



THE SEVIERVILLE SOWER

Sowing the seed (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of mankind.

Sevierville Church of Christ | 208 Hicks Drive | Sevierville, TN 37862 | (865) 453-8009 | seviervillecoc.org

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Lessons from the Church in Corinth

Chad Dollahite

The city of Corinth was a flourishing trade center in New Testament times and was a cultural, social, and economic melting pot of about 400,000 people by the time Paul arrived (circa AD 51). The Corinth of Paul's day was quite cosmopolitan and worldly. The city was infamous for its bars and brothels. Particularly, Corinth was infamous for its temple of the Greek goddess Aphrodite and its hordes of both male and female prostitutes, ever seeking "customers" to assist in "worshiping" the pagan idol. Relished by much of the Roman Empire for its general lack of moral standards and "freedom of thought," Corinth was truly a city in dire need of the gospel of Christ!

The beginning of the Lord's church in Corinth is recorded in Acts 18:1-18. Paul first went to the Jewish synagogue, where people were, for the most part, unreceptive. Perhaps the most surprising early convert was the chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, along with his household (Acts 18:8). Luke then records, "*And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized*" (Acts 18:8). The Lord appeared to Paul in a night vision and told him to take courage and keep teaching, for the Lord would keep him safe, and informed him that many people in the city would be receptive. Thus began the Lord's church in Corinth, and Paul "*continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them*" (Acts 18:11).

The diverse cultural, societal, and economic backgrounds of the Corinthian citizens were brought into the local body when the Lord's church was established there. This caused difficulties for the brethren as they sought to become a unified family of Christians. The Holy Spirit preserved two letters Paul wrote to them, wherein he dealt with numerous issues that plagued this rather diverse congregation. What can Christians today learn from the church at Corinth?

Faith must be placed in God, not man. One of the problems Paul dealt with in detail in 1 Corinthians was their inclination to denominate themselves based on humans (some even seeking to denominate Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:11-13). Paul's Spirit-inspired message to them was for unity in Christ, Who is neither divided nor denominated in any way. Paul emphasizes men as mere servants of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Sin must be dealt with and corrected. The issue at Corinth with the man living in sin (1 Corinthians 5) illustrates the sad fact that, too often, culture influences the church more than the church

influences the culture. However, Paul is clear: Jesus is Lord, and Christians must submit to Him, both in dealing with and correcting sin when it invades the Lord's church.

God's people must be separate from the world. Maintaining a distinction from the sinful, godless world is a perennial challenge for God's people. The Corinthian brethren's propensity to adopt their surrounding immoral culture (instead of separating from such) illustrates the constant struggle of God's people to maintain separation from the world.

God's plan works. Perhaps no example better illustrates the superiority of God's ways and wisdom than the matter of Paul's order to withdraw fellowship from the man living in fornication (1 Corinthians 5). Humans are often reluctant to follow God's plan (especially regarding church discipline), yet God's plan always works. Whether the brother was restored or not, the church's purity—and its distinctive separation from the world—would be maintained, and God's will would be followed. It turned out that the man **was** restored (2 Corinthians 2:1-11). Truly, "*the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*" (1 Corinthians 3:19)! God's way is always the best way!

Where the greatest trouble is, there needs to be the greatest love. Amid dealing with a plethora of problems plaguing the Corinthian church, Paul introduces the key, overarching solution with, "*And yet I show you a more excellent way*" (1 Corinthians 12:31). That "*more excellent way*" is detailed in 1 Corinthians 13 and can be summed up in one word: "love." Whatever the problem, when people love God supremely and love others, those problems can and will be resolved. Perhaps the greatest problem in the church at Corinth was a lack of *biblical* love. Biblical love does not ignore sin or differences, but addresses them frankly and compassionately, seeking God's will above all and others' best interests before one's own.

These are just a few of many great lessons from the church at Corinth. These lessons are as applicable now as when they were first written, for, as Paul stated, these are the lessons he taught "*everywhere in every church*" (1 Corinthians 4:17). Paul also reminded them (and us), "*If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Are we listening to and learning from the Spirit's inspired instructions to the church at Corinth?

Prayer Requests & Announcements

We are sad to report that Jerry Sutton's brother-in-law, Darrell Layman, passed away on Friday from COVID complications and kidney failure. No arrangements are known at this time. Please keep all the family in your prayers.

Kevin's aunt, Belinda Lang, continues her recovery from COVID but is improving and was able to go home last week.

Remember in prayer our sister Chris Bender who has been having health issues lately. She had a biopsy recently and will be seeing a surgeon.

Remember in prayer Shirley Yeager's grandson, Doug Walters, who fell from a ladder while trimming a tree. He is recovering from injuries to his shoulder and knees.

We will begin a monthly fellowship night this Friday, February 25 at 6:30 in the fellowship hall (it will usually be held on the third Friday of each month). All are invited to come and bring friends, games, and finger foods.

Continue to Remember...

Chris Bender, John and Helen Carr, Connie Duncan, Dennis and Marty Danilchuk, Lindsey Johnson, Shirley McKnight, Sue Moore, Lyn Morris, Paul and Ellen Ostrander, Joanne Roark, Shirley Yeager, Becky Duncan (Joe and Connie's daughter-in-law), Adam Lane (son-in-law of Vickie Price), Harlie McClung (John and Helen Carr's 12 year-old great-granddaughter), Anita Ogle (Sherry Simms' friend), Casie Rains (friend of the Hansens), Paul Rolan (Mary Kate's brother), Frankie Simms (Scott Simms' father), Wayne Tart (Tammie Fish's brother).

Ladies' class Thursdays at 6:15 at the Hansen's house

Fellowship night: February 25, 6:30

Monthly afternoon song service: February 27

Fellowship lunch: March 6

Evangelism Materials

Extra supplies for our evangelism work are freely available in the supply room to our members. Instructional books, DVDs, and Bible study materials are available. We also have a variety of cards for our Compassion Card work.

Weekly Assemblies

Sunday: Bible Study 9 a.m.
Worship 10 a.m.
Worship 1 p.m.
Wednesday: Bible Class 7 p.m.

We Need to Imitate Jesus' Courage

Roger D. Campbell

To what animal is Jesus most often compared in the Scriptures? The obvious answer is a lamb. But God's Son also is likened to a lion, being described as "*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*" (Revelation 5:5). The lion is recognized as being strong and fearless.

Though they did not recognize Him as the Christ, some observers candidly confessed Jesus' boldness, saying, "*But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him*" (John 7:26). As followers of Jesus, we need to strive to imitate His boldness. In what ways did He demonstrate His courage?

Even in the face of danger, Jesus had the courage to confess His Deity. When He was asked by the Jewish high priest, "*Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed,*" His answer was, "*I am*" (Mark 14:61,62). That confession ultimately cost Him His life. Are you and I courageous enough to confess Jesus, even when we face potential backlash for doing so?

Jesus showed courage by taking the right action, even as He was criticized for it. For instance, He kept on eating with and reaching out to tax collectors and sinners, despite the criticism He faced (Luke 15:1,2).

Our Lord manifested boldness when He said and taught what people needed to hear. Though they may have preferred to hear something softer, Jesus told great multitudes of listeners that anyone who desires to be His disciple must love Him above their family, bear their cross, and forsake all (Luke 14:25-27,33).

The Christ showed courage when He spoke against religious error and exposed the character of religious leaders. He pointed out the error of trying to bind man-made traditions (Mark 7:1-13) and openly condemned the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23).

Our Savior further showed boldness when He stayed committed to the Father and His will, even when those around Him failed or faltered. The night before Jesus went to the cross, all of the apostles forsook Him (Mark 14:50), Judas betrayed Him, and Simon Peter denied Him. Yet, the Master remained loyal to His heavenly Father and the divine plan.

Jesus courageously suffered for the cause of truth, even though He was innocent of any wrongdoing. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return (Mark 15:29-32). Instead, He "*committed Himself to Him who judges righteously*" (1 Peter 2:23).

When Immanuel was forsaken, He wavered not. As He was tempted by the devil when He was alone, He stood His ground. When He was mocked, He pressed on. Let us learn to imitate His courage!

Elders

Randy Hansen, Robert Moore, Kevin Ruiz, and Jerry Sutton

Deacon

Lenwood Johnson (finance)

Preacher

Kevin Ruiz