

# Our **GUIDE**

## for little ones

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IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

### Lesson 75

## Paul's Letters to the Corinthians

### *1 Corinthians 15*

Have you ever gotten a letter? Maybe your grandmother, if she doesn't live close by, wrote you a letter. That was nice, wasn't it? Even today, when it's so easy to talk to other people by telephone, letters are *important*.



There were no telephones in Paul's days. So letters were even more important then. And Paul used them often. He wrote many letters — sometimes to particular *persons*, like to Timothy, and sometimes to whole *churches*. When Paul left Philippi, he didn't forget about the church there. When he left Thessalonica, he didn't forget about the Thessalonians. And when he left Corinth, he didn't forget about the Corinthians. He wished that he could be in all three places, and more, at once.

But he couldn't. So he wrote *letters* to them.

He wrote letters to *praise* them. And to *teach* them. And, sometimes, to *correct* them. Yes, sometimes Paul would hear that people in the churches were doing wrong things, or had wrong ideas. So Paul had to *rebuke* them, and to show them the *right* way.

And do you know what? We still have some of those letters today. No, we don't have the very paper that Paul wrote on. But we have the *words* he wrote. Almost 2,000 years later, we still today know what Paul wrote in those letters.

**Note to Parents:** These papers are intended for the younger Sunday School students — grade 3 and below. Vocabulary and concepts are such that children in this age group, even the 3rd graders, will profit most if the stories are read *to* them, not *by* them. Most lessons have two stories, for two sittings if that proves to be beneficial. Our hope is that parents will find these lessons to be useful tools in the teaching of Bible stories and Bible truths to their children in the “off” season.

And you and I can *read* them—because they’re in the *Bible*.

Isn’t that *amazing*? Why did God do that? Why did He *preserve* those words of Paul — why did He keep them from being *lost*? It’s because those words were ... *His*. That’s the most amazing part of it all. Think of that! In the Epistle to the Philippians, we do not have simply what *Paul* told the saints in *Philippi* many hundreds of years ago. We have, really and truly, what *God* tells us ... today.

How is that possible? It’s possible because of the great wonder of *inspiration*. That’s a big word. But it’s very important. Important to *know*, and to *remember*. God *inspired* Paul. That is, He worked in Paul’s mind and heart, so that *God’s* thoughts became *Paul’s* thoughts. What Paul wrote, therefore, was as truly *God’s words* — as if God had written it with His own finger.

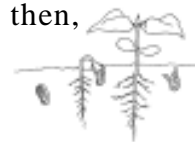
Isn’t that *marvelous*? Let’s just look at one example.

Soon after Paul left the city of Corinth, some people in the church began to ask questions about the *resurrection from the dead*. Paul had clearly taught them that someday their bodies will be *raised*. And now that Paul is *gone*, these Corinthians began to *doubt* it. Everybody, you see, knows that a dead body *decays*. It turns to *dust*. It’s *gone*. How can that body be *raised*? The Corinthians, just like the Athenian philosophers, began to say, “That’s *impossible*.”

Paul heard about it. And it made him very sad. So he wrote a letter (I Corinthians). He talked first about other problems that the church in Corinth was having. And then he got to that marvelous chapter 15, on the resurrection of the dead. “How say some among you,” he asked, “that there is no resurrection of the dead?” Just think, Paul said, if resurrection from the dead is impossible, then *Christ* didn’t arise. Then He’s still buried someplace on this old earth. But we *know*, Paul said, that *Christ is risen*. And He arose as *firstfruits*. That is, because *He* arose, we can be sure that *we will arise too*.

For Paul, that was enough. But he knew he couldn’t stop with that. Some *doubters* will ask, “*How* are the dead raised up? And with *what body* do they come?”

That’s *unbelief*, of course. And Paul’s answer was sharp. “Thou fool,” he said, “that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it *die*.” In other words, you can see the *proof* of resurrection all around you. What happens when a farmer puts a seed, *bare grain*, into the ground? The seed *decays*. And then, lo and behold, up comes the sprout of a new plant. Life ... out of death.



You ask *how*? How are the *dead raised*? “Behold,” says Paul, “I show you a *mystery*. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now, what do you think? Is that just *Paul’s answer* to the Corinthian doubters? No, by the wonder of *inspiration* it is *God’s word* — to the church of all time. Can you even imagine a Bible without I Corinthians 15? The promise of God rings in our souls *today*: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

### How Well Did You Listen?

1. Who wrote the book of the Bible called I Corinthians?
2. I Corinthians was a *letter*. To whom did Paul write that letter?
3. Paul wrote I Corinthians by *inspiration*. Whose words, then, are in that letter?
4. Can you tell, in one word, what I Corinthians 15 is about?

### Paul’s Word in Asia

*Acts 18:18-19:20*

When Paul left Corinth, he did not leave by himself. Silas and Timothy most likely went with him. His two good friends Aquila and Priscilla did too. They were tentmakers, you remember. Paul worked for them. They loved him — because they loved Jesus, whom Paul preached. So when Paul said, I must move on, to bring the gospel to other places, they said, We’re going with you.

And they did. They went with him as far as to the city of Ephesus. Paul wanted still to visit Jerusalem and Antioch. He promised, however, that soon he would be back in Ephesus. So when Paul sailed away, his two friends remained behind to await his return.

One day a man by the name of Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a Jew. He knew the Scriptures, the Old Testament Bible, very well. And he had been trained to be a preacher. So in Ephesus he went to the synagogue, and he preached. Aquila and Priscilla were there. They *liked* what they heard from Apollos. They could tell that he truly loved God. But he was not yet a *Christian*. He did not know *Jesus as Savior*.

So Aquila and Priscilla invited Apollos to their home. And they *taught* him. That’s right, these two tentmakers told this preacher about Jesus — about His death, His resurrection, His ascension to heaven. They had learned it all from Paul. They could point to the Old Testament, and show Apollos how the Scriptures were *fulfilled by Jesus*. Apollos was a brilliant, college-educated man, but he was not too proud to be taught by tentmakers. He listened. He believed what he heard. And then he preached it.

Paul, meanwhile, was in Antioch. This was the church that had sent him out to preach to the Gentiles. He was *their* missionary. He was eager to tell them about all that God had done through his preaching. And they were surely eager to hear. But Paul didn’t stay there long.



Soon he set out on his third missionary journey. And before long he was back in Ephesus.

As usual, Paul started in the synagogue.

And the Jews there listened — for about three months. Some believed. But, again, many did not. And the unbelievers started making trouble for Paul. They said evil things about the gospel, and about Christianity, and about Paul. And they said those things *in the synagogue*, right in front of all the people — hoping that no one would believe what Paul preached.

That didn't stop Paul. That is, it didn't stop Paul from preaching in Ephesus. He just preached in a different *place*. This time it was in a *school* — the school of Tyrannus. Maybe Paul rented a room in that school. And he taught there, not just on Sundays, but every day of the week. For two years. No vacations. For Paul, there was only one thing that mattered, only one thing worth living for, and that was preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ.

And what was the fruit of that work? It was really astounding. Listen. “All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and

Greeks.” That's what the Bible tells us. All in Asia heard the gospel. “Asia” was a large Roman province. It had lots of important cities. And the preaching of Paul got to all of them. How? Not by Paul personally. That is, Paul did not travel all around Asia for two years, starting churches in city after city. No, he sent *assistants*. He sent *helpers*.

But think of that! City after city. Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia — in all of them a *church* is started. And it all came out of that little rented room in the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus. Paul was the professor. He taught the people the Christian religion. And when they had learned it, he sent them out...to tell it to others.

And when he sent them out, he gave to each one a...*handkerchief*. That's right, a handkerchief — one of his *own*. And he told them what to *do* with those handkerchiefs.



They must use them to *heal sick people*. And to *cast out devils*.

That sounds strange, doesn't it? Why would Paul tell them to heal sick people by touching them with one of his handkerchiefs?

It was to help people *believe*. Try to imagine this. A helper of Paul is preaching in one of the cities of Asia. He is preaching the *gospel*. Among those listening to him is a blind man. The preacher sent by Paul touches this man with one of Paul's handkerchiefs and, behold, the man *sees*. Astounding! Who can *do* anything like that? Only...*God!*

God Himself must be working through Paul. So what Paul teaches about *Jesus* must be true. The miracles, by his handkerchiefs, *prove* it.

Always, however, there are people who do *not* believe. They see a great miracle, and they do not think, “God, and His Son!” No, they think, “Magic!” Miracles, they think, can be worked by magic. Just know the right words to say...and devils can be cast out.

That’s what “exorcists” did. Exorcists were men who tried to cast out devils — by magic. One day some exorcists saw Paul, or his assistants, casting out devils — in the name of *Jesus*. And it worked — *every time*.

Well, you can imagine what the exorcists thought of *that*. “If it works for *Paul*,” they thought, “it should work for *us* too.” So they tried it. There were seven of them, all sons of Sceva. They came to a man in Ephesus who was possessed with a devil, and they all said, “We command you, in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches, to come out of the man.”

Surely, they thought, the devil will obey. They were, after all, commanding him in the name of *Jesus*.

But it didn’t work for the exorcists. The devil didn’t obey. Instead, he *answered* them — through the mouth of the man. “*Jesus* I know,” said the devil, “and *Paul* I know; but who are *ye*?” That was bad enough. But then the man, with superhuman strength, leaped on the sons of Sceva and beat them all up — all

seven of them — so that they fled, naked and wounded.

*That* would catch people’s attention, wouldn’t it? It surely did. Soon practically everybody in Ephesus heard about it. The Bible tells us that “the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” And no wonder! Everyone could see that it wasn’t just a matter of saying the right words and names. It wasn’t magic. There was power, *real power*, in the name of *Jesus*. The devil himself had admitted it. The seven sons of Sceva had learned it — the hard way. Never again would they play with the name Jesus. Fear! Yes, *fear* fell upon all who heard about it.

Fear fell also upon *believers*, members of the *church* in Ephesus. Many of them, you see, when they became Christians, did not give up all of their superstitious ideas, their lucky charms, their books of magic. They *kept* them. And now they were *ashamed*. They had learned a lesson from the sons of Sceva. God hates magic arts.

So what did they do? These Ephesian Christians got together and made one big bonfire. All of their books of magic — they burned them all. *Expensive* books. All together — 50,000 pieces of silver they were worth. But the Christians didn’t care about that. They just wanted to be rid of those books, once and for all.



A good lesson it was — for the Ephesians...and for us.

### How Well Did You Listen?

1. When Paul left Corinth, what two good friends of his went with him?
2. In Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla heard a good man preach in the synagogue. Do you remember his name?
3. When the unbelieving Jews made trouble for Paul in the synagogue of Ephesus, where then did Paul preach and teach about Jesus?
4. What did Paul give to his helpers when he sent them out from Ephesus to preach the gospel in other cities?
5. What happened to the seven sons of Sceva when they tried to cast out a devil in the name of Jesus?
6. What did the Christians in Ephesus then do with their books of magic?

### How Well Do You Understand?

1. "Philippians" is a letter that Paul wrote to the saints in Philippi. How, then, can we say that it is *God's* word to *us*?
2. Why did Paul write to the church in Corinth the beautiful 15th chapter of I Corinthians?
3. Apollos was a good preacher in Ephesus. What were two *tentmakers* able to teach this learned man?
4. Why did Paul want to go to Antioch?
5. Why did Paul give a handkerchief to his helpers

when he sent them out to preach the gospel?

6. The seven sons of Sceva were put to shame. Do you see how this helped the spreading of the gospel in Ephesus?
7. Why did the Christians in Ephesus burn all their books of magic?

### Memory Verse

Acts 19:15 "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"

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Color the shapes with the dots. What is left?  
What does this show?

