

# I Cor 1:1-2:16

## Corinthians, Session Two

### **Relationships Are Important (1:1-3)**

Who is Sosthenes (Acts 18:17) and what's his relation to this letter?

Which relationships are spelled out here and why are they significant?

“The greeting fills out the conventional Greek and Hebrew words of welcome with specifically Christian content: instead of *chaire* (=greetings) Paul uses *charis* (=grace); and he takes the Hebrew *shalom* and invests it with emphasis on Jesus Christ the Lord” (Prior, 20).

### **Be Thankful for What God Gives (1:4-9)**

Comment: “If the first nine verses were excised from the text, it would be impossible for any reader to come to anything but a fairly pessimistic view of the church at Corinth” (Prior, 21).

“The church is the fellowship of sinners before it is a fellowship of saints” (Prior, 23).

V. 5 speech (*logos*) and knowledge (*gnosis*)—“both bundles of dynamite in the early church. It is quite likely that Paul concentrates on these two clusters of gifts because the Corinthians majored on them” (Prior, 24).

### **The Things That Divide a Church (1:10-17)**

“When a Christian becomes totally absorbed with one aspect of the truth, to the neglect, exclusion or even denial of the whole truth as it is in Jesus, then the danger-point has been reached” (Prior, 29).

Paul—

Apollos—

Cephas—

Christ—

“Very often what happens in a local church today is that differences grow around personalities (either from within the church fellowship or from the wider church) and then become articulated around matters of doctrinal dispute. There may well be genuine theological disagreement, but the ‘strife’ emerges because the personal relationships are not good. When the love of God is truly controlling such relationships within a church, areas of disagreement find their proper perspective and do not necessitate strife, let alone schism” (Prior, 30).

### **God’s Wisdom Repudiates Division (1:18-25)**

Jews: signs--

“A crucified Messiah is a contradiction in terms”

Greeks: wisdom--

“God’s primary characteristic is his inability to \_\_\_\_\_”

Until they give up their reliance on their own insight and understanding, they will never be able to receive the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ” (Prior, 43).

“It is hardly complimentary to God that we should choose him as an alternative to hell. Yet even this he accepts....If God were proud, he would hardly have us on such terms. But he is not proud. He stoops to conquer. He would have us even though we have shown that we prefer everything else to him, and come to him because there is nothing better now to be had” (CS Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 85).

### **Our Common Calling Draws Us Together (1:26-31)**

“Corinth was by no means unusual, because Christianity spread most rapidly amongst the lower classes of Mediterranean society, and this single fact...was partly the cause of its being so offensive. The riff-raff were being converted, saved, changed. God picked the scum of the earth and made them kings and priests in his kingdom” (Prior, 46).

Jer. 9:23-24

### **The Preaching of the Cross Draws Us Together (2:1-5)**

“The secret and hidden wisdom of God is, therefore, nothing more or less than Jesus Christ and him crucified” (Prior, 52).

Why is there such a close relationship between the Spirit and the cross?

### **God’s Wisdom Unites Us (2:6-16)**

What qualifies a believer as mature or immature?

“It is important to note that the mystery of which Paul speaks here is not something additional to the saving message of Christ crucified: it is in Christ crucified that the wisdom of God is embodied. It consists rather in the more detailed unfolding of the divine purpose summed up in Christ crucified. We never, therefore, move on from the cross of Christ—only into a more profound understanding of the cross” (Prior, 51).

v. 9—Is. 64:4; v. 16—Is. 40:13

“Paul is saying that Christian believers can revert to behaving like unbelievers. When a person has been born again by the Spirit of God, he becomes potentially a spiritual man, but he is not automatically going to continue walking in the Spirit” (Prior, 53).

What is the Spirit’s role when it comes to the thoughts of God?

Is it hypocritical to judge all things and yet not be subject to other people’s judgments? (v. 15)

How is having the mind of Christ a corporate experience?