

Text: 1 Corinthians 1: 17
Topic: Jesus Deficit Disorder
Study First Corinthians
Week 1 of 1
Series 4

River of Life Church
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The Power of The Cross

INTRODUCTION

According to Paul's writings, the Corinthian's were a fellowship of factions, a congregation of carnal charismatic's whose gatherings were egotistic exhibitions of spiritual gifts. A diagnosis of the local body of Christ at Corinth would use such terms as disunity, dysfunction and disorder.

Their ignorant use of spiritual gifts was symptomatic of their confusion concerning their *identity*. The Corinthians did not base their identity on who they were in Christ. Instead, they sought to establish their identity by gathering themselves under the name of a famous preacher. Rarely, has a church received more from God than the people of Corinth. First planted in foundational truth by the apostle Paul, the Corinthian's were then watered by the eloquent flow of scriptural insight from Apollos. Later they would be enriched by the testimony of the greatest living witness to the ministry of Jesus in that day, the apostle Peter.

The back ground of this passage is Paul's utter frustration brought about by the fact the Corinthian church was so deeply divided into factions. Repeatedly, Paul expresses his grief, frustration and heart breaking concern over the tendency of the Corinthians to insult the gospel, and to divide the church by factionalism and a party spirit. The entire book of 1 Corinthians is packed with overtones of correction and admonition. The apostle Paul admonishes the Corinthians for their spiritual immaturity. Spiritually, they are satisfied to be nursing infants rather than to grow into the fullness of Christ. They should be eating meat but they must be fed with milk. One claims to be following Paul, and yet another will claim to be follow Apollos. When one claims to follow one apostle, and another, another pastor, they demonstrate to their mutual immaturity and fleshly ambitions. The exasperated apostle sets the record straight by making clear both he and Apollos are merely servants of Christ who have been assigned by the Lord to be agents of bringing the gospel and feeding the flock at this church. (see 1 Cor.3-9)

In verse seventeen, Paul underscores his mandate and redirects their focus. "*For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News.*" That is a strong statement. Not even the sacraments are central. Christ has sent us to preach. But how should we preach? How should we communicate the gospel? It is possible to preach the gospel in ways that empty it's power: "*Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*" If we preach the gospel with eloquent wisdom, or more literally "the wisdom of speech," it is worse than a lost opportunity. Something goes *wrong*. The cross of Christ is emptied of its power.

Text for today: 1 Corinthians 1:14-17

"I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 for now no one can say they were baptized in my name. 16 (Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't remember baptizing anyone else.) 17 For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power."

1. **Take a stand: be a witness to the truth. (v. 17a)**

2. **Give-up on trying to change people with persuasive arguments (v.17b)**

- a. *“...and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” (v.17b)*

3. **Keep the spotlight on the real Hero**

TAKING THE NEXT STEP.....

- 1) Write out this weeks key scripture - 1 Corinthians 1:17

- 2) What were the two key issues that plagued the believers at Corinth? See Introduction paragraph 1 and 2

- a. I_____y and D__v_____n
 b. Do you see this in the church today? Do you see this in your life?

- 3) Write out Galatians 2:20

- a. What does the above scripture mean to you?

- b. This scripture holds a key to helping us with our relational challenges? How could you apply this scripture to your life? (For a small group or family - Give one action you can do this week which exemplifies obedience to this scripture)

- 4) Can a person who has not had a personal encounter with Jesus be an effective witness? YES / NO

- a. Are there some habits or attitudes which are undermining your witness?
 Choose an area and work on it this week

- 5) Write out Matthew 5:16

- a. How can you obey this scripture on a daily basis without using persuasive words? (This could be tied into Q 4a – “actions speak louder than words”)

- 6) Write out ways that you can keep the “spotlight” on Jesus this week. (It may mean rising a few minutes early or removing obvious distractions such as media, radio.. etc)

- a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____
 d. _____

Think and say this affirmation: “I dialogue with Jesus through out the day”