



perfectly united

studies in 1 Corinthians 1-4

SCPC term 1 2008

sunday 9th march 2008

study 6 one purpose 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

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**

We have seen in 1 Corinthians that the world is ultimately divided into two sorts of people: those who are perishing and those who are being saved (1:18). And the thing that divides the 'perishing' group from the 'saved' group is the cross. The former group take a worldly view of the cross: seeing it as weak and foolish. The latter group take a spiritual view of the cross: seeing it as the power and wisdom of God (1:24). But now Paul has a dilemma! "what group are these Corinthians in?!!". They are Christians—he calls them "brothers" in verse 1. Yet in so many ways they are behaving more like the worldly group than the spiritual group. The cross has had such little impact on their behavior—they are dividing within rather than being perfectly united (1:10) in the cross. So Paul settles on this title for them: "INFANTS IN CHRIST" (3:1). They are Christians but barely walking as Christians should.

some notes on questions

Q1-2. It is important to remember here that Paul is not talking about some "solid food" teaching separate to the cross, as if the cross is only milk and need to be supplemented with the 'real stuff'. Rather, as we saw last week (2:6-16), the cross contains deeper teachings to grow people to maturity. A church that is quarreling about which leader they follow, however, has failed even at the most basic teaching of the cross: JESUS died for you (see 1:13).

Q3. There may be a twist here: in saying "I follow ___" the Corinthians run the risk of so idolizing these leaders that they become servants/devotees of those leaders. But in fact Christian leaders are their servants—not the other way around. The whole mentality is a corruption of the servant nature of Christian leadership.

Q4. As Paul did in the opening verses, he determinedly tries to get the focus back on God. Their focus on human leaders shows their worldliness. And while ever human leaders are the focus God will be sidelined. But when we get the focus back on the actions of God as all-important, we remember that all leaders are his servants, and have ONE PURPOSE under God.

Q5. This issue will come up again in the next study, but for now consider that the reward of faithful ministry are people, rather than things. i.e. the reward of faithful ministry of the gospel is that God has used you to see people won for the gospel—what a great reward that is! - to share eternity with those God used you to help come to Christ.

Q6-8. Notice that there are challenges here for those *led* as well those who *lead*

digging deeper: these are key verses for how those who are led can make the hugely challenging task easier for those who lead.

ministry needs

MOPS (mothers of pre-schoolers) is one of our key outreach ministries to young families (tuesdays 10am-12 @ park ave). To help this ministry grow there is an urgent need for more helpers on MOPS Program Days (only twice a term!). Please raise the need in your groups and speak to Katja McPherson or Bronwyn Mitchell for more info.

coming events

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

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

small group bible study leaders' notes