



First Corinthians - 16 chapters

Title:

The First Epistle to the Corinthians – because it is the first of the two letters written to the church in Corinth included in the New Testament. Corinth was a major trade city.

Author:

Written by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul was a strict Pharisee in Jerusalem until he had a revelation of Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul spent the rest of his life as a missionary proclaiming Jesus to Gentiles around the Mediterranean. Paul wrote 13 of the Books of the New Testament.

Occasion and Purpose:

Paul had founded the church in Corinth. After a lengthy absence, he was made aware of some problems that had developed in the church. They had an incorrect understanding of what it meant to be ‘spiritual’ people, which led to their spiritual pride, resulting in divisions in the church, blatant sin in the church, and their rejection of Paul’s leadership, among other problems. Paul wrote to them to address the sin and division problems, to address their questions, and primarily to address the underlying theological misunderstanding and arrogant attitude, by reminding them of the Gospel of the Crucified Christ and his authority as an apostle following in Christ’s suffering.

Themes:

1. **Theology leads to behavior** – Paul corrects their bad behavior by correcting their bad theology which is its root. Their underlying theological problem of an over-realized eschatology and a prideful, self-focused spirituality is corrected by a rehearsal and application of the Gospel of the Crucified Messiah. This truth is applied to their view of leadership, authority and lifestyle.
2. **True Wisdom** – Their view of wisdom is corrected by Paul’s/God’s. It is not worldly wisdom that boasts in its own achievement, but boasting in God’s wisdom shown in a Crucified Messiah.
3. **True Knowledge** – Their view and content of knowledge is corrected by Paul’s/God’s. It is not worldly knowledge that puffs itself up and boast of its own achievement, but God’s knowledge used to build up and serve one another, like the Crucified Messiah.
4. **True Spirituality** – Their view and practice of spirituality is corrected by Paul’s/God’s. It is not false, pretentious spirituality that boasts in its experiences and gifts and achievements, but true spirituality that suffers and gives and humbles itself on behalf of others, imitating the Crucified Messiah.
5. **True Freedom** – Their view and practice of freedom is corrected by Paul’s/God’s. It is not selfish freedom to do whatever you want – which typically results in increasingly scandalous sin, but it is true freedom to do what is right – freely, willingly giving up one’s own rights for the sake of others, imitating the Crucified Messiah.
6. **True Authority** – Their view and practice of authority is corrected by Paul’s/God’s. It is not worldly authority that lords it over people and boasts in position and power, but it is godly authority that does what is right without regard for image, willing to suffer and be despised on behalf of serving others, imitating the Crucified Messiah.

Summary:

Instead of boasting in human wisdom, power, spiritual experience and leaders talented in winsome communication and promotion, God's people should boast in God's wisdom and power shown in the faithful proclamation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. By rejecting the standards and practices of the world in favor of God's ways and practices, God's people will experience God's resurrection power and reap the eternal rewards of His superior wisdom, for His glory alone.

Organization:

1:1-9 Introduction	
	Salutation, Greeting and Thanksgiving
1:10-4:21 True Christian Ministry	
	1:10-17 No divisions 1:18-2:5 The reason: The Cross destroys human wisdom and boasting in leaders 2:6-16 God's Wisdom by the Spirit, not from leaders 3:1-23 God builds the church, leaders are underlings responsible to Him 4:1-21 True apostles are contrasted with the Corinthians' view of leadership
5:1-6:20 Immorality in the Church	
	5:1-13 The immoral brother 6:1-8 Lawsuits between believers 6:9-11 The high standards of the Kingdom 6:12-20 Sexual Immorality
7:1-14:40 Answering the Corinthians' Concerns	
	7:1-24 Concerning Marriage 7:25-40 Concerning Virgins 8:1-11:1 Concerning Idol-food 11:2-34 Concerning Worship 12:1-14:40 Concerning Spiritual Gifts
15:1-58 The Gospel as the Foundational Answer	
	15:1-11 Rehearsal of the Gospel 15:12-34 the Resurrection of Christ 15:35-58 The Resurrection of Believers
16:1-24 Conclusion	
	The Collection, Personal Information and Final Greetings

Key Verses:

1:18-31; 2:1-5; 4:1-2, 6-7; 6:9-11; 6:12, 18-20; 7:1-2, 8-9, 25; 8:1, 9-13; 10:7-9, 11-14; 10:23-24; 10:31-11:1; 12:1, 4-7; 12:31-14:1, 14:26, 39-40; 15:1-8; 15:12-14; 15:50-58