

Lesson Two (1:10-17)

DIVISION

10 I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius; 15 lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

May we encourage you to utilize the outline presented earlier as you study through? Or make one of your own for use. If you will check the outline given, you will see that chapters 1-4 are presented as a unit of thought, developing a topic. God's message and God's messenger form the topic about which Paul writes. Don't let the man-made chapter divisions create problems for you in studying. Read as if there were no chapter divisions or even verse divisions (since Paul did not write in "chapters and verses" as we think of them). Instead, read for units of thought, words into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, paragraphs into topics, etc. Keep the author's purpose in mind. Decide what is said, what is meant, and then how the author expected it to be understood and applied.

1:10 -- **I appeal** -- The Greek word *parakale* has a strong tone, more than just ordinary, with the idea of beseech or exhort. (In its noun form, it is used to refer to the Holy Spirit, as in John 15:26.) Paul doesn't quite command, but nearly so, both because he is an apostle and their "father" in the faith. (Check 14:3 for the words, then 16:12.)

brethren -- Because of all that God has done for them in Christ, they were brethren, having a common bond, v. 9, of love, faith, hope, etc. On this basis, Paul makes the appeal to them to maintain their unity in the bond of peace, Eph. 4:1ff. Some were of a divided mind, sectarian in thought. As with the brethren in Philippi, every effort needed to be rather than a divided one, togetherness not schisms. (As we progress or contentious of failing to do good. It is "some" not "all" that are involved in one way or another. Granted, they all needed to grow in Christ, but all were probably not lacking Christian graces.)

dissensions -- The letter presents a number of ways various ones were worldly-minded. They had quarrels, v. 11, parties aligned behind men, v. 12, thought too highly of themselves, 4:6-8; were indulging ungodliness, ch. 5; were indifferent to those who believed differently than they, respect to other members of the body, ch. 12-14. Such a state of mind was not the Spirit but of the flesh. To word in Greek, *schisma*, behind dissension has the idea of a tear, split, or division, as in Mt. 9:16; 27:51; Mk. 2:21; Lk. 5:36; Jn. 7:43; Acts 14:4; 23:7; I Cor. 11:18; 12:25. Ch. 3:16-17 indicates that it is not good to do harm to God's temple. Such divisions as here indicated harmed the body.

united -- To counteract this Satanic attitude, they needed to work at mending the rents in the body, which is the meaning of the Greek word behind "united." See Mt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 6:40; Rom. 9:22; II Cor. 13:9, 11; Eph. 4:12; I Thess. 3:10; Heb. 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; I Pet. 5:10. To accomplish the task of mending, the sameness of mind and understanding must prevail. Common goals and all work in the name of Jesus would create the desired end. Note ch. 3:18-23

for one “cure” for this problem, esp. v. 21. Consider also 10:14-22 for the thought of “oneness” in the body.

V. 12 -- **each one of you says** -- The divided minds in v. 10, the quarrels in v. 11, produced the parties in v. 12. None of the men named was responsible for nor would countenance such activity.

Their rivalry was of their own doing. God was not its author. He intended that there be no schism in the body, 12:25. Notice that this point is picked up in 3:1ff. They were the first of many to be so minded, however, down to our own day. Failure to help answer the prayer of Jesus in Jn. 17:20ff. Was sadly evident in Corinth as it is in our own age.

The word Paul used in v. 11, *eris*, is not found in good company (see Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15 and Titus 3:9). They needed to hate the evil and cleave to the good, Rom. 12:9.

V. 13 -- All these questions expect a “no” answer. Christ has a body that is to be united upon him, v. 9, 10, and no other. All of the other persons were but servants in the house while Jesus was God’s Son over the house..

in the name of -- Also in v. 10, the idea is “by the authority of” someone, or in representation of someone. David told Goliath that he came in the name of Jehovah, I Sam. 17:45. Peter and John healed the lame man “in Jesus’ name” in Acts 3:6. The Jewish men tried to work a miracle in Paul’s name, Acts 19:13, but Paul did his work in the name of Jesus, Acts 16:18. The apostles were commanded to immerse all believers in the name of the Trinity, Mt. 28:19. Paul was commanded to be immersed in Jesus’ name, Acts 22:16.

V. 14 -- Paul was totally devoted to evangelism, and doubtless immersed many into Christ over the years. However, in the case of the Corinthians, some of them had such a devilish set of mind that they quarreled over who was immersed by whom. Such was far removed from the right spirit, besides reflecting their ignorance of the fact that who is doing the immersing is a matter of indifference.

Faith in Jesus as savior in the one being immersed makes the act valid. Of course, if those in Corinth knew these facts, their actions were the more inexcusable. This was the case with Peter: he had preached in Acts 2:39 that God’s promise was to all “afar off” but he didn’t perceive what he said. Hence, it took a direct act from God to convince him, Acts 10. In spite of this, however, Gal. 2 reveals that he failed to practice what he knew to be right, and needed a rebuke from Paul to correct him. Truly the sectarian spirit is a hard master, and dies a slow death.

Perhaps one of the reason we are so prone to be sectarian is fear of what others will think. How difficult it is for all to see that loving others is not compromising the truth. It may be true with some that any acknowledgment that someone in another religious group might possibly be Christian would present a threat to their own faith, though such a conclusion is unnecessary. One doesn’t have to agree with “us” in all points of doctrine to be saved. In fact, all have need of “milk” at times, and growth in grace and knowledge. However, to admit such a thing seems to some to be saying that “we” may be wrong and others correct, or it doesn’t matter what is believed, etc; none of which is necessarily so.

Problems of the above nature have always been around, for church history reveals many occasions of strife and division. The reasons are many. Because it is still evident today and among all religious groups, we ought to do our very best to make sure we do not cause such things.

Crispus and Gaius -- Paul mentions the household of Stephan in v. 16 and 16:15. Luke records in Acts 18:8 that Crispus and his household became Christians. How many of these other than the two mentioned here were immersed by Paul isn’t stated. Note also the results in Athens in Acts 17:34.

V. 16 -- Evidently Paul taught others to immerse even though they were “new” in faith. It is really a fine thing (for several reasons) to allow the one who leads another to Christ to help that person put on Christ in the act of immersion, Gal. 3:27. If more of this took place, more would

share in a personal way in the joys of a soul winner. Additionally, it would be evident that the “preacher” doesn’t have to do all the work of the Lord; that others can enter into it, too.

If you, the reader, are wondering how the “way we do it now” got started, the answer is long and involved. Suffice it to say that the Roman Catholic emphasis that only the “clergy” can make an act valid is part of the reason. The egos of some preachers who must be always seen and heard and thought indispensable are another. Should you wish to pursue the point, read your New Testament and see what it says about the matter of who can immerse another.

V. 17 -- In Paul’s case, he disclaimed any great importance being involved in who did the immersing. The task entrusted to him by Christ (note v. 1) was preaching the gospel concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Should any who hear accept the good word, then obedience in immersion to aid in the “new birth” of the believer, which is brought about through faith and God’s work in the washing o regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:5, the fact is that anyone Christina or not, could help the believer be obedient to the lord’s command.

to preach the gospel -- This phrase translates only one Greek term, *evangelidzesthai*. The root of the term means “to announce” or “to bear news” of some sort. In this case, the news is good: it is about a loving God who sent His only son to die that man might live.

eloquent wisdom -- Translated from Greek ‘in wisdom of word/speech.’ This is an intriguing phrase inasmuch as v. 18 speaks of the word of the cross and v. 24 says the word is God’s wisdom. The meaning in Paul’s words may then revolve around the “puffed up” attitude of some in Corinth, as exhibited in their foolishness over men and gifts, etc. Hence, there seems to be a play on words here. Consider the next phrase.

the cross be emptied -- There is no expression in Greek for “of its power.” The idea is implied by the words Paul used. The verb has the idea of “emptiness” or in “vain.” See on 15:14. The thought seems to be that to preach anything to sinners but Christ crucified, 2:2, would be to preach amiss, for Christ is God’s wisdom, v. 30, and nothing else will do for the purpose of salvation. Hence, Paul imparted God’s wisdom, 2:6ff.

Consider the very first preaching done by the apostles, Acts 2. The recorded message in Acts 2 is about Jesus, crucified, resurrected, crowned. Among those who heard were some who believed. Their faith expressed itself in a question: “What must we do” (in light of our sinfulness)?” Peter’s answer, by inspiration, was “Repent and be immersed, each one of you.” The results of faith issuing in obedience as stated by Peter were 1) remission of sins and 2) the gift of the holy Spirit. If God directed Paul to preach as He did Peter, it is rather sure that Paul preached as did Peter, and immersed those who believed (as the Acts record bears out many times).

We ought to follow in their ways. If we do, then people will believe in Christ and act on their faith rather than being persuaded by oratory of some sort and act on another’s convincing manner. God’s Word is sufficient, if we will present it as best we can, with faith that it has God’s power in it, Rom. 1:16, to convict and convert the minds of men.

Paul goes ahead in 1:18 - 2:5 to explain what he means about his preaching, and in 2:6-16 about the source of the message he preached.

LESSON 2 QUESTIONS

1. Have you made some effort to outline the epistle yet?
2. Why was the fellowship in Christ by God’s grace, v. 9, a good basis for the discussion beginning in v. 10?

3. Discuss how the Christians in Corinth could be saints, brethren, enriched by God, in fellowship with Christ and with each other, and yet some be guilty of factionalism.
4. Can you give some reasons why people quarrel and divide, whether or not they should divide?
5. By what means does a person achieve fellowship with other Christians?
6. If you are unwilling to agree that anyone is in Christ except those who agree in all points with you, what causes you to so think?
7. Would it be possible to so present the gospel in public or private that people would believe in something other than Christ?
8. What would prompt anyone to want to preach any message to sinners but Christ crucified?
9. What scripture in the New Testament can you find that states immersion is valid because of who is doing the immersing?
10. Discuss the “pros and cons” of having the preacher do all the immersing on Sunday rather than allowing anyone to be immersed anytime by anyone.
11. Which would be better, do you think: to hold that there are some people in other religious groups who are in Christ (thus, if such there be, to accept those whom God has accepted) or to hold that only those who believe as you do are accepted by God (and perhaps fail to welcome as brethren some whom God has welcomed)?