

# 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

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## A Divided Church

1 Cor 1:10-17 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. 12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." 13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. 16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

### Paul addresses them as "brothers".

By this address Paul seeks to do two things:

1. He softens the rebuke - not from a schoolmaster with a rod, but from a heart of love.
2. To show them how wrong their dissensions and divisions were.

### In trying to bring them together Paul uses two phrases

1. "That you all agree." A phrase used for two hostile parties reaching agreement.
2. "That you be made complete" = "knit together"; a medical word used - to heal a wound, to knit together a fractured bone, to join together a dislocated joint.

### There were four factions (divisions) in the church

schismata = a word used for tears in a garment (Mt 9:16; 1 Cor 11:18; 12:25).

#### 1. Those who claimed to belong to Paul.

Paul always preached the gospel of grace, of Christian freedom and the end of the Law. It is likely that this group were attempting to turn liberty into license, using their freedom as an excuse to do as they liked.

#### 2. Those who claimed to belong to Apollos.

Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria, and elegant man, well-versed in the Scriptures. Alexandria was the center of intellectual activity. These were the intellectuals, scholars who made a science of allegorizing the Scriptures, who were turning Christianity into a philosophy rather than a religion.

#### 3. Those who claimed to belong to Cephas (Peter).

These were the Jews, they sought to teach that a man must still observe the Jewish law. They were legalist who exalted law, and belittled grace.

#### 4. Those who claimed to belong to Christ.

These were the "super spiritual" ones, they were intolerant and self-righteous, claiming that they were the only true Christians in Corinth.

**Church divisions sidetrack us** from our Christian priorities of:

Brotherly love and unity; proclamation of the gospel and evangelism to those who don't believe.

**Baptism** - The argument was over who baptized them.

Baptism - into what name?

"The name of Jesus" implies that the Christian is not only possessed by Christ but also identified with Him. Into "the name of" implied utter possession.

To give money into a man's name was to pay it into his account.

To sell a slave into a man's name was to give that slave into his undisputed possession.

A soldier swore loyalty in the name of Caesar; he belonged absolutely to the Emperor.

**The insanity:** Paul rebukes them, hitting his own "fan club" the hardest.

"Was I, Paul, crucified for you?" (1:13a).

"Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1:13b).

"Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News" (1:17).

## **The cross - a stumbling block to the Jews; foolishness to the Greeks**

1Cor 1:18-25 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

### **Key word = Wisdom is used eight times**

**Key idea** - we dare not mix man's wisdom with God's revealed message, His Word!

### **The gospel (word of the cross)** [Peter's preaching; Ac 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 10:36-43]

The claim that the great promised time of God has come.

The summary of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The claim that all of Christ suffering was the fulfillment of prophecy.

The assertion that Jesus is coming again.

The invitation for people to repent and receive the promised gift salvation.

### **5 points of Evangelism Explosion**

**Grace** - Heaven is a free gift. It is not earned or deserved.

**Man** - Is a sinner. He cannot save himself.

**God** - Is merciful - He doesn't want to punish us. Is just - therefore must punish sin.

**Christ** - Who He is - the infinite God/man. What He did - He paid for sins and purchase a place for us/.

**Faith** - It is not mere intellectual assent. It is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.

### **Three responses to the gospel (word of the cross)**

#### **Jews - The gospel was a stumbling block**

The Law declared "He who is hanged is a cursed by God" (Dt 21:23). They had never dreamed of a suffering Messiah. The cross was proof that he was not God's Chosen One.

The Jews sought for signs. They were looking for someone like Moses or Elijah.

## **Greeks - The gospel was foolishness**

They believed that the first attribute of God was “apatheia” = total inability to feel. God must be incapable of all feeling so that none may ever affect him. A God who suffered was to the Greeks a contradiction in terms

The Greek sought wisdom (sophist); a man with a clever mind and cunning tongue, who would spend endless hours discussing hair-splitting trifles, who had no real interest in solutions but would simply enjoy the stimulus of “the mental hike.”

## **Christians - The gospel is the power of God**

Those who have by faith responded to God’s grace realize that Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (1 Cor 1:18, 24; 2 Thes 2:13-14)

## **God’s call on our life**

1Cor 1:26-31 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

### **Typical person who responds to God’s call:**

Not many wise - people highly regarded for their analytical skills and persuasive speech.

Not many scribes - an expert in the Mosaic law; lawyers.

Not many debaters - a person trained in public speaking.

Not many mighty – Paul is likely referring to the upper-class of Corinthians.

Not many noble - of high birth, nobility

**God delights in using** foolish, weak, lowly, and despise things (people) to nullify the wise, strong, exalted and respected things (people).

God called them, not because of what they were, but despite what they were!

### **Christ became for the believer:**

**Wisdom** - He is the expert in life

It is only in following Him that we walk upright.

it is only in listening to Him that we hear the truth.

**Righteousness** - Righteousness has to do with our standing before God. We are justified: God declares us righteous in Jesus Christ. It comes not from what we can do for God but rather from what He is done for us, our own efforts cannot achieve it.

**Sanctification** – the process of becoming holy, set apart to belong to God. Our garments can only be kept unspotted from the world by walking with Christ.

**Redemption** – Redemption emphasizes the fact that we are set free because Jesus Christ paid the price for us on the cross. This will lead to complete redemption when Christ returns.

Every believer has all of these blessings in Christ. We have been saved (delivered from past sin) from the penalty of sin (**righteousness**); we are (presently) being saved from the power of sin (**sanctification**); and we will be saved (future) from eternal judgment of sin (**redemption**).

### **The gospel answers 3 questions (1 Cor 1:18-31)**

**Question 1:** How can sinful people be in a right relationship with God who is holy and good?

**Answer:** As we believe in God's Son, Jesus Christ, his righteousness is reckoned to us (1 Cor 1:30; Rom 4:6, 11, 22-24; 2 Cor 5:19-21).

**Question 2:** How can our lives be changed for the better?

**Answer:** The cross makes us hate sin and receive power to live a new life of holiness (2Cor 5:17).

**Question 3:** How can we have the assurance of salvation when we still sin?

**Answer:** The death of Jesus secured our ultimate redemption (1 Cor 1:30) and eternal enjoyment of God (Jn 17:3).

**Boast** = to trust in

The Corinthians had a tendency to be "puffed up" with pride (1 Cor 4:6, 18-19; 5:2). The Gospel of God's grace leaves no room for boasting. God is not impressed with our looks, our social position, our achievements, our natural heritage, or our financial status.

Since every believer is "in Christ," and he has all that he needs, why compete or compare yourselves with others? It is the Lord who has done it all! "He that boast, let him boast in the Lord" (Jer 9:24; 2 Cor 10:17).

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