

1 Corinthians 1:1-21

Pastor John Miller

You've heard the story of Oliver Cromwell who, when he was getting his portrait painted, saw the painter was not including the warts on his face in the painting. Now, if I were being painted, I'd say, "Not only get rid of my warts, make me look better, okay?" But Oliver Cromwell said that a portrait should have warts and all -right?- a classic statement. Well, when you come to 1 Corinthians, it is Paul the apostle showing us in a church, warts and all. He holds nothing back. We're going to see all the problems that were going on in the church at Corinth. I'm glad that God didn't call me to pastor the church at Corinth. It was a church that had a lot of problems, and we're going to learn from those problems as Paul addresses them in this epistle.

Three quick things before we get into the text, and I don't want to belabor the introduction. But first the city of Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. This is Paul's second missionary journey when he actually founded the church in Corinth. I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, but I wanted you to see where this Greek city was located. Notice that Corinth looks like an island, but it's connected to southern Greece, Achaia, with what's known as an isthmus. It's a land mass, so it's really kind of a peninsula, and they actually carved a channel, a canal, through that three-and-a-half mile piece of land so that you can go from the Aegean Sea over without going around the southern tip of Greece. A lot of fascinating stuff about the city of Greece, but this is the location. It was a Greek city, and it was ahead of the Roman province there in Achaia.

The city was known for its moral corruption. It had the temple of Aphrodite, which was the goddess of love, and they had a thousand sacred so-called "priestesses," which were prostitutes; and they worshiped that way with licentious, wicked, sinful behavior. They were a very vile, wretched kind of Greek culture city that Paul had gone to and God did a transformation in their lives, but they had a lot of problems in the city.

The church was started by Paul on the second missionary journey, and if you want to make a note, Acts 18 will give you the story and the background of the second missionary journey, the section where Paul went into Corinth and started the church and met Priscilla and Aquila and had a time of ministry there with them and Apollos as well. The background for us is Acts 18. Then, Paul writes the correspondence to the city of Corinth.

Some believe that Paul was writing to Rome from Corinth, when you read Romans 1 and you read about the degeneration of man, that Paul was looking out the window looking at the city of Corinth when he wrote about the wickedness and the debauchery found in the book of Romans. The city is on a trade route from north to south and east to west. It was kind of like the biblical version of Las Vegas or San Francisco. It's just kind of a wicked place. They probably had their own little saying, "What goes on in Corinth, stays in Corinth," or "What happens in Corinth, stays in Corinth." I think that's where that originated from. I'm kidding, but it would make sense.

Three things about the correspondence, verse 1, Paul is the author. There's no doubt about that. Paul was writing to a church that was divided; there was division over different ministers, and we'll touch on some of that tonight. He writes to a church that was defiled; they had sexual immorality in the church, and they weren't confronting it or dealing with it. They were saying, "We forgive you and love you. We accept you just the way you are." It's very much like the problems in the church today. It was a disgraced church. So, it was divided, it was defiled, and it was disgraced.

The first section that we're going to be dealing with is that Paul was told by the house of Chloe, which was a prominent family in the church at Corinth, about the division and some of the problems of immorality that were going on in the church, so he begins to address them and to deal with them.

How could this church, started by the great Apostle Paul, become so divided, so defiled, and so disgraced? The answer was not because it was in Corinth, but because Corinth was in it. You know, it's been said that a boat is made to go on the water, and when you put a boat on the water everything's fine, right? But, if the water gets in the boat, then the boat begins to sink. So, the church is in the world, but when the world comes into the church, then the church is in trouble. We need to be careful that we don't let the world come into the church and dictate how we live and what our standards are.

I want to just outline these first several verses we cover tonight as we go. In verses 1-8, we're going to see that Paul is pointing out that we are called to holiness. Because they were a defiled church and there was immorality rampant in their church, he's going to call them to an understanding of their position in Christ as being called to holiness and godliness. Paul greets them, beginning in verses 1-3. Let's read it. Follow with me. It starts with, "Paul, called to be an apostle." I don't know if your Bible italicizes "to be," but it should be italicized because it's not there in the Greek. It's just, "Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and,"—he mentions a guy named—"Sosthenes our brother,"—who's mentioned in Acts 18:17, who is there and no doubt got converted through the ministry of Paul and became a member of the church.

Verse 2, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are"—here it is—"sanctified in Christ Jesus,"—this is him addressing this issue of them being defiled and wanting them to remember that they are set apart and to be holy unto God—"called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Go back with me to verse 1.

There's no doubt about this and throughout church history it's been accepted that Paul was the author of this epistle, Paul the apostle, who was known first as Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee that was converted to Christianity, Acts 9, a radical conversion, and became the apostle to the Gentiles. So, he's an apostle, verse 1, and the reason he would mention that was because his apostleship was being attacked by other false teachers. They would always try to undermine

Paul's authority and teaching by denying his apostleship. The word "apostle" means one sent out and commissioned on a mission, and they were appointed by God Himself. Paul was an apostle, "... as of one born out of due time," sent primarily to the Gentiles.

Notice the phrase "Jesus Christ." I'm kind of getting to it before I get to verse 10, but I want you to take note of this. Almost every verse from 1-10, I think technically all but one and the one verse still alludes to it, makes reference to "Jesus," "Jesus Christ," or "Jesus Christ the Lord," and I'm so amazed by that. About nine times you find the reference to Jesus, and He's referred to in every verse in the first ten verses. What better way to remind yourself that we are called to holiness than to set Jesus Christ before the people to get their eyes on Him, to be focused on Him. What better way for us this year to live a godly and holy life other than to fix our eyes on Jesus. Amen? So, over and over and over again you find reference to "Christ Jesus" or "Christ Jesus our Lord" or "Jesus Christ our Lord" throughout these first ten verses.

Then, he says, I'm writing, "Unto the church,"—the Greek word 'church' is the Greek word *ekklesia* and again, like the concept of being sanctified in verse 2, it means a called out assembly. It's not a building, it's a people called by God, the term for the Christian, the "called" of Jesus Christ, I love that. We're called out of the world, we're called unto Christ, and one day we'll be called up to meet Him in the air -amen?- when we see Him in the rapture. The "called" is, "the church,"—the *ekklesia* God which is at Corinth." Every church has two addresses: one on earth, "... at Corinth;" and one in heaven, our citizenship is in heaven. "... to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." This is somewhat a typical opening greeting or salutation by Paul as he wishes them grace and peace, verse 3, which is the Greek word *cháris*, grace, all that's beautiful and charming and lovely, unmerited favor from God. Peace is Hebrew

Shalom, and it's always in that order. Grace comes before peace. You can't know the peace of God until you experience the grace of God.

In verse 2, Paul mentions that they "... are sanctified in Christ Jesus." That word "sanctified" is an important word, and I make mention of it quite often, that we're justified, we're being sanctified, and that one day we'll be glorified. But you can actually use the term "sanctified" for the whole of salvation—justification, sanctification, and glorification or just saying salvation. We're sanctified. When you're saved, you are set apart unto God. He saved you to set you apart unto Himself to live a godly, holy, life. The word "saint," the word "sanctify," and the word "holy" *hágios*, all have the same root meaning, which means to be set apart and dedicated unto God. So, we are saints who are sanctified because we're saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. He's reminding them of who they are.

If you want to write them down, first they are the set apart ones. They are the sanctified ones, and that is true of you and me tonight. We are in Christ—set apart, sanctified believers. Then, we're called "saints," verse 2 as well, which is tied into the word sanctified, "... with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 3 Grace be unto

you, and peace.”

Now, beginning in verse 4, Paul begins to thank God for them. You have, verses 1-3, Paul's greeting; verses 4-8, you have Paul's gratitude. Let me just say this before we even get into it. This church had a lot of problems. There is no perfect church. Do I get an, “Amen?” There are churches that are more sanctified than others, but no one is perfect. Sometimes people are looking for the perfect church. I tell them, “If you find it, don't join it because if you do, it won't be perfect anymore.” We're sinners saved by grace. We're in process of being made into the image of Christ. Even though this church was not perfect and had a lot of problems and a lot of pastors would just want to wash their hands of the problems or write the church off, Paul was thankful for the church in Corinth.

We should have a love for and a thankful heart for and a commitment to our local church. By the way, this is not a plug because you have to come to Revival Christian Fellowship. Every Christian should have a local church that they are committed to and a part of, even if the church like we don't have formal membership. If you come, you serve, you give, you pray, you participate, you submit to the leadership of the church, and you're a part of the church. Every Christian needs to have a local church they are a part of and committed to. If you really want to grow in the Lord, you need to be committed to a local church fellowship. When you do that, you're going to find it's got problems, not everybody's perfect, where there's people, there are problems. But, like Paul, we should be grateful.

I'm so grateful for this church. I'm grateful for what God is doing in this church and how God is working in the lives in this church. We should be thankful for the church that God has made us a part of, and we're part of the family of God.

Paul says, verse 4, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by”—here it is again—“Jesus Christ; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul's thankful heart for this church in Corinth starts with the fact that they had been given the grace of God. They were enriched by God's grace. Look at verse 4. He says, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.”

When you're saved, you're saved by grace. But after you're saved and you're living the Christian life, God gives you daily grace, sustaining grace, the grace of God that you need to live the Christian life. It's not the end of grace. John said in his gospel, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” So, even after you're born again, God's grace is sufficient for you. His strength is made perfect in your weakness. When Paul had his thorn in the flesh and he cried out to God to heal him and God said, “No, but I'll give you My grace, and My grace will be sufficient for you, and My strength will be made perfect in your weakness.” I want you all to know tonight that God saves you by His grace and then God gives you His Grace to live the Christian life. Now, we can't do it in our own strength, we can't do it

with our own wisdom and our own ability, so we must rely upon the all-sufficient grace of God to live the Christian life.

I think in context, too, Paul is alluding to the *chárisma*, the gifts of the Spirit as well, that this church was so endowed with and so well-known for that God had enriched them and says in verse 5, “. . . in all utterance, and in all knowledge,” so that could be a reference to some of the gifts of the word of knowledge or the word of wisdom. It could be just a general concept of God’s grace gives us knowledge in His Word, but the idea is that we’re graced, God gives us grace to strengthen us, help us, and gives us gifts of the Spirit. We’re going to be talking about spiritual gifts as we go through Corinthians as well, that the Spirit gives to everyone as He chooses, and we’re all given spiritual gift or sometimes gifts of the Spirit. They were graced by God. We, too, are sanctified, called apart to be holy, and we are given grace to live the Christian life and the gifts of the Spirit to serve the Lord and glorify Him, “. . . given you by Jesus Christ.”

Notice verse 5, “That in every thing ye are enriched by him,”—some translations have ‘made rich.’ Again, this is like Ephesians 1, that we are blessed with all the blessings of the Spirit in Christ, true of all believers. He mentions their “. . . utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.” Verse 6, that “testimony of Christ confirmed in you,” is Paul actually saying, “Your lives have been changed by God’s grace, and it’s a confirmation that you are truly saved.” A transformation has taken place of your life. God transforms life by His grace. Amen? Has your life been changed by the grace of God? Is it being changed by the grace of God? It’s so wonderful to think of God actually changes people’s lives, that God is changing us by His grace. He takes a hard-core sinner, a wicked person, and He transforms them. The Bible says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become”—brand—“new.”

Over the years that I’ve been a pastor, I’ve had the privilege of seeing people that were really, really a mess get their lives changed. I won’t look at anybody right now. Man, could I tell you some testimonies—people that got saved in prison, people that came out of a life of prostitution and drugs and alcohol, marriages that were destroyed and reunited and healed. It’s just amazing. My dear friend, Ron Brav, who’s the pastor of Calvary Chapel Hilo, Hawaii, on the Big Island, came broken and beat up and bruised spiritually, separated and divorced from his wife into our church. He heard the Word of God, gave his life to Jesus Christ, got saved. His wife got saved, remarried, grew in the Lord, then called by God to be a pastor and has been a faithful pastor for many years. A life that was just completely ruined, God can turn around and change and transform by the power of God.

Their lives in Corinth were a testimony, verse 6, of Christ’s power to save. So, they were enriched by God’s grace. Then verse 7, here’s the second characteristic of the church he was grateful for, in that they were expecting Christ’s return, “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” They were expecting and looking for the Lord to return. How marvelous. And, again, they were given gifts, verse 7, as they waited

for the Lord to come back. I do believe that these gifts are going to be in the Church until the Lord returns, that they are part of what God is still doing today in the Church.

Verse 8, Paul says they're being kept by the power of God. So, they were enriched by God's grace, they were expecting Christ's return, and thirdly, they were being kept by God's power. I love verse 8. It's kind of hidden in there, and people pass over it, but it says, "Who shall also confirm you." That "who" in verse 8 is a reference to Jesus. Jesus will confirm you, " . . . unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is keeping you by His power. Write down Jude 1:24. Jude's only got one chapter, verse 24. He comes to the end of the book and says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,"—aren't you glad?—"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless," here he says, " . . . blameless."

Now, "blameless" doesn't mean you're perfect, but it means that you will have no indicted sin committed to you. Christ paid for it all on the cross so you stand blameless before the throne in the Person of Jesus Christ. These are the things Paul was grateful for, that they were leaning on God's grace, expecting Christ to return, and they've been kept by God's power.

Paul speaks about God's faithfulness in calling them into unity and fellowship. This is where he starts to deal with the problem of the division that they were going through. They were divided and they were parting spirit over different ministers in their church. Verses 9-21 is what we're projecting to get to and dealing with the subject of unity and fellowship with the believers in the body. Paul says, verse 9, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship"—which is *koin ōiō y6ö`* his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. 10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Again, this is what I said, the very first issue that he wants to deal with is the division. This is a common thing in a church today. Someone said, "To live above, with the saints in love, that will be glory. But, to dwell below, with the saints I know; brother, that's another story." We can't always get along, but we need to walk in the Spirit. We need to have the same mind of Christ. Write down next to verse 10, Philippians 2 where Paul says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"—not something to hold onto—"But,"—emptied—"himself . . . and took upon him the form of a servant," so we need to have Christ's humility to be able to walk in unity.

Paul is begging them, verse 10. He says, " . . . by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," so in light of who Jesus is, His nature, His character, and no doubt when they were baptized, they would be baptized in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, all consistent with the authority and the character of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Again, a reference to Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 11. He says, "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." Basically, he said,

“You’re busted.” You say, “I thought you said they were a sanctified church?” They are, but they’re not perfect. They’re growing in sanctification. There were some disputes going on; there was some division going on. There were contentions going on. We don’t know exactly what they were, what the issues were, but in light of what Paul says in verses 12-13 and further, it indicates that they were rallying behind their favorite minister instead of focusing on Christ and the unity they had in Him.

It’s always a danger that people start following a man rather than Christ. He says, verse 12, “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas,”—which is Peter—“and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? “—can you just chop Christ up and distribute Him at all these different pastors and ministers—“was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.” Stop right there.

Paul says, “It’s reported to me that you have these contentions,” and they revolved in some way, and it would be nice to know specifically what was going on, where people were grouping behind Paul and thinking that they were superior because they were the “Paulites,” they were following Paul. Paul was the founder of the church, so it only makes sense that they would say, “Paul’s my man,” and “Paul’s a preacher of the gospel. He’s an evangelist,” and “He’s a missionary,” and “I’m a follower of Paul.” Others in the church were going, “Well, I prefer Apollos.”

Apollos was Greek and an eloquent orator. It’s believed that he was quite intelligent and spoke eloquently. The intellectuals, no doubt, kind of rallied behind Apollos, “I like Apollos, and I’m following Apollos.” The problem was that it was causing division, and they were getting their eyes off the Lord. Some said, “Well, we follow Peter.” The word “Cephas” is a reference to Simon Peter, and we have no record that Peter was ever in Corinth, but evidently they thought Peter was the man. He was the leading apostle, and he was a traditionalist and all the great things that Peter would preach and teach. They thought Peter was a great guy, so they rallied behind Peter. There’s a last group which just said, “We’re of Christ.” It’s believed that this “We’re of Christ,” was in kind of a proud, haughty, “We’re the super saints. We’re the deeper life club. You guys think you’re from Paul or you’re following Peter, you’re following Apollos, we just follow Jesus.” Well, aren’t you amazing.

Should we follow the Lord? Yes, but we don’t brag about that. We don’t boast about that, and we need to be careful that we don’t follow men and become a disciple of any man. It is unfortunate sometimes churches will begin to have as their pastor kind of a personality cult kind of a thing where he becomes “the man,” and “the anointed one of God,” and brings the Word of God and the messages from God, and he’s the “anointed leader,” and the focus shifts from Christ to the pastor. It’s a very dangerous thing. You should always keep your focus on Christ. You’re following Christ, you’re not following a man.

Paul wants to make it clear that, “Look, I wasn’t promoting myself. I didn’t have my own brand.

I'm not self-promoting. It's not about Paul. It's not about Peter." He says, verse 13, "Is Christ divided?"—no, Christ is not divided—"was Paul crucified for you?"—obviously not, reminding them of the cross and that Jesus was the One that died for us on the cross—"or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Obviously, not. Then, he makes some interesting statements about baptism, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." In light of what Paul says about baptism here, it supports the idea that baptism is not essential for salvation. Is baptism important? Yes. Should you be baptized? Yes. But if you've been born again, and your sins have been forgiven—if you're born again, you're a child of God—and you have not been baptized, you are still saved and you're going to heaven. It doesn't make you any less saved because you weren't dunked in water.

I've had people say when I'm baptizing them, "Hold me down a long time, I've got a lot to bury." Okay, I'll swish you around a little bit then. I actually have sometimes people say, "You've never lost anybody, did you?" I guess they can't swim or something like that. I thought maybe we would baptize by throwing off the end of the pier in Oceanside, just WHOO! "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!"

These verses indicate, and I wanted you to notice that if Paul believed that baptism was necessary for salvation, he wouldn't say, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." He wouldn't say that. Let me point out some other things that he says here about baptism. He goes on to say, "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." He wasn't making baptism a big issue.

There are churches today that say you must be baptized to be saved, you must be baptized by them, that church. They don't recognize the baptism from another church, and they say that unless you're baptized "in Jesus' name" only that you're not saved. This is very common in what's called the Apostolic Church, which is Jesus only, which is denial of the Trinity; which, by the way, is not Christianity. If you deny the Trinity, you don't have Christianity. They baptize just in the name of Jesus.

Baptism isn't essential or necessary for salvation. We know the thief on the cross, Jesus said, "Today you'll be with Me in paradise." He wasn't baptized. He didn't say, "Get me off the cross and baptize me real quick." It's not essential for salvation. He was saved by grace, through faith.

Paul says, "I don't want anyone thinking " . . . that I had baptized in mine own name." He said, verse 16, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." Paul would never say these things, if baptism were essential and necessary for salvation.

Notice what he says in verses 17-18, "For Christ sent me not to baptize,"—wow! He wouldn't have said that if baptism was essential for salvation—"but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." I love these statements of Paul, and Paul is talking about the preaching of the gospel.

Paul was a pastor. He was an apostle. He was an evangelist. He was a missionary, but he points out that his primary calling and ministry was to preach the gospel, to preach the Word.

I believe that it's consistent with anyone called to be a pastor that the number one priority of their ministry and calling is the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and the proclamation of the gospel. That's their primary calling—to preach the gospel. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul told Timothy, "Preach the word," so Paul says, "God sent me to preach the gospel, the good news, and not to preach it, " . . . with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." What Paul preached, he preached the gospel. How Paul preached it, not with the wisdom of words. If you use the wisdom of words, then you only dilute the gospel and pervert the gospel and weaken the gospel. You want to preach the Word, nothing more, nothing less; and you want to keep it focused on the gospel, not adding to it, not subtracting from it or else you'll take away from the power of the gospel.

Write down Romans 1:16 where Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to . . . the Jew first, and also to the Greek." My passion, my prayer is that pastors everywhere would stick to the priority of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, that they would preach the Word, they would teach the Word, they would proclaim the Word, and they would not let the other issues that they get involved in take precedence over the proclamation of the gospel. I believe it's the pastor's number one job and calling. Paul tells us what he does—preach the gospel, 1 Corinthians 15, we're going to get into the description of the gospel, " . . . Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Verse 18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness"—the proclamation. The word "preaching," by the way, is the reference to the Word of the cross, " . . . is to them that perish,"—or literally are perishing—"foolishness." The reason why it's foolishness is because they're unsaved and thus perishing. By the way, that word "perishing" doesn't mean that they are going to lose their existence or non-being, it means that they will not have life, they will be punished. They're not going to cease to exist. It's not loss of being, it's loss of well-being. The power of God is in the gospel.

Verse 19, "For it is written,"—and this is a quotation from Isaiah 29:14—"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." That statement from Isaiah 29:14 was taken during the reign of King Josiah in Judah when they were being attacked by the Assyrians and they were turning away from the Lord and not trusting in the Lord. Isaiah said that they should not use their own wisdom and rely on Egypt for deliverance, and God would protect them, and they didn't do that. They didn't see Egypt help them, and God did come through and delivered them. Basically, it's the idea that we don't preach our own wisdom, the wisdom of men, but we just preach the gospel.

Verse 20, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that

believe.” This theme, we’re going to stop here, but it’s going to be developed more as you go through the chapter because the Jews stumbled over the cross, the Greeks considered it foolishness, but Paul said, “. . . but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God,”—to salvation. He’s actually promoting them to look at the cross, to look at the gospel, to be central on the cross of Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ. It’s a marvelous section of 1 Corinthians 1 as it develops the fact that they are to look at the cross, remember the cross, preach the cross, to glory in the cross, and that Paul was called to preach the cross, “. . . not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

I love the idea that the gospel is the power of God to salvation. It’s not your wisdom. It’s not your ability. It’s not your ability to sway people or to convince people. Preach the gospel and the God of the gospel will save souls. There’s power in the gospel. The gospel has its own built-in power. Put alongside this John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We can all preach the gospel. It’s easy to just say, “You know, God loves you. Your sin separates you from God, and God sent His Son to die on the cross for your sins. Jesus died in your place. He died on the cross for you. He was buried and rose from the dead. He ascended back into heaven and He’s exalted at the right hand of God the Father, and whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. If you’ll turn to Him and believe in Him, you can be forgiven and you can be saved,” and let the Holy Spirit use the Word of God to convict and convince of sin to bring them to Jesus Christ. Not just pastors, for all of us as Christians there’s a lot of insight here as to how we should be simply preaching the gospel simply. It is God’s power to save. Amen? Let’s pray.