

Message #72

I Corinthians 16:5-12

The Corinthian church was a troubled church. In this one letter the Apostle Paul had given instruction and rebuke concerning at least 21 subjects:

1) Divisions (1:10); 2) Doctrine (2:18); 3) Pride (1:26; 4:18); 4) Preaching (2:1-3);
1) Carnality (3:1); 6) Rewards(3:12-23); 7) Ministers (4:1-17); 8) Immorality (5:1-8);
2) Church discipline (5:9-13); 10) Lawsuits (6:1-8); 11) Heathen worship (6:9-20);
12) Sexuality and marriage (7); 13) Gray areas (8); 14) Ministers and monetary matters (9);
15) Murmuring (10:1-15); 16) Idolatry (10:16-33); 17) Authority (11:1-16); 18) Lord's Supper
(11:17-34); 19) Spiritual Gifts (12-14); 20) Resurrection; 21) Offerings and giving (16:1-4).

A TROUBLED CHURCH NOT ONLY NEEDS PROPER INSTRUCTION, BUT IT ALSO NEEDS THE PERSONAL PRESENCE OF TRUE MINISTERS OF GOD.

He loved it enough to personally rebuke it and to visit it.

PIECE OF INFORMATION #1 – Paul informs the Corinthian church of his future plans.
16:5-7

As bizarre as this church was, as problematic as this church was, as carnal as this church was, it was still God's church and Paul wanted the church to know what his future plans were.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that he would come to them “after” he went through Macedonia. Macedonia was the Roman state located just to the north of Achaia, which featured the churches of Philippi, Berea and Thessalonica.

Reason #1 - Because he had other churches to visit. **16:5**

Some people, especially those who are carnal, think that if the minister is not continually present, he doesn't care.

Reason #2 - Because he did not wish to immediately see them. **16:7a**

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that his physical absence was not a signal of abandonment. As carnal or unspiritual or ignorant as a church may be, the true Pauline, God-honoring leader will not abandon it. He will keep instructing and ministering for the glory of God.

Reason #3 - Because he was going to eventually stay with them. **16:6-7**

The thing we see in all of this is that the church Paul was intending to spend the most time with was the church of Corinth, the one with the most problems. There is no question that problematic people and churches demand the most attention.

Two important points of observation are worth making:

1) If Paul came, he desired the Corinthians to send him on his way. **16:6**

The words “stay,” “spend” and “send” indicate that Paul expected that when he came, the Corinthians would take care of him and when he left they would supply for him what he needed so that he could undertake another ministry.

2) If Paul came, it would be by the permissive will of God. **16:7**

The word “permits” means Paul would come to Corinth to stay if God turned all events and circumstances so that he could. Paul was always aware of the sovereignty of God and knew that it was ultimately God’s sovereignty that would or would not allow something to happen.

PIECE OF INFORMATION #2 – Paul informs the Corinthian church of his present ministry. **16:8-9**

There were three reasons why Paul stayed in Ephesus:

Reason #1 - The great opportunity reason. **16:9a**

God had opened a great door for Paul to be able to minister in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10). Apparently one of the ways that Paul determined God’s will was by doors of opportunity which were opened for him.

Reason #2 - The great power reason. **16:9b**

Not only had God opened doors, but God had also powerfully worked in Ephesus. The words “effective service” indicate God was powerfully “working in” Ephesus (Acts 19:11-22).

Reason #3 - The great opposition reason. **16:9c**

He didn’t run from opportunity and he didn’t run from opposition. He was faithful in both. He literally could have lost his life in Ephesus, but he stayed anyway and kept ministering (Acts 19:23-20:1).

The irony of this is when things are difficult you feel like leaving but can’t because of God’s will and work. Often when things are smooth, you don’t feel like leaving but must because of God’s will and work.

PIECE OF INFORMATION #3 – Paul informs the Corinthian church of Timothy’s ministry. **16:10-11**

Paul had sent Timothy to Corinth to represent him and to teach them (4:17). Paul was concerned that when Timothy got to Corinth, they would “despise” him (**16:11**).

That word “despise” indicates that Paul was concerned that they would treat Timothy as nothing or treat him with contempt.

(Reason #1) - His mission –His assignment was to teach Pauline doctrine and correct problems in the church. I Cor. 4:17

(Reason #2) - His age –Timothy was a very gifted teacher, but he was also a very young teacher. I Tim. 4:12

Paul wanted Timothy well-cared for. The reason was because Timothy was doing the “Lord’s work, just like Paul (**16:10b**). The word “work” means that Timothy’s trade or business or occupation was the work of God; the work of the Lord.

PIECE OF INFORMATION #4 – Paul informs the Corinthian church of Apollos’ ministry. **16:12**

One of the sects that had sprung up in the church of Corinth was the sect of Apollos (1:12; 3:5, 22).

Perspective 1) Paul’s view was that Apollos should immediately go to Corinth.

Perspective 2) Apollos’ view was that he should not immediately go to Corinth.

From a pure submissive standpoint, Apollos should have bowed to the authority of the apostle.

From a pure subjective standpoint, both thought they were right.

When a church is in trouble, it needs instruction from the Word of God and the presence of a minister to minister that Word.

If you are doing the will of God, expect opportunity and opposition.

When you find you are spiritually troubled, you need spiritual direction.

When you find yourself surrounded by problems, you need the presence and help of others.