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
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.”
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

Christian Ministry (3:5-15)
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