



PROBLEMS IN CORINTH

It has been a little more than twenty years since the resurrection of Jesus, and the churches of Corinth are experiencing problems. Paul has received a report that there are divisions among the brethren, much as the way that some of our congregations may be experiencing divisions today.

Sometimes we believe that our relationships at church will be different, and never have any problems. If only that were the case!

- Families fight, and church families are no exception!
- We fight because we are imperfect people worshipping a perfect God and things can sometimes get a bit messy.

It is important to understand that *“fighting among the brethren”* is not what God wants, and there are steps we can take to become more united with our Brothers and Sisters.

CHURCH UNITY

Paul had been receiving reports that there were divisions among the brethren in Corinth. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote:

- *“For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.” – 1 Corinthians 1:11.*

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians reminded them of three (3) things:

1. ***WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME TEAM*** (as followers of Christ),
2. ***BE OF THE SAME MIND*** (As followers of Christ, they should be of the same mind and in the same judgment),
3. ***JESUS IS OUR LEADER.*** Not Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or anyone else.

Paul had not come to Corinth to make disciples for himself; he had come to ***“preach the gospel”*** (1:17). But this preaching was not according to the world’s wisdom or desires -- it was not filled with philosophical arguments or supernatural acts. Paul’s preaching was the message of the cross -- Jesus Christ crucified on behalf of sinners.

Such a message always has two results, for ultimately all of humanity will end up in one of these two classes.

1. ***The gospel message sounds foolish . . . to those who are on the road to destruction.*** For those who desire worldly wisdom, the message of the cross seems stupid. "Who wants a crucified king?" they might ask.
2. ***But for those who are being saved . . . [the gospel message is] the very power of God.*** Paul wrote to the Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (1:16 NKJV)

KEY VERSE:

- **1 Corinthians 1:18** ***"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*** (NKJV)

The Message of the Cross (18-25)

1. It is the power of God (18)
2. It destroys the wisdom of the world (19-20)
3. It was God's plan to save people apart from their wisdom (21)
4. It is absurd to the Jews and the Greeks (22-23)
5. It is the power of God to His chosen ones (24-25)

God Chose This Way to Eliminate Boasting (26-31)

6. God saved mostly the lowly (26)
7. God used a seemingly foolish way to humble the proud (27-28)
8. God doesn't want self-boasters (29)
9. It is His work, not ours (30)
10. We should boast in the Lord (31)

MIXED REACTIONS

The Good News of Jesus Christ still sounds foolish to many and offensive to others. It is foolishness to any who have chosen another way to face their unavoidable appointment with death and what comes after. It is offensive to those who attempt to maintain a facade of self-righteousness or self-confidence in the face of life's questions. Those who cannot consider their own sinfulness will find that the gospel offers a solution they insist they do not need.

Our society worships power, influence, and wealth. Jesus came as a humble, poor servant, and He offers His kingdom to those who have faith, not to those who work hard or improve themselves. This may look ridiculous to the world, but Christ is our power, the only way we can be saved. Make sure you know Christ personally; then you'll have the greatest wisdom anyone could desire.