



CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture | 1 Corinthians 1.1-17

The first chapter of 1 Corinthians opens with an introduction of the author and his recipients. In these first seventeen verses, two opposing forces underly what the apostle writes. He illustrates what brings a church together and breaks a church apart. Despite the Corinthian problem, Paul remains thankful for each of them. He provides a good, Christ-centered model for readers today who would too quickly write off 'troublesome' members.

Observation

READ 1 Cor 1.1-3 | Followers of Jesus are called as saints together as the church.

Who is "writing" this letter? Who is Sosthenes and how might he be involved in the writing? Why should our reception of books or portions of Scripture as authoritative and "God-breathed" be unchanged whether the author collected, wrote himself, or supervised the process of the text? (Luke 1:1-4, 2 Tim 3:14-17, 2 Pet 1:19-21)

Who are the recipients of this letter? What is a "church?" Whose church does Paul emphasize? Why should that make a difference as we are a church?

How does "church" fit with "those sanctified in Christ Jesus? What would make a "church" not a church?

What is the nature of those "sanctified" and what equivalent name does Paul call them? How does that title impact our understanding of hierarchy or levels of holiness in the church?

What key does Paul reveal in His thinking about what shape life takes as a follower of Jesus in v2? What is an inescapable reality about the "together" that defines what it means to follow Jesus?

How does Paul describe what together means in v2? How does the "together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" always become expressed in the life of a believer in something like "the church of God in Corinth?"

How are followers of Jesus always linked to believers everywhere always (universal church), and to believers right here right now (specific local church body)? What dangers follow from neglecting one or the other?

How does Paul use "call" in these verses? What are good ways to think about calling? How is our calling to be saints together as the church?

How does our calling impact what we call ourselves? (v3) What we call God? Why we call God? (v2)

Why might Paul start his letter with the repeated "calling?" How can knowing our calling and what we are called be foundational for our church, like it will be for Corinth?

READ 1 Cor 1.4-9 | The church is united, enriched, and sustained by grace in Christ.



Why might Paul so frequently introduce his letters proclaiming “grace” to the recipients? (v3) Why might it be a good practice to remind ourselves and our brothers/ sisters in Christ about grace?

How does Paul continue about grace in this next opening part of his letter? What is the right response to grace and what is the sphere of grace?

What are some of the effects of grace? Why should those produce thanksgiving? What is the source of grace? (v4) What is the destination of those who receive grace? (v9)

What pronouns get repeated in each of these verses? (4-9) What significance is there that all of the pronouns are plural instead of singular? How is being a church a plural and not a singular experience of God’s grace?

How do these descriptions of grace impact how we think about a church? How do the descriptions let us say that a church is united, enriched, and sustained by grace in Christ?

What should have been the case for how the church at Corinth looked? For how our church looks?

What does the Lord desire for you and for me when He calls us to be saints? How does He intend to unite, enrich, and sustain us together?

READ 1 Cor 1.10-17 | The church’s unity is not to be disrupted by fleshly divisions.

How does the tone of Paul’s letter change in v10? Why appeal? By whose authority?

Why should “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” be the emphasis? (v2, v9) Why would that name then be the lead in to Paul’s command?

What does Paul want for the church in Corinth? What would their unity, and ours, look like? (v10)

How would you describe the situation in Corinth? How pervasive was the problem?

How are the Corinthians not “united in the same mind and the same judgment?” How does their mindset devalue and dishonor Christ?

How does Paul put Christ and the cross at the center of his appeal? Why does he put Him at the center?

How does looking at life through the cross make every church a “cross church?”

How had the Corinthians misunderstood baptism? How does Paul describe baptism? How is Paul prioritizing baptism? For whom? How do Paul’s comments on baptism apply specifically to the apostles? Why do his comments not alter the priority of baptism for believers?

How does Paul describe his specific priority? What would characterize his practice?

Why would Paul need to defend a lack of eloquence in culture that valued eloquence? Why should our concern be more for the message about Jesus than creativity or ingenuity, even when those can augment the message?

Why might disordered priorities disrupt a church’s unity? Why is disrupted unity in a church so often the result of fleshly divisions? How are fleshly divisions the opposite of what we are called to as believers? (vv2,9)

Observation

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. How do you typically greet people when you see them in person? What about on the phone or in an email? How does your greeting change if you have a close relationship to the person?
3. How does God sanctify us as a church? When are we sanctified? When will that work be completed?
4. How are any gifts of God acquired by God's people? Why is it important to see that gifts are distributed according to His will and not ours?
5. In what ways are we enriched in Jesus Christ?
6. Can you remember times when God was faithful to you, even if you weren't being faithful to Him? How do you know you can count on Him to continue His faithfulness to the end?
7. Can you think of times when the church has helped you and strengthened you in the faith? Perhaps this week you could encourage someone who has been an encouragement to you.
8. How can you make it a priority to thank God for FMFB and pray for any needs you know people have? How would FMFB be different if his people prayed more fervently than we do now?
9. Why does God hate divisions in the church so much? In today's world, what causes divisions in the church most often?
10. If we are "perfectly united in mind and thought," what will be our focus? How do we get to this point?
11. What are we doing as a group to promote unity in the church? In what ways do you think we can better live out this value?
12. How does embracing God's forgiveness in our own lives lead us to show grace and unity toward others?
13. How can we help one another keep Christ central in our personal lives this week? What are some practical ways we can each focus our thoughts and attitudes more on Jesus?

Prayer

- Pray that in response to God's desire for unity among us, that we would be people who desire unity, too. Pray for relationships to be restored and reconciliation to occur with those we've injured. Pray that your group would grow together by encouraging one another to live as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Pray that God will also strengthen our brothers and sisters around the world as they seek to make Christ known to others.

Observations & Prayer Requests

- **MY THOUGHTS** | Record insights and questions from the group experience.

- **MY RESPONSE** | Note specific ways you'll put into practice the truth explored this week.


- **MY PRAYERS** | List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.



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