

Father's Day 2023

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, June 18, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Happy Father's Day! Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a rather short space of time.

OPENING REMARKS

May the Lord bless this gathering as we touch upon the topic of fatherhood via a unique passage this morning:

1 Corinthians 4:15 (NIV, Emphasis Mine) [Paul to the Church at Corinth]

15 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your **father** through the gospel.

NOTE 2 – We do well to entertain and heed trusted voices of influence (e.g., pastors, mentors, gifted authors). However, in Christ we possess few fathers (i.e., those most responsible for leading and directing us to Christ). The apostle Paul noted that in relation to the church at Corinth, he operated in this most singular human role, for he was used of God to bring the gospel to their region (cf. Acts 18).

Q. How many in Corinth came to faith through the ministry efforts of the apostle Paul?

KEY 1 – As a father to the Christians at Corinth, Paul possessed a unique voice and sphere of authority.

Q. How did this fatherly aspect manifest to the Corinthians? What role(s) did he take on as a spiritual father?

KEY 2 – Let us consider our response by examining the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth.

DELVING DEEP (1 CORINTHIANS)

1) Influential Authority

Paul possessed a divinely-ordained position of authority from which he was to influence the Church of J. Christ:

1 Corinthians 1:1–3 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, **called** to be an **apostle** of Christ Jesus by **the will of God**, and our brother Sosthenes,

2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE 1 – Herein Paul established the role he played in the broader kingdom of Christ (i.e., he was an apostle). Paul was not to be regarded as simply a peer or friend, but as an emissary of Christ—chosen by divine decree. Therefore, he was to be regarded as one speaking with spiritual &/or kingdom authority; a voice to be heeded.

NOTE 2 – Paul understood as a spiritual father-figure that his relationship with the people of Corinth was not a relationship among equals; he was called to man a significant post and he sought to operate in that post in kind! The outflow of the letter is founded upon the precept that Paul both was an authoritative and influential voice.

2) Edifying Encouragement

He was an edifying encourager in the lives of the believers at Corinth. He sought to both build up and cheer on:

1 Corinthians 1:4–9 (Emphasis Mine)

4 I always **thank my God for you** because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 5 For in him you have been **enriched** in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— 6 God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. 7 Therefore **you do not lack any spiritual gift** as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8 **He will also keep you firm to the end**, so that you will be **blameless** on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, **who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

3) Healthful Correction

Paul was able and willing to offer necessary and healthful correction to this young and wayward congregation!

1 Corinthians 1:10–17

10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12 What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Corinthians 3:1–7

1 Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

4) Consistent Example

Paul called the people to aspire to the Christian example he set forth (i.e., imperfect yet remarkably constant)!

1 Corinthians 4:15–16 (Emphasis Mine)

15 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 **Therefore** I urge you to **imitate me**.

FYI 1 – Similarly, he noted this in a latter section of the same Epistle...

1 Corinthians 11:1

1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

FYI 2 – Paul was a man who took his Christian life and living seriously. Consider the following...

1 Corinthians 9:24–27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. 27 No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

5) Strategic Support

He offered strategic support in moments wherein he could not be directly involved or physically present. Note:

1 Corinthians 4:15–17 (Emphasis Mine)

15 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17 **For this reason** I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

KEY – Paul, realizing the need, dispatched his faithful companion, trusted emissary and spiritual son, Timothy!

6) Effectual Discipline

Paul was not only willing to offer healthful correction, but effectual discipline when needed (i.e., treating sin):

1 Corinthians 4:18–21

18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

FYI – This spills over into 1 Cor. ch. 5 wherein Paul has to bring necessary correction to a truly wayward church:

1 Corinthians 5:1–6

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? 3 For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. 4 So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. 6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?

7) Spiritual Instruction

Paul, as a diligent teacher, sought to offer spiritual instruction that touched upon the needs of those in his care:

KEY 1 – This is by far the bulk of the Epistle, as Paul touched upon an array of topics (i.e., chapters 6–8; 10–15): **a)** lawsuits among believers; **b)** sexual immorality; **c)** marriage, divorce and interpersonal relationships; **d)** contentment amidst societal circumstance; **e)** matters of conscience (i.e., food sacrificed to idols); **f)** Christian freedom and self-control; **g)** Holy Communion; **h)** matters re: submission; **i)** the gifts of the Spirit; **j)** unity in the Body; **k)** the nature of love; **l)** intelligibility and orderliness in worship; **m)** the resurrection and more!

KEY 2 – Consider that to Paul, spiritual truth manifested in truly practical matters; there was no differentiation!

KEY 3 – Consider the following selections in the way of illustration:

1 Corinthians 6:18–20

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:51–55, 58 (Emphasis Mine)

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” [Isa. 25:8]

55 “Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?” [Hosea 13:4]

58 **Therefore**, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

8) Affectionate Connection

Lastly, the fatherly-work of Paul was graced with a note of tender affection and genuine care for God’s people:

1 Corinthians 16:21, 24

21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. . . . 24 My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

NOTE 1 – The love of Paul is readily apparent in verse 24. This love abounds in all of his writings. In particular, I have always loved this selection (**1 Thess. 2:8b**): “Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”

HOWEVER, LET US CONSIDER V. 21...

NOTE 2 – Quite often we forget that Paul used amanuenses in his writings (i.e., assistants who took dictation). At times the name of a particular amanuensis appears in the pages of Pauline literature: (e.g., **Rom. 16:22**): “I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord). This small touch indicates the heart of Paul for his own (i.e., he was willing to lay aside the dictation to put his name on the page; truly PERSONAL connection).

NATURAL APPLICATIONS

Q. What does this have to do with us in 2023? What does this have to do with Father’s Day?

A1. All that can be said of the apostle Paul as a father to the Corinthians can and should be said of us, men. Truly, he has set for us an admirable and aspirational example—an example we should keep before us in Christ. Those under your care can and should heed many trusted voices, yet they will only have one of you in this life! YOU possess a unique VOICE and a singular SPHERE of authority!

Q. Do you want to know what this world needs now more than ever?

- A1.** Fathers who are willing to embrace the mantle of fatherhood, positively influencing those in their care.
- A2.** Fathers who are willing to both upbuild and cheer on their wives and children as edifying encouragers.
- A3.** Fathers who are willing to impart healthful correction upon the wayward; speaking the truth in love.
- A4.** Fathers who will set forth an admirable and aspirational Christian example; showcasing His ways.
- A5.** Fathers who will work to strategically support their wives and children in all appropriate ways.
- A6.** Fathers who will work to discipline their children (i.e., earnestly “contending against” sin).
- A7.** Fathers who will labor to spiritually invest in their families via scriptural instruction.
- A8.** Fathers marked by tenderness and the expression of affectionate connection.

QUOTE – “. . . fatherlessness is a national epidemic affecting millions of children every year. Virtually every major social pathology has been linked to fatherless children: violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, unwed pregnancies, psychological disorders and even suicide.” –Dianna Thompson (Researcher)

- A2.** To the young men who are NOT yet fathers, cultivate such elements in preparation for your future family!
- A3.** To the single ladies who are NOT yet married, these are the elements to look for in a spousal candidate.
- A4.** To the children and wives who are present, honor your fathers and support your men in this work.

FYI – We will likely continue along these lines next week and further explore such elements.

CONCLUSION

KEY – Men of God, we love and need you! Let us close in prayer for you and please receive a gift as you leave!

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org.

NOTE 2 – Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).

NOTE 3 – Membership Packets are Ready for Distribution Following Service Today (i.e., See Pastor).

NOTE 4 – Potluck Supper next Sunday morning following Service. We hope to see you then!

NOTE 5 – Lastly, our friends from Grace Reformation Bible Church have invited us to an informal lunch this Saturday at the Old Town Hall from 11:30am–1pm. This will be a potluck style meal, though there will be salads, pizza and desserts to share. The idea is to use the one-year anniversary of Roe v. Wade’s overturn as an opportunity to celebrate the mercy of God and His gift of life. It is their hope to turn this into an annual meal. Until we are together next...

2 Corinthians 13:14

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.