

“What The Church Should Be Like,” Part 4 - 1 Corinthians 14:36-40 – March 20th, 2016

- Today's teaching will be the final in a part four series I've titled, "What The Church Should Be Like."
 - The chapter concludes with the Apostle Paul making it very clear in no uncertain terms what the church should be and look like.
 - More specifically, no one or no thing should ever become a distraction or a disruption from the main thing being the main thing.
- In our study through this first epistle to the church in Corinth, it's rather apparent that this was a church that had gotten off track.
 - It seems that their services were riddled with chaos and confusion as evidenced by the church being in disorder and disarray.
 - It's for this reason that Paul is addressing these serious problems that ensued as a result of their ignorance concerning church.
- It's my belief that the Corinthian's had forsaken everything Paul taught them while he was there with them for a year and a half.
 - Just as the Ephesian church had forsaken their first love, so too had the Corinthians forsaken the worship and Word of God.
 - I suppose in some way you could say Paul, by the Spirit of God, is exhorting them to get their focus off themselves and on God.
- 1. The Church should be a place where we worship God (Verses 21-25)**
- Paul says it's only the prophetic Word that causes people to fall down and worship God exclaiming, "God is really among you."
- 2. The Church should be a place where we're built up (Verses 26-29)**
- Here, Paul says when they come together as a church, everything they do must be done so that the church may be built up.
- 3. The Church should be a place where we're instructed and encouraged (Verses 30-32)**
- Paul continues by giving specific restrictions with tongues and prophecy so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.
- 4. The Church should be a place where we find peace and harmony (Verses 33-35)**
- Paul tells them God is not a God of disorder but of peace and that women should be silent in the church so as to not disrupt.
- 5. The Church should be a place where we find order (Verses 36-40)**
- v36-37 Paul asks two rhetorical questions saying did the word of God originate with you? Or has the Word reached only you?
 - v38 He then says that if anyone ignores, or as some translations render it, is ignorant, let them be ignored in their ignorance.
 - v39-40 He tells them be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues, but it should be done decently and in order.
- At first read of this passage, one can easily miss the sanctified strength with which Paul rebukes the Corinthian Christians.
 - In verse thirty-six, he basically tells them they have no right to arbitrarily and unilaterally decide what the church should be like.
 - By way of another comparison to another church, they were dangerously close to the Laodicean church, which did exactly this.
- Then, in verse thirty-seven, Paul says, in effect, who do you people think you are? Do you think the world revolves around you?
 - By way of an illustration, our world revolves around the sun, just as everything should revolve around the Son, Jesus Christ.
 - If it didn't, the planets, moons, and the entire solar system would be in chaos and disorder, which is what happened in Corinth.
- To me, this explains why Paul says what he says in verses thirty-nine and forty, about everything being done in an orderly way.
 - Be that as it may, it's what he says in verse thirty-eight that I would like for us to spend the remainder of our time together on.
 - This because, it speaks to what I believe is one of the most serious problems that can ever take up residence in a church today.
- What I'm speaking of is what I'll call "contentious and ignorant obstinance," also known as having a stiff-necked stubbornness.
 - Lest you think I'm being hard on these Corinthian Christians let me hasten to say that this is exactly what Paul is telling them.
 - While it should be noted that the word ignorance comes from ignore there's some debate as to the correlation between the two.
- Barnes' Notes on the Bible, "Let him be ignorant - At his own peril, let him remain so, and abide the consequences. I shall not take any further trouble to debate with him. I have stated my authority. I have delivered the commands of God. ...And now, if he chooses to remain in ignorance or incredulity, the fault is his own, and he must answer for it to God.
- Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary ...if any man be ignorant—wilfully; not wishing to recognize these ordinances and my apostolic authority in enjoining them. let him be ignorant—I leave him to his ignorance: it will be at his own peril; I feel it a waste of words to speak anything further to convince him.
- Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible -- ...if he will not be convinced, but goes on to doubt, and call in question the truth of these things, and obstinately persist in his ignorance, let him be ignorant: let him be treated and despised as an ignorant man; and let his ignorance be no hindrance to any in receiving these rules and directions as the commandments of Christ; for no regard is to be had, or pity shown, to a man of affected ignorance, and willful obstinacy; such a man is not to be known and owned, but shunned and rejected.
- You'll forgive me for referencing our new church building yet again, however, I do believe it's incumbent upon me to do so here.
 - Here's why, in my own personal experience over the years I've seen church dynamics change when a church grows and builds.
 - Whether a church expands or relocates to a larger facility, often times people will have designs on what the church is to be like.
- The bottom line in closing is God has not given us as a church permission to impose our designs or desires on this His church.
 - The truth of the matter is, He's already given us the template, as it were, in His Word, for how the church is to be the church.
 - As for me and my church, it will always be a place of peace, and order where we worship God and are built up and encouraged.