

1 Corinthians 1

- We will now study the letter called 1 Corinthians.
- This is one of the letters that God and Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth.
- Where is Corinth?
 - In Greece.
- Paul first visited Corinth toward the end of his second missionary journey, and stayed in Corinth for a year and a half.
- During this first visit, many people believed in Jesus as their Savior.
- While Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he wrote this letter to the Corinthians.
- Why did God through Paul write 1 Corinthians?
 - Because Christians in the church at Corinth were arguing with one another, and there were many problems.
 - In the church at Corinth, there were problems with unity, morality, marriage, and spiritual gifts as well as many other problems.
 - Because of these many problems, we can say that the theme of 1 Corinthians is this: "Problems in the Church."

-Even though there were many problems in the church, God and Paul begin their letter by encouraging the Christians.

-As God and Paul begin 1 Corinthians by encouraging the Christians at Corinth, what does this teach us?

-This teaches us that we should first encourage others before we talk about their problems.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:1

1-Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes.

-Who was Sosthenes?

-Sosthenes was a Jewish man who was the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth.

-When the Jews tried to hurt Paul, the Roman governor would not allow it, and therefore, the Jews turned on Sosthenes and beat him.

-It appears as if Sosthenes later believed in Christ, as Paul calls him a brother at the beginning of the letter.

-In many of his letters, why did Paul remind us that he is an apostle of Christ?

-Because Paul's letter is God's letter.

-Because Paul's teaching is God's teaching.

-As we have learned, God chose the apostles to write down His words in the Bible as well as to teach.

-Like Sosthenes, why did Paul take others with him when he taught the Word of God?

-So they could learn from him

-So they could help him in the work of God.

-If God has saved you, then He wants you to learn from others so that you can teach others one day.

-Is the job of teaching others about God only the job of the pastor?

-No.

-God wants all Christians to be able to teach others about Him.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:2-3

2-To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

3-Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Did God and Paul write 1 Corinthians only for the Corinthians?

-No. This letter is for all Christians.

-What does it mean to be sanctified?

-To be chosen and set apart by God to do God's work.

-If you believe in Christ, God has chosen you and set you apart to be holy.

-Even though Christians sin, we have been chosen and set apart by Christ to be holy.

-We are not holy because of our lives, but because of Christ's death.

-We are holy because Christ has made us holy.

-We are saints because Christ has made us saints.

-What is a major difference between other religions and true Christianity?

-Other religions of the world teach that people make themselves holy.

-Only true Christianity teaches us that God alone can make us holy.

-As God told Israel in Leviticus 22:32: "I am the Lord God who made you holy."

-Because Christ has made us holy, we should live holy lives.

-When Jesus did not condemn the prostitute who was

caught in adultery, He told her to leave her life of sin (John 8:11).

-This teaches us that when we repent, Christ gives us a new life, and that we are to live according to the new life.

-Therefore, we do not try to be holy in order to be approved by God.

-Rather, because God has already made us holy, we are asked to live holy lives.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:4-6

4-I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.

5-For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—

6-because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.

-What did Paul thank God for when he thought of the Corinthians?

-For the grace God gave them in Christ Jesus.

-Even though the Corinthians and all of us deserve eternal death, the grace of God has given us eternal life as well as all of the riches of God Himself.

-As Christians, we have no greater gift in eternity than the

grace of God which not only saves us, but gives us more than we can even imagine.

-In verse 5, we learn that God has enriched us in all of our speaking and knowledge.

-When we do not know what to speak or say, God will speak through us if we ask Him to do so.

-We submit our minds to God, and allow our Father to speak through us.

-Here is an illustration:

-A man was talking to his wife, and his wife called him a liar.

-The man did not know how to respond, so he asked the Lord to respond through him.

-Then, he heard himself say, "If you think I am a liar, why don't you pray for me?"

-The man realized that this answer was from God, and not from him, as he knew not what to say.

-Because God has enriched us in every way, we can give testimony to others.

-More important, because God has enriched us in every way, our lives are a testimony to us and to others of the

grace of God.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:7

7-Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

-As Christians, how many spiritual gifts do we lack?

-None.

-As we learned in Ephesians 1:3, God has withheld no gifts from us, but has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ.

-Christians do not lack any spiritual gifts.

-If we do not lack any spiritual gift, what is our problem?

-Our problem is that we do not understand that God has given us these gifts, and therefore, we do not use them.

-As we learned in Ephesians, we must first understand what God has given to us, and then, use these gifts.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:8-9

8-He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9-God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

-Even though the Christians in Corinth had many

problems, how are God and Paul encouraging them and us?

-1) That God will keep us strong to the end.

-2) That God will accept us into heaven as blameless.

-3) That God will continue to be faithful to us.

-1) That God will keep us strong to the end.

-If God has decided to save us, He will not change His mind.

-If God is strong enough to save us, He is also strong enough to keep us saved.

-If God has begun a work in us by saving us, then He will complete His work.

-As Philippians 1:6 teaches us: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."

-Nothing and no one can block God from keeping us strong to the end.

-2) God will accept us into heaven as blameless.

-When we enter heaven, we will not find any of our sins on earth.

-This is because our Christ will bring us to the Father, and say to the Father that we are blameless and without sin.

-And we will be blameless and without sin for the rest of eternity.

-3) That God will continue to be faithful to us.

-Although people are not always faithful, God is always faithful.

-After Moses had died, God told Joshua that He would never leave him, nor forsake him.

-As Jesus promised His disciples before He left for heaven: "I will be with you always" (Mt 28:20).

-After God and Paul encouraged the Christians, they now begin to talk about the problems in the church.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12

10-I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

11-My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

12-What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

-What is the first problem that God and Paul talk about?

-The Christians in the church at Corinth were not unified, but were divided.

-Some were following the teaching of Paul because Paul was the first teacher in Corinth.

-Some were following the teaching of Apollos because Paul had sent Apollos to be the second teacher in Corinth.

-Some were following the teaching of Peter (Cephas) because it seems that they were saved under Peter's teaching.

-Some were following only Christ which teaches us that they were not willing to listen to the teaching of others.

-Was the teaching of Paul, Apollos, and Peter different from the teaching of Christ?

-No.

-Then, why were the Christians in Corinth not unified?

-There were two reasons:

-The first reason was that people were following their teacher more than following Christ.

-The second reason was that the people who said that they were following Christ did not want to listen to the teaching of others.

-God has no problem with people who respect their teacher.

-It becomes a problem, however, when people fight in the church because of different teachers.

-It is also a problem when people do not want to be taught by those whom God has chosen to teach.

-Are all of the teachers in the church the same?

-No.

-Each teacher is different.

-Some teachers teach loudly while others teach quietly.

-Some teachers move around while others stand still.

-Some teachers wave their hands while others do not.

-What is most important for a teacher?

-That they teach the Word of God, and not their own ideas.

-While Paul and Apollos and Peter taught differently, they all taught the Word of God.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:13

13-Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

-Is Christ divided?

-No.

-There is only one Lord Jesus.

-Was Paul crucified for anyone?

-No.

-Were the Christians at Corinth baptized into the name of Paul?

-No.

-Why are God and Paul asking these questions?

-To teach that it is wrong to be divided as Christians.

-Even though people fight one another, God wants us to know that it is wrong for Christians to be divided.

-Even though people kill one another, God wants us to know that it is wrong for Christians to be divided.

-The Church does not belong to people.

-The Church belongs only to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has made all believers one in Him.

-If there are divisions in the Church, this is not from God.

-If there is fighting in the Church, this is not from God.

-The world, the flesh, and Satan are always fighting, but there should be no fighting in the Church.

-In a world full of war, if the Church is fighting, then

people will see no difference between the world and the Church.

-If the Church, however, is one, then the world will see that there is a difference between people of God and the world.

-When Paul asked, “Was Paul crucified for you?” what was he saying?

-He was saying that only Christ was crucified for us, and that we should only follow Christ.

-Should we have faith in people?

-No.

-We should have faith only in Christ.

-It is wrong to place a church leader above Christ.

-It is wrong to place anyone above Christ.

-When we have more faith in teachers and leaders than in Christ, what will happen?

-This will divide the Church.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:14-16

14-I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,

15-so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.

16-(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)

-Who was Crispus?

-Crispus was a Jew who was the leader of the synagogue in Corinth when Paul first started teaching.

-Since Paul baptized Crispus, we can know that Crispus came to believe in Christ.

-Who was Gaius?

-Gaius was the man with whom Paul stayed when he was in Corinth (Romans 16:23).

-Did Paul teach that all believers should be baptized?

-Yes.

-Except for a few people, did Paul baptize anyone?

-No.

-Perhaps Paul baptized a few of the first believers, and then asked them to baptize each other.

-Perhaps Paul's helpers baptized the people.

-Why did Paul only baptize a few Christians?

-Because his main work was not to baptize.

-Did Christ baptize anyone?

-No.

-Why did Christ not baptize anyone?

-Because his main work was not to baptize.

-Another reason that Christ and Paul did not baptize is that they did not want to cause divisions in the Church.

-Even for Christians, it is easy to be proud which causes divisions among Christians.

-Even for Christians, it is easy to be proud which causes some Christians to think that they are more important than others, and some Christians to think that they are less important than others.

-In God's eyes, are some Christians more important than others?

-No.

-In God's eyes, all Christians are important.

-This is one reason why God does not want division in the Church.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 1:17

17-For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

-What was the main work that God gave to Paul?

-To teach the Gospel.

-What is the Gospel?

-That God is holy, and that we have sinned against God, but that Christ has died for our sin.

-Did Paul teach the Gospel with words of human wisdom?

-No.

-Why did Paul not teach the Gospel with his own wisdom?

-Because he knew he would fail if he depended on his own wisdom.

-Because he knew that people would not believe if he depended on his own wisdom.

-Is it because of the words of human wisdom that people are saved?

-No.

-It is God's Word alone in God's power alone that saves people.

-As we learned in Romans 1:16, Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God.

-Although the people of the world may laugh at the gospel, it is God's powerful Word which He uses to save all who believe from eternal death to eternal life.