

According to 1 Corinthians 16:8

- Paul wrote this letter while staying in Ephesus which is in Turkey,
- between 53 and 58 AD

Nearly five years had elapsed since the founding of the Christian community in Corinth (51) and the writing of this letter (56)

During Paul's absence the community had fallen prey to a number of vices that were causing people to fall away from the faith.

Paul was informed there was a crisis brewing in Corinth through delegates of a woman named Chloe (1:11)

There disturbing report included news of

- Internal divisions (1:12-15)
- A case of incest (5:1-5)
- Multiplying lawsuits (6:1-8)
- Sexual immorality (6:12-20)
- Outspoken denials of the Resurrection (15:12)
- They were careless in the celebration of the Mass (11:17-34)
- And some were exercising the gifts of the Spirit in a way more harmful than helpful (14:1-40)

Paul makes it clear that the two vices at the root of their problems were

1. Pride
2. Selfishness

Pride in the form of intellectual arrogance that paid more respect to human knowledge and eloquence than to the humble message of the Gospel

- 1:18-25; 3:18-21; 8:1-3

Selfishness in the form of sexual immorality, lawsuits, and discrimination toward the poor

Paul's prescription for this illness is the virtue of charity – Love!

### **Outline of 1 Corinthians**

- 1) Address and Prologue
  - a) Greeting (1:1-3)
  - b) Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:4-9)
- 2) Corrections to Corinthian Problems (1:10-6:20)
  - a) Need for unity and Maturity (1:10-4:21)
  - b) Scandal of Incest (5:1-13)
  - c) Lawsuits among Christians (6:1-11)

- d) Sexual Immorality and the Body (6:12-20)
- 3) Answers to Corinthian Questions (7:1-14:40)
    - a) Marriage and Celibacy (7:1-40)
    - b) Idol Food and Christian Freedom (8:1-10:33)
    - c) Liturgical Abuse (11:1-34)
    - d) The Body of Christ and the Gifts of His Members (12:1-14:40)
  - 4) Resurrection of the Dead (15:1-58)
    - a) Christ's Resurrection (15:1-11)
    - b) Resurrection of Christians (15:12-58)
  - 5) Epilogue (16:1-24)
    - a) Financial collection for Jerusalem and Paul's future visit (16:1-12)
    - b) Final Exhortation (16:13-24)

Paul taught us about Faith, Hope and Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Let us add to this explanation of love what Paul tells the Colossians in 3:12-14

14:1, Make love your aim.

What love is not?

- It is not just a feeling or emotion that comes and goes
- Of which we have no control
- Love is a virtue
  - An act of the will
  - A behavior which is a choice

What is love?

- Love is a theological virtue

God infuses His life into our souls

- which enables us to share in God's activity

Faith is a share in God's knowledge

- You know what God knows

Hope is a share in God's desire

- You want what God wants,
- that you make it to union with Him in Heaven

Charity enables us to love the way that God loves

How does God love?

These are the two radically unique features of Divine Love

- 1) Selfless Gift (Creation)
- 2) Sacrifice (Redemption)

Our love must embody these two attributes

This does not mean that we can never consider our own needs or desires

- After all, the virtue of Hope is based on fulfilling one's own need.
- I want to get to possess God and the joys of Heaven

### **Yet Love must be Selfless**

To have a proper understanding of selflessness, we must first understand the two different kinds of love

What does the word "love" actually mean in its broadest sense?

- To want some good for someone

But there are two ways to want good for someone

1. You can want some good for yourself
  - I love God (I want God)
  - I love my wife and kids (I want to be with them – they bring good to me)
  - I love a good book, a fire and a brandy (I want these goods)
    - Based on wanting your OWN happiness
2. You can want some good for someone else
  - I love my wife (I want her good)
  - Parents love their children (we want their good)
  - Mother Teresa loved the poor (she wanted their good)
    - Based on wanting someone else's good or happiness

The first kind of love is based on wanting something good for me, and the second kind is based on wanting something good for someone else

Love is not about your good or happiness alone

- It involves the good of the other person
- Other wise you are selfish

In Charity, you say to God and neighbor:

- "I will try to make you happy,
- I will try to serve you,
- I will make your good my priority."

## Love must be Sacrificial

### THE PROOF OF LOVE IS MEASURED BY SACRIFICE

If we have charity for God and for neighbor, we will sacrifice in order to bring good to them. The perfection of love is this.

Your good is my good

- Spouse, children, the poor and needy
- We possess the good they achieve
- We possess it together
- And enjoy it together
- We are part of it
- I enjoy your good through you
- Once you love someone you enjoy their good
- This is the communion of saints

It is not only about the good I get out of this

- It is about the good I do for you
- The good I help you get out of this

### **In terms of charity towards others**

We can tell when our love of our neighbors and family is most like God's based on our willingness to sacrifice for their sake.

It also means that we learn and practice the works of mercy.

Corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and imprisoned, bury the dead.

- 1) Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to brotherly love
  - a) It is a work of justice pleasing to God
- 2) Examples: St. Martin of Tours

Spiritual Works of Mercy: Instruct, Counsel, Admonishing (calling to task someone who has sinned), Comfort, to Pray for the living and the dead, Forgive and Bear wrongs patiently.

### **7 times Paul tells us to build up the Body of Christ**

Love is the virtue to build up the Church

**1Cor.14      The exhortation to “build up” oikonomy**