

Intro

This is a talk written by Andy H, with some adaptations made. Thanks to him for this talk.

Bible Verses

Read 1 Corinthians 1, the whole chapter.

Being A Christian

The Corinthians were an immoral group of people. In many ways, we can look around us today and see very similar things happening in our city or in our country.

Corinth as a City

Corinth was a big city in Greece. Two key places of idolatry were the Temple of Apollo and the Temple of Aphrodite. The Temple of Aphrodite still partly stands today. We also learn that Greek writers in the 5th-4th centuries B.C. said Corinth was a city of commercialized love and a “Corinthian girl” meant a prostitute.

The Corinthians were sexually immoral, they went out getting drunk and they used God’s grace as an excuse to do wrong things and that was just the followers of Christ. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in Corinth and the list of sins people were committing was very likely what he saw on the streets of Corinth, worshipping idols, and things made by man that won’t last, sexual immorality, evilness, wickedness, murder, cheating..... The list goes on.

In the time of this letter if you really wanted to insult someone you would call them a Corinthian and everyone would know exactly what you meant!

The Church in Corinth

The church in Corinth often hindered, rather than promoted the spread of the gospel. We learn in Corinthians the Bible book that some of the church’s members followed Paul, some followed Apollos and others followed Christ. The church was dysfunctional and didn’t work together.

Paul called the church out for this and said, ‘hang on, it’s all about Christ, not about Paul, or Apollos, or anyone else.’ He addresses the letter to those called to be holy (all of God’s people) – God had chosen them and they had turned away – see Romans 1:21-23.

Encouragement

Paul didn’t point directly at the all the church’s problems and failings. Rather, he addressed what it meant to be called to and by Christ. He says that as Christians they had fulfilled their testimony and had many spiritual gifts. He didn’t mean that one person had every spiritual gift, but as a church they had all of them. If they were to work together instead of against each other, then they would be an amazing church.

The same is true today. Within and between churches, there is jealousy, ambition and factions. But how can God's church work properly like this? It can't, and we need to repent.

Paul also said that they were rich in spiritual gifts but they weren't using them properly. Again, the same is true today. Some churches reject certain spiritual gifts (wrongly). They will never be all that God wants them to be as they are incomplete. Conversely, some charismatic churches over-use and mis-use spiritual gifts. Again, this fails the Kingdom of God as it's unwise and even selfish.

Paul gives thanks and challenges them to live for Jesus

Paul says that he gives thanks for them because of their gifts and I can do the same here everyone here has spiritual gifts and are using them well. If God has chosen us and given such amazing gifts shouldn't we at least honour him by using them for his work.

In verse seven, Paul challenges the church. If they were waiting for their Saviour to return, surely they would have wanted to live a life that was pleasing to him. To paraphrase, Paul asks, 'as we wait, shouldn't we want to be beyond reproach – and live a life solely for God?' He challenges them with this.

If we look at our lives as Christians, we should be living a life sold out for God. We want and need to stand out. If we don't stand out from the world around us, how can we be glorifying and pointing to Jesus?

Listen Up

God has promised that we will be saved at the end of the world if we truly believe in him and accept his son Jesus as our Saviour. I don't know about you but I think that is an amazing thing and shouldn't be mistreated by using it as an excuse for sin but it should be used as a foundation to build a strong relationship with Jesus. And we have been given the best thing possible – an eternity with Jesus and I don't want to be the only person to have that. I want my friends to have it too, even the people I don't know or even like I want them to have it too.

Prayer

Maybe this is the time to think about giving your life to Jesus. Or maybe you need to say sorry and turn 180 degrees from the life you're living, while claiming to be a Christian. Maybe there are things you know from God, that you need to put right. Do it now. Say sorry, ask God to forgive you. Ask God to help you change, to stay changed. Declare that this is the day you're going to live God's way, do what God says.

Be Accountable

Tell someone what you've done. Maybe even stay accountable to them too – encourage and ask each other how it's going.