

MEMORY VERSE: “Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

Acts 18:9, 10, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

“This week we will take a look at 1 Corinthians 1–4, where the apostle Paul deals with the problem of quarrels in the church and how to overcome them, namely, through unity in Christ.” Qtly, Sab, par 3

1. We are of Christ (Mon)

- The foundation of Christian faith is Christ Himself.
 - Paul opens this letter to the Corinthians by invoking the name of Jesus Christ 9 times in the first 9 verses!
 - In fact, Paul’s letters to the Corinthians refer to Christ by name some 113 times (63 in 1 Corinthians and 50 in 2 Corinthians)!
 - The centrality of Christ is the predicate of his appeal and central thesis of the book: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (1 Cor. 1:10).
- Paul later reiterates this connection between Christ and His people, describing the church as the temple of God built on Christ (1 Cor. 3:9-11; 16, 17).

2. Christ is not divided (Sun, Tue, Wed)

- The Corinthian believers had begun to identify themselves with various spiritual leaders, namely Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. (see 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-8, 21-23)
 - **Paul** was their spiritual “father” (1 Cor. 4:15).
 - **Apollos**... “must have been a good speaker and preacher who impressed his audiences with his rhetoric and his enthusiasm for preaching Jesus (Acts 18:25). Apollos had helped build up the church in Corinth while Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19:1, 2).” Qtly, Teacher’s Ed., p. 41
 - **Cephas (Peter)**... “was the first of the apostles to minister to non-Jews (Acts 10) and, because of his leadership role among the apostles, seemed to be regarded by many as the main Christian leader or figurehead of the movement.” Ibid.

- These leaders did not encourage such divided loyalties.
 - They were united in their message and mission, though they had their own personalities, strengths, and even shortcomings (see 1 Cor. 3:5-8).
 - “Rather than engaging in the debate about who was more theologically sound or a more worthy influencer, Paul highlights every member’s need to keep Christ at the center of his or her spiritual life and not let any leader, no matter how eloquent or good, take the place that belongs to Christ.” Qttly, Teacher’s Ed., p. 41

There can be no stronger evidence in churches that the truths of the Bible have not sanctified the receivers than their attachment to some favorite minister, and their unwillingness to accept and be profited by the labors of some other teacher who is sent to them in the providence of God. 6BC 1086.3

3. True wisdom comes from God (Wed)

- 1 Corinthians 2 contrasts the arrogant, divisive “wisdom of men” with the humble, self-sacrificing “wisdom of God.”
 - Thus, it logically follows that division in the church is certain evidence spiritual immaturity and carnal thinking (1 Cor: 3:1-4; Heb. 5:12-14).
 - Paul’s solution is simple: avoid the wisdom of the world (which would tend to divide the church) and instead be united in the “mind of Christ” (see 1 Cor. 2:14-16; Phil. 2:5-11).

We have no time now to cultivate suspicion one of another. Let us draw together and love as brethren, guarding against judging, criticizing and condemning each other. All this brings confusion and every evil work. Christians should conform their lives to the life of Jesus Christ and not fashion their characters after the model of their former education in their ignorance. To fulfill Christian obligations is to act like Christ, to follow the example of Christ, to have the mind of Christ. Then there will be no variance, but only unity and love. 9LtMs, Ms 50, 1894, par 25

CONCLUSION

The oneness and unity of God’s truth-believing remnant people carries powerful conviction to the world that they have the truth, and are the peculiar, chosen people of God. This oneness and unity disconcerts the enemy, and he is determined that it shall not exist. The present truth, believed in the heart and exemplified in the life, makes God’s people one, and gives them a powerful influence. 1T 327 (Qttly, Fri, par 1)