

Paul's Letters to the Church at Corinth

A Spiritual Ministry

1 Corinthians 2-3

Lesson 2

*Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
January 13, 2013*

A Spiritual Ministry

- ▶ Practical Christianity in the Corinthian church
 - A saved people
 - Variety of problems – moral and doctrinal
 - All Christian practice is doctrinal
- ▶ Outline of 1 Corinthians
 - Introduction (1:1-9)
 - Reply to a report from Chloe's household (1:10-6:20)
 - Reply to questions from the Corinthian church (7:1-16:9)
 - Conclusion (16:10-24)

Chloe's people report to Paul

- ▶ Divisions – divided in mind and judgment (1:10); quarreling (1:11); jealousy and strife (3:3)
- ▶ Validity of their Christian faith not questioned (1:4-9)
- ▶ Divided over men – Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ
- ▶ Specific issues not described
 - Acts 18:24-19:1; 1 Cor.1:17
- ▶ Wisdom of God v. wisdom of man

Discourse on wisdom (1:10-31)

- ▶ Word of the cross is foolishness to man but it is the wisdom of God
- ▶ Wisdom of God is powerful; wisdom of man is not
- ▶ God's manner of working
 - No respect for wisdom of man
 - No glory for man
- ▶ Of God in Christ Jesus
Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption
Glory in the Lord

Lesson Outline

- ▶ Paul's ministry among them (2:1-5)
- ▶ The wisdom of God (2:6-16)
- ▶ The Corinthian problem (3:1-4)
- ▶ Christian ministry (3:5-23)
- ▶ Christian ministers (4:1-21) – Fools for Christ

Paul's Ministry (2:1-5)

- ▶ Godet: “The matter in question is not a system of ideas to be exhibited, but merely a testimony to a fact.”

Proclamation (2:1-5)

- ▶ No eloquence or wisdom
- ▶ Weakness and trembling – no self confidence
- ▶ A simple presentation of Jesus Christ and the cross
- ▶ Testimony or mystery (2:1) of God
 - Testimony – report
 - Mystery – revelation
- ▶ Demonstration of the power of Spirit of God

The Wisdom of God (2:6-16)

- ▶ Two kinds of wisdom: human and divine
- ▶ The wisdom of God in Paul's message
- ▶ Addressed to the perfect (mature)
- ▶ Not a wisdom of the age or of the rulers of this age
- ▶ Secret (mystery) and hidden wisdom of God
- ▶ Decreed before the ages for our glory; revealed now
- ▶ The Lord of glory

The Wisdom of God (2:6-16)

- ▶ God's wisdom revealed through the Spirit
- ▶ Spirit of God knows all about God
- ▶ We have received the Spirit from God
 - John 3:3-8
 - 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Human Dilemma (2:14)

- ▶ Ignorance of Spiritual truth – Spiritual inability
- ▶ Spirit required to receive the message
- ▶ It is the mind of Christ
- ▶ Valley of Dry Bones: Ezekiel 37
 - Can these bones live?
 - Preach to them
- ▶ Preach Christ and Christ crucified

The Corinthian Problem (3:1-4)

- ▶ Carnal – people of flesh
 - Babies in Christ
 - Divisions, jealousy and strife
- ▶ Corinthian problem is a spiritual problem
 - No problem with Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ
 - Jude 19 – “worldly people devoid of the Spirit.”

Christian Ministry (3:5-15)

- ▶ Apollos and Paul are servants – under authority
- ▶ A field (of grain)
 - Planting and watering
 - Giving growth
- ▶ A building
 - Foundation is Jesus Christ
 - Superstructure must be fitting
 - Revealed by fire in that Day
 - The temple of God

A Warning (3:16-20)

- ▶ The temple of God
- ▶ God's temple is holy
- ▶ Deception – human wisdom (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25)

The Glory of Christian Ministry (3:21- 23)

- ▶ Do not glory in men
 - Honor those who labor faithfully
 - 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6, 1 Cor. 9:3-12
- ▶ All things are yours
 - Paul, Apollos, Cephas – sent by God to minister to us
 - The world, life, death, present, future
- ▶ Of God are we in Christ . . . (1:30-31)
 - You are Christ's
 - Christ is God's

A Spiritual Ministry

- ▶ The ministry – Spiritual, not natural
- ▶ Begins with God the Father
- ▶ Focuses upon Christ
- ▶ Executed by Divine agents with the Wisdom of God
- ▶ Servants of Christ must be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God – next week