

1 Corinthians Through The Eyes Of Radical Christianity

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the historical and cultural background of Corinth to provide a deeper understanding of the context in which the book of 1 Corinthians was written. It explores the significance of Corinth as a cosmopolitan city with diverse cultures, the challenges faced by early Christians in a city known for its immorality and idol worship, and the archaeological discoveries that shed light on the biblical narratives. The sermon emphasizes the importance of allowing the Word of God to shape our understanding and guide our interpretation of scripture.

Scripture: Acts 18:1, 1 Corinthians 9:24, 1 Corinthians 11:4, Romans 16:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1

Topics: "Cultural Context", "Biblical Interpretation"

Description

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Transcript

The First Corinthians Through the Eyes of Radical Christianity. I'm going to tell you why I use this. I struggled over even the title.

And what am I going to call this? I thought of it called Corinthians from the chair of a pilgrim or a sojourner or something. But there's a lot that I feel that I relate to at Corinth. And in my life and in my journey, Corinth, I feel like I get it.

I get Corinth. And I'm sure I probably really don't. And if I was there, they would say, Dean, you don't get it.

But I don't know if there's ever a place that I feel that kind of feels like the church experiences that I've been a part of in my life. Not so much. I mean, but the whole general, the way it comes together would be in Corinth.

So here's why. And some of these are kind of funny and how I'm going to engage in this book. So my journey as on into radical Christians, since I got out of the army, I first lived with David Brousseau and that church down there, this early Christian fellowship for 10 years.

And as I was there, you know, it was all the different radicals that would come together. I mean, you know, we would have kind of like all the people who didn't fit in anywhere else would come to Texas, you know, and it was fun. It was kind of like Boston.

It's and it was a lot of fun for us to just be anything we could to follow Christ the best we could. And then from there, I moved up to Pennsylvania and kind of raised my older children all in Pennsylvania. And they're amongst the charity churches.

And the one of the things that I really appreciated about the charity churches that I was a part of was the attempt to bring these two cultures together. And that's this next point. And I know this is a terrible thing to do for a historian to kind of put your culture and put it on to Corinth.

And that's a really big mistake. But I don't know. There's so many things that I relate to of trying to mix the Anabaptist and the evangelical culture in my experience amongst radical Christians.

And so they're a charity. I know there was a decided effort to try to not to get locked into a decided Mennonite culture and have all the different influences that brought together Brother Denny and Brother Mose together. And they did something.

And it was a certain thing that they were trying to do. Now, it causes a lot of problems. You know, when you're in churches that have just a homogenous culture, it really this, you know, stability is not all bad.

And being, you know, just everything going to normal every day, it's not all bad. But I don't think that was the way New Testament churches were. It brought these cultures together.

And when you do that, it brings up things. It's, you know, right now in Lesbos Island, I'm working there with the refugees. And even working with the Persians and the Arabs and the Africans, you know, trying to get them into one culture, it's amazing how much they're saying, oh, this isn't good.

We shouldn't be doing this. And I'm like, no, we're going to be together in the body of Christ. And having to do that has been difficult.

And so I see that in Corinth. You see the Jewish community, and you see lots of the Gentiles and the Greek community trying to come together. And there's so much of this, I feel like I relate to when I read through Corinth.

I read the New Testament differently now, now that I'm older than I did when I was younger. And what I mean by that is, I don't know, I read Paul differently. I read these scriptures differently.

So this is my perspective. Through the eyes of going through the different experiences I have is what I'm going to allow the Holy Spirit to put in me and to come out in this series. I don't know if I'll do a chapter per Sunday.

When I counted up, you know, by the time we get to next fall, we're going to maybe be doing a different church situation with the students and everything next year. So I don't think I even have that many chapters in time to go. So I may skip some, but that's the way I'm going to try to do it.

And I'm going to let my life experience come out in how I relate to the book of Corinth and the Corinthians there, and my life experiences going through radical Christianity. Yeah, from there, from charity, I was a part of, you know, this sort of charity eyes community, progressive Hutterite community coming out and then over implanting the churches in Greece. And now here, again, another expression of radical Christianity.

And as I've always been a part of those churches, and that's been where we've settled there when we got out of the army, and it's been good for me, I've actually always longed to make a bigger bridge. And you hear that coming out of me a lot in trying to appreciate different groups and different people. And that's going to come out, I guess, and even in chapter one, as we discuss, not today, but as we discuss unity and the body of Christ and those types of things.

The other thing is my hermeneutic, my style of preaching is a historical theology. And that's not necessarily history. It's that I see the strain of historical theology through the centuries.

And that's the perspective I give to it to reflect upon Scripture. Nothing should ever replace Scripture. But I use history in the early church to look at and to interpret Scripture.

And this is my little, I use this, my students hear this. This is my personal hermeneutic. It's the, I call it the atmospheric quadrilateral.

This is me, doubting Thomas, looking at Jesus's scar. And I use this acronym, SCAR. And so it's Scripture, Crystal Centric, Antiquity, and Real.

And what I mean by this, Scripture is the ultimate. So the Bible is to be received as the sole infallible source of authority in Christian faith and practice. So, you know, in my earlier days in Tyler and Texas, when we were trying to deal with the early church, it was almost like sometimes we would move the canon of Scripture just like up to 199 or something, you know, but it doesn't do you any good because then you've got people arguing over what the early Christians thought instead of what Paul and John thought.

So really, I can tell you from my years of experience, trust only the Word of God and only it for the things that we have to have. And that's just a foundational position for me. The next is Crystal Centric.

All of Scripture points to Jesus Christ. All of the Old Testament points to Jesus, and Jesus reflects upon all the New Testament, and everything is to be read in a Crystal Centric fashion. At the end of the day, however you're interpreting Scripture, your life, your teaching, whatever you're producing does not look like Jesus, sound like Jesus, come off like Jesus.

It's wrong. It is a Crystal Centric interpretation that I look at Scripture. And the other one is Antiquity.

And this is where I get into my historical theology side. Doctrine and practice should endeavor, and I emphasize endeavor. This is not on the level that I put Scripture, but it should endeavor to be supported by the early church.

And this is important to me as I look at different doctrines, and this is the perspective that you'll hear coming out again and again in this. This is important. Even in Scripture as we see that the Bible saying, Beloved while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

And that's a bedrock passage for me, and the way I view Christian and Christian doctrine that the faith was given to us in a complete form in the Apostles, and it's us, it's our desire to look to that. The second Thessalonians 2:15 says, Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. And this is the passage that I would look at to try to see what was the early church word.

We have the epistles and what was their word and those sorts of things, and these are important to me. One of my favorite quotes from history quotes from one of my favorite historians, Yaroslav Pelikan, he says this, get this quote, it's a good one. Tradition is the living faith of the dead.

Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. And the difference of that as we look at things of church history and how we see the church of the past and these great cloud of witnesses that have gone before us, there's a big difference in there. We've known many times, maybe in ourselves or in others, that the traditionalism comes out a dead faith of the living.

But we want to bring alive that church that still exists, the church triumphant and be a part of that. But this is my perspective. Now, here's I want to give a challenge to the brothers here.

I want to be able to speak freely from my church experiences. There's a lot of topics and a lot of controversy. I mean, there's whole nations probably that have been different over interpretations of different Corinthian passages, certainly different schools of thought and denominations and things like that.

And so as I give this historical theology perspective and allow that to reflect upon the scriptures, I really like those who have studied Greek. Many of you, Brother Finney, a lot of you are a Greek scholar and more coming of it in that way and us to reason together. So here I have the first Corinthians 14 passage, and we'll get to that eventually, that one should prophesy and the other brothers should judge.

And so let's allow ourselves to let Corinthians come alive for us. You know, we stress the inductive Bible reading around here, and I want to do the inductive history reading too, and allowing instead of us to put our interpretations into them, allow Corinthians to come alive and to shape us. And I want to be able to speak freely.

So I want to be open that at the end, Brother Dean, you said that, but did you consider this? I really want to challenge you to do that. You won't offend me. I'd rather us just truly, because I think that's the way church was ran in Corinth right there.

They were speaking from some sort of experience. As we talk about Corinth, let's do it in that way. In real, it's a conviction of mine that I try to find a living faith and that faith is not just a coffee table revival where we talk about radical things that never practice.

And so it should be living. It should be active. It should be living in the early church.

It should have been living throughout time. And again, this is an endeavor to be supported by genuine practice. So today I'd really like to look at the background text, and then I'm going to show you a lot of really cool archaeological stuff that I found in my trip to Corinth.

But let's look at the background text real quick. And that's found in Acts 18. Turn to that.

So in Acts 18, what starts in Acts 15, I have a little passage here. We're in Paul's second missionary journey, and this is where the gospel comes to Europe. And this is about the year 49 AD when Paul sets out from Antioch, Antioch, Syria, to visit the churches he had established.

And we get this clue from Acts 15-36. And it says, sometime after, sometime later, that's after staying in the city of Antioch for about three years, Paul said to Barnabas, let us go back and visit the believers in every town where we preached. And this begins the second missionary journey of the Apostle Paul.

And we get to pick this up in this amazing, incredible journal called the Book of Acts, where we get to see a spirit-inspired history. And what I'm going to show you in a few of the archaeological discoveries that they've got, and you can see there at the book, and you can see that in Corinth, is that it really builds your faith. That many times, like particularly like in the 19th century and things, where liberal scholars were doubting the Book of Acts and saying this wasn't historical scholars, that's not historically accurate, and these types of things.

Archaeological evidence has even given so much more support for it that it just builds your faith. But let's look at this incredible spirit-inspired journal of Luke and see what he said here. So in Acts 18, verse 1. So after these things, Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

He had just finished, he got to Athens, he was preaching there on Mars Hill. You remember all that? It was a great scene to be able to stand there on Mars Hill. I hope you all get a chance to do that.

And it's just an incredible view of the city, looking up at the incredible pantheon, or the Acropolis, and all the different things that are around there. It's amazing. Verse 2. And now he's on the way to Corinth.

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontius, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome. And he came to them. So because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked, for by occupation they were tentmakers.

There's some really neat archaeological stuff you're going to see about why this is significant, that they were all tentmakers in Corinth. Verse 4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. It is interesting that Corinth was one of the only cities, or one of the fewer cities, that were allowed to proselytize, as long as it's not Roman citizens.

You could do that in Corinth. As long as you weren't converting Roman citizens, you could proselytize other people. So here in the synagogue, you had the Jews and you had the Gentiles.

And so there was already this radical, if you would, mixed people in Corinth. And Corinth is extremely cosmopolitan. It's extremely mixing of these different cultures together, which has been my journey.

It's hard. Much better just to stay in Jerusalem and to have a church there. But these churches are rocky.

They're tough. But that's verse 5. When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, that's the northern part of Greece, which this is where Macedonia is very important because this is where Alexander the Great comes from. And even to this day, like when I was over there in Greece, it's amazing how serious they took that region being called Macedonia.

I mean, they literally almost went to war over it because it's a lot of pride that Macedonia is part of the Greek culture. How dare you call yourself Macedonia? Anyway, Macedonia is a very significant region of the northern area of Greece then and now. When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garment and said of them, your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles.

Now, he appears to be saying this only in Corinth because when he gets to Ephesus, the first thing he does is goes back to the synagogue. So verse 7, and he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justice, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, this is the synagogue leader.

You can see this incredible revival that's happening here, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized. So I just think this is an exciting scene.

Imagine Paul coming in. He's wanting to be a church planter. He didn't have a lot of success in Athens.

It's interesting, as big as Athens was, and as well, he got some converts there at the end of his Mars Hill discourse, but you'd never see in early church history a church starting in Athens. You don't get a church in Athens. You'd get it in Corinth.

And so it's interesting how he didn't get the success there, but he did here. In verse 9, now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision. He's there.

He's preaching. People are getting converted. He had some conflict.

The head of the synagogue is converted. Now he's meeting with them. And now Paul, who's received several of these visions, I mean, really important visions from Jesus Christ, gets this incredible one.

I love this vision. Verse 9, now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision. Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent.

Now either that's a rebuke to what he just said to the synagogue, I don't know, or something, but Jesus is telling him and encouraging him to go out into Corinth and to preach. And I'm going to hope by the end of today to give you an idea in your mind what Corinth looked like, what it felt like, what it was like to be in the city of Corinth by showing you some of the archaeological evidence there. For I am with you.

That's a great thing to hear from Jesus Christ. And no one will attack you to hurt you, for I have many people in this city. And that's interesting.

So there were several people that were hearing him and listening to him. You know, it's funny, I've been in some situations before in Lancaster County where there's been some revivals going on, and people who have been like in churches and churches that weren't able to go to the revival meetings would literally be like in the cornfields listening and hearing. People would sneak into the church building and get tracks and tapes and things.

And so a lot of times more people are hearing you and more people are listening than you realize. So Paul is glad that he has this little gathering, which has been pretty impressive, but Jesus is letting him know that even more people than you realize are my people already. He's already calling them my people.

I have many people in this city. Jesus, don't you want to be one of those that Jesus would say, I have, these are my people in this city. May God call us that, that I have many people in this city.

And verse 11, and he continued there a year and six months teaching the word of God among them. So this was fruitful. It was a little time in Athens.

Now he's in Corinth. Things are going great in Corinth. And then verse 12, it gets exciting now.

Things are starting to grow. Remember, you can proselytize in Corinth according to the Roman law, but you could not proselytize who? Let me ask you. Roman citizens.

So now the Jews now are going to want to bring a charge against him, and they're going to try to use this against him. Acts 18 verse 12. So when Galileo, proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat.

I'm going to show you this judgment seat. Saying, this fellow persuades men to worship God, watch now, contrary to the law. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Galileo said to the Jews, if it is a matter, if it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, oh Jews, there would be no reason why I should bear with you.

But if it is a question of words and names and your own laws, look to it yourself, for I do not want to be a judge among such matters. So he's done with this. And he drove them from the judgment seat.

Then the Greeks took Sophones, the ruler of the synagogue, this is the next ruler, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Galileo took no notice of these things. So in other words, you can imagine the scene, and I'm going to try to show you that archaeological site where this occurred.

And then verse 18. So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and settled for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him.

Amazing scene. One of my favorite revival scenes of early Christianity of how it came in, the conflict, how he worked it out, the vision from God, God speaking to him, and seeing the church and the state and the interaction. And then there we have it.

And here I have a little map. It's kind of small, but you can see the journey that he was having. This man was busy.

And the ships by land and by sea, it's inspiring to see him. So I'm going to show you now, we're going to go to Corinth. And for the rest of this message, I'm going to try to show you some archaeological things that I was really impressed with that made that Acts 18 scene come alive.

And for me, made it where I never read Corinth the same way. Now, one of my quotes that I give in my historical theology class that I learned in my study of historiography is this, the past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.

It's important as we try to read the book of Corinth in a inductive way, allowing the Bible to speak to us instead of us putting our culture on them, is to allow it, instead of changing it to us, allow it to be different. If we're not there, if we're not doing it the same way, I mean, not everything they do in Corinth is certainly I want to do in Boston. Don't get me wrong.

You know, I mean, there's some things, some mistakes they were made that were corrected. But nevertheless, allow it, allow ourselves to be taken aback, to allow ourselves to approach the Corinthians and their culture in a way that isn't, is trying to prevent our anachronisms are putting our time frame back on them. What is the significance of the city of Corinth? Ponder this.

So we look at our New Testament, some of the most significant books, we have first and second Corinthians, which are filled with some of the most meaty things that have to do with church practice and things in the early church. But not only that, it appears that first and second Thessalonians and Romans were written while he was in Corinth. And so as we look at that, it's amazing that it's a good idea for us to really understand the city of Corinth, the culture of Corinth, and allowing that, because it affects a lot of the culture in the way that we understand the New Testament.

So this is why I think that the place, it's easy to get to Corinth. If you ever visit Athens, do not miss keeping an extra day to go to Corinth. It's just about an hour and a half drive from Athens, out west, and you can pick it up and it's easy.

All right, so looking at Corinth, there's some significant things about it. Even way, this is about 500 BC, the ancient Greek had these city states. So it was ran like, instead of like a whole country, you had little cities that would literally go to war with each other.

And of course, some of the most famous ones are the war in Sparta and Athens. So you see Sparta way down here and Athens right here. So Sparta's here and Athens here, and you've heard all your life about the fights between the Spartans and the Athens.

But what's right in between them? Corinth. It's literally smack in the middle between the city states of Athens and Corinth. And it's on this little peninsula, a little isthmus that's only four miles wide.

And so anytime that you were going to be Spartans and go to Athens or Athens and go to Spartan, unless you did it by sea, you went through this area in the Corinthian isthmus. And so it becomes incredibly significant in wars. Many times Corinth was signing with the Spartans against Athens, and then they would do that and go back and forth with the Spartans.

Finally, the Spartans and the Corinthians tried to use Rome, and then Rome got in on that. And after that, that was a really bad idea. Then Rome finally came in and took over completely.

Here's just a quick little timeline. The glory days are 500 BC. And here's something really crazy to think about.

When you go to Greece or you see pictures of those ruins and everything, when Paul got there in Athens-like, and he's seeing the ruins and he's seeing the different things, those places that we look at today were already 500 years old. I mean, that was old even at Paul's day. I mean, Greece is old.

And so a lot of them were probably not quite as good looking as they are today, even at Paul's time. But they had different times where they were being built up and things. And about 146, when Rome came in, it totally wiped out Corinth.

Corinth became one of the most prosperous cities before this time. Their seaport, I'm going to show you where they end up on the seaport, was very important. They were able to start different city-states.

But when Rome came in in 146, there was a little scene where the Corinthians were trying to stop them. And they were dumping a lot of their human waste on the soldiers out their windows and such. And it infuriated the Romans.

And they just leveled it to the ground flat. And it was a grand city, incredible city. And it laid barren for almost 100 years until Julius Caesar brought it back in 44.

So by the time you get to Paul, it's got about 100 years of development and prosperity and a whole new city built under Julius Caesar and Augustus and those kind of things. So here's a good map here, showing the peninsula there, the Isthmus. Now, you see how, what it ended up being, and this is very fascinating.

Okay, so apparently down here, the winds and the sea were just terrible. And the people would cross, and I'm going to show you a quote from an ancient historian. And so literally what people would do is take their ships over the four-mile Isthmus and get over here to get to the other side of the Mediterranean.

Or they would have another boat waiting here and would just do the cargo. And so you had all that transport that was happening here. An early historian in those days said this, he says, if sailors pass the southern tip twice, they ought to forget their home.

So in other words, to give you an idea that down here, that you might get through here once, you're probably not going to make it twice. And so that's just giving you an idea that the sea was terrible. So people had to get over this land.

So lots of the different emperors tried to make a canal. Mero tried a canal. And finally, the different people did until they finally got this.

Here it is today. And so as you drive from Athens to Corinth, here's my family, we stopped right on the Isthmus. And you can see, standing in the middle is what you would look at there, looking to the right, it's just a cut down.

And then to the left, it's cut the other way. And there's the Isthmus, four miles. And to this day, ships cross through there.

And it was quite an ordeal. There's another kind of a nicer picture. And if you can look right towards the end, that would be a big cargo ship that's coming through there.

You wouldn't want to be around that edge. You're like, Tonya's like really scared of heights. You just looking at it was making her nervous, you know.

And so, no, she's more scared of the children around the heights, you know, that's the way she is. Here's a construction during the 1800s. They pointed out the Hungarian engineer put it together in the late 1800s.

But that road that went over there, you see these grooves over that four mile Isthmus, where they brought there. Here's a nice view there where you could see they would have these boards and they would roll these ships and the cargo over the four miles and come to the other side. Now, that took a while.

So, if you're a bunch of sailors and you are waiting for your ship to unpack on one end and get to the other pack the other end, and it takes about two weeks to do this, and you're a bunch of sailors, what do you think you're going to be doing? Partying. Exactly. You're a bunch of sailors, you're away from your wives, you're away from your home, you've got a little money in your hand, and you're in Corinth.

That. And where are you going to live? Where are you going to live if you went off the boat? In tents. So, you end up needing to rent a tent, you end up living there, and this becomes the culture and the things that are happening in Corinth, and it really affects the town.

Another interesting thing in this area is the Isthmian Games. It was just like another Olympian contest that was going on, and they're just now doing some different archaeological discoveries to find these different places, and it's fascinating to think of Paul and the Corinthian culture there with all these Olympic Games going on right down the street from Corinth. Here's some just a recent archaeological site here that I was looking at.

This one guy did a really good job. This David Winning visited Corinth, and he was showing some of the archaeological sites there, and this shows like a starting line, and if you ponder it, the rules, and during this time to do these races, you had to swear an oath that you would not cheat, and that you would do this race in a lawful way, and ponder this archaeological stuff with some of Paul's writings like in 2 Timothy where he says, and also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. He would have seen people training along the mountains with these different places here for these different Isthmian Games, and of course right in 1 Corinthians 9, and everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.

I'll bring this up when we get to this passage, and how these races that were right in the Corinthian area, now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, he says, scorning them, but we for an imperishable crown in Jesus Christ, and so this is, I think, really important archaeological discoveries. It's a fascinating city, so when you're there, you're visiting, there's many things that's been studied, and looked at, and then compared to the day, and I'm going to show you a few of these. You go there, you kind of feel like you're back.

Here's one of the, you're back in the area. Here's one of the gates getting up into the to the north, to the higher mountainous region. I'm just going to show you several of these pictures that we visited.

You look down at the road from the Roman era, they would have used more of these small Roman road styles, and those were around the marketplace, and around the different ways, these Roman roads. It's really a scenic spot. If there's one thing that hit me, and I never read Corinthians the same way, it is beautiful.

You're standing there, and this is coming all up to the temple that's on the high mountain, which I'm about to show you, and it's just gorgeous. These mountains towards that way that you're looking would be Athens, would be over that way. You're going to look out to the other side, and that's the Gulf of Corinth, where they became this wonderful port city.

This is where commerce, and they became such a wealthy city, because they had this ability to do trade. They had this big walls that went around the ancient Corinth, and we see some of the early Christians actually having a role in working the city in that wall. Here's one.

Sorry about the telephone pole, but here you can kind of see right down, right over to the right around that mountain would have been the main part of ancient Corinth, and I'm kind of on the other side of the mountain, but just I wanted you to take a look at those mountains in the distance, that beautiful blue water of the Gulf of Corinth, and what a gorgeous area Corinth is. Here's a modern redoing of Athens, and I think it's a nice, it's nicely done. There's been some just remarkable reconstructions of the city, looking at the

archaeological evidence.

Now stand where you are right there at that picture. It's fascinating. To the right is a temple dedicated to Augustus, where you go to worship the emperor.

Look to the top mountain, though. This place, which would have been probably in ruins in its grandeur with this picture, but there was other different smaller temples at the time of Paul, and this would be to the goddess Aphrodite or Venus by the time the Romans took over, and this is the goddess of love, and if you ponder the message of the Corinthians and the emphasis on love, love was the mark of the city, and not in a good way, love. It was actually a very wicked type of thing.

There's an early historian that spoke of, and he's known to exaggerate, but nevertheless, he wrote that on that road from here all the way up to that temple were 1,000 cultic prostitutes that would have been all the way up to there. There was 33 different bars, if you would, places where there'd be alcohol and prostitution, and Corinth was just a wicked city, and it just makes you thinking, why are you there, Paul? I mean, of all places, really? And the more I study Corinth and the more I marvel that it didn't make it in Athens and it made it in Corinth and the culture and the problems, I just think it's got to be God, that he wanted a witness here and to see the way that they would have had to fight against these sort of wickedness and different things there. It's just amazing.

Here's today the leftovers of the emperor worship, the temple there to Augustus, Octavian, and that's a picture we took. And you can see the Corinthian columns are just gorgeous. They became very ornate somewhere around 300 to 200 BC, and they're known to this day of these Corinthian columns.

Here's a little older one. This is the Temple of Apollo, and this was an incredibly strong, it had lots of different columns when it was built, and survived several different wars, survived the Roman invasion, and finally an earthquake knocked down a lot of the columns. These still stood.

And anyway, it's amazing that this would have been just there. So this is an interesting picture here. I'm there to show a perspective.

So the back would have been the Temple of Venus, there to the right the Temple of Apollos, and there, I don't know if you can see, right here, I'm going to show you some of these, right there, you'll see the marketplace is right underneath there, where they would have had all these different, huge different things that were for sale and things like that. So here's another modern interpretation of the view. I'm looking towards the Gulf of it.

You can see the god Poseidon here, a giant, this would have been a place for very prosperous, for marketing, I mean for selling things and things like that. So you see also, you can kind of imagine the social classes that we deal with in Corinth, and the rich and the poor, and the different people there, and how they had to deal with this, and you can imagine why. Here's a nice picture of the marketplace.

It's one of the largest ancient world marketplaces was here in Corinth. So as you imagine when Paul is starting to talk about eating meat to sacrifice, to idol, and where they would have got their meats, and all the different things that were going on, this would have been definitely the scene of going up and down this main street in the the city of Corinth. Here's another nice view there that you can see there.

So here's one of the nicer stores. So they would have had these shops, and I have several pictures of these shops. Not everyone would of course would have probably rented one of these shops.

You would have had tents, I'm sure, and all this kind of a thing, and these are still, it's just remarkable that they have these things standing. And then imagine this scene right here, and when we get to first Corinthians four, therefore concerning eating things offered to idol. I mean check this scene out.

You're standing here in the marketplace. Here would have been a guy selling the meat. The temple of Apollo is right there, and so I really thought that this was a stunning perspective of the marketplace, the temple of Apollo.

So if you're seeing people sacrifice animals there, and then they bring the meat down here, you can kind of get a little visual of what's going on there with the whole Corinthian trouble. The other thing they found in this area is this temple, this place to the god of health, and this is Asclepius. And Asclepius is the god of health.

You sometimes see it with the different Greek mythology of the snake that's wrapped around and things like this, but this is fascinating there. It's right on the outside of Corinth, and people would have come here and washed themselves and did different purifications. And here's an aerial view of the site there, and here would have been some of the water and some of the things that they would have done.

But here's the fascinating part. They've dug up all these arms and legs and hands and brains and stuff, and what they found out is that people would take, here's an actual etching showing it, people would take these arms or these hands with whatever problem you had, bring it to the priest of Asclepius and offer this to them and then take this back to your house and have this as a memento for them and as a sort of a thing. Here's even a brain that they found, and I just found this was fascinating as walking around there.

And it makes you ponder again Paul's words, for as the body is one and has many members, and you think of laying around Corinth would have been all these arms and brains and feet and kneecaps and everything that people took to the priest to get this blessing and everything, and it's just a fascinating part that comes out in the Corinthian culture. And then just a few more things I want to show you. In the ancient study, you get this concept of Corinthianize, and so it was a pejorative statement.

It was a derogatory thing to say you're being like Corinthian. And if you would say a young man he was to be a Corinthian style of man or something, Corinthianize or whatever he was, then you are being impure and you are being wicked. And you could imagine why.

I mean look at this scene there, you would have the stuff that was going on in the Apollo's temple, you would have the goddess of love up on the mountain there, you had the marketplace, to my right there you have the different Ismaean games and the different things there. It's just all these things brought together a very wicked practice in Corinth. They've got a museum there, and in the museum, and this is just really interesting, they made, I don't know if you can see from there, but these are molds.

They even actually found the molds, and you can actually look at these very well done, about this big, of different statues and different of their clothes. You can see their style of you know different professions and different things that they were doing, and this comes out in some of these. And I just found this fascinating.

When I was going through there and looking at these different museums, I was like you know sneaking these different pictures. And there's because there's a really important reason. So like when I was looking at this picture of Augustus, or in the statue of Augustus, this statue of Augustus is from Corinth, and if you

look at it, they show him with his head covered.

Now when they would show men, and sometimes in the ancient Greek they would show men, and only the head leader would have his head covered. Only the Augustus would have this, and here in this sense they clearly show Augustus with his head covered, and it just makes you ponder. We're going to get to this when we look at the head covering in 1 Corinthians 11.

Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonors his head. And also as you look at closely at these different statues, you can see some of the dress, and some of the hairstyles, and some of the head coverings that they would have had in Corinth, which I just found of course incredibly interesting. But every woman who prays and prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

And so we're going to look at these when I get to 1 Corinthians 11, and I was just amazed by seeing that they had these little statues from this time period. One of the last things here that I want to show you is this Gileo and the Bema seat. So in Acts 18 I read to you, when Gileo was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat saying, this fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.

And this Bema, there's us here, gives you, they found this spot. So I wanted to stand up there to get you kind of a perspective. So it wasn't crazy high, but if you back up, this is where you would have stood.

And then on top of there where our family is standing, there would have been a seat. And then the leaders or whatever would be setting up on that seat, making those proclamations down to the crowd. And it would appear that this is the place where the Acts 18 scene occurred, where the synagogue leaders were coming out and the leader was whipped and Paul was let go, would have literally happened right here.

And it just gives you a neat perspective. And you can see the sign right there, the Bema, where the archaeologists would see that this would be something that was looked at. And the stuff that happens here from the archaeology that comes from Corinth and the Corinthian letters and the Corinthian things really help us with the entire New Testament.

This was a stone that was found in Delphi. And it gives us a date that if you take that Acts 18 scene and this stone dug up in Delphi, it allows us to date the entirety of the Book of Acts using this as a keystone and the rest of them. Look, this is the interpretation that's believed to be interpreted from this rock here.

Concerning the present stories and those quarrels of the citizens of which a report has been made by Lucius, Junius Gallio, my friend and procouncil of Achaia, the script is from the emperor Claudius to the city of Delphi and is dateable to 51 to 52. And so it gives us just, again, just amazing archaeological evidence of dating the accuracy of the Bible. And along that main road coming out of Corinth is a place where they have found a synagogue.

And here in the Greek we have put together, as you can see the different parts are broken off, but over the top of the house would have been the synagogue of the Hebrews. And this is what we see in Acts chapter 17 and 18 where he goes into here to the synagogue. So it's just amazing.

And then the last thing I wanted to show you, this is one of the latest archaeological discoveries that were there, was this inscription by Erastus. Now one of the things that in the 1900s, in the late 1800s, the liberal scholars would have come against the New Testament saying the name Erastus would have been kind of made up. It means like sensual guy, good-looking guy, you know.

And so who would really be named Mr. Good-looking, you know, and to have that in the New Testament. And when they found this inscription, it becomes very important because we see in the book of Romans that in some other places that Erastus was, seems to be the one who was running the city gate. And here it says that he donated money for the building of this gate out of his own money.

And so it gives us an incredible archaeological discovery. That's Hamid and Canuco, by the way. You'll hear me talk about them sometime, a great couple there in Athens.

But that's just a really neat passage there that I think is amazing. So as we look at that, I'm going to be coming to the book of Corinth reflecting upon my own journey. And here's my thought about when we look at the Word of God.

The Word of God comes with a promise that when we take the Word of God and allow it to come to life, God has promised us that He will fulfill in the reading of that Word, in the hearing of that Word, His purposes. So I really have blessed the Lord to come and now take this to the first Corinthians. And I encourage all of us as you can pray for me as I study it, but I want us to be a church that Christ would be glorified and learn some lessons from the book of Corinth.

And so let's close with the word of prayer. And today my hope was just to give you some of the historical background and the background text. My first message then would be, when I preach again, will be on the first Corinthians chapter one.

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