

**the book of
1st
Corinthians**
**Thursday Morning
Bible Class**

1 Corinthians 1:1-25

1

Why Did Paul Write 1 Corinthians?

- † To correct misunderstandings of his “previous letter” (1 Cor. 5:9)
- † To address party divisions in the congregation, as reported by the group that met in Chloe’s household (1 Cor. 1:10-12)
- † To respond to matters raised in a letter from the congregation (1 Cor. 7:1) and reported to him by other sources (1 Cor. 16:17-18)

2

Greeting – 1:1-3

- † 1 - Paul identifies himself as a “called apostle”. He thus asserts his authority as Jesus’ designated messenger. An “apostle” is the same as being the sender himself.
- † An “Apostle” is one who received a direct call from Jesus.
- † Sosthenes – the leader of the Corinthian synagogue who was beaten by the Jews.

3

Greeting – 1:1-3

- † 2 – To those who have also been “called”. The church is a divine institution, consisting of saints called by God. Paul continuously appeals to them to be who they are: saints in the middle of a corrupt city.
- † 3 – The apostolic blessing of grace and peace.

4

Thanksgiving – 1:4-9

- † 4 – Paul begins with a note of thanks for the grace of God given to them.
- † 5 – This verse is a hint at the problems: they prided themselves in their ability to speak and the use of tongues.
- † 6 – He praises God for their gifts in speech and knowledge, and thereby seeking to correct their misuse.

5

Thanksgiving – 1:4-9

- † 7 – Paul will be addressing the problem of competition over spiritual gifts. He sets the stage by assuring them that none are lacking any spiritual gift. God has blessed them all with His grace.
- † 8 – And God will sustain them to the end.
- † 9 – One is never an individual Christian. We all belong to the “fellowship” of all believers.

6

Divisions in the Church – 1:10-17

- † 10 – The first issue: fractures in the unity of the Church. He appeals to them that there should be no “schisms” (tears, factions). Rather see themselves as one mind.
- † 11 – Paul had heard from “Chloe’s house” that there was quarreling

7

Divisions in the Church – 1:10-17

- † 12 – The factions claim different leaders: Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ. It seems as though the church was putting these various leaders on pedestals for their own selfish purposes.
- † Paul is the “father” of the church.
- † Apollos was a gifted speakers from Alexandria
- † Cephas (Peter) may have visited Corinth?

8

Divisions in the Church – 1:10-17

- † The “Christ” faction may have been a reaction to the other three.
- † 13 – Could Christ be divided? The idea is preposterous. So is a divided church.
- † 14 – Baptism in the name of Jesus was foundational to the church.

9

Divisions in the Church – 1:10-17

- † Paul is glad he did not baptize many. He did baptize Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and also Gaius (Titius Justus) who welcomed Paul when he left the synagogue.
- † 15 – Being baptized *by* someone is not the same as being baptized *into* someone. They were baptized *into* the name of Jesus.

10

Divisions in the Church – 1:10-17

- † 16 – He also baptized the household of Stephanas (16:15)
- † 17 – The apostolic model: preach the Gospel first, then follow up with baptism. His role was to preach. But even that he did not do well! It was the cross of Christ that brought people to faith.

11

The Theology of the Cross – 1:18-25

- † 18 – Paul seeks to convince them that it is not skillful speaking that saves people, but the cross of Christ. But that is always unpalatable.
- † The world doesn't want the cross, but glory.
- † But God can only be found in suffering and the cross! (Luther)

12

The Theology of the Cross – 1:18-25

- † The cross is always the stumbling block. To assert that God broke the power of death and sin by a crucifixion is folly and madness.
- † But to despise the cross brings tragic consequences!
- † 19 – Paul quotes Is. 29:14 - prized speech and special gifts would only incur God's judgement.

13

The Theology of the Cross – 1:18-25

- † 20 – Rhetorical questions drawn from Isaiah.
The first target: The philosopher
- † The second: the rabbi
- † The third: Any “debater” – a clever speaker.
- † All these “wise men” belong to this age and have been made foolish by God.

14

The Theology of the Cross – 1:18-25

- † 21 - The world, with all it's wisdom could not know God. He is known through the foolish message of the cross.
- † 22 – The Jews demand signs, the Greeks looked for wisdom.
- † 23 – Instead, Paul preaches a “crucified Messiah” – a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentile.

15

The Theology of the Cross – 1:18-25

† 24 – To those who are called, the message of a “crucified Christ” speaks of the power and wisdom of God.

† 25 – What to us is foolishness is, instead, the wisdom of God. What to us is weakness, is in reality the power of God. Only God could accomplish victory over sin by a cross.
