

1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE

Part XLIV: A Fivefold Charge To Believers Facing Astonishing Troubles

(1 Corinthians 16:13-24)

I. Introduction

- A. The Church at Corinth had "an astonishing variety" of "(a)berrant beliefs and practices," making it not only difficult to disciple, but hard for those in the Church to function well. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1619)
- B. In concluding his epistle to this body, Paul gave a fivefold charge, what we do well to heed in view of the spiritual challenges we often confront even in our spiritually needy era of Church History (as follows):

II. A Fivefold Charge To Believers Facing Astonishing Troubles, 1 Corinthians 16:13-24.

- A. First, Paul urged believers who faced astonishing troubles to watch out for the angelic conflict and to fulfill their Christian service responsibilities assigned to them by the Lord, 1 Corinthians 16:13a:
 - 1. The verb "Watch" (KJV) translates the Greek verb *gregoreo* (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 166), a verb used of watching for Satanic temptation (Matthew 26:41) as well as being diligent to fulfill one's calling and ministry that he receives from the Lord (Matthew 24:42), Ibid.
 - 2. The Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:58 had been admonished to devote themselves to keeping at God's service assignments, and many problems they faced would have been fueled by Satan, Ephesians 6:10-12.
 - 3. Thus, they were to watch out for the angelic conflict *especially as Satan would tempt them to cease fulfilling the ministries they had been assigned by the Lord!*
- B. Second, Paul urged believers who faced astonishing troubles to stand firm in the faith, 1 Corinthians 16:13b:
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 11:3 shows Paul's readers were vulnerable to false teaching, Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 547.
 - 2. He then urged them to stand firm in the Christian faith instead of yielding to false teachings and false teachers who promoted errant teachings, 1 Corinthians 16:13b.
- C. Third, Paul urged believers who faced astonishing troubles to mature in the Lord, 1 Corinthians 16:13c NIV:
 - 1. The apostle's call for his readers to be men of courage and to be strong stands opposite Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 14:20 that they were acting like children in their understanding instead of being mature, Ibid.
 - 2. Accordingly, he urged his readers to mature in Christ, to grow up in understanding and in action.
- D. Fourth, Paul urged believers who faced astonishing troubles to perform everything in love, 1 Cor. 16:14:
 - 1. Paul's 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 chapter on love stands in stark contrast to the self-serving ways Paul's readers were vying for attention and honor in their abuses of the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31.
 - 2. Performing everything in love would end the divisive self-centeredness that plagued their ministries.
- E. Fifth, Paul urged believers who faced astonishing troubles to submit to believers who met the needs of others:
 - 1. The household of Stephanas were some of the first converts to Christ in the area of Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:15a; Ibid.), and they as likely the more mature and devout in the body had devoted themselves to be responsible for the ministry and welfare of the rest of the Church body, 1 Cor. 16:15b; Ibid., p. 547-548.
 - 2. Such believers who voluntarily shouldered the responsibility of serving the needs of other believers were not only honorable, but other believers were obliged before God to submit to their efforts that these devout folk might minister unhindered in addressing the needs of other Christians, 1 Corinthians 16:16.
 - 3. Also, whenever a group of believers devote themselves to helping other believers, to keeping the local church functioning well especially if it is a body that faces astonishing spiritual troubles, such folk are of enormous value in God's eyes as Paul indicated of the household of Stephanas, 1 Corinthians 16:17-18a.
 - 4. Thus, the rest of God's people were to give such people support and room to perform their services, v. 18b.
- F. Paul ended his epistle by sending greetings (1 Co. 16:19-21) and admonishing his readers to withstand false teachers or others who did not know or love the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 16:22a. He added a final call for the coming of the Lord (v. 22b) and gave a closing benediction, expressing his love to all, 1 Corinthians 16:23-24.

Lesson: *For believers who face astonishing troubles, Paul urged them to (1) watch out for the angelic conflict, that they especially fulfill their service assignments without yielding to Satan's pressure to quit those ministries, (2) that they stand firm in the truth versus false teaching and teachers, (3) that they mature, (4) that they do everything in love (5) and that they submit to believers who selflessly devote themselves to meeting the needs of fellow believers.*

Application: *If we face astonishing troubles, may we (1) watch out for the angelic conflict, especially in the realm of fulfilling our assignments from God without quitting, (2) that we stand firm in the truth, (3) mature in Christ, (4) do all acts in love and (5) submit to devout believers who are selflessly devoted to meeting the needs of others.*