

## LESSON 26 (16:1-24)

### ABOUNDING IN THE LORD'S WORK

*16 Now concerning the contribution of the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.*

*5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, 6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may speed me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now just in passing; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*

*10 When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. 11 So let no one despise him. Speed him on his way in peace, that he may return to me; for I am expecting him with the brethren*

*12 As for our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brethren, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.*

*13 Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love.*

*15 Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts of the saints; 16 I urge you to be subject to such men and to very fellow worker and laborer. 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for you absence; 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men.*

*19 The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. 20 All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.*

*21 I, Paul, write this greetings with my own hand. 22 If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! 23 The grace of the Lord*

*Jesus be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

Chapter 15 had ended by making practical application of a risen Lord to everyday living. Our lesson will show several ways that are in keeping with such a life that “always abounds in the Lord’s work.”

16:1 – **contribution** – This was the special one-time offering for the poor saints, Rom. 15:26, in Jerusalem. It was given to the Jewish brethren by the brethren in Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia who were probably mostly Gentiles. It was then a gesture of kinship as well as love in action. Other texts that mention this offering would be Acts 20:1ff., 24:17 and II Cor. 8 and 9.

V. 2 – This text, along with II Corinthians, is often used in respect to the weekly offering in local assemblies. However, it should be noted that it is not concerned with such an offering at all. We may want to receive an offering on Sundays or whenever, but we ought not to use this text to prove that such should be done. Let us at least deal honestly with the Bible text if we claim to use it for our faith and practice.

**first day** – As mentioned in lesson 17, on v. 25, Sunday became the norm for the Christians to assemble as a group.

**each . . . put** – The Greek expression, *par heaut* means “for himself” or “by himself” as in a place at home. It could, of course, have been placed in a common location, such as with someone else, but that is left open to the individual.

**store it up** – A Greek expression which means to store as one would a treasure. It is *th\_sauridz\_* as in Mt. 6:19, 21; 13:52; Lk. 12:21; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 12:34; Rom. 2:5; II Cor. 4:7; 12:14; Col. 2:3; Jam. 5:3; II Pet. 3:7.

**as he may prosper** – Always the rule for giving in the Bible. The Old Testament gave the tithe as the norm for giving. The New Testament doesn’t do so, but does teach giving is expected, cheerfully in manner, and as prospered. See below on v. 6. Giving for the local work and “mission giving” are all taught.

**when I come** – Paul wanted them to have it “saved up” so that no special offerings need be taken when he arrived.

V. 3 – The Corinthians could have chosen to send representatives along with the offering had they chosen to do so. It seems apparent from the Acts 20 account that they did not do so. It seems apparent from the Acts 20 account that they did not do so, although Paul went. In passing, we might carefully consider how Paul managed this special gift, such as taking along plenty of witnesses to see that it got to where it was going, etc.

We would do well to study his methods of dealing with the money of others. See especially the latter part of II Cor. 8.

V. 4 – Paul’s plans were unsure at the time of writings, since the principle in v. 7 always determined his activities.

V. 5 – This verse expressed Paul’s thought then. Noting II Cor. Ch. 1:12ff., evidently some accused him of being “wishy-washy” and he had to defend himself. He argued that God was stable, and as God’s servant, he was stable.

V. 6 – It was Summer or early Fall at the time of writing. As it turned out, he spent the Winter in Macedonia, and went to Corinth in the Spring, leaving for Jerusalem prior to Pentecost, Acts 20.

**speed me** – He, though not taking support from them while there previously, had the right to do so. He clearly expected them to aid him when he came. Consideration of II Cor. 10:13-16 will show that he expected them to enable him to work elsewhere, in the same way as he labored in Corinth with help from those in Thessalonica and Philippi, Acts 18; Phil. 4.

V. 7 – This was his “travel basis” regardless of what else happened. See on 4:19, then recall Jam. 4:13ff.

V. 8 – While he had plenty of opportunity to serve in Ephesus, the adversaries were too much, as Acts 19 shows, and he had to depart.

**wide** – From the Greek word for great or large, meaning that he had abounding chances to preach.

**effective** – The term was seen under 12:6.

**adversaries** – The silversmiths were among those, and doubtless many others were opposed to Paul’s work.

V. 9 – Timothy had already departed through Macedonia on his way to Corinth, Acts 19:22, probably to deliver some information from Paul and also to help the brethren. It is not known for certain if he got there. He was with Paul when the second letter was written. II Cor. 7 reveals that Titus had been sent to Corinth, had been received well and reported to Paul in Macedonia that the brethren there had received Paul’s instructions well.

**at ease** – He means remove any reason to be afraid. They were probably unable to do much about the unbelievers, but as brethren they were to treat Timothy with due respect.

**the work of the Lord** – A plain way of declaring that if they hindered him, they were doing so to their own hurt, for Timothy was God’s messenger through Paul. Check this principle in Mt. 10:40 and Jn. 13:20.

V. 11 – **despise** – This word is a strong term. It was in 1:28 (despise) and 6:4. The term itself is

*eksouthene*, and you can check it in Mk. 9:12; Lk. 18:9; 23:11; Acts 4:11; Rom. 14:3, 10; II Cor. 10:10; Gal. 4:14 and I Thess. 5:20.

**in peace** – Timothy was to depart without any problem from them. While some in Corinth tended to be “problem children” to Paul, there were doubtless some who were worthy of the “dearly beloved” in 15:58 too.

**with the brethren** – This is an ambiguous phrase. It is not certain if brethren were coming with Timothy or there were others with Paul (such as Titus and those in v. 17) who were awaiting his return.

V. 12 – Apollos may well have declined to go because of the faction following him. He understandably had great interest in the church and they in him. He had done a good work in Achaia, Acts 18:27-28; I Cor. 3:6.

**strongly urged** – See on 1:10 for this term.

**other brethren** – Evidently those who took this letter to Corinth. See v. 17, 18.

**opportunity** – At a “better time” the Greek has it.

v. 13 – **watchful** – This word was often on the lips of Jesus, as in Mk. 13:34-35; 14:34, 37-38; Lk. 12:37. See also Acts 20:31; I Thess. 5:10.

**stand firm** – This recalls 15:58, though the term in Greek is different. It is in 10:12; also Eph. 4:14; Col. 1:23; 2:7; II Thess. 2:15. There were many temptations in Corinth as elsewhere, and eternal vigilance was the price of victory in Jesus. See Eph. 6:10ff.

**be courageous** – *andridzomai*: “Be a man” Paul wrote. Some of the saints had lots of growing to do. Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were bishops in the church of England during the reign of “Bloody Mary” in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They were burned at the stake for opposing the evil rulers in England. As the fires were lighted, Latimer said to Ridley “Play the man, Ridley. By God’s grace we shall light a fire this day which all England can’t put out.”

**be strong** – This expression is also in Eph. 1:19; 3:16; Col. 1:11; I Tim. 6:16 and I Pet. 5:6. Check *krate*. It often has the idea of grasping, holding on, retaining or even arresting someone, especially in the gospels. So the idea is to be forceful rather than indifferent, to be earnest rather than half-hearted.

V. 14 – The fifth command was not least because last. How much they needed to heed this imperative, not only among themselves but for Timothy, Titus and Paul!

V. 15 – Some versions will read differently in vv. 15-16, but the general meaning is the same.

**Stephen** – From Acts 17:34 it seems that others were the first converts, but Paul may mean those in Corinth, or perhaps a family.

**the service** – See the Greek word under 3:5. This was a noble and unselfish dedication to “specialized service” on the part of the house of Stephen. They were good examples to follow, and to support in every way.

**I urge** – See on 1:10; also above on v. 12, v. 15.

**to be subject** – As in Rom. 13:1. He seemingly means to treat them as Timothy was to be treated, vv. 10-11, and anyone else who labored as they did, even Paul, v. 6.

V. 17 – The three men mentioned here probably were partly responsible for the information about the Corinthian assembly as well as the source of the questions. They may be the bearers of this letter. See v. 12.

**your absence** – Because of the distance and difficulty involved, Paul and those in Corinth could not be together as they would have wished. The three men helped make up the lack of that relationship. The original term meant ‘to come short’ or ‘to lack something’ and in Mk. 10:21; Lk. 15:14; Jn. 2:3; Rom. 3:23; I Cor. 1:7 (no lack or shortness); 12:24; Phil. 4:12; Heb. 11:37.

V. 18 – **they refreshed** – Jesus used this same term in Mt. 11:28. Paul used it in II Cor. 7:13; Phile. v. 20. Read I Peter 4:14. Their contribution to Paul and to the brethren in Corinth was worthy of honor, which Paul instructed them to bestow.

V. 19 – **send greetings** -- Often translators use such terms as greet, welcome, or even salute to remember someone to someone else, as in Rom. 16:3.

**churches of Asia** – These would probably include all those mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3.

**Aquila and Prisca** – They were in Corinth when Paul got there, and now in Ephesus. They had been in Rome earlier, and also later. They were precious to Paul, Rom. 16:3. They were Christians everywhere they went.

V. 20 – **the brethren** – The apostle evidently felt he could speak to those close to him because of their common concern for Christian brethren everywhere. This practice of sending greetings to brethren in other places is a good thing to do, and often cheers the hearts of those in troubled circumstances. All of us need to enlarge our vision and understanding of the family of God, and realize that there are people everywhere on God’s good earth who love Him and the Lord Jesus just like we do. One of the great advantages of conventions is that of broadening one’s concept of God’s family, those who are our brothers and sisters in the household of God.

**a holy kiss** – While not a cultural custom in our day, it evidently was then. It still is in some parts of the world today, such as Alaska and Russia.

V. 21 – **I, Paul** – As with nearly all his epistles, Paul used a scribe to write the letter. In Romans, it was Tertius, 16:22. He evidently personally signed his letters at the end, and sometimes with a few remarks. Check Gal. 6:11ff.; Col. 4:18.

V. 22 – **no love** – The Greek term is *philia*. See on 13:2.

**accursed** – Check 12:3. This may seem strange, but check II Cor. 6:14ff.

**Our Lord, Come!** – The K.J.V. put two Greek expressions together that didn’t belong together. This expression in Greek is *maran atha*, from the Aramaic language. It is translated correctly in R.S.V., and pronounced as maranatha.

V. 23 – A common greeting as well as a closing expression. See Paul’s letters and those of Peter and Jude. However, because it was common did not lessen its significance!

V. 24 – He cared much for them, and was willing “to spend and be spent” in their behalf, even if they would not reciprocate in kind at times. Such was Paul’s love (the term here is *agape*) for them and all the churches, II Cor. 11:28, because of their mutual relationship in Christ Jesus. Let us all be imitators of Paul in respect even as he was of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

## LESSON 26 QUESTIONS

1. Did you notice how the practical application in 15:58 based upon the resurrected Lord was cried through Ch. 16?
2. What were Paul’s instructions to Corinth in regard to the special offering for the Judean brethren? (Did he have to exhort them again about it?)
3. Upon what basis did Paul build his travel itinerary? Is that a good example for us?
4. How was Timothy to be treated in Corinth?
5. List the five exhortations in vv. 13, 14.
6. What was so noble about the household of Stephen?
7. What directions did the apostle give as to the treatment to be bestowed upon all such laborers in the Lord?

8. How long has it been since you sent a Christian greeting to brethren in another place, perhaps brethren you didn't even know?
9. How were people who didn't love the Lord Jesus to be treated?
10. How would you reconcile such treatment as in #9 above with Jn. 3:16?
11. Could you say "Our Lord, Come" with meaning?