

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 16. 1 Corinthians 16. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Corinthians 16.

INTRODUCTION: JUNK DRAWER

Do you have a junk drawer at home? Just a place where you throw random stuff that you don't want strewn out and about.

So, in my kitchen right now we have three junk drawers.

- I have one,
- Maryse has one,
- and yes, our 5-year-old has her own junk drawer!

Now, normally a junk drawer contains pretty common items such as:

- scissors, chip clips, pens, and tape
- Or some small objects like safety pins, thumbtacks, or maybe toothpicks.
- Some stuff just gets thrown in there, like receipts or spare change.

And then some more infrequently used things,

- those old scratched-up sunglasses,
- and frequent shopper cards...stacks and stacks of cards.

And then, there are all those old tech accessories

- chargers
- cases
- cables.
- That for some reason we can't throw out,
- but we don't know what to do with them.

But then again, sometimes there are some very personal things revealed just by peering into one's junk drawer.

- Sometimes there are things we can't part with, but don't use.
 - Knick-knacks from vacation...
 - That graduation picture from your second cousin...
- There are also good intentions in junk drawers
 - like Nicorette gum to help you quit smoking,
 - or sunscreen you swore you'd wear all summer,
 - or long since abandoned to-do lists.

EXPLAIN: PAUL'S JUNK DRAWER

Well, today we come to the end of our study of this letter from Paul to the church at Corinth. And chapter 16 is what I'm calling *Paul's Junk Drawer*.

You see, we need to remember that this is not a book.

- Like, we call it a book,
- but this is really a letter
- that wasn't meant to be chopped up into 35 sermons.

And today, in chapter 16, we find the conclusion of this letter...

- so think...
- he's wrapping this up
- and kinda rapid firing the last few things he wants them to get.
- So, it's like, "*P.S. don't forget this.*"
- And then, "*P.P.S. and don't forget that.*"

TRANSITION

But just like our junk drawers...

- there's a reason why this stuff is shoved in here...
- and it might just have some deeper meaning for us today.

So, let's open up Paul's Junk Drawer and see what we find.

1 Corinthians 16 starting in verse 1:

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-4

[1] Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. [3] And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. [4] If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

EXPLAIN: GIVING

So, the first thing out of Paul's Junk Drawer is about giving...taking a collection...taking an offering.

And what's shocking is how many pastors are fearful about talking about money.

Because it's such a crowd pleaser!

- But, if you take the word of God seriously,
- and Jesus says that **where your treasure is there your heart will be also,**
- then how can we be disciplined if we aren't willing
- to talk about the number one competitor for our hearts?

Now, some churches can overdo this and ONLY talk about money,

- in some sort of money-grubbing,
- fund my private jet, way.

But, I'll tell you this: **We only preach about money at Fathom when the Bible does...which... WARNING...it does a lot!**

EXPLAIN: PRINCIPLES

It seems that Paul had previously asked them to participate in a **collection for the saints**, that is, fellow Christians.

- We are told that it will be sent to Jerusalem,
- the central, regional church at that time.
- They might be facing a famine...
- Or it could be that they're just the central hub church,
- And they'll distribute it to others in need.

Now, the way he instructs them to take the offering is very interesting, and I think, gives us some principles we should consider. Look again at verse 2:

He says: **On the first day of every week** – So, the first principle is of **SLIDE REGULAR GIVING.**

- He says to do this **every week.**
- And he says do this **on the first day,**
- that is, Sunday.
- The day that Christians gathered for worship.
- So, giving is to be REGULAR
- As opposed to just whenever you feel like it.

He also mentions in verse 2 **that there will be no collecting when I come,** which I think means that this regular giving is meant to collect enough so there are

- no “special offerings” needed...
- no gimmicks...
- like a huge red thermometer on the wall...

So, REGULAR GIVING...

Next, he says: **On the first day of every week, each of you** –

The second principle is of **SLIDE UNIVERSAL GIVING.**

- This isn't for a portion of the church...
- or just the wealthy in the church...
- but the entire church is to bring something.
- Everyone is to participate.

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up –

The third principle is **SLIDE SYSTEMATIC GIVING**.

- It's not random and sporadic...
- But he says: Put it aside and store it up.
- So, each of us sets a money aside,
- and then we store it up to be used for kingdom work.
- It's why we budget and plan and strategize.
- Both personally, but this is also why we as a church do this.
- We call it stewardship.

And then, finally: each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper –

The fourth principle I'll call **SLIDE PROPORTIONAL GIVING**.

- It's based on how each person in the congregation is able.

This is not Paul proposing a tithe.

- Which some Christians take as a rule of law...
- He's not proposing a flat 10% right off the top for everyone.
- Rather, he says, give as you may prosper.
- So, that means that for some it might be less than a tithe;
- for others it might be far more than a tithe.
- Now, I think a tithe may be a good place to start or to aim at.
- But we are to be as generous as we are able to be!

BLANK SLIDE

Paul is saying,

- *“Be generous!*
- *It should be REGULAR.*
- *It should be UNIVERSAL.*
- *It should be SYSTEMATIC.*
- *And it should be PROPORTIONAL.”*

TRANSITION

So, first thing out of Paul’s Junk Drawer is a reminder on how to give and be generous.

So, we ought to ask, *“how am I doing when it comes to giving and generosity?”*

Next up? Verse 5.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:5-9

[5] I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, [6] and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. [7] For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. [8] But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, [9] for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

EXPLAIN: GOD'S WILL

Now, this sounds like some ramblings from Paul about his upcoming travels. It's like a first century flight itinerary.

- *“Hey guys, right now I’m in Ephesus,*
- *and I’ll be here until Pentecost, really, springtime.*
- *Then I’m going to come for a visit...*
- *after I pass through Macedonia...*
- *I think I’ll stay with you,*
- *or hey, maybe I’ll even spend the entire winter with you.”*

But I think Paul is really showing us how to live in the will of God.

You ever ask, *“What’s God will for me in this...or that...?”*

- *“Where should I go to college?”*
- *Who should I marry?*
- *Should I take this job?*
- *Should I move to that city?”*

Again, some more principles:

MAKE A PLAN

First of all. Paul has a plan. You want to live in the will of God?

SLIDE MAKE A PLAN. Paul has a plan for what he’s HOPING will happen.

You see, people often think that to be faithful to God you just need to:

- *let go and let God,*
- *and let the Spirit lead,*
- *and Jesus, take the wheel.*

That is not good driving advice!

Now, sure, those are fine bumper sticker sentiments...

- But you can set a course!
- You can MAKE A PLAN.
- You don't have to be completely mindless to live in God's will.
- You can make reasonable plans for what you HOPE to do.

REMAIN OPEN HANDED

But then note what Paul adds in...

- *I intend to pass through Macedonia...*
- *and perhaps I will stay with you...*
- *I hope to spend some time with you...*
- *if the Lord permits.*

So, MAKE A PLAN...most definitely.

But then **SLIDE** REMAIN OPEN HANDED. Ok? Hold those plans with open hand.

You see, sometimes we think that living in the will of God means we will have all uncertainty blotted out.

Question: Would you say that Paul is pretty tight with the Lord?

- Yeah...dude's pretty legit...
- writes Bible for a living...
- not too shabby.

But just note how much uncertainty he still lives in.

You can live in God's will and still face great uncertainties!

REMAIN OPEN HANDED.

PERSEVERE

And then the third principle to note is this. **SLIDE PERSEVERE!**

- Verse 8: Paul is in Ephesus,
- And verse 9 says that **a wide door for effective work has opened to me,**
- **AND there are many adversaries.**

Now, doesn't that seem a bit contradictory?

- Like, normally when I think,
- *"Man, God opened this door for me."*
- I don't equate that with **many adversaries.**

But it would seem that Paul doesn't see that. And I think it's something to note here: **An open door doesn't always mean smooth sailing.**

This is where a lot of us can get into trouble,

- because we often determine
- whether we are in God's will or not
- based on whether or not we feel good,
- or are comfortable,
- or have no perceivable roadblocks.

You may know the Christian cliché *"The safest place to be is in the center of the will of God"*

- And that's true...
- but it also may be
- the most dangerous place to be.

In my life,

- every big thing
- for the Lord
- that I've been a part of
- hasn't come easy...
- but has come with sweat
- and tears
- and hard work
- and PERSEVERENCE.

So,

- if you sense there's an open door...
- but there are hard things as well...
- DON'T GIVE UP!
- Don't run from Ephesus!
- Stay!
- PERSEVERE!

BLANK SLIDE

TRANSITION

MAKE A PLAN, REMAIN OPEN HANDED, and even if push-back comes, PERSEVERE.

You got something going on in your life that this can speak into right now? Consider Paul's Junk Drawer.

On to Verse 10:

1 CORINTHIANS 16:10-12

[10] When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. [11] So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.

[12] Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

EXPLAIN: LEADERS

So, next out of Paul's junk drawer is a mention of two other leaders in the church: Timothy and Apollos.

First, Timothy:

- Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus.
- And it seems that Paul plans on sending Timothy
- to the church at Corinth
- after the arrival of this letter
- to build up and encourage the church.

And frankly, after the contents of this letter, which we've just spent the last year working through, would you be looking forward to that encounter?

- I mean, if you're Timothy,
- are you looking forward to being the first one in Corinth,
- after Paul's beatdown?
- You show up and the dude sleeping with his mother-in-law
- is first in line to give you his thoughts...

But Paul gives them the command to them to treat Timothy well.

And then he turns to Apollos.

- Now, if you remember,
- all the way back to chapter 1,
- Paul's first indictment of the church
- is that they are creating factions
- over which pastor the like the most.

Some follow Paul, others follow Peter, others follow Apollos...no one follows Timothy...sorry buddy.

- But it seems that Apollos was another pastor at the church,
- he has left,
- and now he is unwilling to come back...
- understandably!
- That place is messed up!

But now Paul has **strongly urged** him to visit them.

- And those word ought to carry some weight...
- I mean, he is the Apostle Paul.
- But Paul says that Apollos is not willing to go back.
- We don't know exactly the reasons why.

APPLICATION: LOVE LEADERS

But here's the point I want to make from these two guys being mentioned.

SLIDE LOVE YOUR LEADERS WELL.

Now, that might seem self-serving...alright it is...but love your leaders well.

- And I don't just mean me.
- Love the elders
- and the staff
- and your D-Group leaders
- and those who volunteer on the worship team
- and the tech team
- and the hospitality teams
- and the kid's ministry team
- and the youth team.
- LOVE WELL THOSE WHO LEAD AND SERVE YOU.

BLANK SLIDE

Verse 13:

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13-14

[13] Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. [14]

Let all that you do be done in love.

EXPLAIN

Now, a list of commands often appear at the end of Paul's letters. And these final commands are very militaristic in their language.

He says,

- keep watch,
- stand firm,
- be strong,
- act like men
 - (which has nothing to do with gender here,
 - it was just at that time only men served in the military).

Essentially, he's saying, *"Keep fighting...keep going...don't give up!"*

But then he reminds them of chapter 13: **Let all that you do be done in love.**

Just like Eric and Gary said when preaching chapter 13: Love is the fuel behind all that we fight for.

TRANSITION

Verse 15-18 again reinforce loving and honoring all leaders, not just pastors.

So, skip down to verse 19:

1 CORINTHIANS 16:19-20

[19] The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. [20] All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

EXPLAIN: OTHER CHURCHES

Paul sends greetings from other churches to the Corinthians, to remind them that they are a part of a much bigger thing.

- Fathom Church is not the end, y'all.
- We are a small part of the larger Church...
- the global church....
- the universal church...
- and this is why we are networked
- and partner with other churches.

EXPLAIN: FAMILY

And he just kinda slips in that holy kiss thing...which sounds weird to us,

- but just travel out of the US
- and you'll see that a kiss on the cheek
- is a normal greeting in many other countries in the world.

But back then,

- the holy kiss was only men to men
- and women to women on the cheek...
- sorry to all the single dudes hoping for something more.

And, hear me here,

- this was seldom done in mixed company.
- By that I mean,
- Roman citizens did not greet slaves or freedmen in that way.
- This was for family,
- and those on the same social level as you were.

But Paul just opens up a new family, the church, and it's filled with people of mixed social backgrounds, nationalities, races, and genders.

- This is a new family,
- and it is one that transcends the social constructs
- of first century Rome,
- and of 21st century America.

That little bit from the junk drawer might be all we need to hear in 2020.

Verse 21:

1 CORINTHIANS 16:21

[21] I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

Remember, he's been dictating this to a scribe, but now he grabs the pen. He wants to sign the letter himself!

1 CORINTHIANS 16:22

[22] If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!

Now, this sounds harsh, but remember back through this letter.

- To those who are in the church,
- but have no love for the Lord...
- to those causing factions...
- to those building with straw...
- to those in unrepentant sin...
- to those who are dividing the church...
- let him be accursed.
- This is a warning!

And then Paul ends:

1 CORINTHIANS 16:23-24

[23] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. [24] My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Paul ends with **grace** and **love**. Now, just remember how messed up this place was.

- Corinth, of all the letters in the Bible,
- is the place that is the most jacked up.
- And Paul ends with grace and love.
- I think I'd end with judgment and wrath...
- but no, Paul ends with grace and love.

Listen, I don't know where you're at in your faith...

- maybe you're like Corinth...
- a wreck....
- unrepentant sin...
- brokenness...
- you know you're not where you ought to be...

Paul's final words for you aren't,

- *"Well, sorry..."*
- *you're too far gone...*
- *you've done too much."*

No, he ends with **grace** and **love**.

The message of this letter, and the message for us today is:

- come back.
- Return.
- Repent of your sins.
- Turn away from this mess.
- Return to following Jesus.
- Turn to grace and love.
- Turn to Jesus.

This is on the table for all of us today. Grace and love!

Now, I don't know what out of Paul's junk drawer hit you, but take it and write it down and chew on it.

- It's from God's word.
- And if the Spirit pricked your mind with any of it,
- then take it to heart.

ENDING

So, let's end with those last two verses once more: [23] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. [24] My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Fathom Church...that was 1 Corinthians.

Next week we start something new.

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Anderson, David. *Final Exhortations*.
- Comer, John Mark. *Shotguns & Salutations*.
- Garland, David. 1 Corinthians.
- Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology.
- Osbourne, Larry. *The Truth About Open Doors*.