

“A Wise Masterbuilder!”
1 Corinthians

Introduction:

1. This Morning We Are Going To Begin Our Series Of Messages Through 1 Corinthians!
 - Hopefully, You Have Already Taken The Opportunity To Read Through This Letter!
 - In Our Take 20 Or Other Times Of Bible Reading!
 - We Want To Spend Our Time This Morning:
 - Looking At The Big Picture Of This Inspired Letter Written By The Apostle Paul To A Church Located In Corinth, Greece! Look At Map & Bulletin Pictures!
 - **IE:** Sometimes It Is Helpful To Look At The Beauty Of The Forest, Before You Look At The Individual Trees! Or To Look At & Enjoy The Completed Painting, Before You Study The Individual Brush Strokes Of The Artist!
 - Then We Will Look At The Details!
 - We Will See That This Part Of God’s Word:
 - Even Though It Was Written Nearly 2,000 Years Ago, Is Still Very Relevant & Important To Us!
 - In Our Own Christian Lives!
 - In Our Own Church!
 - In Our Own Community!
 - And In Our Own Culture!
2. Some Key Verses:
 - In Reminding These Corinthian Christians About His Arrival In Their City Around The Year 50 AD, Paul Says In 1 Corinthians 2:4 - “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: / That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!”
 - This Was The Purpose Of Paul This Corinthian Church!
 - For His Speaking!
 - For His Preaching!
 - For Their Growing!
 - That Their Faith Should Not Stand In The Wisdom Of Men!
 - But In The Power Of God!
 - And This Purpose & Message:
 - Extends Not Just To Those Christians In That Church At That Time!
 - But Is Meant For All Christians In Every Church At Every Time!
 - And Especially For You – In Our Church – And At This Time!
 - Because So Often:
 - We Stop Relying Upon The Power Of God, And The Focus Of Our Faith Begins To Stray!
 - **IE:** Like An Outdoor Cat That Sticks Around So Long As It Feels Like It Is Getting Its Needs Fulfilled - Until Something Or Someone Better Comes Along - Then It Moves Along!
 - All To Often, We Are Like That! Our Faith Is Like That! And We Stop Growing!
 - But No – Our Faith Needs To Stand In & Rely Upon:
 - Not The Wisdom, Talents Or Skill Of Men!
 - But In The Power Of God – Which Is The Gospel!
 - Which In Chapter 15, Paul Clearly Defines & Explains!
 - 15:1-4 - “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; / By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. / For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; / And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures!”
3. God Begins The Process Of Rebuilding & Renovating Our Lives:
 - Through Faith In This Simple & Clear Gospel Message!
 - And This Is What The People Of Corinth Needed!
 - And What We Need As Well!
 - Need To Have Our Lives Rebuilt & Renovated By The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - But This Is Not A One-Time Thing!
 - No - This Is A Long-Term Process!
 - Of Continual Rebuilding & Growing!
 - 3:9-10 - “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. /

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon!”

- And This Is What This Letter Of 1 Corinthians Is For!

- We Will See How Similar & Relevant The Message For The Corinthian Church Is For Us & Our Church!

4. Paul Begins His Inspired Letter - 1:1-3 - “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, / Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: / Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ!”

- Need To Know A Little More About Corinth, To See If What Paul Wrote To Them Applies & Is Still Relevant For Us!

- We Will See That There Is A Lot Of Things / Needs That Are Similar! Holy Spirit Wants Us To Deal With These Things Too!

1. *The City Of Corinth Is Similar To Our Own Cities!*

- The City Was Very Powerful!

- Corinth Was One Of The Most Strategically Located Cities In The Ancient World!

- The City Overlooked The Isthmus Of Corinth!

- A Thin Strip Of Land Which Joined Two Major Sections Of Greece! To Get From One Part To Another, Had To Go Through Corinth! Very Powerful!

- The City Was Very Prosperous!

- Also Just A Few Miles From Two Major Ports! Ships, Instead Of Taking A Dangerous Route Around Greece, Would Cross The Narrow Strip Of Land Near Corinth! Even Had An Ancient Railway - Now There Is A Canal! A Lot Of Money To Be Had!

- The City Was Very Prominent!

- Most Amazing Thing About The City - Was Its Mountain! Standing 1,886 Feet High - Could See It For Miles Around! Virtually Indestructible!

- The City Was Very Proud!

- And Just 200 Years Before Paul Went To Corinth To Preach The Gospel – The City Rebelled Against The Roman Rulers - And The Entire City Was Completely Demolished & Left In Ruins!

- Their Pride Led Them To A Great Fall!

- And They Were Left In Ruins For 100 Years!

- After 100 Years, The City Needed To Be Completely Rebuilt – And Was By Rome – And Became Successful Again!

- Our Cities & Our Country Is Similar To Corinth!

- We Are Powerful / Prosperous / Prominent!

- We Are Also Very Proud! Christians Infected Too!

- And We Are In Need Of Being Rebuilt!

- Spiritually! By The Gospel!

2. *The Community Of Corinth Is Similar To Our Own Community!*

- This Rebuilt City Of Corinth Is The City That Paul Went To!

- It Became A Roman Colony & Became Very Prosperous Once Again! But It Also Became Known All Around The World For A Few Things!

- The Mixture Of Corinth Was Well Known!

- A Mixture Of People!

- Because The City Was So Close To Two Major Ports - People From All Over The World Would Live & Pass Through The Community! North / South / East / West! Extremely Diverse!

- A Mixture Of Fortunes!

- Included Rich / Poor & Freeman / Slaves!

- In Fact - At The Time Paul Visited - 200K Freeman / 500K Slaves!

- A Mixture Of Trades!

- Politics Was Important! So Was Commerce By Ship! Also Known For Its Pottery / Brasswork / Architecture!

- A Mixture Of Religions!

- Greek & Roman Gods! A Significant Jewish Population With Their Own Synagoge!

- Corinth Was A Melting Pot In Ancient Rome!

- Just Like Our Community!

- Becomes More & More Diverse! What Paul Says Is Important & Relevant!

- The Morality Of Corinth Was Well Known!
 - Or - Immorality - Is More Like It!
 - Because Of The Great Mixture Of People:
 - What Happened In Corinth Tended To Stay In Corinth!
 - And So - The Community Was Known For Its Immorality Even In That Wicked Culture!
 - But - Shockingly - Even Because Of One Of The Primary Religions Of Corinth!
 - Had A Temple To The Goddess Aphrodite, Where Wicked Immorality Would Take Place In Their Acts Of Worship!
- The Materialism Of Corinth Was Well Known!
 - When Someone Would Say: “To Live As A Corinthian” – It Meant That You Were Living In Luxury And Immorality!
 - The Romans Made It The Finest City In Greece, And Some 5 Times As Large As Athens, When Paul Arrived There!
 - It Was Known As A Truly Modern City!
- Our Community Is Similar To Corinth!
 - Our Mixture & Diversity!
 - Our Materialism & Morality – Immorality!
 - And We Are In Need Of The Message Of 1 Corinthians!

3. *The Church Of Corinth Is Similar To Our Own Church!*

- The Beginnings Of The Church!
 - We Find The Simple Beginnings Of The Corinthian Church In The Book Of Acts!
 - When The Apostle Paul Was On His 2nd Missionary Journey, That Took Him To Athens & Then To Corinth!
 - Read Acts 18:1-11!
 - In Corinth:
 - He Meets With Aquila & Priscilla!
 - Preached First To The Jews & Then To The Gentiles When Rejected!
 - Not At First Sure Of Success!
 - 2:3 - “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling!”
 - But Look At What God Tells Paul!
 - Acts 18:9-10 - “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: / For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city!” - Then Spent 1 ½ Years There!
 - And A Church Was Born!
 - This Is How Every Church Is Born!
 - This Is How Every Church Grows!
- The Building Of The Church!
 - God’s Goal For His Church Is Growth!
 - Not Primarily Numerical, But Spiritual & Faithful & Evangelical!
 - The Church Is Described:
 - As God’s Building – In 3:9!
 - As God’s Temple – In 3:16!
 - As Christ’s Body – In 12:27!
 - And The Church Is To Be In A Continual State Of Building, Growth & Renovation!
 - Otherwise, It Will Deteriorate!
 - **IE:** Like Taking Care Of The Rot On Our House Before It Gets Too Bad!
 - Some Serious Issues That These Christians & This Church Needed To Still Deal With!
 - Such A Variety Of Subjects Is Discussed - “No Area Of The Believers Life Is Exempt From The Salvation That Is In Christ Jesus!”
 - What Are Some Of These Issues?
 - Similar To Our Own Issues!
 - Some Personal / Public / Practical / Principles!
 - The Issue Of Division!
 - Call To Christian Unity!
 - 1:10 - “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!”
 - The Issue Of Selfishness & Self-Centeredness!
 - Call To Christian Service!
 - 12:25 - “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another!”
 - The Issue Of Lust!
 - Call To Christian Love!
 - Chapter 13! 13:13 - “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity!”
 - The Issue Of Carnality & Worldliness In The Church!
 - Call To Christian Spirituality!
 - 3:1 - “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ!”
- Our Church Is Similar To Corinth!
 - Our Beginning!
 - Our Process Of Building & Rebuilding!
 - Need To Be Open & Ready To Apply What We Hear!

4. ***The Challenge Of Corinth Is Similar To Our Own Challenge!***

- What Caused Paul To Write This Letter?
 - Because Of The Issues That He Heard They Were Facing & That Were Hindering Their Growth!
- Their Present!
 - They Still Needed To Undergo Spiritual Rebuilding & Renovation!
 - There Was Still Work To Be Done!
 - 3:9-15!
 - The Were Supposed To Be Built Up With:
 - Spiritually Valuable Materials!
 - Like Gold, Silver & Precious Stones!
 - But Instead They Were Being Built Up With:
 - Spiritually Deteriorating Materials!
 - Like Wood, Hay & Stubble!
 - They Needed To Be Rebuilt!
- Their Problem!
 - Instead Of Seeing Their Need To Be Rebuilt!
 - With Spiritually Valuable Materials!
 - Paul Identifies Their Problem!
 - Instead Of Being Willing To Be Rebuilt!
 - Instead Of Being Humble & Teachable & Moldable! They Were Proud!
 - They Thought They Had It All Together!
 - The Nature & Culture Of Their City & Community Had Infected Their Church!
 - They Were “Puffed Up!”
 - Paul Lays This Charge 6 Times:
 - 4:6 - “That no one of you be puffed up for one against another!”
 - 4:18 - “Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you!”
 - 4:19 - “But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power!”
 - 5:2 - “And ye are puffed up!”
 - 8:1 - “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth!”
 - 13:4 - “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up!”
 - Their Great Challenge – Being Puffed Up, When They Should Be Being Built Up!
 - Like The Church Of Laodicea In Revelation 3:17 - “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!”
- Their Potential!
 - But, God Has A Great Plan & Purpose For This Church!
 - At Corinth & At Grace! Hope & Help!
 - 1:9 - “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord!”

- Our Challenge Is Similar To That Of Corinth As Well!
- Think We Have It All Together!
- Yet - Instead Of Being Puffed Up – Still In Desperate Need Of Being Built Up!
- But - Great Hope & Help – The Faithfulness Of God!

Conclusion:

1. Join With Us As We Uncover Areas Of Our Own Lives & Our Own Church That Need To Be Renovated & Rebuilt!
- 2:4 - “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!”

Grace Baptist Church

Stephen Elmer, Pastor

4245 North 200 West

Greenfield, Indiana 46140

317-326-2362

www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace

www.growatgrace.org

pastor-elmer@hotmail.com