

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

1 Corinthians Chapters 1 – 6

Boast in the Lord

Overview: Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is a classic of pastoral response: affectionate, firm, clear, and unswerving in the conviction that God among them, revealed in Jesus and present in his Holy Spirit, continued to be the central issue in their lives, regardless of how much of a mess they had made of things. Paul doesn't disown them as brother and sister Christians, doesn't throw them out because of their bad behavior, and doesn't fly into a tirade over their irresponsible ways. He takes it all more or less in stride, but also takes them by the hand and goes over all the old ground again, directing them in how to work all the glorious details of God's saving love into their love for one another.

Video: BibleProject <https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-corinthians/>

Segment Questions:

1. What was your faith journey like in your first few years? Did you have a significant change instantly or was it more gradual with plenty of "rough spots" like the Corinthians'?
2. The night before going to the cross Jesus says to his disciples, "Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples – when they see the love you have for each other." And here in Paul's first letter the church in Corinth he writes, "You must get along with each other. You must learn to be considerate of one another, cultivating a life in common." Why do we struggle to get along? Why do you think it is such a powerful tool for advancing the gospel of Jesus?
3. In 1:16 it says, "The message of the cross is folly to those who are perishing." Why do you think Paul makes this statement? What does Paul want us to understand?
4. What are the contrasts between the ways of the world and the ways of God? What do people of the world boast in and what do believers boast in? Why do you think God choose us – the nobodies, the regular guys, the ones the culture overlooks – to reveal Himself and to work through?

Action Question:

1. How did Paul approach his ministry to the people in Corinth (vv 2:1, 2) and how can you incorporate this into your life of ministering to people?
2. What can you do to continue or start building on the foundation of Christ with gold, silver and precious stones, and what do you need to stop doing that is building with inferior materials? (vv 3:11 – 13)

Introduction

When people become Christians, they don't at the same moment become nice. This always comes as something of a surprise. Conversion to Christ and his ways doesn't automatically furnish a person with impeccable manners and suitable morals.

I came to faith in my junior year of high school. I was a kid who would steal booze from my parent's liquor cabinet, had a fake ID to buy beer at 17, got drunk every weekend and had a bad temper. When I came to faith I definitely changed, but it was a process. I changed my friend group and quit all the drinking — or at least most of it. It was a process.

The people of Corinth had a reputation in the ancient world as an unruly, hard-drinking, sexually promiscuous bunch of people. When Paul arrived with the Message and many of them became believers in Jesus, they brought their reputations with them right into the church. Paul spent a year and a half with them as their pastor, going over the Message of the "good news" in detail, showing them how to live out this new life of salvation and holiness as a community of believers.

Sometime later Paul received a report from one of the Corinthian families that in his absence things had more or less fallen apart.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:10, 18, 19, 27 – 2:2, 12, 3:11 – 13

1:10 I have a serious concern to bring up with you, my friends, using the authority of Jesus, our Master. I'll put it as urgently as I can: You must get along with each other. You must learn to be considerate of one another, cultivating a life in common.

1:18, 19 For the message of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

1:27 – 31 Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these "nobodies" to expose the hollow pretensions of the "somebodies"? That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by with blowing your own horn before God. Everything that we have—right thinking and right living, a clean slate and a fresh start—comes from God by way of Jesus Christ. That's why we have the saying, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

2:1, 2 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

3:11 – 13 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.