

Divisions that Drain the Cross

What was the problem at Corinth?

Divisions, , and quarrels, v 11

Divisions, v 10

The word means a tear, used of fishing nets (Mark 1:19); also of a political division, used of Jesus' ministry: he divided the crowds (John 7:43, 9:16).

Quarrels, v 11

Contentions that include subtle manipulative tactics.

What does this mean?

Not a division of doctrine: "The problem is a power struggle, not a theological controversy."

It is a matter of control

The thrusting, competitive culture of the city of Corinth since its refounding as a Roman *colonia* in 44 BC makes it all the more certain that competitive power play on the part of one group against another was the root problem in the church.¹

Corinth was a competitive city.

Not "win-win," but "win-loose," win at any price.

If you don't look out for your interests, nobody else will.

Look out for #1!

How did Paul come to understand this matter, v 11?

Chloe's household.

Some have suggested that she lived in Ephesus, not Corinth.

How was this expressed in Corinth, v 12?

Along party lines, along philosophical lines, along people who thought in the same ways about diverse matters

¹ Thiselton, *Shorter First Corinthians*, p. 40.

The Corinthians were inflated with self-importance on behalf of one against the other.

There were holy huddles, people who knew who agreed with them on their non-theological agendas for the church and who took sides based upon these matters.

What each group believed is probably not known.

What kinds of things do this in 21st century churches?

What kinds of things do this or could do this in our church?

Any of below

Traditional, contemporary, southern gospel, hip-hop, Skillet, rap

I am of wine, I am of abstinence

I am of tattoos, I am of no tattoos

I am of parking lot, I am of platform remodelization

Traditional budget, non-traditional budget.

When people think like this, they are thinking worldly wisdom.

If I don't take care of my own interests, who will?

Can you become inflated with your self-importance?

It is all too easy for this to happen if the message of the Cross is not the focus.

What is wrong with this, v 13?

Is Christ divided?

Is Christ apportioned out? Does each group have its own particular share of Christ that it can control for its own benefit? Should Christ bless your personal agenda at the sake of someone else's?

Please make the Yankees win.

What is the danger of this, 13b-17?

Paul is not condemning baptism or suggesting it isn't significant. He is saying is that who baptized you is not a status symbol, or a tool for power playing, 13b-17a.

When people think like this, they are thinking worldly wisdom.

This kind of worldly wisdom nullifies the message of the Cross, 17b.

Illustration, my expired credit card.

The Gospel has no power, a church has no power

What is the solution to this, v 10?

To “agree with one another,” v 10b

not ...uniformity or replication in every detail..., but a non-competitive attitude that sets aside all hints of power plays

“that you all take the same side”

There should be no ball hogs in the local church.

To be “perfectly united in mind and thought,” v 10c

Same mind: “outlook, stance orientation, attitude”

Same thought: “purpose, intention”

We all want to win the game, we all have the same goal

Not, Lord Help me to score the winning goal, but lord, help us all as a team to win the game

“in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” v 10a

Christ’s character and reputation of being self-giving, sacrificial, even at great cost, cf. Phil 2:5ff

If everyone is passionate about Christ being glorified in this ministry, of the cross to be filled with power, we must all be on the same page with the same orientation.