

## Commentary on First Corinthians chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 8.6.23

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**August memory verse 1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV)** having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

**John MacArthur - Introduction to 1 Corinthians, at end of Commentary**

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Paul introduces himself as the writer with Sosthenes in the first verse.

Paul, called an apostle ([1Cr 1:1](#))

Notice the words *to be* are in italics. That means that they were added by the translators, and they were not there in the Greek.

Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother ([1Cr 1:1](#)),

Now there is a name Sosthenes that is related to Corinth. When Paul was in Corinth, he was brought by some of the Jews before the Corinthian magistrate, Galileo. And charges were brought against Paul by the Jews concerning their religion. Galileo said, "Look, if the guy were guilty of treason or something against the government, then I should stand in judgment of him, but because it's just religious matters, why do you take my time?" And he ordered them out and the men that were there beat up on Sosthenes who was the chief ruler of the synagogue.

So Paul joins his name with Sosthenes in greeting the church of Corinth. Corinth was the center of the world commerce. It was an extremely luxurious city. If you'll take a look of your map of Greece, you'll find that the southern area of Greece is almost an island. Greece narrows down to this very narrow isthmus and Corinth was there in this very narrow isthmus of Greece, only four miles across the land.

Thus, any commerce going from north to south, that is from Macedonia to Achaia, had to pass through Corinth. It came to be that most of the commerce that was going from east to west also passed through Corinth, because sailing around the southern tip of Greece the Cape of Mathene was so treacherous that the early sailors really did not like to sail around southern Greece. So they would usually sail to Corinth. If their ships were light enough, they would take them out of the water and put them on rollers and roll them across the four miles and then launch them again in the Aegean and sail on to Puteoli, the port of Rome, or the same thing coming back. If the ships were too big to

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transport across the land, then they would often unload the ships and just take the cargo across this four miles.

Corinth was not just a commercial center. It was a center of philosophical thought in those days. There came a phrase, "He speaks in the Corinthian style," which meant very articulate, precise and colorful. These men were more interested, not in what they said, but how they said it. Giving a lot of flair and color and all to their speeches. They loved oratory. Doesn't matter what the guy said, just as long as he was a good orator. They were attracted to oratory, but also interested in philosophical thought.

Corinth was also one of the most debased, wicked cities in the world. With all of their philosophy, they could not keep that city from sinking into the lowest kind of debauchery. Thus, "He lives like a Corinthian" was a very common phrase that became a part of their vernacular to describe a man who was always drunk and living in open debauchery. In the Greek theater, whenever they would portray a drunk, they would always refer to him as the Corinthian.

Now, in the midst of this pagan city, one of the lowest as far as morals goes, there was a Church of God, the Ecclesia. Now the word *ecclesia* is a word that is common in Greek, but it usually referred to the city counsel. They were called the Ecclesia, those who have been called to rule in the city, they were known as the Ecclesia. So there was the Ecclesia of Corinth, the city counsel, those who ruled over the city affairs. But there was also the Ecclesia of God, those who are called to reign and to rule with God, the church. And the word *ecclesia* has been translated *church*, but it is really those who are called to rule.

Unto the church of God ([1Cr 1:2](#))

Notice he didn't say the Church of Corinth. I think we make a mistake today when we talk about the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, as though the church is divided. Paul speaks of the church of God,

which is at Corinth ([1Cr 1:2](#)),

So we are the Church of God which is at Santa Ana, but we are not the only Church of God at Santa Ana. There are many, but we are one. We need to recognize and realize the oneness of the church. So he does not address the Church of Corinth, but the Church of God which is at Corinth, a very important distinction. God help us that we will make that distinction also in our minds and not think of ourselves exclusively as God's sole representative in an area, or to think that God is limited to one representation in an area.

There is a very tragic mentality existing among the local church who have made the mistake of thinking that God has only one church in a given area, and of course, it's the local church they are in. All of the rest of the churches they immediately exclude as

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"Babylon" and they are the only true representatives of the unity of the body of Christ within a given area wherever they go to establish the local church.

Now as we get into Corinth, the Corinthian letter, there's a division when we get to chapter 12. The beginning of chapter 12, he says, "Now concerning spirituals, brethren, I want to write to you a few things." In the first eleven chapters he is dealing with carnal things. Those from the household of Chloe had reported to Paul a lot of the mess that the Corinthian church was in, a lot of carnality, fighting, divisions, bickerings. And so Paul wrote to correct these carnal abuses that were existing in the Corinthian church. But then when he finishes that, he says, "Now I want to talk to you about spiritual things; enough of the carnal things, now I want to talk to you about spiritual things." And he begins to talk to them about the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, the supremacy of love, and the power of the resurrection in the latter part of the book, the spiritual things. But he had to get the carnal things out of the way first.

So he deals in this early part with some of the problems that existed. One of them was division within the body. So he addresses the church of God which is at Corinth seeking to show them and bring them into the consciousness of the universal church of God, Jesus Christ.

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,"

to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus ([1Cr 1:2](#)),

The word *sanctified* comes from a root word which is *hagios*, which is also translated *saint*, the root word. It means one who is set apart for exclusive purposes. In the Old Testament, when they constructed the tabernacle and they made the vessels that were to be used in the service of the tabernacle, before they used these vessels, the plates, the cups and all, they sanctified them. That is, they set them apart for exclusive use, and thus, they were never to be used for anything other than the service and worship of God.

Your life, God has set it apart for His use, service to Him. So, those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, set apart from the world, and from the things of the world in Christ Jesus. God help us not to take the holy vessels that God has set aside for His use and use them for our own gain or pleasure.

called saints ([1Cr 1:2](#)),

Notice *to be* are in italics. That was added. You aren't called to be a saint. You're called a saint. I like that, Saint Charles. Got a good ring, doesn't it?

It's unfortunate that the church has designated certain special persons as saints, because as far as the Bible is concerned, you are all saints. It isn't some special honor conferred upon you by a counsel of men after determining that so many miracles have

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been wrought and so forth and thus you are elevated to sainthood. You are called by God a saint and that's good enough for me.

called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours ([1Cr 1:2](#)):

Again, wherever they call on Jesus Christ, He is their Lord but He is also our Lord. There are those who like to feel that they have an exclusive claim on the Lord, and this is the kind of division that was taking place in Corinth. "We're of Cephas, we're of Paul, we're of Jesus. We have exclusive little claims." He is their Lord, but He is also our Lord. And so this endeavor to break down this party spirit that created the divisions within the church of Corinth.

Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ ([1Cr 1:3](#)).

Grace, the word means beauty. The beauty of giving. The beauty of giving to those who are undeserving. Grace, one of Paul's favorite words; he expounds on it throughout the New Testament. Peace. Now "grace" was the common Greek greeting. Instead of in the morning, when you see someone and say, "Good morning," or "hello," or whatever, they'd say, "grace." The Jews when they greet you, rather than saying "hello" or "good morning," they'd say, "shalom," "peace."

So Paul took these two familiar greetings, those of the Greeks and those of the Jews and he combines them in so many of his New Testament epistles, "Grace be unto you, and peace." They are always combined in this order and it is the proper order, because a person cannot know real peace until they have experienced the grace of God. Now, for years as a Christian I did not really have the peace of God, because I did not know the grace of God. It was not until I realized the grace of God that I then discovered the peace of God. "Grace and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, in the first ten verses of this epistle, Paul uses the name of Jesus Christ ten times. He's really laying the foundation for our faith and all in the constant repetition of the name Jesus Christ. Here in verse 2, it was "the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," and here "from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Lord is not His name; it's His title, the kurios. Jesus is His Greek name, the Hebrew is Joshua, which means "Jehovah is salvation." It was the name that the angel told Joseph to call Him, for he said, "He will save His people from their sins." So He was named after His purpose, Jehovah-Shua, Joshua. Christ is actually, again, His designation, for it is the Hebrew word *Messiah*. So, again, it is not His name, but it is His mission.

So the first *Lord* is title, the name is *Joshua*, and the mission is *Christ* or *Me-she'ak*, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, unfortunately, we think of first, middle and last name, not so. And thus, people talk about the Lord Jesus, not really thinking of that as the title

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signifying relationship, which indeed it is. Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and yet you don't do the things I command you?"

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ ([1Cr 1:4](#));

And so Christ is the one through which the grace of God is bestowed upon us.

That in everything you are enriched by him ([1Cr 1:5](#)),

That word *enriched* in the Greek is an interesting word, plouto-ke'tus, actually. And we get our word *plutocrat* from that Greek word. "You've become a plutocrat because of Jesus Christ. You're enriched." And the word means "luxuriously rich," that in everything you are enriched luxuriously by Him. Oh, the depth of the riches that are ours through Jesus Christ. You're enriched

in all utterance, and in all knowledge ([1Cr 1:5](#));

Now, this utterance is the thing that the Greek was especially interested in. It was the *logos*, that's the Greek word used, but also in the knowledge.

Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you ([1Cr 1:6](#)):

So here they're being enriched in Christ in all utterance and knowledge. Their lives became the testimony of Christ, and that witness of Christ confirmed by the lives that they were living, actually.

So that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ ([1Cr 1:7](#)):

Now the interesting thing to me is that as Paul writes to the church of Corinth, he makes mention that they have all kinds of gifts. They do not come behind in any gift. Paul devotes three chapters to the gifts of the Spirit, the operation of those gifts, the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit. Because they came behind in no gift, they had them all. But, unfortunately, there was an abuse of the gifts of the Spirit in the church of Corinth that needed correcting, and Paul spends chapter 12 through 14 in correcting the abuses. But what is interesting to me is that this New Testament church of Corinth that came behind in no gift, that had all of these gifts in operation, was also the church that Paul had to rebuke for its carnality.

Now somehow in our minds there is a twisted wire that's crossed over and is shorting out, so that we have a false concept that if a person is using the gifts of the Spirit, he must be especially righteous or holy. And those that do have the gifts of the Spirit in operation often have that attitude, "Well, I'm more spiritual than you. If you were only as spiritual as I, you, too, could have these gifts working in your life." And there's just an awful lot of promotionalism, hucksterism, and ballyhooing about the gifts of the Spirit.

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But I have observed that even as in the church of Corinth, so today many of those people who are making the most commotion and the most noise about the gifts of the Spirit are really some of the most carnal people I know. They really do not walk after the Spirit. Their whole appearance is marked with carnality. Their whole lifestyle is carnal, though they are constantly talking about the gifts of the Spirit, the power of the Spirit, the anointing of the Holy Spirit and so forth. Yet, when you observe their lifestyles, they are still extremely carnal, much like the church in Corinth. It did not come behind in any gift, and yet was the church that needed the most rebuke because of the carnality that was existing within the church. Unfortunately, there is a tendency many times to use the gifts of the Spirit more or less as a novelty, as a toy, as a parlor game, where we entertain ourselves with the gifts of the Spirit and the operations of the gifts of the Spirit.

Now, please don't think that I am opposed to the gifts of the Spirit and their operation. False. I believe in the validity of the gifts of the Spirit today, all of them. I only wish that I had more of the gift, that working of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit within my life. I, as Paul, covet earnestly the best gifts. I desire that God would use my life, but I also desire that the Lord use me in such a way that it doesn't draw attention to myself. I don't want to be lifted up and begin to walk after the flesh instead of walking after the Spirit.

The Corinthian church commended by Paul because they didn't fall behind in any of the gifts as they were waiting for the coming. The word *coming* there is *apocalypse*, which is the same word used for the book of Revelation, the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ ([1Cr 1:8](#)).

Now he's talking about the future and Christ in the future. The same idea is given to us in Jude where he said, "Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" ([Jude 24](#)).

When my name is called there at the judgment bar, and I step forward, God will say, "Read the charges against this fellow," and Jesus will step forth and say, "No charges, Father. He's one of mine." You better believe I'll be praising God at that moment. Blameless, without fault, that's how Jesus is going to present me to the Father, confirming that work in me. "Blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord ([1Cr 1:9](#)).

Notice how Paul is putting it together. "Jesus Christ our Lord," "the Lord Jesus Christ," "our Lord Jesus Christ," just getting Him in there every lick.

Now, you've been "called into the fellowship," that Greek *koinonia* is a difficult word to translate because it has such a depth of meaning. It means oneness, it means communion, it means fellowship, it means common, it means sharing, all of these



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things. We do not have an English equivalent, and so we use different words at different times as it appears in the text, because all of them are words that define or help define koinonia. You've been brought into a sharing in all things in Jesus Christ. Now that's exciting, because everything that is His becomes mine. I'm an heir of God, but I'm a joint-heir with Jesus Christ as He shares with me. "Come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundations of the world." But don't think that is a one way; that also means that everything that I have belongs to Him. Well, just a minute.

Isn't it interesting how we can get so excited about everything that's His belongs to me, and yet, I would hold out my pittance from Him. I would hold back my mite while reaching for His wealth. But in reality, all that is mine is His. I need to take that view of things. Lord, you've made me a steward, you've entrusted me with Your goods as we've entered into this fellowship with each other. May I use wisely that which You've entrusted to me for Your glory because, Lord, it really belongs to You because we have this koinonia, this communion, this sharing.

Now I beseech you, [I beg you,] brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment ([1Cr 1:10](#)).

So Paul now begins to deal with some of the issues that had been brought to his attention, these divisions that were existing in the church there in Corinth. And he is exhorting them now, "I beseech you, brethren," that you get together, speak the same things, don't want these divisions, be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ([1Cr 1:11-13](#))

So they had divided off. There were those who say, "I am of Paul." Probably those who were wanting to live under the umbrella of grace. Perhaps abusing the grace of God, as Peter said some were doing, using it as a cloak for licentiousness. So when someone would rebuke them for their actions, they'd say "I'm of Paul!" I'm under the cloak of grace. Probably the intellectuals said, "Well, I'm of Apollos." Then there were always those who wanted to go back to the foundation and say, "Well, I'm of Peter." And then there is always that little segment that says, "We're the only ones were of Christ." They have that holier than thou and we are the most and no one else is anything because we are the church of Christ. You don't have the right name and therefore are second-rate. You don't belong. We're of Christ. Is Christ divided?

When men divide the body of Christ, who bleeds? What a shame that we bring up our petty differences in such ways that we divide the body.

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Now I believe that there is room for disagreement, different opinions. I can allow for that. I can accept it if you don't understand the scripture the same way I understand it. If you have a different idea on baptism than I have. I can accept it if you want to be sprinkled; I'll sprinkle you. Sometimes when I'm baptizing people they say, "Will you put me down head first?" I say sure, I'll dunk 'em. I can make allowances for the different ideas that people have. But when we disagree, surely we ought to disagree agreeably that we not create a division. Well he... and we begin to divide over the issues. They shouldn't separate us; Christ is not divided. Paul said, "I wasn't crucified for you and you weren't baptized in the name of Paul."

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ([1Cr 1:14](#));

Now these who say, "I am of Christ," make an issue over baptism and they'll come and hassle you about water baptism. They declare that you aren't really saved until you're baptized. Therefore they keep the tank full in the church all the time so that the minute a person is saved, they can take them right back to the tank and baptize them... so they can be saved. Instantaneous baptisms, and they feel that is extremely important. And better to do it here at the church, because if you're driving to the beach and you happen to get into an accident before you get there, oh brother, you've had it. What a shame, on his way to get baptized and he got snuffed.

Now, if water baptism were so essential for salvation, then Paul here is speaking blasphemously, really, when he said, "I thank God I didn't baptize any of you, but Crispus and Gaius. And if there are any others, I don't remember them."

Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. I also baptized the household of Stephanas: but besides these, I don't know if I baptized any body else [I don't remember]. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel ([1Cr 1:15-17](#)):

A very fascinating statement by Paul that once and for all should put down the concept of baptismal regeneration.

Water baptism is an obedience to the faith of Jesus Christ that I have. It is an outward sign of an inward work of God's Spirit within my life. It is renouncing my old life as being dead and now in water baptism buried, that I might live now the new life after the Spirit. But if I am not living the new life after the Spirit, then it means that the water baptism was not really valid. If I'm getting into all kinds of carnal arguments and fights because a person doesn't baptize instantaneously, and I divide the body and get upset and want to argue the issue, I don't care if you've been baptized a hundred times, you're not showing fruit of a true walk in the Spirit. Which, of course, according to Paul in [1 Corinthians 13](#) is marked by love, which doesn't seek its own way but believes all things, and hopes all things, and endures all things and never fails.

So man, prone to these little party divisions when he is walking after the flesh, when he is living a carnal life.



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G. Campbell Morgan said, "I have noted that the more spiritual a man becomes, the less denominational he becomes." Had Paul been writing to the church today concerning the divisions among it, I'm sure he would say, "But some of you say I'm a Baptist, and some of you say I'm a Presbyterian, and others say I'm an Episcopalian, and then others say, well I'm a Nazarene, and there are those who would say, "Well, we're of the Church of Christ." Again he'd say, "Is Christ divided?" And he would urge toward unity within the body to realize that we are all of Jesus Christ. Paul was sent to preach the gospel, not with the wisdom of words, something that they were very familiar with there in Corinth.

These philosophers played with words, but "God didn't send me to preach," with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect ([1Cr 1:17](#)).

Lest a person be drawn by the clever speeches rather than the conviction of the Spirit in his heart.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God ([1Cr 1:18](#)).

To the Greek, to the philosophers the preaching of the cross was foolishness.

When Paul was there in Athens addressing the Epicureans on Mars Hill, when he came to the place in his story where he referred to the resurrection of Jesus and they said, "What's this? Get out of here. What's this babbler talking about? Resurrection; foolishness, ridiculous," and they rejected Paul's message when he came to the cross and the resurrection. Foolishness. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness."

What is your attitude towards the cross of Jesus Christ? It's important that you examine it.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where then is the wise? and where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? ([1Cr 1:19-20](#))

Talking now about the Greek philosophers, those men who purported their love for wisdom, the scribe, the disputers of this world.

hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ([1Cr 1:20](#))

Yes, He surely has.

When I look at the theory of evolution that they are religiously trying to promote and realize the incredible paucity of evidence of transitional forms in the geological column, I realize all of the hype, all of the deceit, all that has gone to promote the theory of evolution. And then I look at the very concepts themselves trying to be pawned off on us

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as the wisdom of the world men of science. Yes, God has made foolish the wisdom of this world.

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God ([1Cr 1:21](#)),

God is the one who is the source of wisdom. Through wisdom in Christ it says "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" ([Colossians 2:3](#)). But the world by its wisdom knew not God. That to me is very interesting, for there is no true wisdom that eliminates God.

We have in the Bible the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, which is not man reaching out for God, but God reaching down for man. The infinite, it starts with the infinite base reaching to the finite. Thus, God is not found or discovered by man's pursuit and wisdom knew not God. God is discovered by the revelation of Himself to man, and that revelation is oftentimes made through preaching. So the world by its wisdom knew not God.

but it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe ([1Cr 1:21](#)).

So that through the preaching, God is revealed to man that man might believe. Now notice, it is the foolishness of preaching and preaching is really a foolish exercise in a sense, and especially the way some do it. But it is not the preaching of foolishness, so be careful of that, but the foolishness of preaching.

For the Jews require a sign ([1Cr 1:22](#)), Remember they said to Jesus, "Show us a sign that we might believe."

the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews it's a stumbling block ([1Cr 1:22-23](#)),

Even to the disciples it was a stumbling block. The idea that the Messiah would be crucified was a stumbling block.

When Jesus began to say to the disciples after Peter acknowledged, "You are the Messiah," Jesus said "Yes, and I'm going to be turned over to the hands of sinful men and they're going to crucify Me and slay Me. And the third day I'll rise again." Peter said, "Lord, be that far from Thee." Oh, a stumbling block! Peter stumbled over it. Their Messiah rejected, crucified? No way!

The Jews to the present day, for the most part, are still stumbling over the crucifixion, in spite of the fact that they have [Psalm 22](#) and [Isaiah 53](#) right before them.

"But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews it's a stumbling block,"

to the Greeks it's foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is

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wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. The foolishness of God [which is, of course, the preaching of the cross,] is wiser than men; the weakness of God, stronger than men. For look around, you will see brethren, that there are not many wise men after the flesh, and not many mighty, and not many noble, called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ([1Cr 1:23-27](#));

This is the best explanation I can give you for my being the pastor of Calvary Chapel. For God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and Calvary Chapel confounds the wise. They come from all over to study our methods, our techniques, our programs, to discover the secret of how it is that so many people attend a church.

The base things of the world, and things which are despised, God has chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are ([1Cr 1:28](#)):

God uses simple things and the purpose is:

That no flesh should glory in his sight ([1Cr 1:29](#)).

Now, if God would use mighty men and noble men and all, then these men would glory in His sight. People would glory in the men that God was using. God doesn't want any flesh to glory in His sight, and so He uses the foolishness of preaching and He uses simple people, base people, not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble to do His work because He wants the glory for the work that He does.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ([1Cr 1:30](#)).

These are the things that we find in Jesus and in the preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God. For God had to establish a just basis to forgive man their sins. That God might be righteous when He justified, a problem. How can a just God forgive man his sins?

When you really analyze it and dig into it, you find that God had a real problem, and He solved the problem in the cross. For He sent His Son to take the guilt of our sins and to suffer the penalty of our sins and He died that spiritual death and physical death which is the result of sin. The spiritual death first. On the cross He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" And there separated from God because of our sins. Secondly, the physical death as He dismissed His Spirit, suffering again the penalty of our sins.

Now, because the penalty has been paid, if I will just believe in Jesus Christ, God now has a righteous basis to forgive me of my sins. There's been a substitute, Christ, my substitute. Oh, the wisdom of God in the cross of Christ. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed. A righteousness again, predicated not upon the law or my works or my

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obedience to a rule or code of ethics or a standard that I have set or others have set, but a righteousness that is secure and constant because it is based upon the work of Jesus Christ in my behalf, not on my work.

If my righteousness were predicated upon my work, it would be a variable thing, very tenuous. I would have access to God some of the time. But because it is predicated upon the work of Jesus Christ, He has been made to us the righteousness of God. So as Paul said, "Those things which were gain to me," talking about his life in obedience to the law, "I count it loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffered the loss of all things. I count them but refuse that I may know Him and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith" ([Philippians 3:8-9](#)). Christ made to us the righteousness of God.

He's made to us the sanctification. I need power over sin. I need power over the flesh. I don't want to live after the flesh, but I find the flesh is strong. It is powerful; it holds me in its power. I try, I struggle, I pray, I vow, I promise, and still I fail, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

Well, thank God Jesus Christ has been made the sanctification of God for me. Now I see myself crucified with Christ, for I am in Christ and His death becomes my death--the death of the old man, the death of the old nature. So I'm baptized with Christ, and I bury the old life and the old man, and I come up out of the water risen in Christ to live the new life after the Spirit. The new nature of Christ now in control and living and walking after the Spirit. Christ is made the sanctification of God unto me. Finally, He's made the redemption of God.

Lost, a slave to sin in the bondage of corruption. Through the cross of Jesus Christ I've been purchased and I now belong to a new owner and my allegiance to Him.

That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord ([1Cr 1:31](#)).

That no flesh should glory in His presence. The only place I can glory tonight is in the cross of Jesus Christ and His finished work in my behalf.

## John MacArthur :: Bible Introductions - 1 Corinthians

### Title

The letter is named for the city of Corinth, where the church to whom it was written was located. With the exception of personal epistles addressed to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, all Paul's letters bear the name of the city where the church addressed existed.

### Author and Date

## Commentary on First Corinthians chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 8.6.23

As indicated in the first verse, the epistle was written by the Apostle Paul, whose authorship cannot be seriously questioned. Pauline authorship has been universally accepted by the church since the first century, when 1 Corinthians was penned. Internally, the apostle claimed to have written the epistle ([1:1](#), [13](#); [3:4–6](#); [4:15](#); [16:21](#)). Externally, this correspondence has been acknowledged as genuine since A.D. 95 by Clement of Rome, who was writing to the Corinthian church. Other early Christian leaders who authenticated Paul as author include Ignatius (ca. A.D. 110), Polycarp (ca. A.D. 135), and Tertullian (ca. A.D. 200).

This epistle was most likely written in the first half of A.D. 55 from Ephesus ([16:8](#), [9](#), [19](#)) while Paul was on his third missionary journey. The apostle intended to remain on at Ephesus to complete his 3 year stay ([Acts 20:31](#)) until Pentecost (May/June) A.D. 55 ([16:8](#)). Then he hoped to winter (A.D. 55–56) at Corinth ([16:6](#); [Acts 20:2](#)). His departure for Corinth was anticipated even as he wrote ([4:19](#); [11:34](#); [16:8](#)).

### Background and Setting

The city of Corinth was located in southern Greece, in what was the Roman province of Achaia, ca. 45 miles W from Athens. This lower part, the Peloponnesus, is connected to the rest of Greece by a 4-mile-wide isthmus, which is bounded on the E by the Saronic Gulf and on the W by the Gulf of Corinth. Corinth is near the middle of the isthmus and is prominently situated on a high plateau. For many centuries, all N-S land traffic in that area had to pass through or near this ancient city. Since travel by sea around the Peloponnesus involved a 250 mile voyage that was dangerous and obviously time consuming, most captains carried their ships on skids or rollers across the isthmus directly past Corinth. Corinth understandably prospered as a major trade city, not only for most of Greece but for much of the Mediterranean area, including North Africa, Italy, and Asia Minor. A canal across the isthmus was begun by the emperor Nero during the first century A.D., but was not completed until near the end of the nineteenth century.

Like most ancient Greek cities, Corinth had an acropolis (literally, “a high city”), which rose 2,000 feet and was used both for defense and for worship. The most prominent edifice on the acropolis was a temple to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. Some 1,000 priestesses, who were “religious” prostitutes, lived and worked there and came down into the city in the evening to offer their services to male citizens and foreign visitors.

The church in Corinth was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey ([Acts 18:1ff.](#)). As usual, his ministry began in the synagogue, where he was assisted by two Jewish believers, Priscilla and Aquila, with whom he lived for a while and who were fellow tradesmen. Soon after, Silas and Timothy joined them and Paul began preaching even more intensely in the synagogue. When most of the Jews resisted the gospel, he left the synagogue, but not before Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, his family, and many other Corinthians were converted ([Acts 18:5–8](#)).

## Commentary on First Corinthians chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 8.6.23

After ministering in Corinth for over a year and a half ([Acts 18:11](#)), Paul was brought before a Roman tribunal by some of the Jewish leaders. Because the charges were strictly religious and not civil, the proconsul, Gallio, dismissed the case. Shortly thereafter, Paul took Priscilla and Aquila with him to Ephesus. From there he returned to Israel ([vv. 18–22](#)).

Unable to fully break with the culture from which it came, the church at Corinth was exceptionally factional, showing its carnality and immaturity. After the gifted Apollos had ministered in the church for some time, a group of his admirers established a clique and had little to do with the rest of the church. Another group developed that was loyal to Paul, another claimed special allegiance to Peter (Cephas), and still another to Christ alone (see [1:10–13](#); [3:1–9](#)).

The most serious problem of the Corinthian church was worldliness, an unwillingness to divorce the culture around them. Most of the believers could not consistently separate themselves from their old, selfish, immoral, and pagan ways. It became necessary for Paul to write to correct this, as well as to command the faithful Christians not only to break fellowship with the disobedient and unrepentant members, but to put those members out of the church ([5:9–13](#)).

Before he wrote this inspired letter, Paul had written the church other correspondence (see [5:9](#)), which was also corrective in nature. Because a copy of that letter has never been discovered, it has been referred to as “the lost epistle.” There was another non-canonical letter after 1 Corinthians, usually called “the severe letter” ([2 Cor. 2:4](#)).

### Historical and Theological Themes

Although the major thrust of this epistle is corrective of behavior rather than of doctrine, Paul gives seminal teaching on many doctrines that directly relate to the matters of sin and righteousness. In one way or another, wrong living always stems from wrong belief. Sexual sins for example, including divorce, are inevitably related to disobeying God’s plan for marriage and the family ([7:1–40](#)). Proper worship is determined by such things as recognition of God’s holy character ([3:17](#)), the spiritual identity of the church ([12:12–27](#)) and pure partaking of the Lord’s Supper ([11:17–34](#)). It is not possible for the church to be edified faithfully and effectively unless believers understand and exercise their spiritual gifts ([12:1–14:40](#)). The importance of the doctrine of the resurrection, of course, cannot be overestimated because if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then preaching is empty and so is faith ([15:13](#), [14](#)).

In addition to those themes, Paul deals briefly with God’s judgment of believers, the right understanding of which will produce right motives for godly living (see [3:13–15](#)). The right understanding of idols and of false gods, in general, was to help the immature Corinthians think maturely about such things as eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols ([8:1–11:1](#)). The right understanding and expression of genuine, godly love was mandatory to right use of the gifts and even to right knowledge about all the things of God ([13:1–13](#)).



## **Commentary on First Corinthians chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 8.6.23**

So Paul deals with the cross, divine wisdom and human wisdom, the work of the Spirit in illumination, carnality, eternal rewards, the transformation of salvation, sanctification, the nature of Christ, union with Him, the divine role for women, marriage and divorce, Spirit baptism, indwelling and gifting, the unity of the church in one body, the theology of love, and the doctrine of resurrection. All these establish foundational truth for godly behavior.

## **Open Door Bible Church Church Outing and Baptism 2023**

**Wednesday August 23th, regardless of weather**

**(No Bible study on Wed. Aug 23)**

**Baptism & Church outing at White Lake State Park**

**Come any time after 10 am and spend the day**

**Outing ends at dusk.**

**There will be no admission charge**

**Tell the attendant at the gate,**

**you are part of church group using the Pavilion**

**Please bring modest bathing suits.**

**Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm.**

**Church will provide hot dogs and hamburgers**

**with all the fixings and drinks.**

**Please bring salad or dessert to share.**

**Baptism will be at 6:30 pm.**

**Those wanting to be Baptized need to take a short instruction class,**

**Sunday August 13, after lunch.**

**Please bring something to be Baptized in and a dry set of clothes.**

**If you have any questions call Pastor John's cell phone**

**508-380-0471**