

Excerpts from Paul's letters

1 Corinthians (~55 C.E.) – Admonition to Christians in Corinth

1Cor.5

[1] It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife.

[2] And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

[3] For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment

[4] in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

[5] you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

[6] Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

[7] Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.

[8] Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

[9] I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men;

[10] not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

[11] But rather I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber -- not even to eat with such a one.

[12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

[13] God judges those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

1Cor.10

[1] I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,

[2] and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

[3] and all ate the same supernatural food

[4] and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

[5] Nevertheless with most of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

[6] Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did.

[7] Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to dance."

[8] We must not indulge in immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

[9] We must not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents;

[10] nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.

[11] Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come.

[12] Therefore let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

[13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

[14] Therefore, my beloved, shun the worship of idols.

[15] I speak as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say.

[16] The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

[17] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

[18] Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?
[19] What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?
[20] No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons.
[21] You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.
[22] Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?
[23] "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up.
[24] Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.
[25] Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience.
[26] For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."
[27] If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.
[28] (But if some one says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then out of consideration for the man who informed you, and for conscience' sake --
[29] I mean his conscience, not yours -- do not eat it.) For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples?
[30] If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?
[31] So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
[32] Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God,
[33] just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

1Cor.15

[1] Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand,
[2] by which you are saved, if you hold it fast -- unless you believed in vain.
[3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,
[4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,
[5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
[6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.
[7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.
[8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.
[9] For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
[10] But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.
[11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.
[12] Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
[13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised;
[14] if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.
[15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.
[16] For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised.
[17] If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.
[18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
[19] If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.
[20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
[21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
[22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

[23] But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

[24] Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

[25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

[26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

[27] "For God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection under him," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him.

[28] When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one.

[29] Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

[30] Why am I in peril every hour?

[31] I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

[32] What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

[33] Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

[34] Come to your right mind, and sin no more. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

[35] But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

[36] You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

[37] And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

[38] But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

[39] For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

[40] There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

[41] There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

[42] So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.

[43] It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

[44] It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

[45] Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

[46] But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual.

[47] The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

[48] As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.

[49] Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

[50] I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

[51] Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

[52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

[53] For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

[54] When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

[55] "O death, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?"

[56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

[57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[58] Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Romans (~60 C.E.) – this letter is well-known as Paul’s explanation of salvation; here, consider the question of character

Rom.12

[1] I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

[2] Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[3] For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

[4] For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

[5] so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

[6] Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

[7] if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching;

[8] he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

[9] Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

[10] love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.

[11] Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.

[12] Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

[13] Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

[14] Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

[15] Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

[16] Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

[17] Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

[18] If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.

[19] Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

[20] No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

[21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.