

Camrose Way Housegroup

24th May 2023

Introduction to 1 Corinthians – Leaders Version

The main focus of teaching this term is on the book of 1 Corinthians; how it will help guide us to be the church God desires us to be as we plan for the future. HGs studies will follow the teaching on Sundays to consider the implications of what was being preached.

The first sermon will be on the 4th June. The aim of this first HG session is to introduce the book and help us to understand the context of the letter.

Question 1: Intro Question

What does a healthy church look like today? How can we tell?

This is a general question to get us thinking about what marks out a healthy church.

Good attendance; people attending regularly; bible-based; visible in the community; not just Sunday; people willing to serve; welcoming; hospitality, interdependent; community spirited; distinctive; true to God's word

This letter was written from Ephesus to the church in Corinth about 5 years after Paul left Corinth. Corinth was an important trading centre for the Eastern Mediterranean.



Read: Acts 18: 1-17 - In Corinth

1. After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.
2. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,
3. and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.
4. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.
5. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.
6. But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'
7. Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshipper of God.
8. Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptised.
9. One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.
10. For I am with you, and no-one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.'
11. So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.
12. While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment.
13. 'This man,' they charged, 'is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.'
14. Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, 'If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanour or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you.
15. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law – settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.'
16. So he drove them off.
17. Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

Question 2:

Do you think the church in Corinth was healthy when Paul departed?

There is no clear evidence, but ..

Lots of people believed in the Jesus.

The church was strong enough to stand up to the Jews.

The church was tolerated by Gallio, the pro-consul.

Read: 1 Corinthians 1: 1-17

1. Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,
2. 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.

Thanksgiving

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.

A church divided over leaders

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 baptised in the name of Paul?
14. I thank God that I did not baptise any of you except Crispus and Gaius,
15. so no-one can say that you were baptised in my name.
16. (Yes, I also baptised the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptised anyone else.)
17. For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel – not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Question 3:

What is the health of the Corinthian Church when the letter was written. (v10-13).

Imagine a Sunday morning service in the Corinthian church—what would it look like?! This question is aimed at helping us see the issues in the church.

The church is Christ based, but ..

The church is divided.

There are quarrels, possible even during the services.

There are different factions that follow the teaching of Paul, Apollos, Peter and possibly others. That suggests that the teachings are different and diverging from Paul's original teaching.

Question 4:

What does Paul say about the church in verses 4-9. Hint: look for the repeated word.

This is to help us see how Paul focuses on their identity in Christ, which is repeated several times.

The church is in fellowship with **Christ**.

In **Christ**, it has been enriched with all kinds of speech and all knowledge.

It does not lack any spiritual gift.

Eagerly waiting for **Christ** to be revealed.

Question 5:

Why does Paul first start with the identity of the church In Christ, before tackling the issues over division?

This is to help us see that their problems could only be addressed by understanding their Christ-given identity.

He introduces the solution before describing the problem.

Division can only be resolved by understanding the central role of Christ in their worship.

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.

Question 6:

What is it in vv.4-9 that helps address the division?

This is to help us see the details of what we have in Christ, so we don't need to pride ourselves on who we follow.

More or less the same as the answer to Q4.

The church is in fellowship with **Christ**.

In **Christ**, it has been enriched with all kinds of speech and all knowledge.

It does not lack any spiritual gift.

Eagerly waiting for **Christ** to be revealed.

Question 7:

How does the passage help us the means of us being a united church today?

This is aimed at drawing out the implication that understanding Christ will bring us unity.

We must be Christ focussed and avoid any sense of following any one individual's teaching.

Question 8:

Can you think of any examples of division in St. Mary's? Not just now.

Worship style

Different types of preacher (everyone has preachers they prefer)

Attitudes to people (e.g. divorcees, those not married)

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.

Question 9:

How can we encourage one another to: (1) avoid the division of this passage and (2) be "perfectly united in mind and thought" (v.10)?

This is to tease out some of the implications for us.

Pray

Be a bible-based church; read and know the Bible

Test teaching against the Bible

Training for leaders

Be open about areas where we don't agree .. decide whether these differences are fundamental

Take advantage of all teaching. Sermons, equip, HG, focus etc.