

A blessed church

1Co.1:1-9

- Spiritual gifts (4-7)
 - › Enriched in speech and knowledge (5)
 - › Their works have testified of Christ (6)
 - › Paul was grateful they were not lacking in any gift (7)
 - 1Co.14:26: hymn, lesson, revelation, tongue, interpretation
 - › Eager use of their gifts (14:12)
- Blessed with salvation in Christ (8-9)
 - › Guiltless before Christ (8)
 - › Called by God into fellowship with Christ (9)

A troubled church

1Co.1:10-17

- Paul implores: *let there be no divisions* (10)
- Chloe's household reports division
 - › “I am of Paul ... Apollos ... Cephas ... Christ”
 - › The Corinthians appear susceptible to worldly appeals (17)
- Other issues at Corinth
 - › Immoral relationship (5)
 - › Public litigation (6)
 - › Confusion about marriage issues (7)
 - › Indifference toward weaker brethren (8)
 - › Association with idolatry (9-10)
 - › Misuse of the Lord's Supper (11)
 - › Misuse of spiritual gifts (12-14)
 - › Confusion about the resurrection (15)

Diagnosing Carnality at Corinth

1Co.1:18-3:4

Paul's outline

- 1:18-25 The gospel must be viewed through the proper lens
- 1:26-31 Humility is required to accept the gospel
- 2:1-5 Establish your faith in God's power, not in men
- 2:6-16 God's wisdom is revealed for the spiritually minded
- 3:1-4 The diagnosis

1. The gospel must be viewed through the proper lens

1Co.1:18-25

(18) Folly to the perishing but the power of God to the saved

(19-20) The wise & discerning are thwarted by God's power and wisdom

- › A challenge: where are the wise? (Isa.19:11-13)
cf. Sennacherib & Rabshakeh, Isa.36-37
- › See also: Gen.41:8; Dn.2:3-11; 5:8-9

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(21) God cannot be known by worldly wisdom

- › God's wisdom not discoverable by philosophy, science, man-made religion
- › True folly, Eph.4:17-20; Isa.44:14-17; Jer.10:1-5; Psa.115:2-8

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(22-24) A crucified Savior: a stumbling block or folly

- › Not the Messiah the Jews expected
 - Jn.1:11; 6:14-15; Ac.1:6; 1Pet.2:8
 - Jn.1:46; 7:40-43, 52; 6:41-42; Lk.4:22
- › No appeal by worldly standards, Cf. Isa.53:2; 2Ki.5:11-12

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(25) Proper perspective on God's wisdom and power

- › God has no foolishness or weakness
- › Accommodative wording reflects the perspective of a carnal man
 - The world views Christ & His message as foolish
 - A despised, suffering, & dying Savior? >> viewed as weak
- › What many view as foolish and weak is empowered by Almighty God
 - Jos.6; Jud.6-7; 2Ki.5; Lk.5:4-5; Ac.24:5
 - Isa.55:8-9; 2Co.13:4; 12:8-10

2. Humility is required to accept the gospel

1Co.1:26-31

(26-28) God has chosen the lowly

- › Indication that the Corinthian brethren themselves were not of noble rank
- › By worldly rankings, most nobles reject the gospel
 - The foolish to shame the wise
 - The weak to shame the strong
 - The despised to humble the accomplished
- › Evident in the example & teaching of Christ
Mt.2:23; 5:3; 9:11-13; 18:4; 19:16, 21-22f; Lk.15:2
- › See also: Mt.11:25-26; Jam.2:5; Psa.8:2

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1Co.1:26-31

(26-28) God has chosen the lowly

(29-31) Beware of boasting

- › There are no class distinctions, 2Co.11:30; Eph.2:14-22; Jam.2:1-5
- › Self-righteousness and pride, Lk.18:9
- › See also: Jer.9:23-24; 2Co.10:17-18; Gal.6:14

3. Establish your faith in God's power, not in men

1Co.2:1-5

(1) No lofty speech or wisdom

- › Some at Corinth seem to doubt Paul's apostleship & authority in Christ
 - 1Co.9:1-2; 2Co.11:5
- › They appear to be vulnerable to oratory & humanistic philosophy
 - 2Co.11:6-15; 10:10

3. Establish your faith in God's power, not in men

1Co.2:1-5

(1) No lofty speech or wisdom

(2) Christ crucified

- › Death & resurrection – the centerpiece of the gospel
 - Focus of most sermons in Acts
 - Christ's victory over death stabilizes our faith
- Mk.10:42-45; Rev.5:6; Heb.12:1-3;

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(3) Weakness, fear, & trembling

- › Reflects the tenor of the gospel from 1:18-25
- › Reflects a sobering & solemn occasion, cf. Ezk.3:16-21; 2Tim.4:2; Jam.3:1
- › Paul doesn't use a "show of force" to correct misrepresentations about him
 - Ctr. tactics of a carnal ruler, 2Co.10:3-6
 - Shows restraint 2Co.13:10; 11:1,21-29

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1Co.2:1-5

(1) No lofty speech or wisdom

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(3) Weakness, fear, & trembling

(4-5) Relied on God's power

- › Cf. 1:17-18, the gospel /S God's power

- › See also: Rom.1:16; 2Co.12:9-11

4. God's wisdom is revealed for the spiritually minded

1Co.2:6-16

(6-8) God's wisdom was not perceivable by rulers

- › Contrast between heavenly vs. earthly wisdom & power
- › Lk.11:48-51; Ac.7:52-53

4. God's wisdom is revealed for the spiritually minded

1Co.2:6-16

(6-8) God's wisdom was not perceivable by rulers

(9-11) God must reveal His wisdom

- › Cannot be discerned without His revelation
 - Requires training & practice, Heb.5:14
- › Spiritual truth cannot originate from human sources
 - Invalid sources abound, e.g.,
 - Natural instincts
 - Cultural acceptance / majority opinion
 - Historical precedent
 - Authorities, scholars, or religious leaders
 - Illustration: no one can discern your thoughts unless you reveal them

4. God's wisdom is revealed for the spiritually minded

1Co.2:6-16

(6-8) God's wisdom was not perceivable by rulers

(9-11) God must reveal His wisdom

(12-16) Only a spiritual mindset can understand God's wisdom

- › The natural mind vs the spiritual mind
- › God's spirit dwells in us through His revealed word
 - Conduct demonstrates the constant influence of Christ
 - Rom.8:5-11; Jer.31:31-34; Heb.10:15-17; Ezk.36:26-27

5. Paul's diagnosis

1Co.3:1-4

The Corinthians are worldly, not spiritually minded

- › They lack a spiritual mindset, not information (ctr. Act.19:2)
- › Worldly mindset manifested in self-ambitions and pride
 - Rivalries are antithetical to spiritual growth
1Co.3:21; 5:2
1Pet.2:1-2; Eph.4:13; 5:...21
 - Don't walk like the Gentiles
Rom.8:4-8; Eph.4:17-24; Phi.3:12-21
- › Babes in Christ are not ready for solid food
 - It's time to grow up! Heb.5:11-14

Lessons & observations

I. The letter begins with reasoning & fundamentals

- › He does not begin with:
 - A checklist
 - Step 1, Step 2, ... Step 10
- › They need to refine their way of thinking
 - Carnal behavior could indicate fundamental gaps in understanding
 - Cf. The book of Hebrews
 - >> under a high threat of apostasy, *they needed a dense letter on doctrine*
- › Many complain that the Bible isn't written as a checklist
 - A list would be impossible long!
 - Consider: Satan's attacks are more subtle than "technical errors"
 - God isn't interested in obedience that's devoid of understanding

Lessons & observations

II. Beware of carnality & immaturity

- › Look for red flags: e.g.,
 - strife and division, Jam.4:1-4
 - pride, Phi.2:1-4f
 - immorality, Gal.5:19