

This past Wednesday, we left off with the Apostle Paul writing to the church at Corinth about the first of their sin problems; there were contentions in the church:

Nothing will destroy a church faster than pride in her people. At Corinth, there were factions and divisions in the church; each faction boldly asserting its allegiance to a different preacher.

I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ

Paul addressed their sin problem again in (C3); and then again in (C11):

1 Corinthians 3:1-7, 11:18

Back to (1:13): Is Christ divided? Is the body of Christ to be made up of several groups or factions of believers within the larger gathering and assembly; should we, as a church be a diverse group of believers; all very different one from another, everyone doing their own thing and speaking differently one from another?

Or, should there be a oneness of mind and spirit within the church and a unity in the body of Christ? I think we know the answer:

1 Corinthians 1:10 (READ)

There should be good strife in our gathering; Philippians 1:27, we should be striving together for the faith of the gospel, perfectly joined together; no broken bones; (no breaks or schisms in the body); clothed with the garments of salvation; no splits or tears in that perfect garment:

John 19:23-24, 36

And then, take from (V12-16) that we are NOT to ATTACH ourselves and our faith to mortal men; yes, we thank God for godly men, pastors, & preachers of the Word who are to be examples to their flocks, but we are NOT to be implicit followers of mortal men, but of Christ!

Oftentimes, you can detect this problem when a notable preacher has stepped down or left a church for some reason or another; (or died); some of the believers, who were under THEM will refuse to sit under any other preacher! That's like saying: *I am of my preacher rather than of Christ*

Was your preacher crucified for you? Did he die for your sins? Were you baptized in your preachers' name?

Too many believers major on their preacher: I love his style, boldness, delivery, elegance of speaking; beloved, we are to be FIXED on the message of Christ, NOT ON THE MOUTHPIECE! Too many love their preacher more than they love Christ!

Dangerous! *1 Corinthians 4:6*

The greatest and most notable preachers in the world are nothing more than the servants of Christ; planters and waterers in God's field! Unless God sends His power to give increase (unless God causes that seed to take root and grow), it will lie lifeless in the earth. *(3:6)*

For the rest of this message you're going to hear me use gospel or

gospel message or the preaching of the gospel!

In (V17) Paul says, Christ sent me to preach the gospel, meaning to bring good news or to announce and proclaim glad tidings from the Messiah.

#2097: euangelizo. This morning, you will also hear the preaching of the cross and Christ crucified!

- . The gospel is the message of Christ, and it is to be our message? So, what is the gospel? First, the bad news, (the ground must be prepared); then the good news, the good seed must be planted! Explain the gospel!

1 Corinthians 1:17: Paul: What did Christ send me to do?

This is what every preacher ought to be doing on this Lord's Day, and on every other day of opportunity to speak or preach publicly! The GOSPEL is to be his message! His calling is to preach the message of the King, and to point both saints and sinners to the crucified and risen Christ.

Paul told the Corinthians, this is what the Lord sent me to your city to do, and this is what I am determined to do:

1 Corinthians 2:2: For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified

(V17b): I came to preach the gospel: but NOT with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect

Remember where Paul is preaching; Greece; before this he was at Athens where he preached on Mars Hill; remember that the Greeks put a high value on philosophy, speculation, and eloquence of speech. Acts 17:16-23

But Paul said, I didn't come to speculate and debate with you about all of the gods; but I was sent to you by God to testify and be a witness of the truth that there is only One True and Living God; and the only way TO KNOW the true and living God is through His Son Jesus Christ! That is my message!

Paul goes further to the point: To disguise or dress up the gospel with human wisdom; meaning to preach it using enticing and fancy words of man's wisdom, rather than preaching it plainly and in simplicity; THAT is what will empty the gospel message of its power; or as written in (V17), the cross of Christ will be made of none effect. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Paul determination OUGHT to be our determination as well!

But all too often, when churches in our day aren't seeing the RESULTS that they want to see (in conversions or in the church growing in numbers); they decide that they need to HELP God, (and so they take matters into their own hands) by changing the gospel message rather than looking to God to give the increase!

And so, they make the gospel sound more attractive to the worldly mind; you know; they make it less offensive. We don't want people to FEEL uncomfortable! So, they make it enticing to the unregenerate mind; they take out biblical language like repentance from sin, turn from your wicked ways to God; they stop preaching the cross and other essential truths like the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against sinners, and the great danger of eternal damnation to unbelieving sinners!

Beloved, let us never forget that God is the One who saves sinners, and the means that He uses to save them is the plain preaching of the gospel! But when we begin to use a message of our own making (because we are not satisfied with the results of the gospel), we will end up with converts who do not truly believe on Christ, and the church will be filled with disciples of its own making.

Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Ephesians 1:12-14

(V18): The preaching of the cross is viewed as foolishness to the perishing and unsaved; but to us who are saved; it is the power of God.

The preaching of the cross is the message of salvation! It is the message through which the power of God is communicated to lost sinners! There will be no genuine salvation apart from the gospel message!

Roman 1:14-17, John 1:12-13, Jeremiah 23:29

And yet, so many pastors and churches have cast aside the Word of God and used worldly marketing techniques to build their churches. **Their churches**; is the correct term, for if they do not preach the Word of God, they are NOT churches of the Lord Jesus Christ!

(V19) READ: For it is written: And then: Isaiah 29:14
God says: I will destroy the wisdom of the carnally wise,
and bring to nothing, the understanding of the prudent or
the learned by what they call the foolishness of
preaching the gospel.

There were many in Paul's time who thought themselves wiser than God; (especially in Corinth) who thought preachers of the gospel to be fools, and the message of the cross to be foolishness! There were also the arrogant self-righteous scribes and Pharisees of Jesus day, who resisted every Word of the Lord Jesus Christ, their long-awaited Messiah. Matthew 11:25-27

Think about it; even from Paul's time, WORLDLY EDUCATION, WORLDLY WISDOM, and EARTHLY LEARNING have consistently been touted to be the way of salvation for depraved and sinful humanity in the world:

The world just needs to be educated; THEN there won't be all of this crime, hate, war, chaos, and discord between people and nations.

This GOSPEL which you preach is foolishness! Your prayers are worthless; they do nothing! Who do you people think you are in your little church there in south Louisiana on Highway 42? If your message was the right message, there would be MORE people flocking to your gathering! You're nothing; irrelevant and insignificant!

The sad thing about what the world says is; they're right if we are not faithful witnesses of the gospel of Christ; they're right if we're not effectually and fervently praying that God would save sinners; the world is right if we are in the world and also of the world!

Later in this chapter, and as we will see, God says, I will save sinners by using that which the world calls

foolishness!

What do you believe this morning; SPECIFICALLY about Christ?

Is He your Lord and Saviour? Do you put all of your faith and trust in His life and death on the cross? Or is your trust that you're ok with God in something or someone else other than Christ?

Do you believe the preaching of the cross? Do you believe that He suffered and died for YOUR sins? If you do, but you've never confessed that publicly; that is what happens when God saves every sinner.

Romans 10:9-13, Matthew 10:32-33
