

Approximately 35 minutes Expository



“The Cross Changes Everything”

1 Corinthians Chapter 1 :


Opening Prayer:

Father God, we come before You in the powerful name of Jesus. We ask that Your Holy Spirit would open our hearts and minds to Your Word. Speak to us clearly. Correct us where we need correction. Encourage us where we need encouragement. Draw us closer to Jesus. Let the message of the cross come alive in our hearts today. And if anyone does not yet know You, may today be the day of salvation. We love You, Lord. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Historical Setting:

The city of Corinth in the first century was one of the most influential cities in the Roman Empire.

- It was wealthy.
- It was calculated.
- It was intelligent.
- It was immoral.

Corinth sat on a major trade route between east and west. Merchants passed through daily. Philosophers debated in public squares. Athletes competed in the Isthmian  **ISS-mee-un** Games. The city was proud, educated, and self-confident.

But it was also known for extreme immorality. Temple prostitution was common. Pagan worship dominated the culture. The phrase “to live like a Corinthian” meant to live in moral corruption.

Into that culture came the Apostle Paul during his second missionary journey (Acts 18). He preached not philosophy, not self-help, not politics but **Christ crucified**.

- Many believed.
- A church was born.

But after Paul left, problems crept in. Divisions formed. Pride surfaced. People began choosing favorite teachers and boasting in human wisdom. So Paul writes this letter to bring correction and he begins with the foundation: **the cross of Jesus Christ**.

1. A Church Called to Be Holy (1Corinthians 1:1-9)



(NIV)

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,



SAHS-thuh-nee² To the church of

God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— ⁶ God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. ⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us see what is going on here...

Paul opens:

“To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people...” (v.2)

Notice something powerful.

- These believers were struggling.
- They had issues.
- They were immature.

! YetPaul calls them:

- . Sanctified
- . Called
- . Holy

 Why?

Because their identity was not rooted in performance it was rooted in **Jesus**.

Brothers and Sisters, this is important. You may be growing. You may be imperfect. But

if you belong to Christ, you are set apart.

👉 You are His.

Paul continues:

“He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (v.8)

The confidence of the believer is not in self-effort. It is in the **faithfulness of God**.

Verse 9 says:

“God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (v.9)


The Christian life is fellowship with Jesus.

- Not religion.
- Not ritual.
- 👉 Relationship.

2. The Danger of Division (1 Corinthians 1:10-17):

1 Corinthians 1:10-17 ¹⁰ **I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, 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"; still another, "I follow Christ."**

¹³ **Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?** ¹⁴ **I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius,** ¹⁵ **so no one can say that you**

were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas;  STEFF-uh-nus beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Now Paul moves quickly into correction:

“I appeal to you... that all of you agree with one another... and that there be no divisions among you.” (v.10)

Reports had reached Paul that the church was splitting into factions:

- “I follow Paul.”
- “I follow Apollos.”
- “I follow Cephas.”
- “I follow Christ.”

They were forming **personality cults**.

💡 Sound familiar? 😬 I am pre tribulation... I am post tribulation...

👉 Even today, Christians can divide over:

- . Favorite preachers
- . Church styles
- . Minor doctrines
- . Personal preferences

👉 Paul asks the piercing question:

“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” (v.13)

! At the cross, no one stands above anyone else.

We all come the same way....through Jesus Christ crucified.

👉 That is why the church must stay united around one center: Jesus Christ and His cross.


Verse 17 is the turning point:

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” (v.17)



Paul would not reshape the gospel just to impress people who pride themselves on human wisdom.

 Why?

Because the power is not in polished words or clever delivery.

 The **power** is in the **cross of Jesus Christ**.

3. The Message of the Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18-25):

  (NIV) **1 Corinthians 1:18-25** 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. ¹⁹ For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the

weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

! This is the heart of the chapter.

“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.” (v.18)

! There are only two categories:

- . Perishing
- . Being saved

To the world, the cross seems foolish:

- . A crucified Savior?
- . Salvation through sacrifice?
- . **Grace** instead of **earning**?

It offends human pride.

Verse 22-23 says:

“Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.” (vv.22-23)

- The Jews wanted miraculous power.
- The Greeks wanted philosophical intelligence.

! Paul gave them neither.

👉 He gave them Jesus.

And look at verse 25:

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.” (v.25)

- The cross looked like weakness but it **crushed sin**.
- It looked like defeat but it **conquered death**.
- It looked like shame but it **secured eternal glory**.

👉 Brothers and Sisters, never move beyond the cross. Everything flows from it.

4. Who God Chooses (1 Corinthians 1:26-31):

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 ²⁶ **Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.** ²⁷ **But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.** ²⁸ **God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,** ²⁹ **so that no one may boast before him.** ³⁰ **It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.** ³¹ **Therefore, as it is written:**

“Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Paul now reminds them of who they were:

“....Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.” (v.26)

! God didn't choose them because they were impressive.

Verse 27:

“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.” (v.27)

 **Why?**

Look at Verse 29:

“So that no one may boast before him.”

(v.29)

Salvation removes boasting.

We don't boast in:

- . Education
- . Wealth
- . Status
- . Ministry success



Verse 30 gives the beautiful truth:

“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.” (v.30)



Jesus is:

- . Our righteousness
- . Our holiness
- . Our redemption

Super cool Verse 31:

“Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

👉 If you're going to brag, **brag on Jesus!!!**

Application for Today:

In a culture like Corinth ... and like ours ... the church **must guard** against:

1. Division
2. Pride
3. Replacing the cross with cleverness

The **world** says:

- . Promote yourself.
- . Impress people.
- . Build your brand.

👉 The **gospel** says:

- . Deny yourself.
- . Lift up Christ.

- . Boast in the Lord.

The power of the church is not charisma.

- It is not personality.
- It is not programs.

  It is the cross....

Invitation to Be Born Again:

Maybe someone listening today feels like Corinth messy, broken, confused.

The message of the cross is for you.

- You cannot save yourself.
- You cannot clean yourself up enough.
- You cannot be wise enough.
- Jesus died for your sins.
- He rose from the dead.
- He offers forgiveness **freely**.
- God made it so easy for us!!!

The Bible says:

“For the message of the cross... is the power of God.” (v.18)

If you are still without Christ and headed toward destruction, you can be saved today....right now.... This very moment....

! 💡 The cross that looks foolish to the world **is the doorway to eternal life.**

👉 If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus, today is your day.

- Repent of your sin.
- Believe in Jesus.
- Confess Him as Lord.
- Trust in His finished work.

👉 You don't need to understand everything.

You just need to trust Him....

- He will forgive you.
- He will change you.
- He will make you new.



(NIV)

Romans 10:9 ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Let us pray right where you are.....

“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner.... I cannot save myself.... I believe You died for my sins and rose again.... Please forgive me, cleanse me, and give me new life.... I turn from my sin and place my trust in You alone.... Be my Savior and my Lord.... In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

👉 It is really that easy... God made it easy for all of us...

Let’s Pray.....

Closing Prayer:

**Father God, thank You for the cross.
Thank You that when we were weak, You
were strong. When we were foolish, You
were wise. When we were lost, You
rescued us.**

**Keep us from pride. Keep us from
division. Keep us centered on Jesus
Christ and Him crucified.**

**If anyone today is surrendering their life
to You, seal that decision by Your Holy
Spirit. Give them assurance of salvation.
Fill them with Your peace and joy.**

**May we be a people who boast only in
the Lord.**

**We love You. We honor You.
In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.**

