

Introduction

Karen does much of the grocery shopping for our family. Whenever Karen needs me to go to the grocery store, I have her send me a checklist of what she needs. I use that check list as I am shopping and trying to get everything on the list. Before I go to the check-out line, I review the list one final time to make sure I have everything. I think checklists are very helpful and a great tool for us to use.

Paul is not grocery shopping for his wife, but I believe he had a checklist. On his check lists were things to address with the church based on the reports from Chloe's people and others. He was going to address the divisions and factions in the church. He was also going to address the immorality that had not been addressed. On his checklist were questions that he was going to answer regarding marriage, divorce, and personal liberties. On his checklists were some doctrines that he wanted to make sure they understood. These included spiritual gifts and their use in the assemblies, love, and the resurrection of the dead. I believe his checklist of things to cover also had some miscellaneous items, which I am calling, Paul's Closing Comments. There are some administrative details he wanted to share about the offering for Jerusalem, and his own travel plans. Also on his checklist were some instructions and team updates. He had some final miscellaneous exhortations to give. Finally, he had a number of greetings to give. He has written a lengthy letter, but he needed to squeeze in a bunch of these things on his checklist into his closing comments.

Paul's Closing Comments (1 Cor 16:1-24)

1. Offering for Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4)
2. Paul's Travel Plans (1 Cor 16:5-9)
3. Instructions and Team Updates (1 Cor 16:10-18).
4. Miscellaneous Exhortations (1 Cor 16:13-18)
5. Greetings (1 Cor 16:19-24)

(1 Co 16:1-4) "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. {2} 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. {3} When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; {4} and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me."

(1 Cor 16:5-9) "But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; {6} and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. {7} For I do not wish to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits. {8} But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; {9} for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

(1 Cor 16:10-11) "Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. {11} So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren."

(1 Cor 16:12) "But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all *his* desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity."

(1 Cor 16:13-14) “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. {14} Let all that you do be done in love.”

(1 Cor 16:15-18) “Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), {16} that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. {17} I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. {18} For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.”

(1 Cor 16:19-20) “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. {20} All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

(1 Cor 16:21-24) “The greeting is in my own hand—Paul. {22} If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha. {23} The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. {24} My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

1. **Offering for Jerusalem** (1 Cor 16:1-4)

Paul's first closing comments are about an offering that they were taking for the saints in Jerusalem. This was not just a collection in Corinth, but offerings were being taken by the churches in Galatia also. Paul gives the same instructions that he gave to those churches.

(1 Co 16:1) “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.”

What were those instructions? He wanted them to take a collection on the first day of every week and put it aside. They were to save it until he arrived. He did not want to take a collection when he came; he wanted their offering to be ready to be taken to Jerusalem when he arrived. Then, they were to choose and approve someone from their church to take the offering to Jerusalem. Paul said that he would add some letters to take with their gift to Jerusalem. Then, if it was fitting, he would also go along when they took the offering to Jerusalem.

(1 Cor 16:2-4) “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. {3} When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; {4} and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.”

In 2 Corinthians 8, we have a follow-up report on that offering. The offering to Jerusalem was taken by Titus, and another brother who was of great fame for the gospel. Many scholars believe that he is referring to Luke, who authored the book of Acts. The churches were very careful to administer the offering in a way that was honorable in the sight of the Lord and also the sight of men. That is a principle that we also endorse. We need to do things that are honorable to the Lord and to men. We need to be above reproach in all things, and especially in our handling of finances.

(2 Co 8:16–21) “But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. {17} For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. {18} We have sent along with him the brother whose

fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches; {19} and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness, {20} taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; {21} for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

I want to go back and make a few points about these first few verses. First, the church met on the first day of the week. The Jews had met on the Sabbath, but after Jesus had been resurrected from the dead, the church began meeting on the first day of the week. We see another example of this when Paul was in Troas. Luke wrote, “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread...” They did not just meet to break bread; the early church was devoted to four things, the apostles’ teaching, prayer, breaking bread, and fellowship. In Revelation 1:10, John refers to the first day of the week as the “Lord’s day,” because of His resurrection on that day, and because that was the day the body of Christ (church) would meet.

(Ac 20:7) “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.”

(Re 1:10) “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet,”

The second thing I want to point out is that the churches were not isolated from one another. The churches were connected. They were taking a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. This was primarily a Gentile church taking a collection for the poor Jewish believers in Jerusalem. This crossed all cultural boundaries. This was a selfless, and intentional offering for their poor brothers in the Lord in Jerusalem, whom most of them had never met. In Acts 11, the gospel had been preached to Gentiles in Antioch and many had come to know the Lord. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas there to find out what had taken place (Acts 11:22). He witnessed the grace of God, and began to encourage them (Acts 11:23). He went and found Paul, and together they met with the new church and taught considerable numbers. Then, some prophets came to Jerusalem and indicated by the Spirit that a great famine was going to take place. It had not happened or started to happen; this was just a prophetic word given about a coming famine. The church immediately took an offering, and sent it to Jerusalem via Barnabas and Saul. Again, this was primarily a Gentile church, and they were taking an offering to help those that would be in need when this famine hit. The churches were connected and helped one another out. They were not competing, but were caring for one another.

(Ac 11:27–30) “Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. {28} One of them named Agabus stood up and *began* to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius. {29} And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send *a contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. {30} And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.”

The third thing is that the churches took collections as part of their Sunday services. They would have taken their regular tithes and offerings, which would support the pastors, and needs within the body, and also apostolic ministry. This offering was just a specific offering they were taking for the church in Jerusalem. They had some way of designating the money for that particular

cause. They had a way of saving the money. They also designated and approved someone to carry the offering to Jerusalem. There were a lot of leadership and administrative details associated with this offering, and it was all done in a way that was above reproach in the sight of God and men. This is a very instructive passage for church leaders today.

2. Paul's Travel Plans (1 Cor 16:5-9)

Paul transitioned from the gift to the church in Jerusalem to his own travel plans. He offered to accompany whoever was taking the gift. He said that he would be coming to them after he went through Macedonia. The known churches in Macedonia included: Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, but there were most likely some other churches in Macedonia. Paul said that he would stay with them, and perhaps spend the winter with them. He also mentioned that this would give them the opportunity to send him on his way wherever he went. This would give them an opportunity to supply his future ministry travels. The church was not just supporting the poor in Jerusalem, but they were also giving towards his apostolic ministry.

(1 Cor 16:5-7) "But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; {6} and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. {7} For I do not wish to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits."

Paul's current plans were to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost. There were three main feasts in Israel. The first and main feast was the Passover. The second feast was seven sabbaths after the Passover. Pente means fifty, so it was fifty days, or the day after seven sabbaths after the Passover. The third feast was the feast of Booths or Tabernacles. Even though these were Jewish holidays, the rest of the world knew the time periods associated with these feasts. They knew Paul would be staying in Ephesus until the early part of summer, and then he would go to Macedonia, and then on to Corinth.

(1 Cor 16:8) "But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost;"

Paul wanted to stay in Ephesus because a wide door of effective service had opened up to him. Paul wanted effective ministry. I greatly identify with Paul. I want to have an effective ministry. I believe that each of us should strive to have an effective ministry.

(1 Cor 16:9) "for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

One of the main keys to having an effective ministry is to abide in Christ. Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches. If we abide in Him, we will bear much fruit, but apart from Him we could do nothing. By abiding in Christ, we will see what the Father is doing and we can do what we see the Father is doing. That is the way that Christ lived His life. He spent time with the Father, saw what He was doing, and then gave Himself to those things.

(Jn 15:4-5) "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. {5} "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

(Jn 5:19–30) “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. {20} “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.... {30} “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Another key to effective ministry is perseverance. God tells us that in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. In the parable of the soils, the good soil bore fruit with perseverance. It is wonderful when we see fast growth, but sometimes we have to persevere. We have to dwell in the land, cultivate faithfulness, and persevere.

(Ga 6:9) “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”

(Lk 8:15) “But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

(Ps 37:3) “Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.”

Notice that Paul said there were many adversaries. Even though a wide door for effective service had opened, there were many adversaries. Paul had to deal with these adversaries. Paul said that our battles are not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, powers, and world forces of darkness, against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Paul had to put on the full armor of God and stand firm against these spiritual forces of darkness. He had to persevere so that he could have an effective ministry and bear fruit.

(1 Cor 16:9) “for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

(Eph 6:12–17) “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. {13} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. {14} Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, {15} and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; {16} in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

3. **Instructions and Team Updates** (1 Cor 16:10-18).

The third set of comments that Paul gave concerned his fellow-workers. These were instructions and updates about his team members. The first team member is Timothy, who Paul commonly addressed as my son. He was a spiritual son that Paul had taken under his wing and mentored. He said that if Timothy comes, “see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord’s work, as I also am.”

(1 Cor 16:10-11) “Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord’s work, as I also am. {11} So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.”

In 1 Corinthians 4:17, Paul had told the Corinthians that he had sent Timothy to them. He said that Timothy was his beloved and faithful child in the Lord. Paul had exhorted the Corinthians to become imitators of him, and the reason for sending Timothy was for him to remind them of Paul’s ways. Timothy had learned the ways of his spiritual father and mentor, and could remind the Corinthians the way that Paul lived his life.

(1 Co 4:15–17) “For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet *you would not have* many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. {16} Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. {17} For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

The ESV says, “When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.” Since Paul has already told them that he has sent Timothy, I think the use of *when* is probably better than *if*. I don’t think that Paul believed that Timothy would disregard his instructions to go to Corinth. I also believe that the ESV has done a good job capturing the intent of Paul’s instructions. He wanted to make sure that Timothy was well cared for while he was there. Paul wanted them to receive Timothy, like they would himself, since he was doing the same work. He also wanted them to send Timothy on his way in peace. Sending him in peace was really sending him away with a blessing, as this is how people greeted and departed from one another. Paul was expecting Timothy to return to him after he had visited the church in Corinth.

The next team member that Paul mentioned is Apollos. After Paul had left Corinth, Apollos went and pastored the church. Apollos was mighty in the scriptures, eloquent in his speech, fervent in spirit, and a great spiritual leader. The Corinthians know Apollos very well. In the first chapter, Paul addressed the divisions in Corinth over leadership. Some were of Paul, some were of Apollos, and some were of Peter. Apollos is part of Paul’s apostolic team, and the fact that Paul has encouraged him to go to Corinth shows that they were working together. He let them know that the timing was not quite right for Apollos, and he would come to them when he had an opportunity.

(1 Cor 16:12) “But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all *his* desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity.”

(Ac 18:24–25) “Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. {25} This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;”

The next comments were about the household of Stephanas. Apparently, when Paul brought the gospel to Achaia, they were the first fruits; they were the first people to come to Christ. Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia. We do not know if Stephanas was in Corinth, Athens, Cenchræa, or some other place. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, he mentioned Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchræa. Paul did not say that Stephanas was the first fruits in

Corinth, but Achaia, so he may not have been from Corinth. In any case, the Corinthians obviously knew Stephanas.

(1 Cor 16:15) “Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),”

(Ro 16:1) “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;”

Paul said that the household of Stephanas had devoted themselves for ministry to the saints. His whole household had devoted themselves for ministry to the saints. I understand that concept. The churches in those days met in homes. When you meet in a home, the whole household is involved. The Murchison household has been devoted for ministry to the saints for many years. All of our churches have met at one point or another in our home. When a church outgrew the home, we met in a facility. Everyone is involved in setting up, cleaning up, and participating in the services.

Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. The word for subjection is *hupotasso*, which means under proper order and arrangement. Many times people have a wrong idea about submission or subjection. They think it is about control and power. God's intent is for there to be proper order in the church. The leaders of the church are to humbly serve and lay their lives down for the flock. They are to feed and protect the flock. They are not to rule like the Gentiles. God's plan for leadership is not to lord over people. Jesus taught His disciples, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” I believe that the household of Stephanas were humble servants, and Paul is exhorting the Corinthians to submit to these godly leaders.

(1 Cor 16:16) “that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.”

(Mt 20:25–28) “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. {26} “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, {27} and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; {28} just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Paul rejoiced over the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. They had come from Corinth and supplied Paul with what was lacking on their part. Many think that they brought the letter with the questions that Paul has just answered. They may have brought some insights into the issues the Corinthians were struggling with, and the areas that they needed further instruction. They may have brought Paul an offering. These three men refreshed Paul, and they had also refreshed the Corinthians. Paul wanted them to submit to them and to acknowledge such men. Acknowledging what people do for you is a great way of showing gratitude, appreciation, and honor.

(1 Cor 16:17-18) "I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. {18} For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, acknowledge such men."

4. **Miscellaneous Exhortations** (1 Cor 16:13-18)

In the middle of Paul's comments on his team members, Paul gave five miscellaneous exhortations. The first exhortation is to be on the alert. The second is to stand firm in the faith. The third is to act like men. The fourth is to be strong. These exhortations could easily have been given to a squadron of soldiers. We want our soldiers to be alert so that enemies do not attack us by surprise. We want our soldiers to stand firm against the attacks of the enemy, and fight in the faith. We want our soldiers to be courageous and act like men. We want our soldiers to be strong. These first four exhortations could be summed up by saying, "Be good soldiers!"

(1 Cor 16:13-14) "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. {14} Let all that you do be done in love."

Notice the resemblance to what he wrote the saints in Ephesus. He told them to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. He told them to put on the full armor of God, so that they would be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. He wanted them to take up the full armor of God so that they could resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. He told them to be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

(Eph 6:10–18) "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. {11} Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. {12} For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. {13} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. {14} Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, {15} and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; {16} in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. {18} With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,"

The saints in Corinth were in a spiritual battle. They may not have been aware of it, but they were in a spiritual battle. In Paul's next letter, he told them that though they walk in the flesh, they are not warring according to the flesh. He told them that the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. The saints in Corinth are in a spiritual battle, and Paul is encouraging them to be alert, stand firm, and be strong like good soldiers.

(2 Co 10:3–4) "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, {4} for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

The next exhortation that Paul gives them is to do everything in love. He wrote, "Let all things be done in love." There were divisions in the church. There were quarrels and lawsuits. There was immorality. There was a desire to maximize their use of liberties, and live life to the fullest.

They had a focus on themselves, and a disregard for others. Paul has addressed all of these things in this letter. He told them that knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. They were to seek the edification of one another. Their liberties needed to be restrained by love for others. Their use of gifts in the assembly needed to be restrained by a desire to edify others, not themselves. Paul has spent one whole chapter defining love. He concludes, "Let all that you do be done in love."

(1 Cor 16:13-14) "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. {14} Let all that you do be done in love."

5. **Greetings** (1 Cor 16:19-24)

Paul ends this letter with several greetings. He sends his greetings to them from the churches in Asia. Second, he sends greetings from Aquila and Prisca. Third, he sends greetings from all the brethren. Finally, he exhorts them to greet one another with a holy kiss.

(1 Cor 16:19-20) "The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. {20} All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss."

The first greeting to the Corinthians is from the churches in Asia. Paul was in Ephesus, which was in Asia, when he wrote this letter. The churches in Asia would have included Ephesus, Colosse, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira. You will recognize many of these from Revelation 2-3, where John was given messages to the seven churches in Asia. John was on the island of Patmos, right near Miletus, when he received the revelation. Paul was well connected with these various churches in Asia, and representatives from many of these churches are probably with Paul when he wrote this letter.

The second greeting is from Aquila and Prisca. They were pastoring a church in Ephesus. They were tent makers that Paul had met in Corinth. After Paul left Athens, he had gone to Corinth, and he found a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They had left Rome when Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. They went to Corinth and were making tents there when Paul met them. Because Paul was also making tents, they became friends and he stayed with them. Paul had probably led them to Christ and mentored them. When Paul left Corinth, they went with him to Ephesus. Paul left them there and he went on to Jerusalem. They planted a church in Ephesus in their home. This letter to the Corinthians was written about 57 A.D. In Romans 16, Paul sent greetings to Prisca and Aquila, and to the church that was meeting in their house. They left Ephesus and went to Rome, which is where they originally lived, and planted a church there. The letter to the Romans was written in the spring of 58 A.D., so sometime during 57-58 A.D. they moved back to Rome. Aquila was an apostle, and he and his wife planted churches among other things.

(Ac 18:1-19) "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. {2} And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, {3} and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.... {18} Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. {19} They came to Ephesus, and he left them there...."

(Ro 16:3–5) “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, {4} who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; {5} also *greet* the church that is in their house....”

The next greeting is from all the brethren. This would be the brethren that are with Paul, and he always had a team of people with him. It would probably include the brethren in the church in Ephesus, where he was at the time.

Then, Paul exhorts them to greet one another with a holy kiss. That was an affectionate way of greeting one another. Paul said a holy kiss, so there is no hint of any other motive when people greeted one another with a holy kiss. Having grown up overseas, it was very common in Europe and the Middle East for people to greet one another with a kiss. Most of the time it would be a kiss on the cheek of the other person. Sometimes, someone would kiss the hand of the other person. In America, the most common greeting is a handshake or a hug. In four of Paul's letters he exhorts the churches to greet one another with a holy kiss, so this was a practice he encouraged in all the churches. (See Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, and 1 Thess 5:26.)

(1 Co 16:20) “All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

Finally, Paul sends his own greeting. Paul authenticated his letters by signing with his own hand. In 2 Thessalonians, he wrote, “I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.” In Galatians 6, he wrote, “See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.” It is thought that Paul had poor eyesight and because of that he wrote in large letters, and only signed the greetings. He had other people on his team take dictation from him and do the actual writing of the body of the letters. His greeting and signature distinguished and authenticated his letters.

(1 Cor 16:21) “The greeting is in my own hand—Paul.”

(2 Th 3:17) “I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.”

(Ga 6:11) “See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.”

Paul said if anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. The truth is that those who are unbelievers are accursed. Jesus took the curse for us, and those without Christ are accursed. Believers are to love the Lord with all their heart. If anyone does not love the Lord, they should exam their faith to see if they have placed their faith in Christ.

(1 Cor 16:22-24) “If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha. {23} The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. {24} My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

Next, Paul says, “Maranatha.” This is Aramaic and means, come Lord. Paul and the early church were looking for the return of the Lord. They looked forward to his coming. I believe we have lost some of that enthusiastic anticipation of his return.

Next, Paul said, “the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.” That was also part of his normal greeting and benediction. He began his letters with a blessing of grace and peace, and he ended his letters with grace also.

Paul ended by saying, "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen." Paul loved the Corinthians and he wanted them to affirm his love to them.

Conclusion and Applications

Paul has written a difficult letter to the Corinthians. He has dealt with their divisions, strife, lawsuits, and immorality. He has instructed them on their liberties, divorce, marriage, remarriage, spiritual gifts, love, and the resurrection of the dead. He ends his letter with instructions about an offering for the poor in Jerusalem, his future travel plans, some instructions about his team members, and then a number of greetings. Paul had a love for people. He was well connected with all the churches. He wrote them letters, and he prayed for them. Through his letter to the Corinthians, we see his love and concern for them. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he said he wanted to present every man complete in Christ. Paul has admonished, taught, and exhorted the Corinthians with all wisdom so that he can present them complete. He did not want them to remain as babes in Christ, as carnal Christians. He wanted them to mature and become Christlike.

God wants this for all of us. He wants His bride to be pure and spotless, and without blemish. He wants us to love Him with all of our heart. He wants us to love one another. He wants us to seek love in everything we do. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is also a letter to the church today.

There may be someone today that has not entered into a relationship with Christ. The gospel message is simple, Christ came and died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead on the third day. If you believe that Christ was raised from the dead and you confess Him as Lord of your life, you will be saved. If you would like to make Jesus your Lord, I invite you to pray with me.

Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You came and died for our sins. I believe that You were raised from the dead, and I ask You to come into my life today. I ask You to forgive me of my sins. I give You control of my life, and confess You as Lord today. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

There may be someone else today that has received Christ but has not subjected themselves to the leaders of a church. God wants us to be part of a body of Christ. We are to be members of the body. If you would like to be a member of the Connection Church of East Rome, just let us know. We want to receive you into the body.

Paul's Closing Comments (1 Cor 16:1-24)

Introduction (1 Cor 16:1-24)

1. **Offering for Jerusalem** (1 Cor 16:1-4, 2 Co 8:16-21, Ac 20:7, Rev 1:10, Ac 11:27-30)

2. **Paul's Travel Plans** (1 Cor 16:5-9, Jn 15:4-5, 15:19-30, Ga 6:9, Lk 8:15, Ps 37:3, Eph 6:12-17)

3. **Instructions and Team Updates** (1 Cor 16:10-18, 1 Co 4:15-17, Ac 18:24-25, Rom 16:1, Mt 20:25-28)

4. **Miscellaneous Exhortations** (1 Cor 16:13-18, Eph 6:10-18, 2 Co 10:3-4)

5. **Greetings** (1 Cor 16:19-24, Ac 18:1-19, Ro 16:3-5, 2 Th 3:17, Ga 6:11)

Conclusion and Applications