

Foundations Bible Study – I Corinthians
Lesson 5

Scripture Readings:

- I Corinthians Chapters 14 through 16

Lesson

Here at the end of the letter Paul addresses two important issues, and we also get a glimpse into more troubles in the church at Corinth. First the gift of tongues is addressed. Tongues for most Methodists are far off our radar. In fact not many of us have heard or been a part of a service where tongues were spoken. I have heard tongues in two kinds of churches, Pentecostal churches here in the states and Methodist churches in Mexico. I have been scared and blessed by the gift of tongues. I have also been confessed when tongues have been spoken. It seems to most scholars that there is a problem in the worship services at Corinth. It sounds like there is a lot going on and not much organization or order is taking place there. Paul is not so much saying, “tongues should not be a part of worship” as he is saying, “things have gotten out of hand”. As united Methodist we are not forbidden to have this gift as a part of our services of prayer and worship; however it is not promoted or encouraged in most areas of the USA.

I believe tongues are for the most part a gift from the Spirit of God, and I also believe they can be very distractive and even destructive to the church. When it comes down to it.... I can not say yes or no to the gifts of tongues. Why? Because I've seen the very good work of God done through tongues, and I seem much fear and confusion come from tongues. We are not Pentecostal as to our beliefs about tongues, yet we are Pentecostal in our beliefs about the coming of the Holy Spirit. So we my friends are caught....

Paul does make one point several times here: Seek the gifts that build up the church. I think this is the most important part of the message. It was important in Corinth and it is still important today. As we grow spiritually beginning to find and use our gifts, I pray we will all as the body of Christ encourage and uplift each other as much as we can.

Lastly in the 14th chapter Paul speaks of order in worship. Sometimes I forget how important that is. All we do should have purpose, and especially when we gather to worship. My prayer is as Paul's “God is really among you!” (14:25)

In chapter 15 Paul speaks of the power and miracle of the resurrection. We celebrate Easter and every Sunday the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, just as the church in Corinth: Do we really believe it? And if we do, what does it mean for our lives each day?

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Here the Bible is teaching us all how that the resurrection is the very hinge-pin to our Christian faith. This belief is what drives us forward and onward in life and the life to come. I think we teach and preach about this much and that is good. Sometimes I just wonder how much it affects our lives.

It should affect me and you much. This life on earth, is not the part of life that last forever, oh yes, this life is very important but, it is not the end. Many of us here in the US live like this life is the end, the money we spend, the things we do, the way we fight death, what is up with all that? Death leads to the resurrection. At almost every graveside service I read part of chapter 15. Verses 51 through 57 are some very comforting words there in the cemetery. And I often think I should take more risks in this life, live it more fully, not worry so much about others opinions, just do my best and as Jesus said, “Store up for yourself treasures in Heaven.”

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What spiritual gifts do you think are the most helpful to the church today?
2. Are the Virgin birth and the resurrection hard for you to believe? Or is it an easy thing to believe through faith?
3. How does the resurrection of Jesus affect you life today?????
4. What treasures do you have stored in heaven? What treasures do you have stored up in the earth?
5. Do you have a “Living Will”, does your family know how you want to approach the bar of death as you pass over to eternal life?