

Read through the Bible



1 Corinthians Week One



**OUR
SAVIOR
LIVING
LOVE**

Monday, June Twelfth

Welcome to our four-week journey through 1 Corinthians! This booklet is laid out to help you walk through a portion of Paul's letter each day. Whether you start off your day with this, find some time during your lunch break, or sit down with it before you go to bed, the hope would be for you to engage with the Bible on a consistent basis as God engages you and calls you into His story. May your journey through it be filled with fresh perspective as you reflect on how we are to live in Christian community with one another. – Vicar Chris

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

On his second missionary journey, Paul traveled to the heart of Corinth and proclaimed the Gospel to this Grecian community. As a result, several Corinthians came to faith in Jesus, and Paul worked with them to establish a church. After spending 18 months with them to ensure they could effectively minister on their own, Paul confidently continued his missionary journey elsewhere. However, after receiving a variety of disheartening reports from travelers familiar with the church in Corinth, Paul sat down and wrote a letter to clear up some issues that had arisen since his departure.

- What issue does Paul address first? (see verses 11-12)
- What is Paul's solution to the problem? (see verse 10)

Paul's question in verse 13 – "Is Christ divided?" – reminds the Corinthians that church is not a popularity contest. While Apollos, Peter, and Paul are leaders to learn from, they are all servants who point to Christ. Instead of factions centered around personalities, the church is to be a community of people centered around Jesus.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and thank Him for uniting us all together and to Him through the work of Jesus on the cross.

Tuesday, June Thirteenth

If you've ever been to a venue like the Wagon Wheel Flea Market or the Oldsmar Flea Market, chances are you've seen some very interesting items for sale. Imagine walking through the booths with a friend one Saturday afternoon. As you come across the first vendor, you both scope out the various items for sale. You come across a beautiful antique watch, and your friend spots an ingeniously designed drink cooler. You pick up the watch and take it over to your friend and comment on how beautiful it is. Your friend, however, surprises you by exclaiming, "What a piece of junk!" How is it that two people could look at the exact same item and come to completely different conclusions about it? In today's passage, Paul shares why two people could hear the same Gospel and come to completely different conclusions about it.

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What does the cross mean to those who believe and to those who do not? (see verses 18-19)
- What does God do with the foolish, weak, and lowly? (see verses 26-28) What is the end result? (see verse 29)
- Who do we boast in instead, and why? (see verses 30-31)

When we boast in our own wisdom, in our own strength, and in our own status, we run the risk of elevating ourselves above our God. Paul reminds the Corinthians here that God gave the world a much-needed reality check by using the foolish, the weak, and the lowly to accomplish His purposes. We boast in Jesus because through Him – a man considered by many to be foolish, weak, and lowly – God graciously provided us with forgiveness and eternal life.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

What does the cross mean to you? How does Jesus' death and resurrection challenge you to boast in God and not in yourself?

Wednesday, June Fourteenth

Advertisements are everywhere. Whether you're watching TV, attending a baseball game, or even sitting down at the mall, companies are always finding creative and subtle ways to get your attention. The goal of these ads is simple – to persuade you to buy into their product or brand. Consider driving down the highway and seeing a billboard with a bright blue and green can of Sprite. As you drive a little further, you see a bench with an ad that says, "Thirsty? Grab a Sprite." Shortly after, you find yourself stopping at a Circle K to grab yourself a Sprite because the ads enticed you to pull over and satisfy your thirst (or as they say, "Obey your thirst™"). But in today's passage, Paul reminds the Corinthians how he didn't share the Gospel with them through persuasion or influence. He simply shared the truth – "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (v. 2).

Read: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did Paul share the Gospel with the Corinthians? What did he make sure not to do? (see verses 1-5)

Sometimes we are tempted to 'dress up' the Gospel. We think that if we can make it flashier or illustrate Jesus as some sort of hipster superhero, then maybe people will be persuaded to hear and accept our message. But Paul reminds the Corinthians and us reading along that the Gospel needs no 'dressing up.' Our faith rests on God's power, not on our persuasive arguments for it.

- Why did the 'rulers of this age' not understand God's 'secret wisdom'? (see verses 6-8) Who revealed it? (see verse 10)

If the 'rulers of this age' knew who Jesus was, they likely wouldn't have called for His crucifixion. But now that everything has been accomplished, God reveals His wisdom to us through His Spirit.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

How would you describe the Gospel to one who's never heard it?

Thursday, June Fifteenth

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends not giving solid foods to babies for the first six months after they're born. There are good reasons for this – their digestive system hasn't matured yet, their teeth haven't come in, and ultimately, breast milk or formula has everything the baby needs in their early stages of growth and development. In today's passage, Paul advises the Corinthians that they are not quite spiritually ready for 'solid food.'

Read: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What was Paul's initial assessment of the Corinthians' spiritual maturity? (see verses 1-2) What is his current assessment? (see verses 2-4)

Did Paul just call the Corinthians babies? You bet, and spiritual babies at that! In doing so, his imagery of milk and solid food is not meant to be an insult, but rather an indicator that the Corinthians were still living in their fleshly and immature desires. The fact that they were divided into 'personality factions' illustrated this point.

- What role does a person like Apollos and Paul have in sharing the Gospel with someone? (see verses 5-9) What is God's role? (see verses 6-7)

Paul makes an important distinction between the role we play and the role God plays in the Gospel. While we may proclaim the Gospel to someone (we plant the seed) and others may explain it or teach it to them (we water it), God is ultimately the one who works through His Holy Spirit to bring that person to a saving faith in the redemptive work of Jesus (God makes it grow).

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Sometimes we crave spiritual food when we really need spiritual milk. Take a moment to consider how you are being 'fed' by God. Ask Him to provide you with what you need, not what you want.

Friday, June Sixteenth

Hurricane season in Florida has begun, and we are already bracing for a very active summer! Whether you're checking the batteries in your flashlight or writing down the nearest place to get sandbags, preparation is an important component of the season. However, seasoned Floridians don't just purchase the necessary supplies. They also check the foundation of their home to make sure it is sturdy and prepared to face the gusting winds and rising waters. In today's passage, Paul urges the Corinthians to check their own spiritual foundation.

Read: 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What sort of foundation should a Christian have? (see verses 10-11) How can you tell? (see verses 12-15)

Paul reminds the Corinthians that their church was solely founded on Jesus. If Jesus is not the foundation, then it isn't a church at all! His reminder still rings true for churches all over the world today. Because we are prone to our own earthly wisdom, much like the Corinthians, we must constantly evaluate what our ultimate aim is.

- Who is God's temple and who lives in that temple? (see verses 16-17)

Paul is setting the Corinthians up for some of his later discussions in his letter. In doing so, he reminds them and us that we are called to be holy because the Spirit of God dwells in us. While we have freedom in Christ, that doesn't mean we are to misuse that freedom by dishonoring God with our bodies.

- What advice does Paul have for those who think they are wise "by the standards of this age"? (see verses 18-20)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to inspect your own spiritual foundation. In what ways is it or is it not founded on Jesus?

Saturday, June Seventeenth

Being the mayor of a city or town can often be a thankless job. Sure, you get to cut ribbons, shake a lot of hands, and maybe even kiss a baby or two, but many mayors spend much of their time trying to solve difficult issues while attempting to address their critics. For example, a mayor may try to do a noble thing in restoring a community park. But shortly after sharing the proposal, she begins to hear from all sorts of groups – environmentalists, developers, neighborhood watch councils – criticizing her for what appears to be a good thing for the community. Facing a barrage of angry voices, the mayor realizes how difficult it is to serve the people of the city. In today's passage, Paul illustrates just how difficult it can be as servants of Jesus out in the mission field.

Read: 1 Corinthians 4:1-13

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- In what two ways does Paul want the Corinthians to see men like him and Apollos? (see verse 1) Given they were divided over following various leaders, why is this important?

You can imagine the disagreements among the Corinthians. "Apollos is the best teacher!" "No, Paul is the great one! He knows the *real* truth!" But in his letter, Paul speaks against these divisions over leaders. These men are not celebrities or people to be paraded around. They are servants and stewards. And Paul, being one of them, identifies their unifying role in sharing the Gospel.

- How does Paul describe the conditions of his missionary work? (see verses 11-13) How does this contrast with how the Corinthians were living? (see verses 8-10)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Consider chatting with someone tomorrow at church about something God has been revealing to you in 1 Corinthians.

Sunday, June Eighteenth

In Disney's *Mulan*, young men throughout China are drafted into the military to fight against a brutal adversary – the Huns. During boot camp, Captain Li Shang surveys his battalion of men and finds them to be wildly out of shape and ill-prepared for battle. In response, Captain Shang spends much time (a whole song!) showing these young men how to fight and defend themselves. By following his example, they eventually learn to become skilled and fearsome warriors. One "young man" – a woman disguised as a man named Mulan – excels in following his example. In today's passage, Paul urges the Corinthians to follow his example so they are prepared to face the realities that come with being a Christian.

Read: 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What does Paul urge the Corinthians to do? (see verse 16) How are they to do this? (see verse 17)

Even though Paul spent 18 months with the Corinthians when he first founded the church, time had clearly eroded some important things that he taught from their memory. After all, they were living in a time when Paul couldn't just pass out Bibles or have them pull up some training videos on their phone. Because Paul was currently unable to be with the Corinthian church, why not send a mature believer who could show them how they are to live? By sending Timothy, Paul provided the Corinthians with an example of how they are to live in Christian community with one another.

- How does Paul's talk of arrogance correlate with his earlier discussions of earthly wisdom and pride? (see verses 18-21)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and thank Him for sending us His example – Jesus – to show us how we live love with others.

Questions? Comments? Contact Vicar Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 531-2761.