

When the Party Spirit is Not Innocent Fun

1 Corinthians 1; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 9-19-2021

Corinth in Context

- A Greek city and a Roman colony
- A very large and very wealthy city
- A capital city of the Roman province of Achaia
- An international trading center as a port city and a tourist hotspot (Isthmian Games)
- A 'pluralistic, cosmopolitan' city of diverse people groups and religions
- A city filled with competition and consumerism and self-promotion
- A 'cultured' city that valued Greek wisdom and persuasive rhetoric over 'barbarianism'
- An immoral city because of religion and tourists/traders (port)

The theme of this letter is what it looks like to be Christian in a non-Judeo-Christian context and the importance of fighting cultural pressures to conform!

- 1 Corinthians could be divided this way:
 - Response to Reports (1-6)
 - Response to Questions (7-16)

1. God through Paul rejoices over a messy Church. (1-9)

“Messy” = imperfections and sin and failure are not hard to find and even surprisingly so!

Paul says some wonderful things about a church that had these issues:

- Celebrity worship (1)
- Attraction to worldly performance (2)
- Immature believers (3)
- Arrogant criticism of Paul (4, 9)
- Incest (5)
- Suing one another (6)
- Prostitution (6)
- Abstinence in marriage (7)
- Divorce (7)
- Participation in idol worship (8, 10)
- Feminism (11)
- Abuse of the Lord's Supper (11)
- Abuse of spiritual gifts (12-14)

- Denial of the resurrection of the dead (15)

"The church ... is a hospital in which nobody is completely well, and anyone can relapse at any time." - J.I. Packer

2. God through Paul reproves a divided Church. (10-16)

“Divided” = the party spirit was strong in this church resulting in cliques and power struggles and criticisms between groups within the church

3. God through Paul reproves a worldly Church. (17-25)

“Worldly” = they valued what the world values and evaluated success according to the world’s standards

4. God through Paul reproves a proud Church. (26-31)

“Proud” = they believed their wealth and gifts were the result of their own efforts or wisdom or were the reflection of what they rightly deserved

Application

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. – Galatians 3:28

What is dividing the Church in the US today?

- Systematic Theology: *“I am of Calvin” / “I am of Arminius”*
- Politics: *“I am of Trump” / “I am of Anybody but Trump”*
- Covid: *“I am pro-vaccine mandate” / “I am anti-vaccine mandate”*
- Race: *Critical Race Theory*

What unifies a divided Christianity?

- Our sanctification (for the will of God) – vv. 1-9
- Our Savior (the Lord Jesus Christ) – vv. 10-16
- Our message (of a crucified Savior) – vv. 17-25
- Our boasting (in sovereign grace) – vv. 26-31

“If therefore a man has his mind regulated in such a manner that, claiming no merit to himself, he desires that God alone be exalted; if he rests with satisfaction on his grace and places his entire happiness in his fatherly love and, in fine [in short; to sum up], is satisfied with God alone, that man truly ‘glories’ in the Lord.” – John Calvin