

"How to Survive the Last Days," Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 16:15-16 – May 29th, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, "How to Survive the Last Days."
- Here at the end of Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth we have his parting words of exhortation as well as encouragement.
- Not only is he exhorting and encouraging them as it relates to the days that lie ahead, but also, the last days of the church age.

- Truth be known, this is yet another place in God's Word where we see just how active and alive the Word of God is in our lives.
- This because, it's just as applicable and apropos for them then as it is for us now such that it both speaks to us and guides us.
- One of my favorite Psalms is 119 because it speaks about the power of God's Word, through God's Spirit, in to God's people.

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV) Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

- Enter our text today, which is textbook in the way that it provides us this lamp to our feet that in turn provides light to our path.
- So much so, that I would submit God's Word is the only light in a world that's becoming increasingly dark seemingly by the day.
- It's for this reason that here at the end of Paul's epistle we are given practical ways to navigate our way through this dark time.

1. Be on guard (Verse 13a)

- Here in the first part of verse thirteen Paul simply says to be on guard, or as some translations render it, watch, as a watchman.

2. Stand firm in the faith (Verse 13b)

- Here in the second part of verse thirteen Paul exhorts us to stand firm in the faith, which carries with it the idea of not giving up.

3. Be courageous and strong (Verse 13c)

- Here in the last part of verse thirteen, Paul says, "be courageous; be strong," or as another translation renders it, "be brave."

4. Do everything in love (Verse 14)

- Here in verse fourteen the Apostle Paul seemingly wraps everything he's said up to this point by saying, "do everything in love."

5. Be devoted to service (Verses 15-16)

- v15 Paul reminds them of the household of Stephanas who were the first Ahcaia converts devoted to the serving God's people.
- v16 He then goes on to urge them to submit to such people, and also to everyone who joins in the Lord's work and labors at it.
- What's interesting to me in this is not so much that they were committed and devoted to serving, but why they were so devoted.
- I would suggest the reason they were so committed and devoted to the Lord's work and the Lord's people was because of Paul.
- More specifically, the example of the Apostle Paul himself, who modeled for them a life of total commitment and service to God.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest the example of Paul's life was so powerful that the entire family of Stephans committed too.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the main reasons that Christians don't commit to serve this would have to be it.
- Namely, that they have never seen it modeled, particularly in their own family, and even if they do, they're unwilling to sacrifice.
- Sadly, those who are willing to make the sacrifices required to serve the Lord, are the very ones who are robbed of the reward.

Luke 18:28–30 (NKJV) — 28 Then Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You." 29 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) — 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

2 Samuel 24:18–25 (NKJV) — 18 And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 20 Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. 21 Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people." 22 Now Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23 All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you." 24 Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25 And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

- I'll bring it in for a landing by pointing out a couple of closing thoughts the first of which is that David's sacrifice came at a cost.
- I suppose the question becomes one of whether or not David would receive a reward for this in his lifetime and the life to come.
- The answer, in a word is, "yes!" Notice that the first reward comes by way of an end to the plague that had come upon Israel.

- As it relates to the reward in the life to come, this would become the documented title deed to the temple mount in Jerusalem.
- As such, it would also become a prophetic fulfillment of Jesus Christ Himself, from the line of David, some 1,000 years later.
- It will also be fulfilled vis-a-vis the New Jerusalem for all eternity, all because David made the sacrifice for the Lord as a reward.

- Here's the question before every one of us today, what reward awaits only our willingness to make the sacrifice for the Lord?