

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
The Most Pressing Issues
1 Cor 1:10-31

Last time...the background, overview, and greeting of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians

The church planted by the Apostle Paul and watered by Apollos is infected with

- divisions
- gross sexual immorality
- loose practices of the Lord's Table
- disorderly public worship practices
- confusion regarding the Resurrection

Bottom line: The church at Corinth is a very carnal church

Christian conduct in the midst of a warped, wicked, and perverse people had been severely compromised by a lack of diligence in holiness

This time...the Holy Spirit thru Paul gets right down to business

First thing first – the most important of all issues addressed in this letter

- divisions
- the preaching of the Gospel

v10-11 no divisions...contentions:

Having greeted the believers with grace and peace, Paul immediately begs/implores them, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be unified.

Because they are fractured.

They are a divided people, they are not in one accord and are not like-minded (with the mind of Christ).

So much so that there are contentions among them...in-fighting, quarrels, heated arguments

Walls are being erected to separate people within the church

The Lord divides to multiply ala dividing the highly effective missionary team of Paul and Barnabas into 2 highly effective teams (Acts 15:36-41)

When Jesus divides, like a cell division in our physical bodies, the Body of Christ grows and is kept strong, whole, and in proper adjustment

The devil uses division to subtract, distract (from doing the Lord's work), and destroy

So how can we discern if it is Jesus or the devil doing the dividing?
Using...rightly dividing...the Word of God

Is the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5-8) on display?

1 Cor 14:33

James 3:16-18 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

What is happening in the church at Corinth is the work of the devil; the Body of Christ is “bleeding”, and it needs to be corrected by the Spirit of Christ

Luke 11:17b

Ps 133:1

Rom 15:5-6

Carnal, worldly, and devilish divisions weaken the Body of Christ

Thus, Rom 16:17-18

2 Thes 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us

God’s design:

Eph 4:11-16

Clearly the work of the flesh, the world, and the devil has impeded the work of God in the Church...from very early on

- Denominations

Divided over doctrine and methods

- baptism
- operation of the Holy Spirit
- gifts of the Spirit
- eschatology
- predestination vs free will
- governance structures

A man dies and goes to heaven

“Shhh. Calvary Chapel is in there...”

- Church-splits are common

Acts 20:28-31

when grace fails

wolves in sheep’s clothing

v12-13 I of...divided...crucified...baptized:

The walls being erected within the church at Corinth are built on different foundations by factions attempting to ride the coattails of different personalities

Some are building walls on/around Paul, attaching themselves to the Apostle who originally came to town and planted the Church...putting the man Paul between them and Jesus

Some are building walls on/around Apollos, attaching themselves to the powerful orator (Greek-style) who came to town after Paul left...putting the man Apollos between them and Jesus

Some are building walls on/around Peter, attaching themselves to a powerful personality and the Apostle to the Jews...putting the man Peter between them and Jesus

Some are building walls on/around Jesus Christ, either properly so (Ch 3) or self-righteously so...putting themselves more holy than the others

There are 4 kinds of Christians in this church, contending with each other within the church rather than contending for the faith with unbelievers outside the church.

They are unwisely comparing and competing with each other rather than being busy about the Father's business of seeking and saving the lost, continuing the work Jesus began

2 Cor 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise

The error is so obvious that Paul asks some rhetorical questions to expose it

v14-16 I baptized none...but:

Paul was not a wolf in sheep's clothing, was not drawing disciples unto himself

In fact, he only baptized (immersion in water for the remission of sins)

- Crispus (Acts 18:8)
- Gaius
- the household of Stephanas (1 Cor 16:15)

so that he could not be falsely accused of perverting the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

To the contrary, Paul was faithful to his Divine calling

v17 For Christ sent me...lest:
For...since, seeing that

Christ sent Paul...no man/group of people did, nor is Paul a loose cannon

not to baptize but to preach the gospel...not to focus on baptism but to focus on
making Jesus Christ known

Baptism does not save, Jesus saves

Salvation is the work of God, not the work of man

Titus 3:5-6 Not by works of righteousness which we have done,
but according to his mercy he saved us, by the
washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy
Ghost, Which he shed on us abundantly through
Jesus Christ our Saviour

We are not saved by baptism (the doctrine of baptismal regeneration)...
otherwise both Jesus and Paul would have baptized multitudes!
Paul baptized few, Jesus none

Paul was sent to preach the Gospel...1 Cor 15:3-4
And not with deep-thinking theological terms but with the profound
simplicity of God's gift of salvation (Gen 15:9, John 6:29) that
even a child could understand

Paul was sent to preach the Gospel not with his own intellectual capacity
or his own "highly educated opinions"

1 Cor 2:1-2

John 3:16 with John 1:29

Is 53:10-12 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to
grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he
shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the
pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall
see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his
knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he
shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him *a*
portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the
strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and
he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin
of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

They have strayed from the simplicity of Christ (2 Cor 11:3)

So rather than contending with themselves, what should the church be doing?
Simply preaching the Gospel to the lost

v18-19 to them that perish...us which are saved:

What is preaching of the cross?

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Living – Matt 16:24-25 | other worldly living |
| 2. Loving – Matt 22:36-40 | other worldly loving |
| 3. Speaking – Col 4:3-4 | other worldly speaking |

Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak

The followers of Jesus Christ are to preach the Gospel in word and deed

The Gospel is God's wisdom that confounds man's wisdom
Paul quotes Is 29:14

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a forced march, it is not imposed upon mankind by the Creator

The Gospel is an invitation from the Creator to mankind to receive

- the gift of eternal life by God's grace thru faith
John 3:17
Eph 2:8-9
- victory over death by surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Preaching Jesus Christ without the Cross is to strip the power out of the Gospel

There can be no ransom without a ransom payment

There cannot be grace and mercy without justice being satisfied

2 Cor 5:21...we cannot be so made without repentance of our sin

Many believe the Gospel is sheer foolishness...that it is silly and absurd

Incarnation (John 1:14) and the virgin birth?

Lose our lives by saving our lives and save our lives by losing our lives?

Life comes by death?

Victory comes by surrender?

The way up is down?

Believing is seeing and understanding?

Preposterous!!!

Many will perish...eternal death...by their unbelief

A few will believe the Gospel and be saved...from eternal death...by believing what God has said and done

Heb 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Man's self-help will be futile in the fight against death

Man's intellect will prove to be foolishness in the fight against death

Few will believe and accept God's wisdom,
leaning not on their own understanding

Leaving some basic unanswered questions

v20 where is:

Where are all the world's wise men?

In time, they all have died or will die

What good did they do in the fight against death?

Where are all the world's scholars and lawyers and geniuses?

Where are all the national debate champions?

They did not incline their ear to wisdom...Word of God

They did not apply their heart to understanding...believing the Word of God

Prov 2:2

To understand/believe the Word of God is to find knowledge of God and to receive His wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov 2:6)

The ways of God's wisdom are peace and life (Prov 3:17-18)

Happy is the person that finds God's wisdom and gets knowledge (Prov 3:13)

The world's "best and brightest" did not "move the needle" on the issue of death even one tic!

Perhaps 3000 years ago, God said

Ps 90:10 The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away

What have centuries of advances in medical knowledge added?

According to insurance actuarial tables, the average life span in USA is 78.5 years

Thus...Ps 90:12

So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom

But God conquered death via the Cross of Christ and the Resurrection,
thereby establishing life or mortal man

John 11:25-26 I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me,
though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever
liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou
this?

1 Cor 15:26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death

1 Cor 15:55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

1 Cor 15:57 thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ

In the end (after the last breath in this world), what unbelieving mortal man
thought was so wise is in reality so foolish and what he thought was so
foolish is in reality so wise!

Matt 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and
lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his
soul?

v21 the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God:
The Gospel is God's wisdom manifesting His heart and nature – Love

The world, blinded by its proud, man-sized wisdom, did not know God

Rom 1:16-25

Rom 11:33 His ways are past finding out...unsearchable

Ps 145:3 His greatness is unsearchable

Ps 147:5 His understanding in infinite

Jer 10:12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established
the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the
heavens by his discretion

Greek philosophy did not produce a knowledge of the OTL God;

Relative to the conquest of death, Greek philosophy

(Western Civilization) is an exercise in futility

So is Medical Science

All of man's philosophies and knowledge fail on the death bed

Greek worship of the human body did not resolve the unavoidable,
day-by-day failing and ultimate death of the body

Human reasoning will never "write a script" of salvation that is the Gospel
Human reasoning: finite man working to reach the Infinite God

Salvation comes only by believing God's philosophy/worldview...

Word of God

Gospel: the Infinite God reaching to finite man by the conquest of death

Only Jesus triumphs at the death bed!

Only by God-sized wisdom (Rom 5:8) are people saved from death

v22-25 Jews...Greeks:

In a world inhabited by Jews (the nation created by God to be His inheritance) and Gentiles (all other nations),

Jews require a sign...a wicked and adulterous generation seeks a sign (Matt 16:4), tangible worldly evidence of God doing what He told them He would (as repeatedly demanded of Jesus; Jonah)

Gentiles seek after wisdom...intellectual stimulation, an unending pursuit of knowledge and philosophy

Jews stumble at, are offended by, Christ/Messiah crucified

Gentiles think Christ crucified is pure folly

But to those who believe, both Jews and Gentiles, the Gospel of Christ is

- the power of God...the Creator's power over death unto eternal life
 - the wisdom of God...the only acceptable, rational, and workable Plan, and only conceivable by the Almighty
- Is 55:8-11

v26-29 not many...no flesh:

The "best and brightest" of mankind thinks God's wisdom is silliness... so the victory over death by surrender to Jesus Christ "escapes" them

Not many wise, mighty, or noble humble themselves in the sight of the Lord and draw near to Him so He can lift them up

Not many of the world's rich and powerful...the "elites" and "influencers"... are children of God

"many" vs "any"...oh, the difference one letter makes!

"m" = God's grace

Queen of England many years ago: I am saved by an "m".

God does not choose the "best and brightest" of creatures made of clay to deliver His Plan of Redemption

He chooses the

- foolish...according to the world (foolish like me)
- weak...in the world (weak like me)
- lowly...of the world (lowly like me)
- despised...by the world (“deplorables” despised like me)
- are not...nobodies in the world (nobodies like me)

to confound/put to shame/cause to blush and to render useless the world’s

- wise
- mighty
- noble
- that are (somebodies, celebrities, the self-exalted)

He uses the “child-ish” to proclaim the only Good News in the world

Matt 18:3-4

Why?

So no lump of clay will boast in His presence!

Even lumps of clay named Paul, Apollos, or Peter

v30-31 of Him are ye in Christ...glory in the Lord:

Oh, how far short even the very “best” person falls of the glory of God!

But by the work of God we who believe are “in Christ”

A finite person with no wisdom, no righteousness, no sanctification/unpurified,
and no redemption/salvation has “in Christ” the wisdom, righteousness,
sanctification, and redemption of the Almighty Infinite God

Jesus Christ is our everything!

We add nothing of value to Him

All we bring to the table is sin

And that is nothing to boast of!

So if one feels like boasting, boast in the Lord!!!

Take-aways

The Living God, Creator of heaven and earth and Source of all Life, chose to humble Himself,
subjecting Himself to shame and death...because He loves me

Someone told me that...preached the Gospel to me

I watched their life...and saw the same message spoken in their actions/lifestyle

I wrestled with God about His wisdom, but surrendered...unto victory over death

I have chosen to not be wise or mighty or noble in this world

I have chosen to be foolish, weak, lowly, and despised to be with Jesus in the next world

So when I look in the mirror in the morning,
with my eyes I see a nobody
with my spirit I see a Somebody – Jesus (Gal 2:20)

Therefore, even when I look with my eyes, I do not see a loser (like the world sees me)
I see a victor

Rom 8:37 in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that
loved us
who has overcome the world...by faith in
the Lord – title
Jesus – name
Christ – mission

Are you of the same mind and judgment/opinion (of Self and Jesus)?

Then go

1. smell like Jesus

2 Cor 2:14-16

The world likes the smell of rotting flesh

2. 1 Peter 3:15

sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to
every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and
fear

If you want hands laid on you in prayer, come forward