

Text: 1 Co 3.1-17

As we move through Corinthians, we will keep our place by developing the broad outline we started with.

I. Introduction (1.1-9)**II. Conditions reported to Paul (1.10-6.20)****A. Divisions in the church (1.10-4.21)**

¹ Cor 1.11 For I have been **informed** concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you.

Divisions Revealed (10-12)**Paul's Opening Apologetic (13-17)****The Gospel vs. Wisdom (1.18-2.5)**

Section 1: the cross vs. human wisdom (18-25)

Section 2: the world's view of believers (26-31)

Section 3: the powerful effect of Paul's preaching (2.1-5)

The Spirit and God's wisdom (2.6-16)**Fleshly Immaturity and God's Church Building Program (3.1-17)**

Today: **Change of Mind and Servants of Christ (1)**

The Change of Mind (3.18-23)

Turning to the next section of the text, Paul begins to combine his themes. What kind of change does Paul call for in 3.18? **Paul calls for a change of mind (specifically a change of "worldview") — from the wisdom of this age to the foolishness that makes truly wise.**

Compare 1.18-25. What did the world think of God's wisdom? **It is foolishness**

How does Paul reverse the world's view in 3.19? **The wisdom of the world is foolishness**

Paul quotes from Job 5.13 and Ps 94.11 in support of his point. What do these quotations say about God's relationship with the wisdom of this age?

1 Cor 3.19 (Job 5.13): **God catches the wise in their own craftiness**

1 Cor 3.20 (Ps 94.11): **God knows the reasoning of the wise better than they know themselves**

What three remedies does Paul command in this section?

1 Cor 3.18 a: **Stop deceiving yourselves**

1 Cor 3.18b: **Become foolish**

1 Cor 3.21: **Stop boasting in men**

Paul compares himself (and the other leading men) to “the world or life or death or things present or things to come.” (21b-23) What do all these things represent for the Corinthians? **God’s good gifts to them, including the leaders**

It may seem hard for us to imagine this scenario, but how can “boasting in men” exhibit itself in a local church? **When men form party spirits in the church and see themselves in competition with one another against the pastor or a deacon or some other person in the church.**

Servants of Christ (1) (4.1-7)

Paul turns from the group of leaders to focus now on his own place as a leader. He wants them to adopt God’s viewpoint of spiritual leadership. What terms does Paul use to describe his leadership? (4.1) **Paul calls himself a servant of Christ [“under-rower” — a laboring servant] and a steward [manager, civil servant] of the mysteries of God**

What do these terms reveal about the relationship of spiritual leaders to God? **They are completely subordinate to God, and are sent to accomplish God’s work, not their own.**

What is the fundamental requirement for any steward? (2) **That he faithfully performs the task his master gives him**

What does Paul say about how he views their evaluation of him? (3a) **He gives it little attention**

Why does Paul say he doesn’t examine himself? (3b, see v. 4) **He does little self-examination because he knows how easy it is to deceive himself, he waits on the examination of the Lord.**

Why should the Corinthians leave off judging faithful church leaders? (5) **The time for judgement is when the Lord comes (see 3.13-15), who will judge men correctly and reward those who are praiseworthy.**

How does this argument help to overcome the Corinthian party spirit? **Their spiritual champions are actually only men who serve as the lowest social class, in service to God, who the Corinthians ought to follow.**

Note: in this discussion, it is assumed that the church leaders are faithful stewards of God's word. The Corinthians were making favorites out of them and boasting over one another because of their champion. They missed the point of who these men were to them (servants of God) and who ought to be their only champion (God).

Why is the apostle so insistent that they view Paul and Apollos correctly? (6) **To avoid personal arrogance and pride**

Why should pride be avoided? (7) **Because everything we have comes from God, God's gifts don't make us superior persons**

Pr 13.10 Through insolence [pride – κἰϐ] comes nothing but strife, But wisdom is with those who receive counsel.

Pride isn't the only cause of strife, but pride only produces strife. How might we see this in a church fellowship? **Various answers**