

When Church Becomes Messy: First Corinthians

3 – FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES (1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17)

I. The Factions within the Church (1 Corinthians 1:10-12)

A. Paul's Plea (1 Corinthians 1:10)

1. The Basis for His Plea

- Speaking with the authority of Jesus Christ, Paul pleads with them.

2. The Plea

a. United Testimony

- Paul appeals to them that they be united in their testimony.

b. Harmony

- Paul tells them to be united in their thinking.

B. The Report of Divisions (1 Corinthians 1:11)

1. The Source (1 Corinthians 1:11a)

- Paul received the report of a problem from the household of Chloe.

2. The Report (1 Corinthians 1:11b)

- He hears that the Corinthian church has fragmented with quarrels.

C. The Factions (1 Corinthians 1:12)

- Paul identifies the various groups in the church.

Historical Note: Apollos

Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew. He was an eloquent speaker. He was well-versed in the Old Testament scriptures. He came to Ephesus after Paul left the city. Because he only knew the Baptism of John, Aquila and Priscilla taught him the complete gospel of Jesus Christ. From Ephesus, he journeyed and ministered through Achaia. He went to Corinth and ministered there. While some in Corinth identified themselves with Apollos (1 Corinthians 3:4), there does not appear to be any rivalry between Apollos and Paul.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4,5,6,22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13

II. Paul's Response (1 Corinthians 1:13-17)

A. The Rhetorical Questions (1 Corinthians 1:13)

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1. The First Question

- Paul asks them if Christ is divided.
- The universal body of Christ is not divided, and neither should its local expression be.

2. The Second Question

- Paul asks them if he was crucified for them.
- No man or leader won salvation for the Corinthians, except Jesus Christ.

3. The Third Question

- Paul asks them if they were baptized in his name.
- Their allegiance was owed to no man except Jesus Christ.

B. The Issue of Paul Baptizing (1 Corinthians 1:14-16)

1. Paul's Practice of Baptism (1 Corinthians 1:14)

- Paul stated that he was thankful that he only baptized two among them.

2. The Reason (1 Corinthians 1:15)

- Paul did not want them to attach some spiritual significance to being baptized by him.

3. Others Who were Baptized (1 Corinthians 1:16)

- Paul does remember baptizing Stephanas' household.

C. Paul's Declaration of His Ministry (1 Corinthians 1:17)

1. Paul's Ministry (1 Corinthians 1:17a)

- Paul was to proclaim the gospel, not baptize.

2. The Manner of His Ministry (1 Corinthians 1:17b)

- Paul did not proclaim the gospel with clever speech.
- In doing so, he would make the cross of Christ meaningless.