

COMMENTARY - 1 CORINTHIANS - Chafin

Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985),

Introduction

A study of Corinthians can be one of the most relevant studies the church today could make, for several reasons: *First*, it was written to a church in an urban setting. .. While the churches in the United States began in the country, the great churches of the first century were located in the great urban communities of the Roman Empire. *Second*, the questions that were being asked and the problems that were being faced by the Corinthian church are the same as those for the churches today. On the surface a person might wrongly conclude that Paul's letters deal with a lot of "antique issues." But when we look at the underlying ethical and theological issues, they seem much more contemporary. The first problem that Paul addressed was division in the church, and one of the most persistent problems of the modern church is its difficulty in establishing real community. ...¹

고린도 교회의 이야기는 옛날 이야기가 아니라 심심치 않게 분열이 일어나는 오늘날 교회의 현실이기도 하다. 고린도라는 도시는 고린도라는 도시의 환경이 상업도시여서 그리고 혼합된 민족이 많아 오가는 곳이라 완전한 희랍문화도 아니고, 완전한 로마문화가 아닌 특수한 배경이여서 고린도의 사람들은 예수를 믿기 매우 어려운 상황에 살고 있었다고 한다.

Many Christians and churches adopt secular definitions of success for God's work. They often pattern their lives more after the chief executive officer [CEO] of a corporation than after the simple Galilean. Another problem Christians have today is in finding their own uniqueness and worth in the church. No amount of foot strap "help yourself" psychology could possibly help them as much as really understanding

¹ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 16.

Paul's discussion of the spiritual gifts with which God has endowed each believer.²

Third, *Paul's style for dealing with the questions and problems makes Corinthians helpful today.* While he started with some everyday concern, he would usually probe to see if there were some theological understanding that could be reached. Only then would he apply the principle to the experience of the Christian. This approach may seem slow and often circuitous, but it gives us a better basis for decisions. While the problems we face are not identical to those faced in Corinth, often the underlying principle will serve us well for problems that we are facing.³

Unlike the book of Ephesians, which was intended to be distributed to all the churches, this letter was addressed to one church. This wonderful particularity is its great strength, but is also what challenges the interpreter. A careless and lazy student can create confusion and disorder in the church by trying to apply to all times and all places a truth that may have been much more limited in its application. Many people are still trying to define relationship within the family with ideas that are much more a part of first-century culture than they are a revelation of God's perfect will.⁴

1 Corinthians was written to the church in Corinth which the apostle Paul had founded and converted Jews and Gentiles to Christianity... The church was a relatively young church with none who had been a Christian for more than six years. Most of the members had come out of paganism and were "starting from scratch." .. Most of the members of this church in Corinth came from the lower classes in the town, and Paul reflects on this fact in his letter (1:26).⁵

The church was located in a city where being a Christian was not an easy matter and where just knowing what a Christian ought to be like was difficult. Nothing in Paul's letter would indicate that there was any

² Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 16.

³ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 16.

⁴ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 17.

⁵ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 18.

persecution of the church in Corinth. But while there were no effort to restrict their freedom of worship, the very nature of the culture was a constant threat to the individual Christians and to the church's life.⁶

Corinth was located forty miles west of Athens on the narrow neck of land between the Corinthian Gulf and Saronic Gulf. This assured its commercial success. Its two seaports made it wealthy since it controlled all the east-west commerce, and its land-bridge assured its control of all the north-south travel and business. It was the least of Greek of the Greek cities and the least Roman city in the Roman Empire because of the great racial diversity of its population. There were people from all the known world. It had been destroyed and rebuilt, so it was a newer city with less retraining traditions. The city had developed an unapologetic love of things and a love of pleasure. It was full of people who wanted to make money and have fun.⁷

On the hill overlooking Corinth was the temple to the goddess Aphrodite. Its male and female prostitutes made sexual intercourse as part of the religion, and they participated in the night life of the city when they were not at the temple.... It was to people wanting to serve Christ in such a town that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Unlike the letter to the church at Rome, which was made up mostly of strangers, Paul's relationship to those in Corinth was intimate, loving, and full of mutual reward.⁸

[Upon receiving a news from the Corinthian church] that some of the members of the church were quite reluctant to break with their background, causing some disturbing irregularities in the conduct of the believers. The problem included factions with sexual impurity, and the spread of a quarrelsome spirit. Paul felt that there needed to be reformation of conduct and this was one purpose of the letter. But I Corinthian was also written to answer specific questions that the church wanted answered about the Christian life and church life. These included questions about marriage and divorce (ch. 7), eating food that had been

⁶ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 18.

⁷ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 18.

⁸ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 19.

offered to idols (ch. 8), the value of different spiritual gifts (ch. 12-14) and belief in the resurrection of the body (ch. 15).⁹

The Date of the Letter

1 Corinthian was written between A.D. 54 and 56 by Paul from Ephesus (16:8).

Paul's arrival in Corinth has been set with some exactness at about A.D. 50.¹⁰

I Cor. 12: 1-11 (God's gifts unite the church)

This particular chapter can be of great help to Christians and

I Cor. 12: 12-

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⁹ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 19.

¹⁰ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 20.

마추어 측정하는 것이 아니라 현대사회의 큰 회사의 중역들의 방법을 사용한다고 합니다. 또하나는 현대 기독교인들이 교회에서 자신의 특성과 가치를 찾는 방법입니다.

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도시에서 그리스도를 섬기겠다는 사람들에게 바울이 편지를 한 것입니다. 주로 낯선 사람들의 교회인 로마에 보낸 편지와는 달리 고린도에 사는 사람들과는 바울이 매우 가깝고, 사랑하고, 서로가 보람을 나누는 그런 깊은 관계였습니다.

바울은 고린도 교인중에 과거의 생활습성을 끊지 못하고 교회를 어지럽게 한다는 소식을 듣게 되었습니다. 문제들은 성적인 문란과, 다투는 영들이었습니다. 바울은 그들의 처신에 변화가 있어야 한다고 생각해서 쓴 것이 고린도 전서입니다. 그러나 또 결혼, 이혼등 개인 기독교인들의 문제와 제사상에 놓았던 음식을 먹는 문제, 각각 다른 은사의 가치, 몸의 보혈 신앙등 교회생활에 관련된 문제들에 대해 해답을 주고자 하는 목적도 있었습니다.

고린도 전서는 주후 54-56 년 사이에 썼다고 봅니다 (16:8).

바울이 고린도에 도착한 것이 주후 50 년이라고 봅니다.

10: 13: Paul gives Corinthians some pointed practical advice.

Often devil is very powerful, persuasive, persistent opponents who often invade our minds and hearts and take us captive before we even know they are near. The evil we face in life is a master at disguise and frequently changes the labels on things to confuse us. One of the best defenses we have is to become realistic about the temptations of the world in which we live and to be honest about our own limited spiritual resources to resist. ¹¹

Paul told his readers not to feel exempt from trials. Trials are common to everyone. This statement comes as a shock to all those who have felt that they had in their relationship with Christ an exemption to problems. On the other hand, to people who are going through difficult times this passage is a source of

¹¹ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 126.

assurance that they are not alone. This word is a reminder of the common lot we all share as human beings. Paul also give his readers two great words of assurance about their trials and temptations. First, God would set some limit on what He would allow to happen to them: God "*will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.*" God knows us, our strength and our weaknesses. This doesn't mean that we will never be overcome by evil but that our failure will not be the result of having more than we can handle. The promise of this passage is that there is nothing any of us will face in life that will be so overwhelming but that if we turn to God He will help. Second, Paul assures us that "*with the temptation [He] will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it*" (v. 13). We ask God for help God will give it to us. ¹²

16:1-3 – Collection story

The word about the "*collection for the saints*" at Jerusalem reveals a lot about the Apostle Paul. That he would put his discussion of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and the offering for the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem so close together gives an index to the wholeness of the man. There has always been an unhealthy tendency in the church to create a dichotomy between theology [spirituality] and practical helpfulness, but Paul's wedding of the theological [spiritual] basis of life and its practical application is a healthy corrective to this tendency. In Galatians 2:10 Paul said that when he had been in Jerusalem the apostles [there] asked him to remember in his travels the needs of his fellow Christians in Jerusalem. [Therefore] he urged the churches everywhere to participate in a special offering [for Jerusalem Christians]. Paul had several reasons for giving such a high priority to that kind of project. He had natural ties to his fellow Jews, and it is quite likely he had many friends and acquaintances among those who were suffering. But the thing of utmost importance about this offering was that it had the potential for drawing the

¹² Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 126-127.

Gentile and Jewish Christians closer together. Paul was constantly aware of the fact that the Jewish Christians were nervous about many of the things that were happening in the new [Gentile] churches out in the Greek world. And Paul felt that participating in the offering, either as a giver or a recipient, would create a bond.¹³

While I was serving several homeless mission programs I have seen that people who give to these causes of missions grow in their love for the cause to which they give. Some of them not only gave their money but of their time, talents and expertise. In the process of helping and volunteering they learned more and more about the circumstances and needs of the homeless in their own cities and neighborhoods. Many volunteers confessed that they reaped more blessings than the recipients. The homeless also felt close bond with the givers and volunteers.

While two chapters in 2 Corinthians (8 and 9) are devoted to expanding Paul's thoughts on the importance of the offerings, these four brief verses [1 Cor. 16: 1-4] that are dropped in only as a reminder leave us with a wonderful pattern for giving, both for special offerings and for the meeting of ongoing needs. Everyone should be involved in the offering whether they had little or much to give. The systems Paul suggested was that each week as they met to worship, they add to the offering. This giving should reflect each member's own circumstances. Paul's simple formula [*On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come*] seems to be an excellent way for God's people to give.¹⁴ I had seen some churches put out a small container on each table in the social hall. Whenever they share meals they place changes in it. Slow but sure, it accumulates. It is a wonderful way – easy way for everyone can participate.

¹³ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 192-193.

¹⁴ Kenneth L. Chafin. *The Communicator's Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Inc., 1985), 194.