



perfectly united

studies in 1 Corinthians 1-4

SCPC term 1 2008

sunday 24th february 2008

study 4 one boast 1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5

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**

In this study we build on what we learnt last week about the “message of the cross”. We shouldn't be surprised that God delights in using such a weak and foolish looking thing like a cross as his instrument of salvation. Afterall, it's not just the message of the cross that is unimpressive: the hearers of the message (the Corinthians) are unimpressive (1:26-31); and the speaker of the message (Paul) is unimpressive too (2:1-5). Why all this unimpressiveness? So that we'll be impressed with the Lord and him alone! So our only boast will be the cross of Christ.

some notes on questions

- Q1. Look ahead to 4:8 and 8:1 to see the sort of boasting the Corinthians are getting into. Remember also the boasting “about men” (3:21) that we saw in the opening of the letter (1:12).
- Q2. As we saw last week, the cross shows manmade religion to be pathetic attempts to open the door to heaven—a door that only God can blast open from the other side—through the power of the cross. The cross thus smashes religion and silences our claims to heaven.
- Q3. The surprising twist Paul gives us—having ruled out boasting in verse 29—is that there IS a form of boasting open to us—but certainly not in ourselves... it is boasting in Jesus and his death for us. That's worth telling out. That is our ONLY boast.
- Q4. Paul decided to keep it plain and simple so that no-one would attribute him with power—but only God's Spirit (which is what makes the boasting of 1:12 all the more ridiculous). Be careful to read verse 4 in context—although Paul performed miracles elsewhere—we shouldn't think that the “demonstration of the Spirit's power” here refers to miracles. On the contrary, he has just said in 1:22 that he did not bring signs or impressive speech but that the Spirit's power was at work through the plain unadorned message of the cross (1:18).
- Q5. As Paul protested in 1:13, making his preaching all about the cross was his attempt to ensure his hearers would only elevate Jesus—not the speaker. Furthermore, the cross isn't just how we are saved, but also our discipleship: service rather than the pride of the Corinthians.
- Q6-8. Have a good talk and pray about our church. It's exciting that we are growing—but it is possible to grow bigger but actually lose focus on the cross in it all (pride is always a trap!).

digging deeper: this passage from 2 Corinthians 12 is a ripper—as Paul ties himself in knots making sure his boasting is only the sort that honours Jesus.

small group bible study leaders' notes



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

SCPC AGM: wed 12 mar 7:30pm
@park ave

good friday service: 9:30am 21 march
@lismore high