



perfectly united

studies in 1 Corinthians 1-4

SCPC term 1 2008

sunday 30th march 2008

study 9 one judge 1 Corinthians 4:1-13

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**

This week Paul continues to rebuke the Corinthians for their failure to cast off worldly attitudes or to appreciate the call of the gospel—the call to deny yourself and follow Jesus on the narrow & winding path to glory. How much better are we? Do our worldly ears find Paul's description of his own life in 4:9-13 highly undesirable? Do we quickly dismiss it as a bit fanatical, a bit extreme? Do we too easily settle for a sanitized Christianity that sees us looking more like "kings" (just like those in the castles next door) than "the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world"? Read on if you dare...

some notes on questions

Q1. The "secret things of God" is a reference to the gospel (see 1 Cor. 2:7 and following) not something mysterious which Paul has not yet revealed.

Q3. Note the distinction between "judging people" which only God has the power and the right to do and "warning people" (see verse 14) which is something we all have the responsibility to do as part of our stewardship of the gospel. This very important distinction is often poorly understood.

Q4. The Corinthians' problem is not simply valuing their leaders (no problem there!) but judging their leaders according to outward worldly standards rather than valuing their faithfulness to God and to the gospel that has been entrusted to them.

Q5. Notice the repetition of "already" in verse 8. It seems that the Corinthians were very confused about what life this side of Jesus' return is all about. This life is about following in the footsteps of the suffering servant King who went to the cross before entering his glory. The same sort of pattern will be evident in the lives of faithful Christians.

Q6-8. This passage contains a serious challenge to our comfortable lives. Do you feel it? Try to get your group to feel the weight of it too. If you're not convinced that Paul's description of the apostles' lot in verses 9-13 applies to the average Christian (i.e. you and me), peek ahead to next week's passage, verse 16 in particular.

digging deeper: Check this passage out to see how much (or how little) progress the Corinthians had made since Paul's first letter. This should add to the seriousness of Paul's warning.

ministry needs

MOPS (mothers of pre-schoolers) is one of our key outreach ministries to young families (tuesdays 10am-12 @ park ave). There is an urgent need for more women as 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

NORTH COAST
CHRISTIAN CONVENTION
Evans Head
May 24-25

small group bible study leaders' notes