

The Church Paul Loved (1 Corinthians 16:13-24)

- I. **Introduction: The ‘church militant:’ An imperfect church**
 - A. Corinth was a church that was far from perfect, but Paul loved them anyway
 - B. Read the text and pray
 - C. Indifference toward the church
 1. Bonhoeffer quote
 2. Excuses for people’s indifference
 - a. the church is indeed imperfect (Eph 2:21-22)
 - b. Christ’s promise to the church (Mt 16:18) does not mean that the church is infallible.
 - D. Outline of sermon: *How then are we to love an imperfect church?*
- II. **We love the church by being strong and standing firm in truth (vss 13-14)**
 - A. The command to *do everything in love* is couched in the previous four imperatives calling for **strength**.
 1. Love is not keeping silent or being weak
 2. Love is standing up for the truth
 - a. and illustration from the ‘Duck Dynasty’ spectacle
- III. **We love the church by serving one another (vss. 15-20)**
 - A. The example of *the household of Stephanas* (vss 15-16)
 1. they *devoted themselves* to a life of selfless *service*
 2. be subject to such individuals in the church
 - a. the one who is greatest, is the servant of all (Mt 23:11-12, Mk 9:35)
 3. Follow those servants in our own midst
 - B. Stephanas served and refreshed Paul by visiting him (vss. 17-18)
 1. The blessing of an personal audience
 2. If you do not wish to love in this manner, examine yourself to be sure you are in the faith (1 John 4:7-11, 20-21)
 - C. The warm hearty greeting of Aquila and Prisca (vss. 19-20)
 1. A holy kiss ... a holy greeting
 - a. warmly greet one another in church
 - b. use your Sundays to get to know EVERYONE
 - c. use your ‘prayer lists’ to reach out during the week
- IV. **We love the church by first loving Christ (vss. 21-24)**
 - A. Side points: Paul’s own hand (v. 21) & Maranatha (v. 22)
 - B. Malediction: The curse of having no love for Jesus
 1. We love others by first loving Christ
 2. What if your love doesn’t measure up?
 - C. Benediction: The Gospel of **grace** (v. 23)
 - D. Paul loved a church that by all rights he could have been angry at
 1. Savor ‘*Christ Jesus*’ the Lord of the church!