

1 Corinthians 1:10-2:5

Dealing with Division

Last week we began our study of the book of 1 Corinthians SEEING how this church got started

A) Acts 18 – Paul comes to Corinth – goes to the Synagogue – Preaches Jesus

B) The Jews reject his message – ok – taking it to the Gentiles

C) A guy named Justus who lived next door to the Synagogue – says, Hey Paul – preach at my house

People start getting saved – including a guy named Crispus – ruler of the synagogue – the head elder in the synagogue

A) Crispus starts attending Paul's studies and is either removed from his position or quits

B) As the popularity of Paul mounts so does his anxiety – been down this road before – God starts moving – Jews get upset

1) Riot and beat – imprison Paul – it seems that he is anticipating this again

⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent

C) The Lord speaks to Paul saying – Paul don't be afraid to but speak

1) Paul was considering stopping speaking preaching – The Lord don't be silent

D); ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

1) Many people – that I know – but they don't know me yet.

E) Paul was encouraged by that word from the Lord - ¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The Lord did a great work in Corinth – solid church was formed in a city that was plagued by immorality.

A) Corinth was the most important city of Greece.

B) It was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and was ideally located on the empire's most important travel route from east to west.

1) Fourth in size among the great cities of the Roman Empire

C) You could say it was a strategic place to have a healthy vibrant church of Jesus Christ.

D) After his ministry in Corinth Paul ends up in Ephesus where he planted another church

1) and stayed there 3 years.

While at Ephesus Paul receives a letter from the believers in Corinth

A) Questions about practice and doctrine

B) But those who brought the letter – also told Paul of some real problems going on in the church there.

C) 1 Corinthians is Paul's letter that is meant to answer their questions but to also deal with their problems

1) The first problem he deals with is that of Division

Before we look at this first problem – I want us to notice again Paul description of this Church

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Enriched in everything; Good testimony; Abounding in the gifts of the Holy Spirit; Eagerly waiting for the Lord's return

Sounds like a Great Church – Right?

A) In actuality it was a church with a lot of problems

B) Corinth is a good example of how a church that starts off right can get really twisted when – it loses sight of the main thing

C) Any Church is going to have problems because it is filled with sinful people

D)But Paul's letters to the church in Corinth also illustrates The Lord doesn't discard this church

1)when a church gets off and has problems –it
But He wants to correct and restore that Church

E)Jesus Letters to the Churches in Revelation illustrate the same thing

Problem #1 Division

V.10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all **speaking** the same thing, and that there be no **divisions** among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are **contentions** among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

The Problem in Corinth – they had lost sight of the main thing!

A)They were focused on men instead of on Jesus.

B)Paul – great Apostle and Church planter -

1)His fan club – those who felt more church planting should be happening

C)Apollos – Great intellect and orator

1)Apologist – The make-up of the Bible – importance of understanding Creation

D)Those who were into that – Apollos is our guy – we need more of that emphasis in the Church –

1)Apologetics – what we believe and why

Peter: - Seems every time Peter preaches there is a major outpouring of the Holy Spirit

A)Those – we need more of the Holy Spirit moving around here

B)Then there was the ultra-Spiritual group – we are not into any of those guys –

1)in fact we don't even need the church – Jesus only for us

C)Egocentric – thinking only of self – my likes my preferences my needs

D)Paul responds – Is Christ Divided – Answer is no!

This is actually a common problem in the Church.

A)V.11 Contentions among you – Strife

B)Strife over preferences – Music too loud – not loud enough

C)Our giftings – Gift of Mercy – caring for People – we need more mercy around this place

D)Evangelism – More of an emphasis on Evangelism

But the beauty of the body of Christ is this: Many members many functions many parts

A)Each one functioning in the way that God has uniquely gifted them – makes the body what it is supposed to be

B)But anytime we start to focus on one aspect of the body over another – result – DIVISIONS

C)divisions is "schismata." Although we derive our English word "schism" from this Greek it properly means "tear or rend."

D)Paul's plea is that they stop ripping each other apart, tearing up the body of Christ.

Picture: Picture a bride on her wedding day – Make up is done

A)Dress is on the service is going to start in 30 minutes –

B)That is when two of her brides maids start arguing over who really should be the maid of honor

1)They start pulling on the bride – and they rip her dress in half – shredded –

C)Once order is restored – try and pin the dress back together – but it is a mess – pieces missing –

1)She is walking down the aisle – what would you be thinking ?

Gasps: Some think Poor girl what happened to her ?

A)Others – what is wrong with her – that is the dress she chose – doesn't she have any sense

B)Either way – people are going to look at the Bride in a negative way

1)her wedding will be the talk of the town for years

C)Division tears the body of Christ – We are called the bride of Christ

D)Take the analogy one step further – not wanting to be gross

1)but hopefully – implant an image in your mind – never forget

Same Bride – same Bridesmaids –

A)This time it is not just the dress that gets torn - her limbs – pull her arms off – some of her hair out

B)Here she comes walking down the isle – she is disfigured – gross and ugly. –

1)Nothing attractive about her

C)People flee – the wedding instead of celebrating

As gross as that picture is – I think it is a more accurate picture of what Division does to the bride of Christ –It Disfigures her

A)Instead of being something that people are drawn to – she becomes something that people run from.

B)That is why we are told in the book of Proverbs 6- 1)These are six things that the Lord HATES – 7 that are an ABOMINATION

C)The last thing on that list is – One who sows discord among the brethren –

D)Remember that the next time you are sitting around debating things that bring division and discord to the bride of Christ

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

A)I PLEAD WITH YOU – ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING

B)That is how Divisions get started – someone speaking something that is not right

1)Seed gets planted – someone else waters it – Can you believe Pastor Rob.....I know right?

C)Paul says – I want you to be perfectly joined together

D)Joined together =“A medical phrase used of knitting together bones that have been fractured, 1)or joining together a joint that has been dislocated. The disunion is unnatural and must be cured.”

D)The Beauty of the gospel – sinners saved – people from all backgrounds and races/ social status – ONE IN JESUS

Instead of being torn apart, Paul pleads that they would be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

A)Same Mind – understanding

B)Same Judgment – connected to the word ginoko – Knowledge by experience

C)Thinking rightly leads to speaking rightly – which leads to DOING RIGHTLY

Paul is going to talk about his experience w/ them

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

A)This is sort of funny and sad at the same time: Paul baptized none of you except Crispus, Gaius and oh yea the Stephanos and his household

B)I don't remember anyone else!

1)Henry is hearing this – Paul you baptized me – don't remember – special day – friends and family there – felt something – cake afterwards

C)He doesn't even remember – Reason

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

A)Wisdom is a key word in this first section – appears 16 times in chapters 1-2

B)Wisdom is the right application of Knowledge – Know something –

1)but you are not wise until you do the right thing with the Knowledge

C)Part of the problem with the Corinthians – they were functioning in the fashion of the wisdom of the world

D)In the same way the Grecian Culture was divided over different Philosophies and Philosophers –

1) the church was divided over their leaders

One of the things that Paul wants them to understand is that God's house is not like man's house – God's ways is not like man's ways –

A)God's wisdom is not like man's wisdom

B)How do we stay joined together – Remember the Message – and the method.

B)Message and a Method – that is completely different from the world

1)Message and a Method that unites us – holds us together – can't lose sight of it

C)THE MESSAGE - 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, **but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.**

GOD SENT ME TO PREACH A PRETTY SIMPLE MESSAGE – THE GOSPEL

A)GOSPEL = Goodnews – Jesus left heaven came to this earth..... die for our sins - Three days later – rise again - JUST BELIEVE

B)PAUL SAYS 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.

C)FOOLISH MESSAGE – To those who reject the salvation of the cross, the idea of being saved through the work of a *crucified* man is foolish.

The words message of the cross sound kind of noble and religious to our twentieth-century ears.

A)But in the first century, saying message of the cross was about the same as saying *message of the electric chair* – except worse!

B)What message does a cruel, humiliating, unrelenting instrument of death have?

1)No wonder it is foolishness to those who are perishing!

The great Roman statesman Cicero said: “The cross, it speaks of that which is so shameful, so horrible, it should never be mentioned in polite society.” If we were witnesses to the trial of Jesus – when the crowd was shouting out “Crucify him! Crucify him!” – if we had our wits about us, we would have shouted back, “Don't crucify Him! If you must execute this man, do it honorably. Let him die the death of a dignified man. But don't expose Him to the horror and the humiliation of hanging on a cross.”

C)So the idea that – the founder of Christianity – died a Criminals death Foolish to the Gentiles

And the idea that - I don't have to do anything – God did everything -equally foolish

A)The Greek and Roman culture – always thinking they had to perform to appease the gods

B)You are saying – Man can be made right with God just believing – Foolishness

D)Deeper still – God Created – knowing – Rebel – knowing have to send his Son to redeem and save
1) knowing more would reject than believe – FOOLISH

E)God's wisdom is a wisdom of a different order altogether.

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The message of the gospel is foolishness to the unbeliever – but To us who are being saved it is the power of God:

A)Power to save – power to take away sins – guilt and ultimately transform the one who believes and embraces Jesus

B)Note Being saved - Salvation is, in a sense, progressive.

1)New Creation in Christ – new standing with God –

C)Justified – the miracle of the moment Sanctification is the process of a lifetime.

19 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

In this quotation from Isaiah 29:14,

A) Paul shows that in spiritual matters, God opposes the wisdom of man.

B) He will destroy the wisdom of the wise, not bow down before it.

C) But understand Paul isn't condemning all learning or education;

1) he merely says that by themselves they are useless for obtaining spiritual wisdom. Obtaining Spiritual salvation

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

A) This is such a pertinent idea for our culture Paul asks - "Where are the debaters, scribes, and thinkers?"

B) Where are the psychiatrists and psychologists? "What have they done for your culture?"

C) We look around at all the problems in our culture - no one has any answers

The gospel has every answer.

A) Race issue - All men created in the image of God - to be light bearers of God

B) Sin marred the image - sin wrecked the creation - GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD - every man every race

1) Jesus came to pay the price for our sins - and RESTORE US

C) Man is unified at the cross - Sinners saved by grace

Man is mixed up about his identity -

A) Looking for identity in sexuality - looking for identity in pursuits - careers

B) The Gospel tells us made by God and for God - we find our identity as men and women created by him and for him

C) The problems of the world - get really simple when we see them in light of the gospel

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, (the wisdom of man doesn't help us know God or our purpose at all) it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block perhaps this is better understood as an offense or a scandal. (SUFFERING MESSIAH - dies as criminal) and to the Greeks foolishness,

24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

So the message of Jesus Christ and him Crucified - brings us together into the family of God -

A) Unifies us - sinners saved by Grace

Meet at the flag pole - meet at the Cross

B) We find our beauty and purpose - seeing how untied in the Cross

C) That is the message that answers most the problems that man in his wisdom is trying to figure out.

1) But because man in his wisdom leaves God out - the problems get bigger and bigger and more and more complicated.

D) The message of the gospel has the power to transform lives, cities, and entire cultures

1) But how does the message get out there? Method

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

A) The same is still true. Look around.

B) How many of you are listed in *Who's Who in America?*

1) The only place most of us would find our names would be in *Who's He?!*

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world Of low birth -icks and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the

things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

God's method foolish people to deliver a powerful message – THE REASON

29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—31 that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

Jesus picked 12 guys uneducated -untrained schools - turn the world upside down

A) Took gospel Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world– that is us Vista 2020

B) THAT IS God's method – Not looking for the most talented – the brightest – most scholarly

C) Looking for those who are available and who will be faithful

This doesn't mean that God cannot use smart people? Paul was very intelligent guy

A) Wisdom = knowledge applied –

B) The smart person who realizes in spiritual matters – He is nothing – can do nothing

C) Wisdom is in Jesus

Paul uses himself as an example Chapter 2

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom (Paul didn't come as a philosopher or a salesman; he came as a *witness*) declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

- 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (Paul's confidence wasn't in his speaking ability-but in the power of the gospel to transform lives) 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Paul's own ministry amongst them was a testimony to the power of the message -and method

The Beauty of Pastor Chuck – so smart – He could talk with anyone really about anything.

A) He had studied to be a doctor – Human anatomy - Smart guy – Learned in History, Philosophy, astronomy, entomology (bugs)

B) You name it – he was versed in it – but never flaunted –

1) Instead he Taught on such a simple level – connected with regular people.

C) But the message of the gospel was so powerful – it impacted an entire generation and helped start a Revival

1) Jesus people movement

Wrap this up:

A) Avoid Divisions – tearing apart the bride of Jesus

B) Keep the main thing the main thing – Not politics – no social issues

C) The Gospel – Who Jesus is – what He has done – who we are in Him

1) What he wants to do in us and through us

D) What he is going to do when he returns

If we keep that focus – we will be OK –

A) IF we remember that – God works through – through normal people like us –

B) We will be each others cheerleaders rather than seeking to divide over – gifts and preferences

C) We will be an attractive – bride and wonder to the world

D) We will have a contagious affect in our answers the questions in the world today –

E) Power to transform lives – cities and entire cultures – AMEN