



1 Corinthians
10-13
New International Version

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,^[a] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. ¹¹ My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas^[b]"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

3:5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹ For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

"Christians are made, not born." Tertullian



Sermon Notes

A CHURCH FOR ALL AGES

Division comes from **COMPETITION**

PAUL is the established, the founder.

APOLLOS is the new young dynamic leader.

CEPHAS is the megachurch, super-star.

ASSIGNMENT: We are co-workers in God's Service

Builders of the House, Field hands of the Harvest, Contributors in the Body

INTERRELATED: We require community

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality." Martin Luther King, Jr.

FOUNDATION: We are rooted in Christ

Like branches on a tree, we all grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one.

FOCUS: Becoming a Church for all Ages!

Look back and **THANK** God

Look forward and **TRUST** God

Look around and **SERVE** God

Look within and **FIND** God.

Called in Christ

The church in Corinth was far from perfect. Paul had heard a long list of complaints about this eager but misguided flock. As he attempted some long-distance pastoring, where would he begin? Paul's starting point is very relevant for problem groups and individuals today.

Discovering the Word, Read 1 Corinthians 1

Before discussing the problems in Corinth, Paul affirms his readers (vv. 1-9). Why is he thankful for them?

Why do you think cliques had formed around Paul, Apollos and Cephas (v. 12)?

How did Paul conduct himself in Corinth to avoid, if possible, the problem of a personality cult (vv. 14-17)?

The Corinthians boasted in worldly wisdom and those who taught it. How does the message of the cross destroy all such boasting (vv. 18-25)?

The Corinthians also felt intellectually and spiritually superior to others. What had they forgotten about their past and the reason God chose them (vv. 26-29)?

What does it mean to "boast in the Lord" (vv. 30-31)?

Applying the Word

As you reflect on your own past, what reasons do you have for being humble rather than proud?

How can genuine humility promote unity in your church or fellowship?

Responding in Prayer

Take time to thank the Lord for all he has done for you.

The Intimacy of the Table

The table is one of the most intimate places in our lives. It is there that we give ourselves to one another. When we say, "Take some more, let me serve you another plate, let me pour you another glass, don't be shy, enjoy it," we say a lot more than our words express. We invite our friends to become part of our lives. We want them to be nurtured by the same food and drink that nurture us. We desire communion. That is why a refusal to eat and drink what a host offers is so offensive. It feels like a rejection of an invitation to intimacy.

Strange as it may sound, the table is the place where we want to become food for one another. Every breakfast, lunch, or dinner can become a time of growing communion with one another.

You may have heard of product placement in movies. Movies actually get paid to insert the names of products into the story somehow. I just read this story this week. A company actually offered pastors the chance to win \$1,000 and a free trip to London if the pastor would send proof that they mentioned a particular movie in their sermon. I won't tell you what the movie was, but it's a good movie. It's connected to faith issues, but we live in such a commercially driven society that somebody is actually offering to pay pastors to do product placement in sermons! A perfect example of how consumed we are with our own blessings! That's not God's plan. God's plan is to give you a blessing so you can *be* a blessing.

See, the reason blessing is so central in the Bible is it's the answer to an ultimate, inevitable human question. The question is this: What is the good life? Who has the good life? Is it people with money, people with looks, people with health? *Blessing* is the Bible's answer to these questions. Blessing is different than success because it starts with God. It doesn't start with me. It's grace. It's different than success because it's given so I can bless the world. It's not about showing how blessed I am.

"Count your blessings / Name them one by one / and it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

May the Lord God Almighty, in his mercy obliterate every word, statement, experience, and invisible barrier you may have constructed that is keeping his blessing from reaching your heart. May the unrelenting love of God pursue you and surprise you with his compassion for you. May the forgiveness of Jesus Christ restore and renew your hearts. May the living waters of the Holy Spirit fill you and flow through you to a struggling and broken world. May God's peace rest upon you, and may the Lord fill you with his joy. May his joy become your strength. In the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.