

Study 26. 1 Cor 16:1-24

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Big idea: our connections with Christians throughout the world give us opportunity to care for their needs

Introduction

Think of the last postcard you received (if you can!). Who was it from, and where were they?

Observation, interpretation and implications

1. Collections for the needy

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

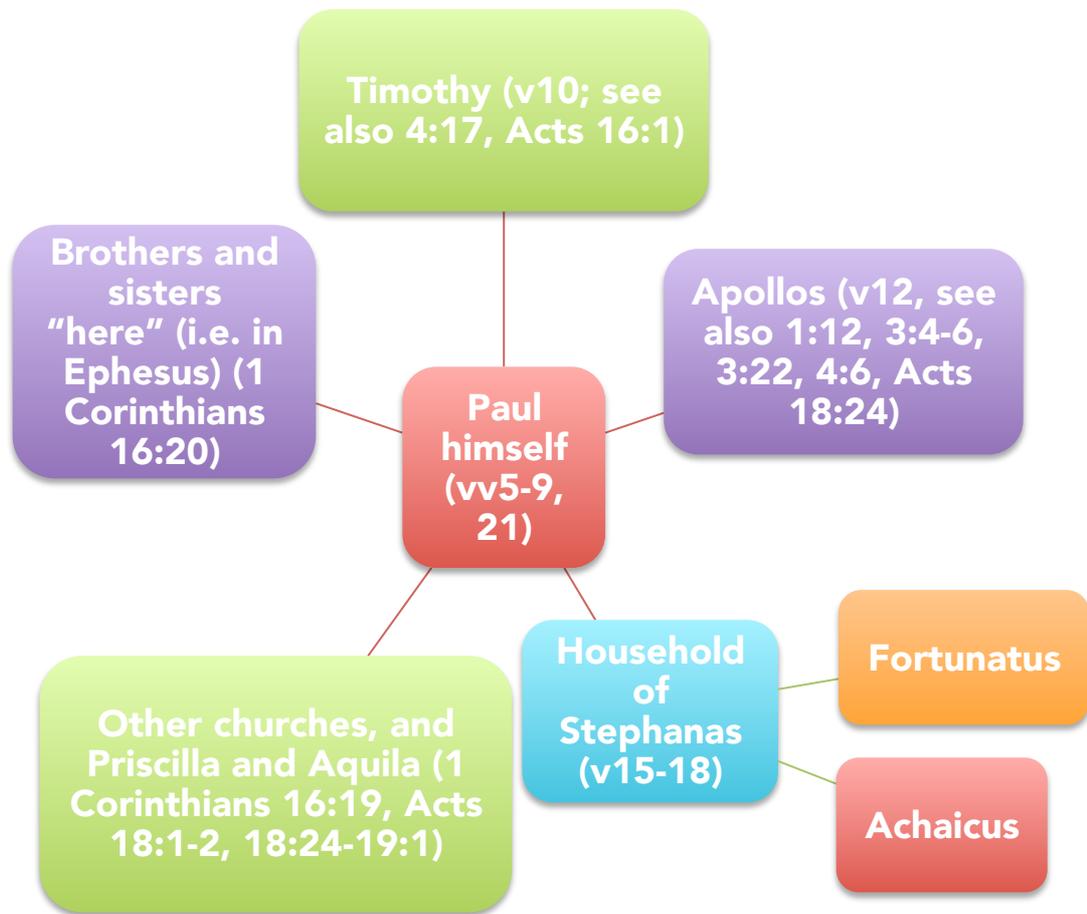
- Why was Paul helping them to send money to Jerusalem? (Hint see Acts 11:28-30, 2 Corinthians 8:13-15)
- What is the benefit of Paul's plan that each person set aside money at the start of the week?
- How might we apply these principles today to practically care for Christians in other parts of the world?
- Many people give electronically to different charities. What is the advantage of us giving together as a church in the way the Corinthians are doing here?

2. Comings and goings

Paul mentions a bunch of people as he shares greetings, and talks about travel plans.

- Do you find it surprising that God's word includes such incidental details about people long dead?
- Why is God's word so anchored in this particular time and place?

Using a whiteboard or big piece of paper, try to draw a picture or diagram of all the people mentioned. Who are they, and what do Paul's comments about them reveal about his hopes and fears for the Corinthian church?



People often giggle at the “holy kiss” in verse 20. The “kiss” was a cultural practice for greeting, departing and expressing a relationship of peace, love and respect. It particularly applied within families. The “holy” part of the expression probably emphasises that this is a greeting shared now with a special significance among the holy people of God (i.e. the church).

Final words of advice

- What is interesting about the way Paul uses provisional language throughout (e.g. “if the Lord permits” in verse 7)?
- What does it mean to be “on your guard” (16:13)? What threats did Paul anticipate for the Corinthians, and what threats do we need to be aware of today?
- 1 Corinthians has been a wild ride full of heavy rebukes for the church at Corinth. What do Paul’s final closing comments in verses 22-24 reveal at the end of the day about how he sees them and what he wants for them?

Review of 1 Corinthians

- If you had to summarise the book of 1 Corinthians in a single sentence, what would you say?

You can do this activity in a fun way by getting each person to work out their own sentence, then join with one other person to hone their sentence (deciding as a pair whether to adopt one person's or modify), then threes, fours, and so on until the whole group has settled on a summary.

- What have you found encouraging or challenging about this series on 1 Corinthians?
- The book of 1 Corinthians is sometimes referred to as the book of "1 Sydney" because of how it applies to our city. What do you think Paul's message would be to believers in Sydney today?

Prayer ideas

- Pray for Christians in other parts of the world that you're aware of that are in need.

You might like to ask someone in your group to do some research about this prior to the night so you can pray in an informed way.

- Give thanks to God for Paul and the Corinthians - that in Christ we are connected with them though they lived thousands of years ago, and that their lives and passions and struggles can speak to us today.
- Take some time to pray about the things that we've been confronted with in this series on 1 Corinthians.