



AN IMPERFECT LOCAL CHURCH
A Study in 1 Corinthians
CLASS – Lesson 2

GENERAL OUTLINE

1 Corinthians 1:1-17, Introduction

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1 Corinthians 1:1-17, Introduction

1-3, Greeting

4-9, Thanksgiving

10-17, The problem of division

The Corinthian church was plagued by a variety of problems that had a direct practical impact on the congregation. For example, they tolerated immorality among the members of the congregation, they sued each other in civil courts, and they didn't even observe the Lord's Supper as a single group or spiritual family.

As is often the case, all of these practical problems had doctrinal roots. The visible cause of congregational problems may be practical or a matter of conflicting personalities, but the real problems are doctrinal and spiritual. In this opening section, Paul calls for unity in the congregation as an expression of the great doctrines associated with the fact that we are all saved by the crucified Christ.

THEME VERSE OF THE LETTER: 1 Corinthians 1:10

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.

DISCUSSION

1 Cor 1:1-3, Greeting

- 1. Who was Sosthenes? What do we know from him in Scripture? Why might Paul have seen fit to mention him at this point in the letter?**

2. What four attributes of the Corinthian Christians does Paul list in his greeting? Are they unique to the Corinthians?

Note: "Every place" or "everywhere" probably refers to every meeting place of Christians or to "every place where Christians were found" rather than every town in the empire.

3. How might these attributes relate directly, or serve as an introduction, to Paul's attempt to correct division in the church?
4. How many times are God and Christ cited in the greeting? What importance might this have considering the situation in Corinth and Paul's message?

1 Cor 1:4-9, Thanksgiving

5. For what was Paul thankful regarding the Corinthians?
6. What was the impact of God's grace? Identify these as 3 pairs of statements, each including a form of cause and effect relationship.

Note: Verse 9 has another cause and effect statement.

Cause: (9) God is faithful,

Effect: by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. We sometimes use the word "fellowship" almost synonymously with "denomination" or "religious group," as in the phrase, "Members of certain fellowships believe differently." What was Paul's meaning for fellowship in v. 9? What are the implications (especially in the Corinthian church context) for Christians?

1 Cor 1:10-17, The problem of division

Verse 10, the “theme verse”, is the first verse of the main body of the letter after the standard greeting and thanksgiving sections. He pleads for one thing, though he states it 3 different ways.

8. What are those three versions of Paul’s goal?

9. Is Paul’s desire possible?

10. Paul is acting on the basis of what someone had told him, rather than firsthand observation. How does Paul avoid an accusation of acting on hearsay?

11. In what ways was the Corinthian congregation divided, and in what way(s) might they have appeared to be united?

12. How might their quarreling over favorite preachers have been linked to their baptism?

13. Why would Paul object to Christians saying, “We are of Christ”?

14. How do Paul’s claims in verse 17 serve to reduce his “prestige” among those who might be tempted to say, “I am of Paul”?

**15. If Paul wasn't sent to baptize, does that mean that baptism isn't important to salvation?
What is the subject of this passage (i.e., the context) that helps us understand Paul's real meaning?**

16. Who were Crispus, Gaius and Stephanus?