

## In What Do You Boast? (1 Corinthians 1)

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**Introduction:** Consider the background of Corinth

- A. Located on a narrow rock of land called the "isthmus" that connected Greece and Achaia.
  - 1. Old Corinth was destroyed by the Roman consul L. Mummius, B.C. 146.
  - 2. Rebuilt 100 years later by Julius Caesar as a Roman Colony.
  - 3. In Paul's day the population was about 600,000. It was a wealthy city, being a sea-port, with all nationalities visiting there.
- B. One main source of revenue was derived from the Temple of Venus (Goddess of Love or Licentious Passion) where 1,000 or more priestesses, dedicated to harlotry, worked. This brought crowds to the city. Paul wrote Romans from Corinth! (Rom 1)
  - 1. Another impact on the character and wealth of Corinth was that of the Isthmian games that were conducted near the city. Paul frequently refers to these games when pressing Christian energy and activity.
  - 2. The citizens are described as "dishonest, litigious, speculative, suspicious, factious, volatile, and excessively egotistic."
  - 3. A discouraging field? Paul entered it alone, joined by Silas and Timothy about three months later. Paul found there Aquila and Priscilla and lived with them since their trade (tentmakers) was the same as his. He reasoned in the Jewish synagogue until his companions arrived. Hostility of Jews then drove him to the house of Justus. He was in Corinth 1 1/2 years. (**Acts 18:1-17**)

1 Corinthians 2:3 (NKJV) 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

- 4. Apollos teaches in Corinth and gains more converts (**Acts 19:1; 18:28**)

**Acts 19:1 (NKJV)** 1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples **Acts 18:28 (NKJV)** 28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

- C. The church later formed factions, following different men. In addition, the wickedness of the city so affected the church as to result in other problems.
  - 1. To correct matters, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Corinth (**Acts 19:21-22; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10**).

**Acts 19:21 through Acts 19:22 (NKJV)** 21When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” 22So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

**1 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)** 17For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

**1 Corinthians 16:10 (NKJV)** 10And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do.

2. Before their return the church in Corinth wrote Paul asking questions regarding many things. 1 Corinthians is Paul's response to those questions.
- D. There are ways we indicate what is really important to us.
1. If you are with someone long enough, you learn what is important to them.
  2. What is really the most important thing to you?

***I. What Did God do for Paul and the Corinthians? (1:1-9)***

**1 Corinthians 1:1 through 1 Corinthians 1:9 (NKJV)** 1Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- A. Would you have considered Paul the right man for the job? (**1 Cor 1:1; 1 Tim 1:12-16**)

**1 Corinthians 1:1 (NKJV)** 1Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

**1 Timothy 1:12 through 1 Timothy 1:16 (NKJV)** 12And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

13although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

B. Would you consider the Corinthians likely candidates to obey the gospel?

(1 Cor 6:9-11)

**1 Corinthians 6:9 through 1 Corinthians 6:11 (NKJV)** 9Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

C. We all must be humbled and full of praise for what God has done for us.

1. He called us. **(1 Cor 1:1-2)**
2. He has given us His grace. **(1 Cor 1:4)**
3. He has enriched our minds. **(1 Cor 1:5)**
4. He will confirm us to the end. **(1 Cor 1:8)**
5. He will be faithful. **(1 Cor 1:9)**

## ***II. A Fruit of Improper Boasting - Division (1:10-17)***

**1 Corinthians 1:10 through 1 Corinthians 1:17 (NKJV)** 10Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

A. Satan is most effective when he perverts something that is a gift from God.

**(1 Cor 8:1-2; 1 Tim 3:6)**

**1 Corinthians 8:1 through 1 Corinthians 8:2 (NKJV)** 1Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. **1 Timothy 3:6 (NKJV)** 6not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

B. What are preachers for? **(1 Cor 3:5)**

**1 Corinthians 3:5 (NKJV)** 5Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

1. The Corinthians used preachers as a focal point to start divisions.
2. All division needs a rallying point.
3. What should they have seen in these preachers? (1 Cor 3:21-23)

**1 Corinthians 3:21 through 1 Corinthians 3:23 (NKJV)** 21Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. 23And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

C. What is Baptism for? **(1 Cor 1:14-17)**

1. It is not for any glory to the baptizer! **(Jn 4:1-2)**

**John 4:1 through John 4:2 (NKJV)** 1Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

2. Many do view Baptism as a show to glory in.

D. How do we deal with division? **(1 Cor 1:10)**

1. Change the heart!
2. Consider the three questions of verse 13.
3. What do you have that you did not receive? **(1 Cor 4:6-7)**

**1 Corinthians 4:6 through 1 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)** 6Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

### ***III. The Basis of the Christian's Boast - The Cross of Christ (1:18-31)***

**1 Corinthians 1:18 through 1 Corinthians 1:31 (NKJV)** 18For 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. 19For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

20Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—31that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

#### **A. There are two systems that are in conflict: Spirituality and Carnality. (1 Cor 1:18)**

1. One is man centered -- the other God centered.
2. One is physical - the other spiritual.
3. One has the majority - the other the minority.
4. One contains the lost - the other the saved.

#### **B. Things in which the world boasts.**

##### **1. "Wisdom" (1 Cor 1:19-21)**

- (a) In fact this is only an appearance of wisdom.
- (b) What did Rome glory in?
- (c) What did this glory blind them to?

##### **2. "Signs" (1 Cor 1:22)**

- (a) There are many "worldly religions".
- (b) There are ways to obtain emotion without commitment.
- (c) What did this glory blind them to?

3. What was the final position of these people? They fought God! Guess who will win?

(a) If they had known they would not have fought God! **(1 Cor 2:7-8)**

**1 Corinthians 2:7 through 1 Corinthians 2:8 (NKJV)** 7But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

(b) Could you be doing this? Is your wisdom Godly or worldly?

C. How does the world view Christianity? **(1 Cor 1:23-28)**

1. "Foolish", "weak", "base" and "despised".
2. Please do not try to win the world through worldly wisdom. They will only mock you. Ex. Brother Hall visiting man on plane.
3. The world's wisdom destroys those who hold it.
  - (a) Stumbling Block **(v. 23)**
  - (b) God's weakness is more than a match. **(v. 25)**
  - (c) Their end is shame **(v27)**

D. What then do we boast?

1. Not in our selves. **(V26-28)**
2. Our boast is in God! **(v29-31)**

**Conclusion:** Who do you think you are? What has God done? **(Psa 8:3-4, 9)**

**Psalm 8:3 through Psalm 8:4 (NKJV)** 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

4 What is man that You are mindful of him,  
And the son of man that You visit him?

Psalm 8:9 (NKJV) 9 O LORD, our Lord,

How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

A. Let God be your boast! **(Gal 6:14)**

**Galatians 6:14 (NKJV)** 14But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

B. Will you let God be with you?