

The Church at Corinth - 1 Corinthians

Background on Corinth

- Ancient city found in southern Greece
- Was a strategic trade route
 - Trade brought diverse groups, international commerce, and varied beliefs
- Because of diversities of religions, led to rampant immorality
 - City became known for all that was impure and sensual
 - Greek verb korinthiazomai coined to mean "to act the Corinthian" which meant "to commit fornication"
 - City was a seaman's paradise and moral cesspool; High divorce, prostitution, lusts, etc.

The Church at Corinth

- Acts 18:1-17: Church birthed through evangelism, preaching of unadulterated Word of God (1 Cor. 2:2)
 - Paul didn't rely on human wisdom or cliches, but the power of the Gospel to build the Church
- Paul first helped by Priscilla and Aquilla and ministered to the Jews.
 - When most Jews rejected the Word, efforts turned to the Gentiles and the church was eventually formed
- About 3 years after leaving, Paul received a letter about serious issues in the church at Corinth and asking about matter of Christian practice. Paul's response was 1 Corinthians.

General Theme

- How to deal with a worldly, carnal church (John 17:15)
- Church was not lacking in resources or gifts, but had too much of the world in it

Chapter 1

Vs. 1: Paul's authority

- Called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God
 - Acts 9; 1 Tim. 2:7; 1 Cor. 9:1-3
 - Paul had to deal with those who challenged his authority and apostleship. And, in your life, you will have to deal with those who challenge your authority and calling which you received from God.
1 Cor. 2:4; Acts 5:38
- What is an apostle? A sent one, messengers of Christ
 - Original qualifications: personal encounter w/ Christ, chosen by Christ Himself, power of working miracles, inspired of God (John 16:13), church founding and maintenance
- Paul writes to Sosthenes, perhaps the former ruler of the Jewish synagogue

Vs. 2: To the Church AT Corinth and beyond

- Those sanctified and called *{to be}* saints
- Also to all who call on Jesus - Eph. 4:5
- Initially talking to Corinthians who say they are part of God's family

Vs. 3: Grace and peace

- There can be no true peace until there is first grace - Eph. 2:8; Isa. 9:6

Vs. 4: It's God

- Acknowledges that the Church is there by the Grace of God
- He thanks God continually for what He has done in Corinth.
- ➔ ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR GOD'S GRACE?

Vs. 5: The Church is equipped

- God has equipped His church with spiritual gifts
- There were enriched in all utterance (outward expression) and knowledge (inward comprehension)
 - Example: tongues and interpretation of tongues

Vs. 6-7: You are not lacking

- God has equipped His Church with the spiritual gifts needed to live in this world as we await His return
 - Grace, favor, kindness, peace, humility, healing, etc.
- Merely having gifts and abilities from God is never enough. It is how we exercise them that really matters!
1 Cor. 13
- The Church was fat on gifts but lean on practice and lifestyle

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Chapter 1 (Continued)

DIVISIONS AMONG THE BELIEVERS

- Paul begins by appealing to them by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - This is not about any individual, but what Christ has done and is doing through them and us
 - He establishes his authority for what he is about to tell them
 - When we speak that for which Christ has given us authority to, people will see Christ and not us John 14:10
 - If the people truly love Christ, they will obey Christ's speaking through Paul
- Paul appealed to them to end all schisms (Vs. 1)
 - Wanted them to all be perfectly joined together
 - Together: "katartizo: to mend or be adjusted to one another, fit, frame)
 - Requires them all having the mind of Christ
- Paul tells them they should all speak the same thing (Vs. 10)
 - Not that they would all do the same thing (1 Cor. 12:14) but speak as one Body
 - The Greek word for "divisions" is schismata (tear, rent)

THE WORD ON CORINTH (VS. 11-12)

- Those of Chloe's house told Paul of the contentions
 - NOTE: PAUL NAMES THE SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION. WE SHOULD NOT PASS ON STUFF ABOUT FELLOW BELIEVERS UNLESS WE ARE WILLING TO GO ON RECORD WITH IT.
 - This would end most gossip in it's tracks! Mat. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:19
- The Corinthians struggled with exalting men
 - I am of Paul: not the best preacher but an excellent teacher (1 Cor. 2:1,4)
 - I am of Apollos: gifted speaker from Alexandria (Acts 18:24)
 - I of Cephas: Peter
 - Probably those who preferred Peter because he was with Christ in His earthly ministry
 - Probably felt Peter had the most authority (Mat. 16:13-18)
 - I of Christ: Jesus only
 - Denounced all the others (2 Cor.10:7); exclusive: superior to other believers

THE REBUKE FOR DIVISIONS (VS. 13-17)

- Christ is not divided!! Therefore, if there is division, where is Christ? Eph. 4:1-7
- Vs. 14-17: The person who baptizes is not important – it is whose name they were baptized in
 - Paul viewed preaching a priority to baptism
 - This is indicative of the need for salvation prior to baptism!!
 - Salvation comes by preaching the gospel (1:21) and is by grace (Eph. 2:8)
- Principle: Our primary allegiance and focus should be on the Word and not how God chose to deliver it.
- Paul called for the church to evangelize and not divide (vs. 17)
- The power of the Cross is made of none effect when constrained to oratory skill, man's wisdom, or philosophy. However, it is powerful when presented in simplicity.

THE CROSS

- An indicator of your spiritual state is your response to the Cross (vs. 18)
 - The "preaching" of the Cross – logos (thought spoken or written)
 - Power of God – dunamis (miraculous, abundant power)
 - Those who deem the Cross foolishness perish (intellectuals, sciences, arts, earthly reason) Mat. 27:42
 - Those who are saved deem the Cross powerful and significant in their lives – Mat. 7:13-14
- The problems of many with the Cross – vs. 22
 - Jews required sign (physical wonders) while Greeks required intellectual stimulation and splendor
- God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). His Word will work for anyone who believes – vs. 24

