

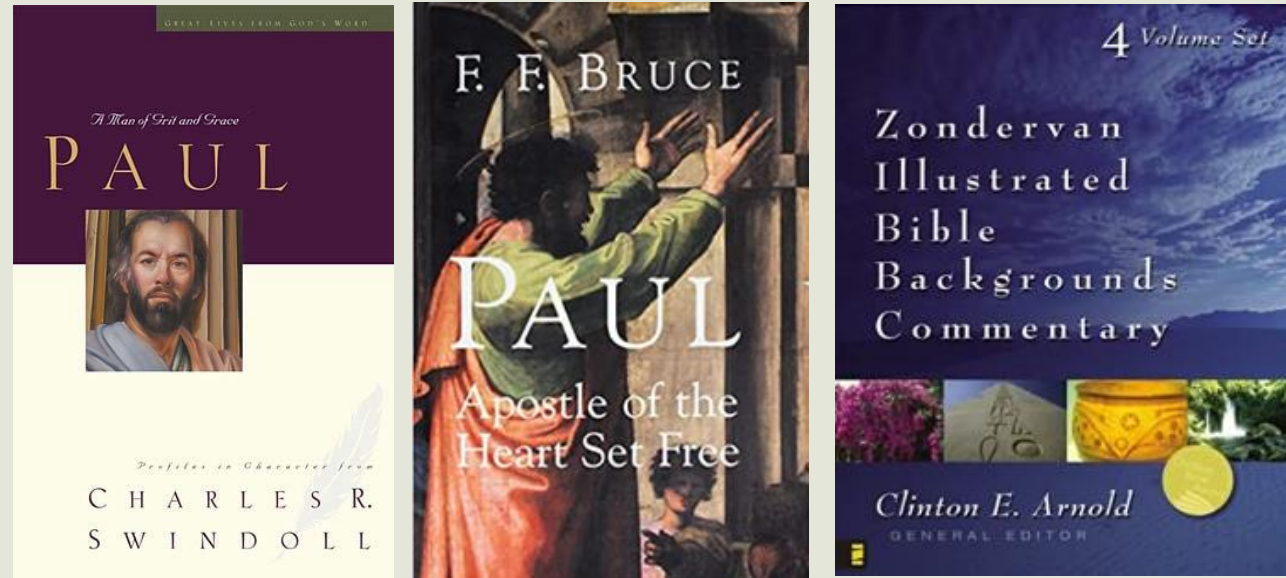


# Paul – Lesson 14

## New Testament Studies

CBC B&B Sunday School  
July 16, 2023

# Source Material



Companion Sources

# Lesson 14 Intro...

- Acts 19:21-20:6 (~ AD 55-57):
  - Where we last saw Paul, he began his third missionary journey, stationed himself in Ephesus supporting a church in a society that practices sorcery and other spiritual influences.
  - Luke tells us that Paul stayed in Ephesus for a period of approximately 27 months (Acts 18:8-10) before heading for Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 19:21)



Acts 18:24-19:20 [NASB]

Pastoral Care for a Worldly Church

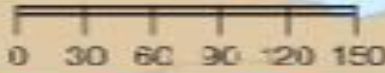
# Acts 19:21 [NASB]

<sup>21</sup> After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” <sup>22</sup> He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

\*Map used by Permission – Standard Bible Atlas



*Paul's Third Missionary Journey*





# Paul's Letters to Corinth

Letter 1: 1 Corinthians 5:9

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

Context: 1 Corinthians 5:1-2

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

# Paul's Letters to Corinth

## Letter 2: 1 Corinthians

### Context:

- To clarify misunderstanding of first letter (1 Cor 5:10-11)
- To address disturbing issues about divisions and cliques he heard from the household of Chloe (1 Cor 1:11)
- To answer questions brought to him from a delegation from the church (1 Cor 16:17)
- Paul shared his plans to visit them in this letter (1 Cor 4:19) but first, he needs to collect money for the struggling saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4)



# 1 Corinthians 16 [NASB]

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. <sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. <sup>3</sup> When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; <sup>4</sup> and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me. <sup>5</sup> But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia;

# Paul's Letters to Corinth

Letter 3: 2 Corinthians 2:3

I wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy

Context: 2 Corinthians 2:1-2

So I made up my mind that I would not make **another** painful visit to you. 2  
For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved?

# Paul's Letters to Corinth

## Letter 4: 2 Corinthians

### Context: 2 Corinthians 7:5-16

After hearing news from Titus that the church wanted to reconcile with him:

<sup>8</sup> For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—*for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— <sup>9</sup> I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.



# Paul's Letters to Corinth

Letter 1: a letter instructing Christians not to fellowship with professed Christians who were sexually immoral (1 Cor 5:9)

Letter 2: 1 Corinthians

Letter 3: "Sorrowful Letter" (maybe 1 Corinthians)

Letter 4: 2 Corinthians

Note: Possible that Paul wrote many other letters to the church that was not preserved or mentioned (i.e.. Did Timothy have a letter with him?) – leading some to speculate that 2 Corinthians may actually be letter# 5 or #6. This is based on the tone in 1 Corinthians over how the church wanted Paul to visit them soon, and how Paul's visit was delayed.

# Timeline

## Reference Handout:

- Paul arrived in Ephesus, having heard about Apollos going over to Corinth (AD 53)
- Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth out of pastoral care and concern for its well being (letter #1)
- Representatives from Chloe's household brought disturbing news about divisions and cliques formed out of loyalty in Corinth (1 Cor 1:11). Paul sent Timothy to try to resolve that matter (AD 54-55)

# Timeline

## Reference Handout:

- A Delegation from Corinth visited Paul with some questions about church order, prompting Paul to write 1 Corinthians to address these issues (1 Cor 16:17) as well as the issues from Chloe's household (1 Cor 1:11) and misunderstandings from Paul's first letter (1 Cor 5:9). This letter was sent to Corinth before Timothy's arrival (Acts 19:22 cf 1 Cor 16:10-11). Letter was delivered in AD 55
  - Timothy was on his way to Corinth through Macedonia, but this letter reached Corinth before Timothy completed his task in Macedonia and make it to Corinth



# Timeline

## Reference Handout:

- Shortly after, Paul left Ephesus after the riot (Acts 19:23-41) and heads towards Macedonia
- \*sometime during this period, Paul may have visited Corinth, and returned to Macedonia after a “painful” visit (2 Cor 2:1-4), leading to him writing a “sorrowful letter.” The church evidently had experienced an intense conflict initiated by a vocal minority that led to a fallout between the church and Paul; prompting Paul to write that “sorrowful letter” with affliction (2 Cor 2:4)

# Timeline

## Reference Handout:

- Some time later, Titus brought news to Paul while he was in Macedonia, that the church wants to reconcile with Paul. This prompted Paul to write 2 Corinthians (2 Cor 7:5-16; cf Acts 20:1). The year was approx. AD57
- In the winter of that year, after completing his fund raising / other businesses with churches in Macedonia, Paul visited Corinth, and stayed there during that winter, where he wrote the book of Romans (Rom 15:23-29)

# Timeline

## Reference Handout:

- The following Spring (AD 58), Paul heads to Jerusalem to deliver needed funds to the struggling saints in Jerusalem (Acts 20:1-4)
- Luke rejoin Paul's ministry team on this journey back to Jerusalem (Acts 20:5-6)



# Issues at Corinth

- Divisions and disunity in the church due to cliques formed out of loyalty to Paul, Apollos, Peter, or the world cultures (1 Cor 3:22)
- Church culture tolerating sexual immorality that even pagans do not tolerate (1 Cor 5:1-2)
- Confusion over association with immoral people of the world from Paul's previous letter (1 Cor 5:9-11)
- Believers filing lawsuits against one another over trivial matters and doing so in pagan courts (1 Cor 6:1-11)
- Christian liberty being mistaken as a license to sin in a manner that is indistinguishable from the world in Corinth (1 Cor 6:12-20)

# Questions from Corinth

- Marriage and singleness (1 Cor 7:1-40)
- Christian liberty, especially as it relates to food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8-10)
- Proper disciplines in worship and administering Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11)
- Spiritual gifts and the unity of the church (1 Cor 12-14)
- Clarification regarding the topic of Resurrection (1 Cor 15)

# Paul's Dilemma in Corinth

- Seeker-Friendly Church that wants to co-exist with world cultures
- Sanctification (Discipleship Training) not happening
- Lack of Spiritual Leadership
- Vocal minority – who may appear spiritual – with worldly agendas have hijacked church agenda
  - Cliques based on loyalties to different apostles formed or encouraged
  - (possibly) used Paul's request for funds to support saints in Jerusalem to create division between Paul and the church

# Church in Corinth

Class Discussion –

How to fix this church in Corinth?



# Church in Corinth

- Why was Paul isolated as the one that the church wanted to part ways with?
- Where was Apollos? Sosthenes? Delegation who visited Paul? (Where was the other church leaders during this church fight?)

# Lessons from Corinth

- Pastors should avoid spending too much time away from the flock tasked under his care
- Every church (will) have vocal minorities that appear spiritual but are very worldly (look for manipulative and deceptive means – 2 Cor 11:13)
- Others?

# Principles I

- **Spiritual leadership involves drawing a hard line between right and wrong.** Paul did not mince words as it relates to the worldly sinful practices that the church had embraced. He fully realizes that their practices were influenced by the culture, and he recognizes the church's young spiritual state. Young Christians look to spiritual leaders for guidance on right vs wrong. Therefore, it is critical for spiritual leaders, in leading others towards spiritual maturity, to make that clear distinction between what God approves and disapproves. Spiritual leaders should never rationalize sinful behavior.

# Principles II

- **Spiritual leadership must learn to deal with the vocal minority.** Vocal minorities are often cancerous to the unity of the church, especially when they are willing to disrupt the unity of the church to achieve their goal. This was what confronted Paul. The vocal minority in Corinth used deceptive and manipulative means (2 Cor 11:13) that created friction between Paul and the silent majority, causing divisions, disharmony, and disunity. They were able to achieve this goal likely because Paul was absent. Spiritual leaders must not overlook the dangers of a vocal minority who preaches a different message.



# Principles III

- **Spiritual leadership advocates for grace and restoration.** The church in Corinth likely went through a tumultuous period that ultimately ended with some form of punishment inflicted on the vocal minority, the group that caused division and disunity in the church (2 Cor 2:6). Although Paul was a direct victim of the vocal minority's attack, he nonetheless advocated for grace and restoration not just for the church in general, but he specifically called out for the comfort and encouragement to the vocal minority that created the problems (2 Cor 2:7-8). This is the mark of a true spiritual leader, being always concerned for the spiritual well-being of everyone, including those who attacked him.

# Principles IV

- **Spiritual Leadership does not engage in worldly comparisons.** The initial signs of fracture at the church in Corinth came from the household of Chloe, who informed Paul about divisions based on loyalties to various spiritual leaders. Paul addressed this issue in both of his letters, citing how he doesn't care to be compared to other apostles or defend his ministry against worldly standards. In his letters, Paul was affirming of all the spiritual leaders as if they are equals, including Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and others. Spiritual leadership does not engage in these worldly comparisons.

# Questions