**1 CORINTHIANS 1**

**DEALING WITH DIVISIONS**

Intro: You could say that what happened in Corinth, stayed in Corinth. Like Las Vegas, Corinth was a city that people travelled to **for** a vacation, and **from** morality.

Located 1 hour west of modern day Athens, Corinth was the capitol city of Greece in its day. It is located on a narrow strip of land separating the Aegean Sea from the Gulf of Corinth leading east to the Ionian Sea.

Corinth and its inhabitants were made wealthy due to the ease of shipping goods finding their way to Corinth. Some of the smaller ships were even hauled or rolled across the land route and re-entered the shipping routes on the other side.

Besides affluence, Corinth also was a very religious city. Unfortunately the religion of Corinth was one of satisfying the flesh. Wealth and lust were joined together in a religion that worshipped Aphrodite, the god of love (or lust.) Her Temple was filled with 1000 prostitutes, and church attendance there was record-breaking.

Of the 700,000 people who lived in Corinth, 2/3rds of them were slaves. The city was full of people, full of money and full of ways to sin but not a single Greek Philosophers came from its borders. Intellectually, Corinth was mute.

To many of us the term “Corinthian” describes leather for the Chrysler New Yorker (Thanks to Ricardo Montalban,) but in Paul’s day if you were said to be “Corinthian” it was NOT a compliment. It meant that you were motivated by your lusts. This was acting “Corinthian.”

Paul was unable to establish a church there on his first visit, but on his second visit a church was indeed established. Paul will have written two letters to this church which found itself surrounded by sin and sinners.

It was difficult keeping a church in Corinth, and it was difficult keeping Corinth out the Church.

Jon Courson says that if the Church at Corinth were to receive a grade it would be a “D”. D for divided, defamed and defiled.

This is likely the third of Paul’s 14 Epistles. It is the year, 57 A.D.

Paul will have to deal with several issues in the Corinthian church:

* Church factions (splits)
* Lawsuits
* Immorality
* Questionable practices
* Abuse of church ordinances
* Abuse of Spiritual Gifts (Like tongues)
* Divorce
* Church discipline
* Christian liberty
* Worship
* Resurrection vs. Religion
* The call of being single
* The unequally yoked believer
* Long hair!
* How to behave in church!

The letters to the Corinthians were written 23 years or so after the death and resurrection of Christ and while the Apostle was on his third missionary Journey. He wrote this letter from Ephesus.

The main theme of 1st Corinthians is to deal with carnal living practices.

The Open Bible says the “Key Verse” of First Corinthians is Chapter **6:19&20**, and you’ve heard me quote this verse a lot:

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

The 13th chapter of first Corinthians is one of the more famous chapters in literature: Commonly used at weddings it is the standard bearer of how to love within a relationship!

* And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is…..love. **1 Cor 13:13**

Let’s begin our study by studying the greeting of grace by the Apostle.

**GREETING**

**1 Corinthians 1:1** Paul, **called *to be* an apostle** of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

* BTW, Sosthenes was one of Paul’s accusers in **Acts 18**… And since has become a supporter of the ministry.
* Paul knew what his calling was… Make sure that you do too Beloved…
	+ I am \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am called to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by God.
* Paul will mention Jesus Christ BY NAME in 9 of the first 10 verses…

***FROM PAUL…***

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called *to be* saints**, ***(Holy)*** with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, ***(That includes us)*** both theirs and ours:

3 **Grace** (Greek word) to you and **peace** (Hebrew word) from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Always in this order, NO grace, NO peace**

* **If you have grasped onto God’s grace… You are enjoying God’s peace.**

**THANKSGIVING**

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, ***OH! WHAT A BLESSING!***

5 that you were **enriched in everything by Him** in all utterance ***(Eloquence****)* and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, ***(The Apostle MAY be speaking sarcastically here…MAN… do you guys EVER have the gifts!!! We will talk later😉 )***

***THEY WERE…*** eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless ***(Innocent)*** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* In spite of all of their faults … The Corinthian church was ready for Jesus to gather them up! I HOPE YOU ARE TOO BELOVED.

9 **God *is* faithful**, by whom you were **called** into the fellowship ***(Deep relationship, partnership)*** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

* ***Great partnerships are rare.*** Most of us will only experience one or two of them in our lifetime, BUT, our partnership with Jesus Christ is a perfect one- NOT because of us but because of HIM!
* The word: Fellowship is Koinonia in the Greek and though beautiful sounding… We do not have an English word for it. It is a deep, abiding relationship. We are called into this deep relationship with JESUS!
* Like a well delivered job review the Apostle starts with the positive stuff and then… gets to the issues… **THAT BEING SAID… I have heard some things…**

**DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH**

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

* **NLT** – be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of **Chloe's *household****,* that there are contentions among you.

* What a great procedural precedent Paul sets by naming his source of info!
* I THINK… **My humble opinion is**… If you cannot or will not state YOUR source of information while confronting another Christian about something… YOU ARE GOSSIPING. So… do not do it. Shut up and pray, listen and wait. OFTEN you will find that nothing needs to be said. The Holy Spirit will deal with the issue.

12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."

* I am of John Wesley… I am of Luther… I am of Ellen White… I am of John Smythe… I am of John Knox… I am of George Fox… I am of Joseph Smith… WELL… I AM OF CHUCK SMITH, so there!
* So, instead of the Church of Jesus Christ we are Methodists, Lutherans, Seventh Day, Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Cultists or JESUS PEOPLE!

13 **Is Christ divided?** ***(NOPE!)*** Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. **Crispus and Gaius had hosted the Apostle.**

16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. ***WHY NOT?*** 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

* We believe this scripture along with many others proves that baptismis NOT a part of the regeneration process.It is important and it is taught by Jesus Christ that we should be baptized. But NOT to be saved.
* Paul knew that he would distract from the Cross if he became a baptizing minister, like JTB.

**CHRIST THE WISDOM AND POWER OF GOD**

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, ***(Rejecting the Gospel)*** but to us who are **being saved** it is the power of God.

* **Jon Courson** explains why we are **BEING SAVED** V18… Again, a more literal rendering of this verse would be "…but unto us which are *being saved,* it is the power of God." Salvation is, in a sense, progressive. When you opened your heart to Jesus Christ, you were saved from the penalty of sin. Day by day, we're saved from the power of sin. And when Jesus comes to take us to heaven, we'll be saved from the presence of sin. The message of the Cross gives hope when I have failed because Jesus' blood cleanses me from all sin. It also gives direction to the way I live, for it is only when I deny myself and take up the Cross that I find life (Mat\_10:38-39).

19 For it is written: "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT." **ISAIAH 29:14**

20 Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

* **NLT** - So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

* The intellect of man is not enough to find God… It takes faith. To those who know God it is NOT a blind leap. The Lord has done plenty to prove His love to us, for us and in us.
* To the doubter, we seem like fools and lost sheep sometimes. THAT will not always be their opinion – The day of judgment will change their way of thinking. We pray for the lost that they too would have the faith to believe.

22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the ***(Religious)***Jews a stumbling block and to the ***(Intellectual)*** Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.*

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

31 that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD." **JEREMIAH 9:23**

* This glorious salvation that the Apostle is speaking of is simple enough for children to grasp and believe.
* **Matthw 18:1** At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

SO…Humble yourself and let the Lord do His work in you and me!