

“Watch Ye, Stand Fast In The Faith ...”

“... quit ye like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love” (1 Cor. 16:13-14).

We doubt that any other quotation from Paul’s letters is more familiar than this one. The five different appeals give five different topics for sermons of exhortations to brethren and have doubtlessly been referenced to thousands through the centuries.

“Watch ye.” The appeal to watch was found on the tongues of our Savior, Peter, Paul, and other of the apostles, if not in precise terms, certainly in practical significance. Jesus commanded disciples to “Watch” for His return (Matt. 24:42). Peter urged us to watch against Satan’s efforts to devour the unsuspecting (1 Pet. 5:8) and Paul, in our text, commanded the Corinthians to “watch” with no specific item for which they were to “watch”. Paul’s warnings and exhortations would provide a whole list of things the Corinthians were to watch for. Simply stated, we need to “watch” our hearts, eyes, tongues, and feet.

“Stand fast in the faith.” Most of the ills the Corinthians were bogged down in were not doctrine as much as they were violations of morals and sins against brethren or their conscience. But, there were items of faith which Paul addressed and some of those matters had to do with belief in the resurrection, support for proclaimers of the word, and teaching about marriage and spiritual gifts. It is needful that brethren not be moved away from the faith which has been once for all delivered to saints (Jude 3). As Paul neared his life’s end, it was good that he could say, “I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). Because he had done that (along with having fought a good fight and finished the course), a crown of righteousness was laid up for him.

“Quit ye like men.” There were so many indications of childishness among the Corinthians: their quarreling over men (1 Cor. 3:1-4), their jealous and envy over the possession of spiritual gifts, etc. Jesus likened the people of His day to children in the marketplace, unhappy and dissatisfied with whatever came their way (Matt. 11:16-19). The Ephesians were warned to “be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14). God’s people need to grow up and be men: not grumbling, complaining, and always dissatisfied with life but to have eyes of faith and confidence that “I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

“Be strong.” Acting like men will make us strong, with courage to face whatever trial we meet in life; to resist Satan’s enticements, to have strength to help those who are weak in endurance and faith. We are to be strong — in faith.

“Let all that ye do be done in love.” Had the Corinthians walked in this precept, they would have needed no rebuke about lawsuits with one another; wounding and violating the conscience of weaker brethren; for their selfishness when they had eaten meals together. Doing all things in love does not mean we make no effort to correct those who have been overtaken in a trespass for love for the fallen one’s soul demands we do that — it means such correction is made in gentleness, conscience of the weakness one’s own self (Gal. 6:1). Love for one another is the way the world sees we are Christ’s disciples (Jn. 13:35). Love for one another is the way we are able to cover a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8). Surely, there can’t be too much of this and it is certain we can do much, much more in this area than what we do!

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