

1 Corinthians 1.4-17

“The Best of Times and the Worst of Times”

Last Sunday caught up w/Friend from our Church, Both of us been in Homelands
I asked how were Things in their church > Known Biblical, Vibrant, Faithful
NEW Pastor – Problems started, Some by him – Church of 200, now 2 people
IRONY – Church ENDURED, Thrived under Harsh, Oppressive, Dictatorship
Church BROUGHT DOWN by BICKERING and BACK-BITING from WITHIN!



UNLIKE my Homeland & Friends Homeland
CHRISTIAN Faith was BRAND NEW THING
in Ancient City of CORINTH

@ Letter Church in Corinth about 5 years Old

Paul WITH them about 1½ years –about 3 years Passed – writes from EPHESUS

Paul established churches in major cities like Corinth and Ephesus, with one of his aims being for local evangelists to establish a cluster of satellite churches in the region. This was Paul’s strategy for the rapid spread of the gospel. Paul Barnett

1. Raw Corinthians

a. Fighting

v. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

ONLY Mention of WOMAN Named Chloe – Not Clear whether CHRISTIAN

Probably WEALTHY – HER Workers Traveled between Corinth & EPHESUS

Chloe – FUNDED the Several Days journey across the AEGEAN SEA to PAUL

SAD Paul had to HEAR about Church PROBLEMS from Chloe’s FACEBOOK

NOT Drive-by SHOOTING – Willing to GIVE Her NAME – OPEN Charge

No things are BAD when NEIGHBORS are Talking about STINK in the Church

b. Factions

10 verses into this LETTER – So far, EVERY Verse says NAME of Jesus Christ
Everything God HAS Done or WILL Do for this Church is because of JESUS

v. 12 CHURCH had “I” Problem – “I follow Him, Her, That...I, I, I, NOT Christ

v. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.”

NO Evidence – Not even HINT – that These Men PROMOTED Factions

NAMES became PARTIES or GROUPS within Corinthian CHURCH

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

1 Corinthians 11.18,19

When SHAKE the MILK Bucket the CREAM will RISE to the TOP

NOT yet PHYSICAL Split – All there to HEAR this Letter > STRAINED Relat.

1) Safe – Paul: Founder becomes Foundational “I follow Paul”

PERHAPS the OLD Guard – First to BELIEVE when Paul came to PREACH

Follow PAUL like Some Follow Name of Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Wesley

PAUL never SUGGESTED that ANY NAME but Jesus should be on SIGNBoard

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1 Corinthians 15.8,9

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

1 Timothy 2.15

2) Style – Apollos: Eloquence & Entertainment “I follow Apollos”

APOLLOS – Brilliant JEWISH Scholar and ORATOR from Alexandria

TODAY many Churches LONG on STYLE, but SHORT on SUBSTANCE

More CONCERNED about DONATIONS than DOCTRINE

Apollos NOBLE Example of HUMILITY and TEACHABILITY

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately...he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. Acts 18.24-28

Went to LUNCH NOT to EAT the Preacher – but to ENCOURAGE him

Luke does RADICAL thing – Wife’s Name 1st – Better Exegete or Theolog.

With – Under COVERING & FULL Support Husband, P > Apollos Bibl.Theol

Apollos is HUMBLE & READY to Grow > Preaching becomes MORE Powerful

Paul NOT Threatened by SUPERIOR Gifts of APOLLOS

BOTH of them FOUND their IDENTITY in the HAND of the MASTER

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 1 Corinthians 3.5-7

3) Source – Cephas: Right on the Rock “I follow Cephas”

MAYBE Peter and his WIFE passed thru Corinth on M Trip as Apostle to JEWS

Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 1 Corinthians 9.5

NO Other Historical Reference to such a VISIT by Peter

His STORY and his INFLUENCE felt by SOME in Corinthian Church

Why can't Peter be Chief Enchilada here? So Cool! Chief Apostle...he ROCKS!

Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
Matthew 16.17,18

Some BELIEVERS Today CLAIM the ORDINATION of their LEADERS

Can be CLEARLY Traced back to PETER himself > But PATH gets Blurry!

PETER was Part of FOUNDATION of CHRISTIAN CHURCH

But JESUS is the CHIEF CORNERSTONE --- All must LINE UP to HIM

Peter the ROCK is SATANIC when he Stands in way of God's Plan of CROSS

"there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live"
1 Corinthians 8.6

LORD Jesus Christ – RULER over CREATION / REDEEMER of CHURCH

4) Signs – Christ: Gifts not the Giver "I follow Christ"

Of course ALL Corinthians CONFESSED Christ – Some Exclusive CLAIMS

So GIFTED & TALENTED that they were SPECIAL PETS of CHRIST Himself

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?
1 Corinthians 4.7

Personality cults develop and grow into splinter groups that divide local congregations and wider church connections. Quarrels persist and at their root is found the dominant note, 'I', the tell-tale sign of the uncrucified ego. David Jackman

no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.
1 Corinthians 12.3,27

Rise above Your Differences – rise to you Unity in Christ

Don't be Content with Spiritual Gifts – Grow Spiritual Fruits

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

1 Corinthians 10.31-33

2. Redeemed Christians

Asks 3 Questions that TOUCH on very HEART of the GOSPEL – Verse 13

Is Christ divided? / Was Paul crucified for you? / Were you baptized in P's name?

a. Catholic v. 13 Is Christ divided?

v. 10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

10 verses into this LETTER – So far, EVERY Verse says NAME of Jesus Christ

HE is ONE Church Needs to AGREE ON, RECONCILES, RESTORES, UNITES

'appeal' NOT a Military Command – Warm ENCOURAGEMENT

FATHER kindly pleading with MATURE CHILDREN who are RESPONSIBLE

'appeal' of APOSTLE of the LORD JESUS CHRIST – Wise Men will LISTEN

WARNING - 'schism' – RIPPING Apart the FABRIC of the COMMUNITY

Christ has come to KNIT them TOGETHER > SOLIDLY UNITED in HIM

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

1 Corinthians 1.2

CLAIM we're ONE in X – Hard to BELIEVE Today – ONE Church? REALLY??

Over 2 Billion Xtians – Over 40,000 Denominations - DOZENS in this Room

If Don't Like what I Say > You might GO OUT Start ANOTHER Denomination!

You CAN start ANOTHER Denom – but CANNOT Divide TRUE Body of X

I believe in one holy, catholic, (Latin for “universal”) and apostolic church.

Nicene Creed, 325 AD

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 1 Corinthians 12.12

‘Christ is multi-membered yet one’...Paul makes the astounding statement that (somehow) Christ is the church...Christ is active in the church, the local ‘body’ of believers. Just as the church is now ‘in Christ’ in heaven Paul Barnett

When PLANE Load of PENTECOSTALS landed in HEAVEN’S AIRPORT

Very EXCITED to get FIRST Tour Heavenly Home: NEW JERUSALEM

Lots of Shouting – “Glory to God!” “Praise Jesus!” “Hallelujah!”

Came to area with HIGH Walls – Angel told them to BE QUIET!

Shhh!!! LUTHERANS Live in There – Think they’re ONLY One’s Here!

There can be only one Christian family, only one Christian faith, hope and baptism, and only one Christian body, because there is only one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You can no more multiply churches than you can multiply Gods...The unity of the church is as indestructible as the unity of God himself. It is no more possible to split the church than it is possible to split the Godhead.

John Stott

b. Christened v. 13 Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

INWARD Baptism of HOLY SPIRIT Symbolized NOT by Speaking in Tongues

SYMBOL of being Baptized by Holy Spirit is WATER BAPTISM

No such thing as Christian who does NOT HAVE the Holy Spirit

Should be NO Such thing as Christian does Not Confess Faith in Water Baptism

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12.13

GETTING Excited here – HEY! It's Not about BAPTISM, it is Christ & CROSS
 Well, just to be TRANSPARENT – There were a few People there I BAPTIZED
 As ITINERANT APOSTLE – Paul normally Left Church Work to Elders/Pastors
 BEFORE there were any CHRISTIAN CORINTHIAN Elders he got a Few WET
 (NOT going to VENTURE into DEBATE of HOW MUCH Water Paul Used!?)

vs. 14-16 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so
 that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the
 household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

Paul having SENIOR Moment – RAMBLES On a Bit

Can't Quite REMEMBER all those he BAPTIZED in CORINTH

Paul is NOT saying anything NEGATIVE about BAPTISM

Emphasizing there would be NO BAPTISM without PREACHING the Gospel

Paul does NOT think BAPTISM EFFECTS Salvation

Only the PREACHING of the CROSS Does That

PREACHING of the CROSS becomes EFFECTUAL to Save in Power of Spirit

c. Cross-bought v. 13 Was Paul crucified for you?

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

If men are persuaded by eloquence, they are not persuaded by Christ crucified.

C.K. Barrett

Jesus is our PEACE – Broken Down DIVIDING Wall – Jew / Gentile

CROSS – Unites us ONE Another – TOGETHER to God – ONE BODY

Just as JESUS made EVERY EFFORT – Giving VERY LIFE – BUY Church

Now called to make EVERY EFFORT to BUILD & BEAUTIFY His Church

Whenever we rely on the preacher, or he on his communication methods, especially in situations where entertainment dominates, we shall empty the message of the power of the cross.
David Jackman

To know Christ is to know His benefits. Philip Melancton

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6.19,20

3. Risen with Christ

THANKSGIVING – TRADITIONAL part of a 1st C LETTER

Find something to COMMEND in Letter's RECIPIENT – Praise to the gods!

Probably 4th of 13 Letters of Paul we have in Bible

COMMENDS NOT what they ARE but what KNOWS God will MAKE Them

a. Grace

THANKING GOD for the POTENTIAL of the Corinthians – Statement of FAITH

v. 4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus

Live into Your Calling – here's who you Really Are, Be that Person IN Christ

Grace gives us what we do not deserve and mercy shields us from what we do deserve.
David Jackman

...he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
1 Corinthians 15.4-10

Grace NOT INVISIBLE IDEA – Walking & Talking – Seen IN New Life in X

In this ‘thanksgiving’ Paul, as a consummate pastor, has ‘placed a floor under’ his readers’ feet, the sure foundation of God’s faithfulness in calling and keeping them. Certainly he will challenge and rebuke them in what follows. But first let them be assured that they are secure in God’s love and care. Paul Barnett

b. Gifts

vs. 5-7 in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge — even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift,

GIFT is CHARISMA – Corinthians = Charismatic --- ALL Christians should BE FORGIVEN by Blood of CHRIST – FILLED with Spirit of Christ > Given GIFTS

Corinth was CITY that THRIVED on SPEECH & RHETORIC

God gave GREATEST Message and Messengers who DECLARE the Lord Jesus

What is remarkable here is the apostle’s ability to thank God for the very things in the church that, because of the abuses, are also causing him grief...Paul’s gratitude for their giftedness includes the reminder that they still *await* the final glory.
Gordon Fee

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
1 Corinthians 12.4-7

Paul REJOICES in their GIFTS and REMINDS them they Come FROM Christ

Far North SCOTLAND – Small Island just ONE Church – PRESBYTERIAN
Christians from OTHER Denom had to WORSHIP there Too – It Worked OUT
NEW Presby Pastor sent from HQ in EDINBURGH – Learning the church
CRISIS – First death in Community – Asked by Family to lead FUNERAL
Found out PERSON was a BAPTIST – Never done Baptist Funeral Before??
Send a MESSAGE to Presby Denom Office “Can I BURY a BAPTIST?”

Answer from HQ – Of Course! BURY ALL the BAPTISTS you Can!!

v. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

UNITY is NOT OPTION – It is EVIDENCE that we Really ARE in CHRIST

Unless we are working to maintain, defend and develop the unity we already enjoy, and to overcome, demolish, and put behind us the disunity we still find ourselves in, we can scarcely claim to be following Paul’s teaching. N.T. Wright

Big Church in Kampala “Miracle Center” – Pastor invites “Come get Miracle!”

Show you Miracle > Stubborn, Selfish Sinners, Living & Working Love & Unity

That is a Miracle > There is the Living Power & Presence of Jesus Christ

The contemporary church not only experiences quarrels at the local level, but it is deeply fragmented at every other level...all broken off to become their own ‘church of Christ’...This fragmentation is both a shame on our house and a cause for deep repentance. If there is a way forward, it probably lies less in structures and more in our readiness to recapture Paul’s focus here – on the preaching of the cross as the great divine contradiction to our merely human ways of doing things.

Gordon Fee

c. Guiltless

“For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering. Zephaniah 3.9,10

OT Prophets EAGERLY Looked for Day of the LORD

DAY has NOW COME and the LORD of the DAY is JESUS CHRIST

vs. 7,8 as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul sees CHAOS in Corinth w/ EYE of Faith to see them GUILTLESS by Grace

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” 1 Corinthians 2.9

WORTH NOT DETERMINED BY BACKGROUND BUT BY CALLING

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15.5,6

HEAVEN won't Change our COLOR, CULTURE, or COUNTRY

But in ALL our Beautiful DIVERSITY --- UNBROKEN, DEEP UNITY

HUMBLLED and HAPPY in the ETERNAL Presence of our SAVIOR and GOD

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation 7.9,10

1 Corinthians 1.⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹²What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." ¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.