

1Corinthians – Week 2

I. Review:

A. Author: Paul, the apostle

B. Period Established: During Paul's second missionary journey

C. Written: circa AD 56-57

D. Purpose:

i. To address the problems reported by some from Chloe's household (1:10-6:20)

ii. To reply to their questions they had regarding various topics (7:1-16:4)

II. The Lord's intention for His Church

A. John 17

i. The night he was betrayed, Jesus prayed a simple request: that His followers be one

1. Four times Jesus mentioned this desire for His church (vv. 11, 20, 22, 23)

2. Divisions in the Church rob God's people of the peace that God intended for them to have.

a. This country was intended to be "a nation under God, indivisible..."

i. Indivisible – not divisible; not able to be divided or separated.

b. Yet, quarrels, injustice and immoral behavior run rampant in this country due to the divisions that exists along social, racial and political lines.

3. Divisions in the Church also hinders the world from believing the message of Christ (John 14:21)

B. The goal of this class:

i. For us, as God's church, to avoid divisions and to work towards the unity the Lord prayed.

ii. We can simply entitle our study of 1Corinthians: "Solving Problems in the Church" because this book was written to address issues and questions in the church at Corinth.

C. Greetings:

i. 1Cor. 1:1 (ESV), "*Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes*"

1. In Acts 18, we read some of the background of the founding of this congregation

a. Paul spent 1½ years teaching these new disciples the word of God (Acts 18:11)

b. The Jews rose against Paul and brought him before Gallio, a pagan judge, which refused to hear the charges since it was a matter of Jews vs. Christians.

c. As a result, a certain "Sosthenes," a synagogue ruler, was beaten up by the Gentiles (Acts 18:17).

d. It is possible that the "Sosthenes" mentioned in 1Corinthians 1:1 is the same person of Acts 18:17, who then converted to Christianity.

2. From verses 2-9, Paul begins to lay a foundation for the rest of the letter

a. He describes the characteristics of those who make up the Church...

ii. 1Cor. 1:2-3 (ESV), "*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: (3) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

1. *To the church of God...*

a. Keep in mind that it is not MY church nor is it YOUR church; it is GOD'S church.

b. When we forget that *we are not our own, but we are brought with a price* (cf. 1Cor. 6:19-20), we get into trouble...

- i. We start to feel that the church should function in our timing, should pursue our purpose, and approach things our way.
 - ii. We are HIS church, brought together by God the Father, through the sanctifying work of His Son, Jesus Christ...
2. *To those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...*
- i. Sanctify – to make holy; to set apart for a godly purpose (*set apart to serve God – Revelation 1:6*)
 - ii. Saint – holy one (a sanctified one)
- b. Note: The Corinthians were sanctified, not by “profession” of holiness, but because they were IN Christ!

D. Thanksgiving:

- i. 1Cor. 1:4 (ESV), *“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus”*
 - 1. It’s amazing how the apostle thanks God for a church plagued with problems!
 - 2. The explanation lies with this key phrase: *“because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus”*
 - a. The Corinthian church was credited with the righteousness of Jesus Christ!
 - b. 2Corinthians 5:21 makes this point...
 - i. *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*
 - 1. A Christian is accepted as righteous and treated as righteous by God on account of what the Lord Jesus has done.
 - 3. So, in essence, Paul gives thanks to God for their conversion (cf. Acts 18:8)
- ii. 1Cor. 1:5-9 (ESV), *“that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— (6) even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— (7) so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, (8) who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
 - 1. The phrase *“enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge”*...
 - a. May be referring to the miraculous gifts the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Corinthians (cf. 1Corinthians 12 and 14).
 - b. Or it may be referring to their ability to speak of the things Paul taught them when he was at Corinth (this includes the gospel and doctrines of Christ) – this interpretation applies for us today.
 - 2. God has provided them every spiritual gift so that they can function as a church.
 - 3. The testimony of Christ (the gospel), was confirmed in them, perhaps, either by:
 - a. The miraculous deeds done by the apostle (Mk 16:20; Acts 14:3; 2Cor. 12:12)
 - b. The miraculous gifts given to some of them by the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12-14; Heb. 2:4)
 - c. Or, perhaps, by their belief and obedience to the gospel (Acts 18:8).
 - 4. And now, because they await Christ’s return, they will be sustained by Christ and declared guiltless at Judgment Day.
 - 5. God is faithful!
 - a. His purpose is to complete the work He started in those who wait for Christ’s return (cf. Phil. 1:6)
- iii. Now that Paul has captivated their hearts by his encouraging words, now he proceeds with his correcting their behavior (to be continued next class).