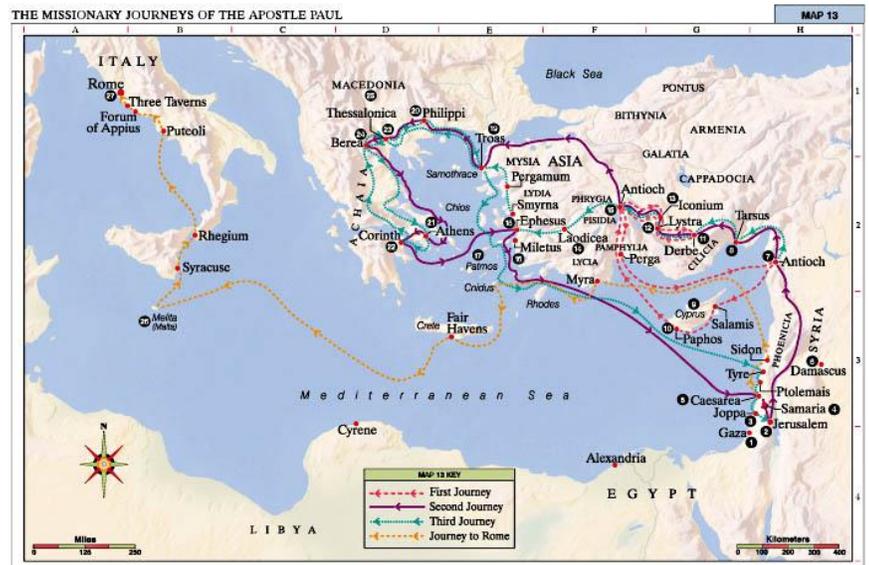




PAULINE EPISTLES



1 Corinthians Chaos and the Cross in Corinth

1. Church in Corinth was in utter chaos, divided along social and spiritual lines. They failed to understand the real-life consequences of following “Christ, and Him Crucified.” Paul’s goal was to show them that no disciple is greater than the Master, and that we are each expected to pick up our cross and follow Him in the hopes of eternal life.
2. This letter presents:
 - a. Clearest picture of an early Christian community
 - b. Paul’s most practical and contemporary letter
3. Corinth had such a reputation for immorality that it became a verb: to become *korinthianazesthai* was to become thoroughly immoral and materialistic. This pagan city had many temples to pagan gods, some of which practiced ritual sex orgies.
4. Corinth was strategically crucial for the spread of the Gospel, as it was a thriving commercial metropolis. It was the “master of two harbors” - so bustling sea trade between Asia Minor and Italy - (1) Cenchreae and (2) Lechaion. The Corinthians were not wealthy but took every social and material advantage to become “upwardly mobile.” Paul probably chose Corinth because:
 - a. There was plenty of opportunity for work (for him to support himself)
 - b. Plenty of immorality to set straight and ideas of gods to correct
 - c. Strategically situated along major trade route for the spread of the Gospel
5. Paul spent 18 months there around AD 50-51/52. The dating can be this precise because of the mention of proconsul Gallio. He arrived alone after little success in Athens and after persecutions in Beroea, Thessalonica, and Philippi. Here he met up with Prisca and Aquila. He started in the synagogues, with little success, and turned to the Gentiles when Silvanus and Timothy joined him.
6. Paul developed a diverse community of Gentiles and Jews, slaves and freed, women and men, rich and poor. There may have been several house churches which could accommodate differing sizes of congregations.

7. Paul's visit was followed by the visit of Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew and possibly a visit from Peter.
 - a. Congregations split over who baptized them (Apollos faction, Peter, Paul)
 - b. Some professed to "belong to Christ" - of course the right position, but it added on to the divisions rather than healing them.
 - c. Some Corinthians took their fellow believers to court (1 COR 6:1-11)
 - d. Some Corinthians avoided the pagan temples, while others ate there and perhaps mocked their fellow believers (1 COR 8:1-13)
 - e. People brought their own food to the Mass of the Lord's Supper in the house churches, so some ate lavishly while others went hungry
 - f. Some flaunted their gifts of the Spirit or valued them more highly than other gifts of the Spirit (1 COR 12:1-14:40)
 - g. Moral depravity arose among believers: prostitution, incest, fornication, adultery
 - h. Some Christians in Corinth denied the general resurrection at the end of time
 - i. Some were "puffed up" with pride at their socio-economic status, their education, or of their gifts of the Spirit - they looked down upon fellow Christians and upon Paul, who preached the Cross, fidelity to the Father's Will, looking for reward in the life to come.
 - j. Paul in Ephesus was told of the problems in Corinth by letter and in person. He sent Timothy ahead since he was occupied in Ephesus. He wrote again to the Corinthians around the year 54, still having been delayed and prevented from visiting. Scholars believed that Paul wrote *at least* four letters to the Corinthians.
8. Paul's deliberate rhetoric was designed to:
 - a. Strengthen the faith; sanctify the people; and unify the community
 - b. Urge that all be done with love - these are the two bookends of his argument - 1 COR 13, "the love chapter" is the core of his argument. The problems in Corinth stem from a failure to love as Christ loves, as we Christians are called to love. At the heart of this heart is verse 5 "love does not insist on its own way," also translated: "love does not seek its own welfare or interests," a Greek idiom which also appears in
 - i. 1 COR 10:24 and 10:33
 - ii. 1 COR 11:1
 - iii. Philippians 2:4 and 2:7-8
9. Their stories, ideologies, and spiritualities had to be reshaped to be cruciform and countercultural.
10. Opening and Thanksgiving: **1:1-9** addresses the church as one community. He cites Sosthenes as one of the letter writers, who may have been a synagogue official in Corinth who converted and whose credibility was influential. He stresses that Corinth is one church among a widespread Church called to be countercultural and saintly (do not be transformed by this age, but be conformed to our Lord Jesus).
 - a. Themes in the thanksgiving: grace (*charis*)
 - b. Spiritual gifts (*charismata*)
 - c. Wealth in speech and knowledge
 - d. Blamelessness/holiness
 - e. Day of the Lord
 - f. Fellowship (*koinonia*)
11. God's work may begin with the power of the Spirit but does not end there; the people must work every day, bearing their cross as they follow the Lord to their personal judgment and to the Second Coming. Their charismatic community must be true to its Christian identity as cruciform and countercultural.

12. Address Ecclesiological chaos: the wisdom and power of the Cross **1:10-4:21** - main theme is UNITY, which is part of the broader theme of holiness letter-wide. They should boast only in the Lord, in Whom and through Whom all things are done. Intersection of three stories:
 - a. Christ Crucified as the power-in-weakness of God
 - b. Paul's cruciform ministry
 - c. Conversion of the Corinthians from pagans to Spirit-filled charismatics
13. The divisions spoken of as "I am of..." means "I belong to" - as a servant would to a master or devotees to a god. Paul therefore stresses that he, Apollos, and Peter are all servants of God, so we are all disciples "of" God - not of Peter, Paul, or Apollos. He posits three statements:
 - a. Christ is One Body
 - b. Christ was crucified to free us all from our sins
 - c. Corinthians were baptized into Christ.
14. Preachers are called to preach, not to baptize - perhaps the presbyters or the deacons did that. Preachers are merely the messengers; it is the message which is of primary importance - the power of Christ crucified. It is not the eloquent wisdom or the power of fancy rhetoric which should be attracting souls - what saves souls is Jesus.
15. Wisdom and power paradox - God's power is most evident in the "powerless" Crucified Christ; and God's wisdom is seen as foolishness to the world. Conventional wisdom does not reveal God - only faith in Jesus the Son reveals God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the **kerygmatic paradox**: the stumbling block of a crucified Messiah.
16. Paul uses the congregation of the Corinthian church to show the nature of God's wisdom and power: God's preferential option for the poor, of making great the lowly. He quotes Jeremiah 9:23-24: boast only in the Lord, which is to celebrate Jesus as the Wisdom from God. Through Christ Crucified comes redemption, righteousness, and sanctification.
17. Just as in Corinth God did not *choose* the rich and powerful, so also God does not always *use* the rich or the powerful, as the Corinthians don't seem to think highly of Paul's rhetorical style in public, which Paul admits as being weak and fearful (as opposed to his impassioned letters). His weakness is a demonstration of God's Wisdom, for instead of hearing Paul's powerful rhetoric, they heard the message of Christ Crucified. They could concentrate on the message rather than be transported by the messenger.
18. Thus far, Paul has focused on
 - a. Rejection of human wisdom and power and
 - b. Affirmation of Christ Crucified as Divine Wisdom and power
 - c. But now Paul wants to focus on the divisions in the Corinthian community
 - d. Paul now wants to affirm the reality of Spirit-inspired wisdom and gifts AND
 - e. Stress its connection to Christ Crucified
 - i. The wisdom and rulers of this age failed to perceive Jesus as the Messiah
 - ii. For Corinthians to disconnect the gifts of the Spirit sent by Jesus at their Confirmation from His Cross shows an *absence* of wisdom on their part.
 - iii. Inability to connect Spirit and Cross reveals an immature spirit, one which is "fleshly"
 - iv. The truly spiritual (or spiritually mature) person sees the connection between the Paschal Mystery and the Holy Spirit - these people have the mind of Christ and can actively hope for the future - the eschaton

- v. The divisions in Corinth negate the Cross and reveal the Corinthians as “fleshly” people far from Jesus and the Spirit, yet Paul still calls them “the church of God.”
- f. Paul reminds the Corinthians that preachers, apostles are servants of God and the church; they are God’s possession. If they are destroyed (martyred), the Church will continue. Apostles live a cruciform existence as they live the message of Christ Crucified. This is the Church’s foundation. Theocentric tone: boast only in the Lord. Paul uses two analogies:
 - i. Paul planted; Apollos watered; God caused the growth
 - ii. Paul laid the foundation (Christ Crucified); Apollos (and others) build upon it; God will judge the work at the end: good work will be rewarded; poor work will be punished.
 - iii. They are building God’s Temple - God owns and inhabits the Church. The Corinthians, as the Body of Christ, is the Temple of the Holy Spirit
 - iv. Verdict of men matters not; only the judgment of God matters.
 - v. Paul establishes his apostolic authority AND shames the Corinthians who pride themselves by naming his conformity to Christ:
 - 1. A criminal awaiting death penalty
 - 2. A prisoner in chains, paraded in public
 - 3. Physical suffering
 - 4. Blessing his persecutors and forgiving them
 - 5. Being “foolish” and weak, relying on the strength of Jesus
 - 6. Echoes Jesus’ teaching in MT 5
 - 7. Treated like garbage
 - vi. Paul, having sent Timothy, warns the Corinthians that he may come to rectify the situation himself.

19. Summary of 1 COR 1-4: Paul’s perspectives on Jesus, church, spirituality, and ministry

- a. Allegiance to individual leaders is divisive and wrong - we all submit to the authority of the Church
- b. Crucified Christ is the power and wisdom of God
- c. Living the message of the Cross in a cruciform life is more evidence of spiritual maturity than boasting of one’s spiritual gifts
- d. Fidelity to God in word and deed is the mark of apostleship/ministry
- e. God’s servants are accountable to Him for the quality of their labor
- f. The Church does not belong to human leaders, but to God

20. **1 COR 5:1-7:40**: Addressing moral chaos: life between the Cross and the Parousia - Paul believes that the Church in Corinth misunderstands how to live the Gospel in everyday life. Paul has received reports of certain problems in the Church which he address in chapters 5 through 7, with his underlying conviction that Christians are to live with one eye on the present to faithfully live according to God's Will and one eye on the future Beatific Vision to help maintain constancy in difficulties (fortitude). One eye on Jesus' death; one eye on the Parousia.

- a. First problem: *porneia*- sexual relations immorality - one of the believers is having sex with his stepmother, forbidden by the Torah and by Roman law. Paul recommends expelling (excommunicating) the offender.
 - i. Offender betrays Jesus, in Whose Body he is a part - for his own salvation, he should go
 - ii. He give scandal to the other believers - who seem to tolerate his behavior
 1. One bad apple spoils the bunch
 2. Yeast of the Pharisees "puff them up" - grows and spreads immorality
 3. The Church lives a permanent Passover/only unleavened bread may be eaten - keep it simple, basic, spartan
 4. Paul's Gospel of freedom does not translate into libertinism or licentiousness
 5. Community should discern when evil is present and act to oust it.
 6. Principle of holiness - all evil, malice (yeast) must go
 - iii. He gives scandal to pagans and Jews about Christians
- b. Second problem - lawsuits among Christians in the pagan courts - a three-dimensional failure:
 - i. Of wisdom - how can you judge at the end of time if you cannot judge arightly the things of this world? - Taking the decision to pagans degrades their wisdom.
 - ii. Of cruciform love - No matter who wins or loses, the Christian loses in love. Isn't it better to be defrauded than to defraud? "Turn the other cheek," taught Jesus. Cruciform love absorbs injustice.
 - iii. Of conversion and sanctification - the unjust will be excluded from the Kingdom of God because they have not been washed, sanctified, justified. This behavior is one of non-conversion and betrays their identity as Christians, for they have forsaken the Cross of the Lord. Once you have been baptized, died to sin and risen to new life in Christ, you cannot continue in your old ways.
 - iv. Third problem - sex with prostitutes - could be (1) ordinary; (2) sacral (cultic prostitutes); or (3) after dinner guests common for Corinthian elites.
 - v. They blame Paul's "all things are lawful for me" Gospel - activities done in the body carry no spiritual significance.

- vi. Paul's rhetorical diatribe to this libertinism and dualism makes theological points
 - 1. Consists of slogans/counter-slogans, theological correction and claims, and exhortations
 - 2. Parallel strands made up of:
 - a. Paul's lawless Gospel/slogan of "sins are committed outside the body have no spiritual significance" - his counter-slogan: the body is meant for the Lord and the Lord is meant for the body; the fornicator sins against the body itself and is a sin which has spiritual consequences - it subverts the spiritual union between Christ and the Christian. The body is destined for temporary death but ultimate resurrection. Whether in life or death, keep your body pure for the Lord, as your relationship with Him is expressed in your body.
 - b. Theological corrections: your bodies are members of Christ and should not be members with a prostitute; anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him; your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit; you were bought with a Price - therefore, your body belongs to God. Treat God's possession (your body and soul) with dignity, respect, and love.
 - c. Exhortations - shun fornication (*porneia*!); glorify God in your body.
 - 3. Bodily activity has spiritual consequences because of the present and future status of the body as:
 - a. The locus of spirituality and redemption
 - b. Is in union with Christ now - present purpose: love like Jesus
 - c. Will be resurrected - future destiny
 - d. Is the Temple of the Holy Spirit
 - e. Is not our own - it is the possession of God, bought at a dear price
- c. Fourth problem - confusion about marriage - can married partners have sexual relations?
 - i. Paul responds that abstinence within marriage could be a temptation to adultery
 - ii. Married partners may mutually abstain for periods of prayer or other reasons
 - iii. Married partners should share the marital embrace exclusively with each other
 - iv. The single life of celibacy is the best because it allows one to concentrate on the Lord without the distractions of a family. Paul counsels the unmarried and widows to remain unattached so they can dedicate themselves to the Lord.
 - v. Celibacy is a gift of the Spirit; not all have it.
 - vi. Believers married to believers may separate but not divorce (Paul cites as authority: "not I, but the Lord")
 - vii. Sometimes a Gentile would convert but not their spouse - was the marriage valid? Was it impure? Paul advises them not to divorce. The spouse may convert; the children would suffer from a divorce.
 - viii. If the nonbeliever initiates the divorce, the believer is free to accept it.
 - ix. Paul holds men and women to the same standard.

- x. Paul's program of "**positive apathy**" - remain as you are when God called you (as was the case with deacons). What matters is obedience to God, not social station or marital status. This brought up the question of slaves - should they remain slaves or take freedom if offered? Paul's point is that all are free in Christ - there is no Gentile or Jew, woman or man, slave or free - all are equal in the Church - and all free persons are slaves to Christ.
 - xi. Paul believes that because in Jesus the eschatological age has begun, the old world is passing away. In Christ, the new age is invading (breaking in) to the present. All social structures should align themselves with the eschaton in mind and be **in Christ**.
 - xii. Widows and engaged bachelors should remain single but may marry **believers** ("in the Lord") with the expectation for widows that the Church would help her financially - that remarriage would not be a financial necessity.
- d. Summary of 1 COR 5-7** Basic principles for life between the First and Second Coming of Christ
- i. You belong to Jesus - live morally, then
 - ii. Keep one eye on the Cross and the other on the Parousia
 - iii. Bear wrongs patiently rather than taking a fellow Christian to court
 - iv. Sexual immorality has consequences for the believer in this life and the next and impacts the community
 - v. Your body is meant to glorify God in celibacy (gift of the Spirit) or in marriage with another believer
 - vi. Marriage between believers is permanent and exclusive between one man and one woman. It is a gift even though it is a distraction from devotion to the Lord. Marriage will end with the death of one spouse and will end at the eschaton.
21. **1 COR 8:1-14:40**: Addressing liturgical chaos: the Cross and worship - The Church interacted with the religious dimensions of Greco-Roman idolatry (directly and indirectly). Paul wanted to establish order and unity to the Corinthians' liturgical life as grounded in the Cross yet fully alive in the Spirit. He argues that freedom and order are compatible, as are freedom and love. **This is the crossroad of Paul's ecclesiology and ethics**. Twice in these chapters he uses a chiasm: chapters 8:1-11:1; and chapters 12-14. Paul grants pride of place to the fulcrum of these arguments in **Chapters 9 and 13**; therefore, we should pay special attention to those chapters.
- a. Meat associated with idols within the pagan temples or in private homes - social divide between Corinthian elite (knowers) and the non-elite ("weak conscience").
 - i. Jews were forbidden to eat meat sacrificed to idols whether (1) sacral - within pagan temple; (2) in a restaurant within the precincts of a pagan temple (leftover meat could be on the menu; or (3) leftovers purchased at the temple market to be eaten at home.
 - ii. Corinthians who knew that idols are nothing, and therefore that eating meat sacrificed them, meant nothing, ate the meat at any one of the three scenarios. They were not harmed spiritually, as they were not worshipping the idol by eating meat sacrificed to it.
 - iii. Other Corinthians with a weak conscience felt that eating such meat constituted idolatry.

- iv. Paul replies that those with knowledge should not give scandal to those with weak consciences. In love, they should abstain from eating meat so as not to lead others astray. He tells them that meat sacrificed to idols is sacrificed to demons, and they should not eat at the table of the Lord and from the table of demons. **Knowledge puffs up but love builds up.** Those with knowledge **sin against charity** - they may cause a "little one" to sin AND they sin against Christ, Who died for that "little one" and Whose Body is made up of those with knowledge AND the "little ones."
- v. In **Chapter 9**, Paul shows how he embodies that teaching.
 1. He gives up his 'right' to support as an apostle and preacher by supporting himself. He establishes his apostolic authority as (a) one who has seen the Risen Lord and (b) one who founded the Corinthian church.
 2. He gives up two rights: financial support and spousal support. He gives three reasons for his right to financial support:
 - a. Common practice, both secular and religious - soldiers do not pay their own way, and farmers benefit from their own produce
 - b. The Law - do not muzzle an ox while he is treading the grain
 - c. Jesus' command - a laborer is worth his pay
 3. He denies himself out of cruciform love for his brethren.
 4. When Paul writes autobiographically, he also writes paradigmatically. Renunciation of his apostolic rights is part of his apostolic identity and MO; he does it to win believers to Christ and to ensure his participation in the eschatological victory. His eye is on the Cross and the Parousia.
 5. Corinthians ought to follow his example and refrain from eating meat so as not to scandalize weaker brethren (for their salvation) or those who are not yet believers (for the good of the Gospel); and to keep their own conscience clean for the Day of Judgment (for their own salvation)
 6. Paul is boasting in the Lord, whose grace enables Paul to make this sacrifice out of cruciform love for others and for the salvation of his own soul. Paul's story parallels Jesus' story:
 - a. He had a status with certain powers and rights
 - b. Which He voluntarily renounced (emptied Himself) for the benefit of others - motivated by love, Paul became all things to all people - he emptied himself so that Christ shone through
 - c. He became a slave (manual labor was considered debased in Greco-Roman world) - voluntary debasement equal to the shame of the Cross - the Corinthians despised him because he worked manually
 7. Paul reaps the rewards of this self-renunciation in this life and the next - the wealth of imperishable salvation. Like the athlete who renounces luxuries and disciplines his body for the reward of winning, Paul renounces and disciplines for a heavenly reward, one which will not pass away. In this, Paul does not renounce his freedom; he exercises it in acts of love.

- vi. Paul turns to the issue of idolatry, warning the Corinthians not to share the table of the Lord and eat at the table of demons, for you can be incorporated into only one body, and it should be the Body of Christ. He narrates the Golden Calf story to illustrate that even those whom God has saved can stray into idolatry.
 - 1. Israelites had been redeemed/saved
 - 2. Israelites had been washed (baptized) through the Red Sea
 - 3. They had eaten the bread from heaven and had drunk water from the rock which is Christ.
 - 4. Nevertheless, they desired evil and became idolatrous and sexually immoral (both problems the Corinthians faced). These are the two great covenant-breaking temptations: idolatry and sexual immorality. His “flee from idolatry” of 10:14 echoes “shun fornication” in 6:18
 - vii. Paul offers rebuttals to arguments/slogans of the Corinthians:
 - 1. Not all things are beneficial (although all may be lawful)
 - 2. Not all things build up - not all deeds are acts of love as they should be
 - 3. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of your neighbor
 - 4. Whatever you eat/drink/do, do it for the glory of God
 - 5. Give no offense/do not be a scandal or stumbling block to the Gospel
 - 6. Be imitators of Christ
 - viii. **Summary of 1 COR 8:1-11:1** You must order your actions for the good of others, the good of the Gospel, and your salvation. The truest expression of freedom is cruciform love, following Jesus’ example Even theologically correct knowledge can be a sin if you scandalize others, placing their salvation in danger (and your own). Allegiance to the Lord is exclusive; there is no room for idolatry.
22. **1 COR 11:2-16:** Disorderly people in the assembly - Paul assumes that men and women may pray and prophesy - speak to God and for God - in the gathered church. Men and women are equal *in Christ*. Truly Spirit-filled worship respects an order appropriate to worship. However, this is the only point of agreement scholars have about this passage:
- a. Words are difficult
 - b. Complicated, tortured, or inconsistent logic of thought and interrelated sentences
 - c. Veiled reference to ancient social phenomena
 - d. Does the text refer to men and women or husbands and wives? The Greek words used can mean either.
 - e. What does the word “head” mean? The Greek can refer to authority, source, most prominent, or contrast or complement to the body. Paul appeals to apostolic tradition and universal (cultural) custom (headship) in these matters pertaining to head covering. He states that the head (physical body part, Corinthian church, universal Church?) can be either the glory or the disgrace by the behavior of the body.

- f. Does the text refer to veils or to loose or bound hairstyles? To both? - The freedom in Christ was being used by some women to uncover their heads and let their hair loose. This signaled (at a cultural level) a male identity (change of gender) or sexual looseness. Paul advises these women not to abandon cultural norms in the name of religious freedom. Men, on the other hand, signal a feminine identity by covering their heads and shame Christ by treating Him like an idol since men with high social status in pagan temples covered their heads to pray to their idols.
- g. Does the passage interpret male-female or spousal relationships to be hierarchical, reciprocal, or both? Most probably, the relationship between men and women is a matter of source (God made Adam freely, and made Eve as a companion/helpmate for Adam. Adam had a job: till the garden. Eve had a job: be a helpmate to Adam. Men and women build one another up through prayer and prophecy. In the natural world, men are born of woman and both come from God.

1 COR 11:17-34: Abuse of the Lord's Supper - this is the only discussion of the Lord's Supper in the Pauline letters. He sees it as a time of *koinonia* - solidarity, commemoration, and proclamation (of the Gospel and of prophecy) which blesses the community and is a participation in the eschatological banquet. The way the Corinthians practice the Lord's Supper, however, causes division, and is a betrayal of their incorporation into the One Body, and shows forgetfulness of the Gospel message and Christ's sacrifice. They fail to celebrate the Supper of the Crucified, Present, and Coming Lord. Something which should be a blessing is for them a curse, as they are lacking in love in the way they celebrate Mass. Paul is quite concerned and his watchword to them is Wait and Welcome all.

- h. The Lord's Supper should be a cause of community, not division. We share one loaf, one cup as we are members of One Body, the Church. God has a "preferential option" for the poor, so the Corinthian elites should especially wait for the poor, who are coming in "late" after working - generally after the elites have eaten and drunk freely and the poor eat the leftovers or go home hungry.
- i. Eating and drinking without discerning the Body means (1) the Real Presence and (2) co-members in the Body of Christ, the Church, missing the interconnections of Christ, Cross, and community.
- j. The Lord's Supper is a Mass of remembrance, which means making the past present. Members ought to faithfully remember and faithfully respond to God's saving love, re-presenting the death of the Lord for our salvation. This is the New Covenant in His Blood.
- k. The Lord's Supper is an act of proclamation of the Cross. We must be constantly reminded of the critical importance of the Cross and to take up our own to follow the Master.
- l. The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of the Eucharistic banquet in the future, while it blesses us in the present and re-presents the past.

23. **1 COR 12:1-14:40** - Spiritual Gifts - Continuing his theme of unity in the Cross-centered community, Paul emphasizes that spiritual gifts are given to unify and build up the Church, and are meant to be exercised publicly for the good of the community. Paul's use of parts of the body to refer to the community is not unique to him.

- a. Equality within a hierarchy - there are many gifts, all given by the same Spirit, but there is a hierarchy of gifts - some build up and unify the Church better than others. Paul denigrates status and raises up the lowly - an inversion of societal status in Corinth.
- b. Paul uses two terms to refer to spiritual gifts - *pneumatika* (gifts of the Spirit) and *charismata* (gifts of grace).

- c. The most basic criterion of all believers is to confess: Jesus is Lord. For Paul, that means our Crucified Jesus, raised by the Father, is Lord and is present with us by the power of the Spirit.. Anyone who professes this is a Spirit-filled member of the Church, for only in the Spirit can this confession be made. Anyone who curses using the name of Jesus is not inspired by the Spirit.
- d. The Spirit gives the gifts; Jesus, as Head of the Body, is served by these gifts in His members; and the Father activates the gifts. Everyone has a gift, not the same gift and not to the same degree, but **every gift is for the good of the community** and not for personal gain. **Diversity** of the gifts; **unity** in source and purpose.
- e. The body imagery conveys four interconnected points: (1) bodily unity in diversity; (2) necessity of each body part; (3) mutual interdependence of all the parts upon each other - solidarity; and (4) the weaker or less honorable members are indispensable and treated with greater honor and respect. This fourth point is Paul's presentation of his inverted status hierarchy. Due to the solidarity of the Body, when one member suffers, all suffer; when one is honored, all are honored.
- f. Hierarchy of gifts: apostles, prophets, and teachers rank higher than splashier gifts such as healing - because the first three do so much to build up and unify the Church. At the bottom: glossolalia - the speaking in tongues of which the Corinthians were so proud.
- g. 1 COR 13 is a "encomium" - discourse in praise of a virtue - in this case, Love. Love is patient, love is kind, etc. Paul means to show the Corinthians how their gifts ought to be exercised - in love. He shows them the antidote for their self-centered and self-destructive behavior. Love is necessary, permanent, and superior to other virtues or gifts. This type of love - **agape** - is a fruit of the Spirit, the love with which God created the world and holds us in existence, the love with which Jesus incarnated, suffered, and died for us.
- h. If I (fill in the blank) but have not **love**, I am nothing. The glossolalia is a "noisy gong," perhaps an allusion to the frenzied Cybele worshippers. Love is the Christian's hallmark.
- i. The list of "love is" has no adjectives, only verbal phrases - seven positive and eight negative. Paul alludes throughout this list to actions of the Corinthians which he's addressed in the letter. Paul strikes at "love does not insist on its own way" by hearkening back to the slogan/counter-slogan in chapters 8 and 10:
 - i. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up (8:1)
 - ii. All things are lawful, but not all are beneficial; all things are lawful, but not all build up; do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. (10:23-24)
 - iii. Imitate me as I imitate Christ - I try to please everyone in all I do, not seeking my own advantage, so that all may be saved. (10:33-11:1)
- j. Love endures forever, while all other gifts pass away - Paul intends to strip the Corinthians of their pride in gifts which had been given to them, while love is an action which requires work to cultivate and share, but which ultimately, is the best for edifying and unifying the Church. Pursuit and practice of love bridges the gap between seeing in a mirror darkly and seeing God face to face.

- k. The concrete issue of the use of the gifts is addressed in 14:1-40. Corinthians' worship was chaotic and self-indulgent which overemphasized the gift of tongues, especially when there was no one to interpret the tongues. How does that build up the Church if we don't know what the Spirit is saying to us? Prophecy, on the other hand, edifies, encourages, and consoles (and warns). Other "inherently edifying" gifts: revelation, knowledge, teaching, and interpretation of tongues.
 - l. 14:20-25 is confusing, but the point seems to be that whatever is done should build up and unify the community.
 - m. Paul goes on to give practical advice: since gifts are meant to build up, encourage, enlighten, and unify the Church, ppl should speak in tongues one at a time and allow someone else to interpret. Prophets as a group should mutually discern and self-correct. God is a God of peace and order, not of chaos and division.
 - n. 14:33-36: a woman should be silent - another confusing section, possibly inserted by someone else.
 - o. **Summary of 1 COR 11-14:** Paul's major concerns: (1) worship should be orderly but not moribund - a mixture of freedom and order; (2) the Church is the Body of Christ, interdependent upon each other, diversity of parts in the unity of the One Body, where poorer parts are the more honored; (3) cruciform love is patient, kind, does not seek its own interests, and endures forever; (4) cruciform love gives meaning and shape to worship and life.
24. **1 COR 15:1-58** - Theological Chaos - Resurrection as vindication of the Cross - the pinnacle of Pauline rhetoric and theological argument, embodying his conviction that his mission, his message, has life and death consequences. He addresses eschatology:
- a. Judging apostles and their work (chapters 3, 4, & 9)
 - b. Man to be delivered to Satan (5:1-13)
 - c. Lawsuits between Christians (6:1-11)
 - d. Prostitution (6:12-20)
 - e. Passing away of this age (chapter 7)
 - f. Condemnation for not discerning the Body (11:17-34)
 - g. Permanence of Love over gifts (chapter 13)
25. Corinthians seem to believe in present spiritual resurrection (in the gifts) coupled with a denial of future, bodily resurrection - in this, they were pagan. Chapter 15 is Paul's exposition of the implications of Jesus' bodily Resurrection from the dead for Christians in this life and the next. The Resurrection vindicates the Cross and puts to death the power of sin and death; it therefore validates the crosses we bear, the little deaths we endure in our sacrifices, until the Parousia. **Chapter 15 is the foundation of the entire letter.**
- a. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the Creed and hopes that his labors with them has not been in vain - one of this chapter's themes. The 4 main points of the Creed:
 - i. Jesus died for our sins, in accordance with Scripture
 - ii. Jesus was buried
 - iii. Jesus was raised on the third day, in accordance with Scripture
 - iv. Jesus appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve, then to more than 500, then to James, then to all of the apostles, and then to Paul.
 - b. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Paul could not have encountered Him so miraculously, and the Church is in vain - empty. Paul, naturally, is certain that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to him.

- c. As a former Pharisee, Paul begins with the Resurrection - a possibility which became a reality in Jesus. Corinthians, former pagans, deny bodily resurrection. They interpret Jesus' Resurrection in a way which denies His bodily Resurrection.
 - d. Paul begins a series of if...then correlations which stress that denying bodily resurrection is a grave mistake:
 - i. Paul's preaching and the Corinthians' faith are in vain
 - ii. Paul's preaching misrepresents God
 - iii. Believers are still dead in their sins if Jesus' death did not kill sin
 - iv. Believers who have died have perished and will not be raised to new life
 - v. Apostles and Christians are pitiable, for they endure much for nothing
 - vi. Corinthian ritual of baptism on behalf of the dead is pointless
 - vii. Paul's daily danger and suffering are absurd and gain him nothing
 - viii. Hedonism is the logical lifestyle
 - ix. Without resurrection from the dead, there is no reason for faith, hope, or love. Death is the ultimate enemy. Life is meaningless.
 - e. Paul then refutes this line because Christ has been raised from the dead, as Paul knows from personal experience and the Corinthians know by Paul's witness. Paul focuses on the Parousia, the future general resurrection, God's ultimate victory over death:
 - i. Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection
 - ii. Jesus is the New Adam who undoes the reign of death inaugurated by the first Adam
 - iii. Jesus is alive now and is reigning as Lord
 - iv. God will ultimately defeat death, and God will be all in all
 - v. Paul advises the Corinthians to avoid those who deny the resurrection; wake up and embrace the Creed you profess
 - f. Paul considers two issues which address possible objections to the Resurrection: (1) *how* the general resurrection will occur; and (2) the nature of the resurrection (the *what*). As to *how*, Paul offers an analogy: the seed which is sown, dies to sprout new life, which is different from the seed (the *what*) - you do not sow the body that is to be.
 - i. There is continuity and discontinuity in death that transforms the dead body to the resurrected body;
 - ii. There are different kinds of bodies, each with its own kind of glory.
 - iii. Death and resurrection mean transformation: from perishable, dishonorable, weak, and physical into imperishable, honorable, powerful, and spiritual - not flesh and blood. It has been transformed from glory into glory - but both forms of existence are bodily.
 - iv. The self continues in the purely physical body AND in the glorified body. When the apocalyptic trumpet sounds, all bodies, living and dead, will be transformed by God.
 - v. For this reason **alone**, Corinthians should be steadfastly faithful in the Lord.
26. **1 COR 16:1-24** - Closing - Paul asks for the Corinthians to provide for the church in Jerusalem; he repeats the request in 2 COR and delivers the collection in Romans. He hopes to revisit Corinth after he leaves Ephesus, which he cannot leave yet due to the opposition to the Church there. He writes of Timothy and Apollos - asking for a warm welcome for Timothy and indicating that Apollos had remained with Paul so long of his own accord. He exhorts the Corinthians to be firm in faith and hope and to do everything in love. He ends with a prayer for the Parousia: "maranatha" and a benediction with an offer of the apostle's love.