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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **Paul Thanks God for the Corinthian Church**

### **1 Corinthians 1:1-17**

This morning, we begin to walk through the amazing words of 1 Corinthians... we will drink in the powerful teaching of God to a very gifted but divided church. We will see how every spiritual gift and blessing that flows into a church's life is an evidence of God's grace... God deserves thanks for each one of them

If Paul can thank God for such a divided, dysfunctional church, how much more can we give thanks for each other as well

Our desire is that God will use this amazing epistle to draw our church more and more toward full maturity in Christ!

#### **I. Paul's Apostolic Greeting (vs. 1-3)**

##### **A. Paul's Apostolic Authority Asserted**

#### ***1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God***

1. An apostle called by God
  - a. The WILL OF GOD overruled Paul's will for his own life
  - b. Paul wanted to be a Jewish religious leader and he was extremely zealous for the customs of his people and was advancing in Judaism far beyond his peers
  - c. It wasn't his idea to be an apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, but God had been preparing him from the womb for this life work

#### ***Galatians 1:15-16 God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles***

- d. His story is well known, how he persecuted the church of Jesus Christ... he hated Christ and all Christians and was breathing out murderous threats against them

- e. Suddenly on the Road to Damascus he saw the resurrected, glorious Christ and his life was never the same again

***Acts 9:4-6 "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."***

Ananias was a Christian man who was sent to baptize Paul and prepare him for his life work:

***Acts 9:15-16 the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."***

- f. He was immediately called into service to Christ and began preaching the same gospel he once tried to destroy

## 2. Paul's apostolic authority attacked in Corinth

- a. After Paul planted the church in Corinth, others came along and began disparaging Paul, mocking him, saying he wasn't really an apostle
- b. They were called the "super-apostles" and said things like this

***2 Corinthians 10:10 For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."***

## 3. Many times Paul gives his apostolic credentials in these two letters

- 4. Paul wants them to have a high level of confidence that God is speaking through him... to build their lives on the solid doctrine he has laid down

## 5. Sosthenes

- a. Synagogue ruler there, one of their own... a name they can recognize
- b. Sosthenes was mentioned in Acts 18 in conjunction with Paul's trial there before Gallio... the Jews made a concerted attack on Paul, but Gallio paid no attention to them

***Acts 18:16-17 [Gallio] had them ejected from the court. "Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court."***

- c. Perhaps Paul reached out to Sosthenes later and led him to Christ; turning an enemy to a friend. Perhaps Sosthenes was already a follower of Christ when they beat him... we don't know

d. Sosthenes does not help Paul write the letter, for Paul often speaks in the first person throughout this letter

e. But he is mentioned as a form of connection to the community there

## B. The Corinthian Church Described

### ***1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy***

#### 1. “Church of God”

a. Like Paul, this church was established in Christ by the sovereign will of God

b. The church belongs to God... he created it, redeemed it, it is HIS POSSESSION

#### 2. “in Corinth”

a. Every local church has a setting... a place where they are positioned by God

b. This is going to be their mission field, their place to work

c. We saw last time some basic facts about Corinth... let’s learn a little more

#### BACKGROUND ON CORINTH:

Corinth is located about 50 miles southwest of Athens in Greece; it was built near an extremely thin isthmus connecting two gulfs of water pinching in on either side of the Peloponnese... the bottom section of Greece

Because the journey by boat around the Peloponnese was 185 treacherous nautical miles, mariners in ancient times would actually pay to have their ships hauled by ropes across the narrow neck of land that made up the Corinthian isthmus... the distance across was only about 4 miles

#### 3. “Sanctified in Christ Jesus”

a. Sanctified here means “set apart as a God’s holy possession”

In the Law of Moses, things that were used for the worship of God in the tabernacle were said to be “Holy to the Lord”

The priests wore a golden plate on their turbans that said "Holy to the Lord"

The incense they burned was made of a special formula and no one could make it except the priests and then only for service in the tabernacle

***Exodus 30:37 Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the LORD.***

So also the tithes of the people had the same designation:

***Leviticus 27:30 "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.***

- b. In Christ Jesus, the church belongs to him as his holy possession, only for his use
- c. The sense here is that the church is called out of darkness into God's holy light; called out of Satan's dark kingdom into the kingdom of Christ
- d. Christians are to think of themselves as separated from the world

***2 Corinthians 6:17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."***

Like the call to Christians living in the wicked symbolic "Babylon" in Revelation 18:

***Revelation 18:4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues***

- 4. "and called to be holy"
  - a. The doctrine of "sanctification" is the idea of progressively growing more and more Christlike, more and more holy... but the word usually isn't used in the NT
  - b. As we just saw a moment ago, the church was instantly sanctified in Christ Jesus the moment they were converted... but that is a POSITIONAL sanctification... they were declared by God to be his holy possession
  - c. But then, the church has to live out a holy lifestyle in daily practice
  - d. They are sanctified in Christ Jesus AND called to walk in daily holiness
  - e. All the many issues of holiness this church is facing make it a challenge... struggles with infighting, pride, sexual immorality, idolatry, lawsuits

among believers, divorce, gender roles, meat sacrificed to idols, and other issues HAD TO BE ADDRESSED... the church HAS to be holy

***Leviticus 11:45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.***

5. We prove our conversion by our holiness...

***Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup> because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

C. This Letter Intended for All Christians Everywhere

***1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth... together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-- their Lord and ours***

1. That's US... we are among those the Lord intended to read this letter
2. Though the issues Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians were immediately applicable only to that local church, yet they are issues that every church faces in every generation
3. That's the genius of the New Testament epistles... though written to address immediate circumstances, they are beneficial for every Christian individually and every local church

***Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.***

4. We are those who CALL ON THE NAME of our Lord Jesus

***Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

This is the essence of the so-called "sinner's prayer"... realizing that you are a sinner, condemned by the Law of God; that Jesus Christ is the only Savior for the world, provided by the grace of God... to call on him is to say "Lord Jesus, I need you... please save me from my sins!"

That sinner's prayer is the first genuine prayer of the saved person's life... but it is followed by a whole lifetime of prayer... praying without ceasing. Calling on the name of the Lord to answer prayers continually

Praying is of the essence of being a Christian

5. We all have the SAME LORD

***"their Lord and ours..."***

- a. There is only ONE LORD... his name is Jesus
- b. He is both their Lord and ours
- c. This is the marvelous unity of the Body of Christ worldwide... we all share the same Lord

***Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***

#### D. The Apostolic Blessing

***1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

- 1. This is the same blessing and greeting Paul uses in all his epistles
- 2. Grace ALWAYS precedes peace... it's not "peace and grace" but "grace and peace"

Before grace comes to a sinner, we are at war with God and he at war with us:

***Romans 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.***

***John 3:36 whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.***

- 3. Grace is the determination in the heart of God to save sinners by faith in Christ

***Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.***

- a. By grace through faith in Christ, God covers all your sins
  - b. By grace through faith in Christ, God JUSTIFIES you... declaring you to be perfectly righteous in his sight
  - c. By grace through faith in Christ, God is reconciled to you and no longer your enemy
- 4. Once we have this grace, then we will have PEACE with God as well

***Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ***

Also God ministers his GRACE and then his PEACE through the Word of God... this epistle, under the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, can minister

more and more grace to you, and more and more of a sense of peace with God

The words “grace and peace to you” is not a mere throwaway, a Christian catchphrase... it is OUR LIFE in Christ!

## II. Paul’s Thanksgiving for the Corinthian Church (vs. 4-9)

***1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.***

### A. Paul Lived a Life of Thankfulness to God... Especially for the Grace He Saw in Others

1. Thankfulness shows that God is the author of all things... the Corinthians exist as human beings because God willed that they live; it was he who knit them together in their mothers’ wombs...
2. Even more, it is by his sovereign grace that they were rescued from their empty pagan way of life... by the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit they were transformed by GRACE IN CHRIST

***1 Corinthians 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus***

3. When Paul gives THANKS for the salvation of others, he is praising the sovereignty of God in salvation

***Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.***

Putting it quite simply, THANK GOD YOU OBEYED... thank God you believed... thank God you repented... thank God, thank God, thank God!

4. Paul specifically thanks God for the GRACE he poured out on them in Christ... grace to transform them from pagans to children of God
5. Paul is thankful that they are his brothers and sisters in Christ, that they share Christ and the indwelling Spirit, and they will spend eternity in heaven together
6. He is also thankful for the SOVEREIGN GRACE of God in that they were so messed up that, apart from the continual grace of God in Christ, there would be no hope for them finishing the Christian race

### B. A Gifted Church

***1 Corinthians 1:5-7 For in him you have been enriched in every way-- in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-- <sup>6</sup> because our testimony about Christ was***

*confirmed in you. <sup>7</sup> Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

1. They have been richly blessed with spiritual gifts, as he will later discuss in chapters 12-14
2. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by God through the Holy Spirit that enable us to build up the church by the ministry of the word
3. They were RICH with these gifts, and these spiritual gifts made their church life so powerfully blessed by God
4. He specifically zeroes in on their SPEAKING and their KNOWLEDGE... or to reverse it, their KNOWLEDGE and their SPEAKING
  - a. The Corinthian church had a very robust knowledge of God and of his Word; their doctrine was solid in many ways
  - b. Later he will specifically speak of the Corinthians who possessed a right knowledge of the spiritual charade that idolatry was... they KNEW that idols are nothing at all, and that meat was only just meat
  - c. The gospel had completely severed any tie they had to that old way of life in paganism
  - d. They had embraced the tenets of the Christian faith with their minds and comprehended them in their hearts
  - e. The truth of God had driven out their love of human wisdom
5. Beyond that, they had gifts of SPEAKING... not only could they understand Christian doctrine, they could put it into words with skill and power

I had some professors at MIT who were geniuses and leaders in their fields— calculus, physics, material science... but they were very poor communicators, they had very little skill with words. It's one thing to KNOW something, it's a separate skill to be able to SPEAK about it clearly

6. Now, later Paul will have to rebuke their over-confidence in their knowledge and in their speaking

*1 Corinthians 8:1-2 Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup> The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.*

*1 Corinthians 13:1-2 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

7. But still, their knowledge and speaking were rich gifts of God's grace to them

C. Paul Thanks God Especially That They Confirmed His Gospel Witness

***1 Corinthians 1:6 because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.***

1. By their faith in Christ, they validated Paul's courageous witness concerning Christ and him crucified...
2. This confirmation came by the radical changes that occurred in their lives
3. Just as Paul said to the Thessalonians:

***1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, <sup>9</sup> for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven***

D. No Lack of Gifts

***1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift***

1. We will find out later that God outfits local churches completely by his Spirit
2. God has pondered every local church and has given to each church the full array of spiritual gifts needed to make that church thrive

Application: it is vital for each of you to have a clear sense of your spiritual gifts and to do the ministries attached to those spiritual gifts!!

E. Ardent Waiting for the Second Coming of Christ

***1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.***

1. Continual expectancy for the second coming of Christ is an essential part of a healthy Christian life
2. We just studied in the Book of Revelation how Jesus Christ said four times, BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON!!
3. I love the last one:

***Revelation 22:20-21 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.***

4. Paul will say almost the exact thing at the end of this epistle

***1 Corinthians 16:22-23 Come, O Lord! <sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. Amen.***

F. The Faithfulness of God's Sovereign Grace

***1 Corinthians 1:8-9 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.***

1. The world, the flesh and the devil continually ASSAULT our souls, trying to draw us away from faith in Christ
2. It takes SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH to stand firm in our faith in Christ
3. Paul commands Christians to "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power and PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD"... so we have a responsibility to be strong and to fight
4. But ultimately, our continual standing in Christ does not depend on us but on God's limitless power working in us...
5. His powerful working in us keeps us in Christ and in the justification that will enable us to stand BLAMELESS before him

***Jude 24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy***

6. The essence of our ongoing protection is the FELLOWSHIP we share with God and with Christ through the Holy Spirit
  - a. This fellowship is a sweet communion with God by the Spirit
  - b. It keeps us walking in holiness in this dangerous world

***1 John 1:6-7 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.***

Bottom line: spiritually, we are escaping from Satan's POW camp and are traveling across miles and miles of occupied territory which is swarming with enemy troops; to survive this hostile journey will take all the sustaining power of God working in our souls

Paul is confident that God's faithfulness will enable all of his children to finish this dangerous journey

### III. Paul's Appeal for Unity (vs. 10)

***1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.***

#### A. Paul is Deeply Concerned About their Unity

1. We'll find out in a moment why, but like most local churches in the New Testament and throughout church history, the Corinthian church was rent apart by divisions
2. Paul makes a heartfelt appeal for unity
  - a. There is a human factor to this... an appeal to disputing brothers and sisters in Christ to GET ALONG
  - b. This APPEAL Paul makes with some authority behind it... it is an appeal made in the NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ
  - c. "Come to your senses, and STOP ARGUING with each other!"
  - d. It's something we can control!

Think about a married couple having an argument, and the phone rings and someone from church is calling... immediately the person who picks up answers sweetly, "Hello... how ARE you?! It's SO GOOD to hear from you! Oh yes, we're doing JUST FINE!!"

e. So

#### B. The Foundation: Christ's Prayer for Unity Based on the Trinity

1. Paul makes his appeal for unity IN THE NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ... based on his death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his Kingly authority
2. This is the very thing Christ prays for in his High Priestly Prayer

***John 17:11 Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one.***

***John 17:20-23 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be***

***brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

C. The Goal is Absolute, Perfect Unity... No Sham, Surface, Whitewashing of Disagreements

1. People can FAKE agreement, act like they like each other, pretend that they're all getting along
2. This is not the unity Paul has in mind
3. Paul describes it this way

***1 Corinthians 1:10 that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.***

4. The Trinity are perfectly ONE... there is not the slightest shifting shadow of disagreement between the Father and the Son and the Spirit on ANYTHING
5. Other translations:

***KJV: that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.***

***ESV: that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.***

Mind and judgment = how you think about everything, the assessments and evaluations and perspectives

The word for "perfectly united" implies that they are perfectly assembled, fit together wisely, like a magnificently finished piece of furniture, so skillfully joined that you can't see the seam between two separate pieces of wood

So it is in Christ, that we can each be TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MINDS, and come to perfect agreement with each other in every way

Another verse that describes Christian unity is this one:

***Philippians 2:2 make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.***

We agree in our thinking, we love the same things, we are motivated in the same direction to achieve the same ultimate goal

D. The More a Local Church Can Display this Unity, the More the World Will Be Attracted to Christ

***John 17:23 May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

1. A church rent by divisions, constantly bickering is a terrible witness and causes no one to sit up and take notice
2. And that's exactly the problem going on in Corinth

#### IV. A Church Rent by Factions (vs. 11-12)

***1 Corinthians 1:11-12 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> 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."***

- A. Paul's Source of Information: Chloe's Household
- B. What They Told Him: There are QUARRELS among them!
  1. They are bickering, arguing, displaying their carnal side
  2. Their pride is on display, their sinful anger and selfishness
  3. Quarrels are a great sin, and yet one of the most common sins

***Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining or arguing***

4. Quarrels ruin family life...

***Proverbs 17:1 Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.***

***Proverbs 15:17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.***

5. The Corinthian witness was being destroyed by these quarrels

#### C. The Nature of the Factions

1. Some follow this spiritual leader, some follow another
2. Some were lining up behind Paul, some behind Apollos, some behind Cephas (Peter)
3. My favorite were those that said "I follow Jesus" as if the others were not!!
4. There was a tragic rending of Christian unity, especially when it was all so unnecessary

5. The problem here is not the slogans, or the merits of the various leaders, but the pride and arrogance of each faction and the focus on the HUMAN AGENTS rather than the God who empowered them

***1 Corinthians 3:5-7 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-- as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.***

6. They did not realize that ALL beneficial aspects of EACH ONE were theirs as a treasure to the WHOLE CHURCH

***1 Corinthians 3:21-22 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future-- all are yours***

7. Anything beneficial that ever came through Paul belonged to EVERYONE in the Church... so also anything beneficial that ever came through Apollos or Peter
8. And Jesus is not the unique possession of any one faction, but of the whole church!!

#### D. Christianity as a Whole: Rent by Factions

1. The first significant faction happened between Eastern Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic church over a slight doctrinal issue—whether the Holy Spirit came from just the Father or the Father AND the Son
2. So the fabric of Christianity was rent by their inability to come to agreement
3. Centuries later, the Reformation further rent the garment of the church of Jesus Christ when the Roman Catholic leaders would not repent from their false understanding of justification
4. NOW, the Protestant world is further rent by almost COUNTLESS smaller divisions... one website says there are over 41,000 different Christian denominations in the world!!

Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Mennonite, Brethren, Congregational, Coptic, Moravian, Independent, Church of Christ, Nestorian, Quaker, Amish, Pentecostal, Anglican, Waldensian, Reformed...

There are several hundred Baptist denominations in the US alone

Some of these divisions have come over the smallest issues, some over more significant issues

At the Colloquy of Marburg, Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli met to try to hammer out their differences and present a united front to the Roman Catholic opponents... they agreed on 14 of 15 articles, but could not agree on the Lord's Supper

## V. Only the Gospel of Christ Can Unite Sinners (vs. 13-17)

A. To Those Who Claimed to be following Christ and the others WEREN'T

### *1 Corinthians 1:13 I Christ divided??*

B. Paul Did Not Want Any Denomination Named After Him

1. There were some saying "I follow Paul..."
2. Paul would have encouraged that if they added this

### *1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

3. But he was very clear that he was no one's savior

*1 Corinthians 1:13-16 Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. <sup>16</sup> (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)*

C. Paul Did Not Die for Anyone... Nor Was Anyone Baptized into His Name

D. Baptism Doesn't Save... Only the Gospel Saves

*1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel-- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

1. This is one of the greatest verses in the Bible destroying BAPTISMAL REGENERATION... the idea that water baptism is essential to salvation and that people cannot be saved without it
2. The Triangle Church of Christ is an area cult patterned after the Boston Church of Christ that teaches the same thing
3. Paul here makes water baptism incidental... water baptism is only the outward confirmation of the inner change worked by the Holy Spirit

***Matthew 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.***

***1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.***

4. The thief on the cross was not water baptized

***Luke 23:42-43 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."***

5. Only the power of the cross of Jesus Christ can genuinely transform this bickering worldly church into one that truly glorifies Christ

6. So Paul is about to pour out the gospel again on these people so that they will stop their divisions and quarrels

## VI. Applications

A. The Cross of Christ Alone Can Save Sinners... SO Come to Christ!

***1 Corinthians 2:2 I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

B. Give Thanks to God for your own Conversion... Apart from his mercy, you would never have trusted Christ

C. Give Thanks to God for the grace you see in other Christians!!... Do this regularly... it will sweeten your demeanor toward them

1. I think if the Corinthians had spent more time thanking God for the grace of Christ that was poured out on the others, they would have stopped bickering

D. Cherish the Spiritual Gifts God Has Poured out on FBC...

1. Give thanks for all the teachers and preachers of the Word of God here

2. Give thanks for those who are skillful at teaching little children the gospel at an early age

3. Give thanks for those with administrative gifts, who can organize large ministries and get them to run well

4. Give thanks for those with gifts of faith and intercessory prayer, who are continually lifting up the Body of Christ and praying for you to stand firm in Christ

5. Give thanks for those with the gift of hospitality, who open their homes and host Home Fellowships and other church events, or who just use their homes to invite non-Christian coworkers and neighbors over and witness to them
6. Give thanks for those with gifts of giving, who give so generously and support our budget and our missions giving in amazing ways
7. Give thanks for those with gifts of service, who do so many behind the scenes things and work so hard in ways no one ever sees

#### E. Find Your Own Spiritual Gift Ministry

1. Do you have a regular pattern of using spiritual gifts to serve this church?
2. What is your ministry??
3. What are ways God is using you to build others up in their walks with Christ?

#### F. Strive for Perfect Unity in Your Marriages

1. Paul is praying for the Corinthians to be “perfectly united in mind and thought”
2. That is an admirable goal for all married couples
3. Keep in mind how many amazing ways you already agree
4. Don’t let the things you disagree about divide you... work on it, communicate over it, use the scriptures to bring you to unity in Christ

#### G. Strive for Unity in this Church

1. It is not ok for us to disagree
2. Wherever there is a disagreement, we should communicate based on scripture and saturated with prayer
3. We should seek to have IRON SHARPEN IRON
4. We should listen to each other and seek to get to a place of true unity patterned after the Trinity

#### H. Understand the Important But Limited Place of Water Baptism

1. Paul didn’t even remember who he baptized or when
2. He said very poignantly that Christ did not send him to baptize, but to preach the gospel
3. Water baptism doesn’t save anyone; BUT it is important

***Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.***

4. It is an outward and visible sign of the Spirit's baptism in your life
5. If you have never been water baptized and want to be, talk to me or another of the elders