**1 Corinthians—Rebooting our Christian Walk**

**Purpose:** To identify problems in the church, offer solutions, and teach believers how to live for Christ in a corrupt society. Unity, Putting Others First, Right Living, and the Resurrection were of top concern.

**Historical:** Paul brought the Good News about Jesus to Macedonia (northern Greece) but then had to flee to Achaia (southern Greece) for his safety. He visited Corinth, the wealthiest city in Greece and a cosmopolitan commercial center. The city was seeped in sexual immorality and pride with a focus on man's wisdom. Many came to believe in Christ, and Paul stayed a year and a half to teach and set up the church (Acts 18). The church was made up of a few Jews and predominately Gentil converts who were not familiar with God's laws.

Church, *Ecclesia* in Greek means "called out." And Paul calls them out to be set apart for God's purposes. Five years after being founded, the church was divided and adopted Corinth's morally corrupt culture. They were in cliques, suing each other, getting drunk at communion, abusing the gifts of the Spirit, sexually immoral, and had questions about lifestyle liberties, spiritual gifts, and managing money. Paul addresses critical areas of life and faith that speak to us today: the resurrection of first importance, man's wisdom, division and the need for unity, the role of the church, lifestyle choices, sexual immorality, marriage and singleness, rules for harmony, freedom in Christ, Gifts of the Spirit, the indispensableness of love and putting others first.

**Unity (the key message)**

*"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Cor 1:10).* Focus on Jesus and His purposes and don't let petty differences divide.

Don't be a person who is divisive or stirs up conflict. Proverbs 6: 16 -19—"There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a **person who stirs up conflict in the community."**

**Divisions in the Church**

**Divided Over Leaders**

Personality worship. People favored and followed specific leaders, quarreling and taking pride in their preferences. Resist man worship, or you'll stay a baby or, at best, an adolescent. People are fallible, and we will never become mature if we try to please men or look to them for answers. Many people have a crisis of faith when they look to a failed church leader for their spiritual needs.

How do we guard against this? Work out Spiritually. Instead of always looking to be fed, we become spiritually mature by reading the scriptures for ourselves—training ourselves in God's Word. See Hebrews 5: 11-14. We need to get on solid food. Don't get caught up in false pride or misplaced devotion. Jesus is the central message.

**God's Wisdom vs. Man's Wisdom**

“Faith must not rest on human wisdom but on God's Power” (1 Cor 2:5).God's empowering grace is Christ alone and Him crucified. "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's Power" (1 Corinthians 2:4).

We have a need to be respected, to appear intelligent, and to convince using intellect and reason, but it is God who opens people's minds and hearts to Him. (Isaiah 55:9) Most of the Corinth church were Gentiles who grew up in Greece, where Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates came from, and the importance of man's wisdom was paramount. "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith." (Eph 2:8). Faith is not an intelligent argument based on man's understanding. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

**Man's wisdom is foolishness—**

The world, through their wisdom, did not know Him. "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” (1 Cor 1:18). God knows better; faith requires humility. The most incredible ignorance is to think you don't need God. Albert Einstein asked his students these questions. How much human knowledge do you think you have cumulatively? We believe 5%. Don't you think God could be revealed in the 95% you don't know? The wisdom of the age, the rulers of this age, are coming to nothing (1 Cor 2:7). “Greeks want wisdom, and Jews want miracles" (1 Cor 1:22). The Spirit reveals God's wisdom. "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31). "The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of Power" (1 Cor 4:20).

**Dealing with Disorder in the Church**

God is **a God of order** in the church and our personal lives.

**Legal Matters** –Honor God with how we handle our disputes.

**Flagrant Disobedience—**The church must discipline flagrant sin among its members. Leaving it undisciplined will have a dangerous influence on other believers. Not dealing with sin is the same as condoning it. The church's role should be to help, not hurt offenders motivating them to repent and return to the fellowship of the church and right relationship with God. The beauty of being in God's Word is that it does the convicting.

**God Defines Right and Wrong**

The Bible is our guidebook. It is the ordained Word of God. The Creator, not the created, determines what is right and wrong—this liberates us because there is no confusion. Our society, just as in Corinth, is confused when moral standards are missing. We don't get to pick and choose what we do and don't believe in.

**Sexually Immorality**

No one should underestimate the power of sexual immorality. It has devastated countless lives, families, churches, and communities. God does not condone sex outside of marriage.

**Singleness, Marriage, Sex and Divorce, Change of Status (Chpt 7)**

*For more info: Pastor Gary Hamrick at Cornerstone Church*

**Christian Freedom (Faith is also about considering others)**

We are no longer living under the law but under grace. Our freedom should be less important to us than strengthening the faith of a brother or a sister in Christ. Corinth was divided about this too.

Beware of Spiritual Arrogance "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor 8:1).

**Food Sacrificed to Idols**

Although Christ set us free from dietary and ceremonial restrictions of the past, many did not have this understanding, so it became a stumbling block to their Faith. "Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Cor 8:9). This is true today with such hot topics as alcohol, music, movies, tv, and dress.

**Be others centered. Don't live in the extremes of legalism or freedom to do whatever you want without considering others.**

Paul takes the temperature of the room. He meets people where they are and makes the Gospel relatable through relationships, and we are wise to follow his example.

**Learn from the Israelites**

Idolatry (anything you value more than Christ).

Sexual Immorality (Because of sexual relations with Moabite women, 23,000 died).

Do not test the Lord (were killed by snakes).

Do not grumble and complain (were killed by the destroying angel).

**The Lord's Supper**

**"**The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup" (1 Cor 11: 23-28).

**Spiritual Gifts**

Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of healing, Miraculous powers, Prophesy, distinguishing between spirits, Speaking in Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues. Other Gifts: Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Helps, Administration, Serving, Encouraging, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Evangelism, Pastor/Shepherd, Hospitality, and Intercession. Properly used spiritual gifts are not self-serving but serve the whole body, and each is useless if not administrated with love. The Church in Corinth was misusing its spiritual gifts.

**Love, the Most Excellent Way**

Love is our mark of distinction as Christians. It makes our actions and gifts useful. Jesus raised the standard of love in the greatest commandment, "love as I have loved you." (John 13:34). Paul uses this chapter to show the Corinthians how to live out their Faith, use their gifts, and move toward unity.

**The Resurrection is Fundamental**

*"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day"* (1 Cor 15:4). The resurrection is central to Christianity, historically factual and unique to our faith.

The Bible's legitimacy. The Bible has the most surviving copies of any ancient document, with approximately 24,000 manuscripts from all over the ancient world, some as early as the second century. No archaeological finds have ever disproved a single Biblical event, civilization, or individual. On the contrary, there are numerous incidents where archaeology has upheld the facts recorded in Scripture and disproved the skepticism of academics. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s allowed scholars to compare Old Testament manuscripts separated by hundreds of years and found no substantial differences.

The Old Testament testifies to the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here are a few: Isaiah 53:5-6, Zechariah 13:7, Psalm 16:10. All the festivals also point to Christ.

1. The Passover (Blood on the door posts to have death Passover, and Jesus, the great lamb, dies, so death passes over us and brings eternal life. Jesus died on Passover.
2. Unleaven bread – Jesus without sin.
3. First fruits —Giving thanks for the first fruits of the harvest, the first of many to follow. Jesus was the first fruit, and our resurrection follows.
4. Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Passover when the Holy Spirit came, and many were saved (Acts 2).
5. Trumpets – the dead in Christ shall rise.
6. Day of Atonement – Jesus was the scapegoat.
7. Feast of Tabernacles or Booths – celebrates His presence as He tabernacles (dwells) with us. Jesus is Emmanuel, meaning "God is with us."

**Group Questions from 1 Corinthians:**

1. What spoke most to you today? Is there an area of our life that the Scriptures highlighted?
2. In what ways do you promote unity, and in what ways do you contribute to division?
3. How can you practice the "most excellent way" of love in dealing with difficult people or challenging situations?
4. How can we make Christ's death and resurrection more central to our Faith?
5. In what ways are you too legalistic? And in what ways are you exercising your freedom too much?
6. What gets in your way of becoming more like Jesus?
7. In what ways are you Spiritually Arrogant?