in mind?

Conclusion: This concludes 1 Corinthians! If you have time left, consider these questions:

* What have you learned in our study of 1 Corinthians?
* What part of 1 Corinthians do you most remember? Why was it memorable for you?
* What impact has this letter had on you?

Some Challenge options:

* Give something away this week. Try to give not out of abundance, but sacrificially.
* Write down your current plans for the next 10 years and consider what needs to be held loosely.
* Consider where you may be defaulting to the path of least resistance in your life. Purposely choose to face resistance by sharing your faith or fighting impulses of laziness with respect to spending time with God.
* Do some research on the global and persecuted church. Commit to praying for believers across the world. See these links:
  + <https://www.persecution.com/>
  + <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/>