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## THE CHURCH THE WORLD NEEDS | THE PERILS OF POPULARITY (2)

September 19, 2021

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

### PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst  
To cultivate mutually encouraging-relationships  
To participate in God's mission to the world

### ICE BREAKER QUESTION

10 MIN

Share one "high" and one "low" from the previous week.

### WORSHIP

10 MIN

#### OPENING PRAYER

God of radiant light, shine into our lives, and disperse the darkness that dims our vision; shine into our world, and cast out the fears that long have chained us; shine into our worship, that we may be a people of your hope and promise. Amen.

#### RESPONSIVE PRAYER—Psalm 50

<sup>1</sup>O God, save me by your name,  
and vindicate me by your might.

<sup>2</sup>**O God, hear my prayer;  
give ear to the words of my mouth.**

<sup>3</sup>For strangers have risen against me;  
ruthless men seek my life;  
they do not set God before themselves.     *Selah*

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, God is my helper;  
the LORD is the upholder of my life.**

<sup>5</sup>He will return the evil to my enemies;  
in your faithfulness put an end to them.

<sup>6</sup>**With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;  
I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good.**

<sup>7</sup>For he has delivered me from every trouble,  
and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

### SCRIPTURE READING

<sup>10</sup>*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.* <sup>11</sup>*For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.* <sup>12</sup>*What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."* <sup>13</sup>*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?* <sup>14</sup>*I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,* <sup>15</sup>*so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.* <sup>16</sup>*(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)* <sup>17</sup>*For 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.*

## BIBLE STUDY

40 MIN

### Summary and Connection

In v.10-17, Paul addresses two pressing issues in this young church: division and quarreling. Paul has received word that Corinthians had become sectarian, aligning themselves with various teachers, some with Paul, others with Cephas and some with Apollos and some with Christ. The Corinthians had formed parties around some of the charismatic figures in a way that led to division and fighting. Paul will later argue in chapter 12 that there are many gifts that serve the church and we should seek unity within a diversity of gifts. The different ministers in the church should not be competitors but collaborators in the task of serving the church. In order to unite the Corinthians, he begins teaching about baptism and the cross of Christ. It's these two realities that serve as the foundation for our identity—not simply as individual Christians but as the body of Christ. This is how Paul, the pastor, will seek to bring unity in the midst of division. We now should pay careful attention to the divisions that tend to creep into our life together, as well as the beautiful unifying remedy of baptism and the cross—both gifts we receive from Jesus.



#### 1. Looking at the Bible

What does the text say?

- Look with curiosity at this text. What jumps out at you?
- Pay attention to the change in Paul's tone from the first nine verses to this passage.
  - » Do you sense the urgency and perhaps frustration over the division?
  - » Where do you see it?
- We are familiar with Christ and Paul, but what do we know about Apollos or Cephas (Peter)?
- Does that help us understand something about this text?



#### 2. Looking at Jesus

Everything in the Scripture says something about Jesus. What does this passage teach you to *believe* about him?

- Paul's primary and rhetorical question in this passage is in v.13: Is Christ divided? The answer is no, but what point is Paul trying to get across by asking that question in that way?
- In v.17, Paul mentions the cross of Christ being "emptied of its power."
  - » What does he mean by that?
  - » Why does the eloquence of his speech, or lack thereof, relate to the power of the cross?
  - » How might the divisions in Corinth be emptying the cross of its power?



### 3. Looking at our Hearts

How does this passage shape our life as a community?

- How do you see Paul breaking down the walls of division in this passage?
- What are the enemies of community in this passage and what are some modern day equivalents?
- Why is it that we so often want to hold up other people or ideas instead of Christ for our hope?



### 4. Looking at our World

What are we to hope for?

- How do v. 10 and v. 17 call the Corinthians and us to have hope in the work of Christ?

#### SHARING

15 MIN

Share your prayer requests, thoughts, hopes and fears for the coming week, and as you do consider how this passage might give light to what you are sharing.

#### KINGDOM PRAYER

15 MIN

Pray that we would see ourselves called by God.  
Include other prayer requests.

#### SENDING

5 MIN

May God bless you, providing you with a listening ear. May Christ bless you, giving you the words you need to truly follow in his way. May the Holy Spirit bless you, instilling in you the boldness to seek God's grace and mercy. May the triune God bless you and give you peace. Amen.