The Church At Corinth

Intro: I think it would be well at the outset of our lesson to notice some outstanding facts in reference to the city of Corinth and the establishment of the Lord’s church in that locale.

I. CORINTH: THE CITY.
   A. Corinth, one of the great metropolis of the ancient world, was located in the country of Greece, also referred to in the Bible as Achaia.
      1. It boasted of a population of 600,000 souls and is reputed to have been one of the worst cities known to man from the standpoint of sin, wickedness and idolatry.
         a. It was here the temple of Aphrodite was located which employed 1000 priestesses to minister to the baser passions of those who came to worship.
         b. Thus, it was noted throughout the world as a city devoted to gross immorality.
      2. In Paul’s day to say that someone behaved like a Corinthian was the gravest insult that could be given to an individual.
   B. Yet, is it not comforting to note, that even here the gospel of Christ was not without its power to change and transform lives, and that the church of our Lord was here firmly planted?
      1. Rom. 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
      2. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
      3. What encouragement it lends to us today who likewise are beset by wicked forces.
      4. Wherever the gospel is faithfully preached and lived it will reap a harvest of precious souls to the Lord; cf. 1 Cor. 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.
   A. To this wicked city the apostle Paul came on his second missionary journey to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.
   B. The record of Paul’s mission to this city; Acts 18:1-11 “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”
   1. Although firmly believing in the support of the church in the preaching of the gospel, Paul joined himself to a man named Aquila, and Priscilla his wife because
they were of the same trade—tentmaking, and used that profession as a means of support.

2. But, even working with his hands to provide his support, he ceased not to avail himself of every opportunity to further his true profession: Preaching Christ; 1 Cor. 9:16 “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

3. Thus, every Sabbath he could be found in the synagogue reasoning with both Jews and Greeks.

4. This labor of Paul was not unrewarded; Acts 18:8 “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

C. Thus was established in A.D. 52 the church in Corinth and for a year and a half Paul labored and served with that church.

III. PAUL’S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.

A. In A.D. 57 or 58 the apostle Paul wrote two letters to the Corinthian church.

B. The reason for these letters is evidenced by the fact that certain sinful practices were being entertained by the Corinthian brethren.

1. Practices that were out of harmony with God’s revealed will.
2. It was Paul’s desire, in these letters, to correct these sinful practices and present positive teaching for the upbuilding of the church.

C. It is impossible, in the time allotted, to notice specifically the various messages presented by Paul to this church.

1. We shall endeavor, however, to notice them generically and their application to us today.
2. Paul’s introduction to his first letter clearly indicates his messages are applicable to all churches and, therefore, to us.
3. 1 Cor. 1:2 “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

D. We shall concern our self with Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian church in this lesson.

IV. THE BASIC DIVISIONS OF PAUL’S FIRST EPISTLE.

A. Chapters 1-4. Paul reproves them for their internal strife showing them the consequences of such partyism and calls upon them to follow after unity.

1. Chapter One: Reproves their division and gives the basis of true unity; 1 Cor. 1:10 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
2. Chapter Two: He present the wisdom of God and the unity to be found in that wisdom that comes from above.
3. Chapter Three: He reproves them for their lack of spiritual wisdom as exemplified by their carnal divisions. he also shows that proper estimates of preachers are to be determined by their works.
4. Chapter Four: A continuation of these thoughts.

B. Chapter Five: Paul censures the church for their deliberate toleration of gross immorality and concludes by saying we should not associate with such.
C. Chapter Six: He reproves them from their lack of submissiveness since they were going to law against each other.
D. Chapter Seven: Teaching concerning marriage.
E. Chapters Eight and Nine: Christian liberty and the principles of self-denial; we should waive our rights in the interest of others. Too, we should not use our liberty in Christ as freedom to sin.
F. Chapter Ten: The Israelites an example that we too can apostatize.
G. Chapter Eleven: Disorders in public worship.
H. Chapter Twelve: An appeal to unity, we are all members of one body.
I. Chapter Thirteen: A more excellent way.
J. Chapter Fourteen: Conduct in public worship; let all be done in decency and in order.
K. Chapter Fifteen: Lessons on the resurrection.
L. Chapter Sixteen: The collection of the saints and closing remarks.

Conclusion: 1 Cor. 16:13-14 “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 14Let all your things be done with charity.”