



perfectly united

studies in 1 Corinthians 1-4

SCPC term 1 2008

sunday 17th february 2008

study 3 one divide 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

KEY VERSE FOR SERIES: 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. **1 Corinthians 1:10**

The Corinthian church is divided. Instead of being “the church of God in Corinth” they have dragged the selfishness and divisiveness of Corinth into the church. Factions. Quarrelling. Divisions. This is tragic. Because as we see this week in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, especially in the key verse 18, the real divide in this world is between those “who are perishing” and those “being saved”. The same cross, that unites the church because it is our common salvation, is the cross that divides the world into saved and unsaved, as people accept or reject the “message of the cross”. This exposes the stupidity of a divided church, arguing over side issues. When the cross is everything to us, we will be truly united, and get focused on the real issue: people who have not heard and accepted the message of the cross are perishing.

some notes on questions

Q1. See introductory notes above.

Q2. All through the Bible God has always delighted in mocking human cleverness and in using weak and foolish looking instruments and messengers in his plans.

Q3. God delights in using foolish looking things because if salvation was to do with human cleverness then we could boast that “we worked it out”. The cross strikes at this pride because it is ultimately a word about our sin and our utter need for God’s grace—nothing we can contribute.

Q4. For the Jew who loves powerful things, it’s hard to think of a weaker looking thing than the cross. And for the Greek who loves wise and beautiful things, it’s hard to imagine something more foolish and ugly looking than the cross. As 21st century believers we can hardly imagine how despised and repulsive the cross was to all who lived in the 1st century.

Q5. The gospel redefined the world—no longer Jew vs Greek but saved (Jews and Greeks) vs perishing (Jews & Greeks). It is the supernatural work of God to call to himself those being saved—granting us to see in the cross not something weak and dumb but something strong and clever—saving us to eternal life! That’s strong! That’s clever!

Q6-8. It would be great if these questions help us lift our eyes beyond the squabbles that can derail our mission, to the needs of the world around us to hear the message of the cross.

digging deeper: the real offence of the cross is that Jesus is understood when we see things from God’s perspective: God the Son from all eternity, bleeding on a cross to pay for our sins.



remember that once the talk goes up on the website you can always post a question/observation by leaving a comment—it’s easy to do and then others will also be able to see the response when it goes up and leave their thoughts too.

coming events

o-week outreach at uni: 18-23 feb

SCPC AGM: wed 12 mar @park ave

small group bible study leaders' notes