

Thoughts on the Daily Word

21st Week of the Year. *Thursday 29th August. Readings: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Psalm: 144; Gospel: Matthew 24:42-51.*

Corinth was a wild town! It was a particularly important port and canal dividing the Adriatic Sea from the Aegean Sea. It drew in people from all over the Mediterranean to make their fortunes. Probably on the cutting edge of culture, somewhat like Los Angeles in the 60's. It also had a large expat Jewish diaspora. A vibrant Christian community was formed by Paul and his two letters to them are two of the most famous letters that he wrote. The early communities were excited by the expectation of the return of Jesus and the end of the known world. These largely gentile Christian communities were at the centre of the controversy over whether they had to keep the Jewish law and observances. This appealed to some gentiles, in a watered-down form, minus the circumcision bit! The ability to keep laws and observances appealed to the wealthier members, just like it had to the Pharisees, as it gave status and usually required some wealth. This is reflected in the letters of Paul who constantly tries to exhort the community to care for one another and to stop quarrelling. Jesus is seen doing the same thing in Matthew's Gospel, obviously addressing the same issues in Matthew's community, which was probably later than that of Paul. Community cohesion is a perennial problem for human beings unless they see themselves as servants of one another in Christ.