

BIB 271 Church Epistles

Lesson 5 I Corinthians

Intro. The key to the book of Corinthians is division. They were divided upon almost every possible subject. This church is known as the most worldly and carnal church in the New Testament. This was a direct result of the location of the city. They were the intersection for sailors and were well known for their paganism and temple prostitution. This letter was written as a response to a letter sent to Paul asking for insight into how to handle the numerous divisions that were prevalent in the church. Paul responds with answers to their many problems reminding them that they were called to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

Key verse 1:10

I. Division over preachers (1-4)

- A. The power is in the message not the messenger (1) this is revealed by those that received the message being not many wise, noble, and mighty are called but rather the foolish.

“What wickedness it is today, the way that soundly evangelical preachers criticize each other! It does nothing but harm, besides leaving a bitter taste in the disparager’s mouth. It is a poisonous weed which springs from jealousy. It is a dishonor to Christ and a grief to the Spirit” Baxter

- B. The power is the message not the method (2) It was not oratory skill that produced results because it was a message spiritually understood. This is illustrated that not many wise, noble, or mighty are called.

C. The power is in the maker not the man (3-4) it is carnality to follow a man. “Let the Christian rank and file, also, learn to appreciate the Lord’s gifted human servants without idolizing them. Doubtless even in the days of the Christian era preachers and teachers had their differing excellencies, emphases, and ways of putting things, so that different men appealed to different minds. Equally doubtless, now as then, immoderate adulation of such “ministers” is a mark of spiritual immaturity.” Baxter

- 1. We are merely laborers - it is God’s building therefore be careful how you build (3) ‘send laborers into HIS HARVEST’
- 2. We are merely stewards (4) stewards don’t own anything they are required to be faithful managers of what they have received

II. Division over problems (5-6)

- A. Immoral problems (5) the need for church discipline - to act
- B. Illegal problems (6) the need for spiritual discipline - to not act, rather to suffer yourself to be defrauded

Trans. In the first two instances of division (preachers and problems) there was little toleration for their actions and they were reprovved for their carnality.

III. Division over practices (7-11) these can be the most difficult because of the “gray area” in the matters.

- A. Marriage practices (7) they were not sure how to treat marriage
 - 1. the case for marriage 1-2

2. the case of the married 3-5
3. the case of the unmarried 6-9
4. the case of the married not to divorce 10-11
5. the case of the Christian married to an unbeliever 12-16
6. the principle established 17,20,24 and illustrated for circumcision 18-19, servants 21-23
7. the case of virgins and widows 25-28
8. the case of celibacy 29-38
9. the case of divorced 39-40

Note: is it wrong for the divorced to remarry?

- B. Pagan practices - eating meat sacrificed to idols (8) don't defile the weak of conscience
- C. Money practices (9) paying the preacher - ox deserves the corn nevertheless Paul refused their pay
- D. Idolatrous practices (10) example of wandering the wilderness and also of eating from table of demons and table of the Lord - Key verse 31
- E. Worship practices (11)
 1. Head covering - if cultural why does he use spiritual concepts to explain
 2. abusing the Lord's supper and agape feast - rich and poor despising each other. The rich have good food and are getting drunk. The poor have nothing.

IV. Division over preaching

- A. the unity of spiritual gifts (12) illustration of a body being unified
- B. preeminence of charity over speaking in tongues (13)
- C. prophesying preeminent over tongues (14)
- D. false teaching and refutation concerning the resurrection (15)

V. Conclusion

- A. Paul's collection - instruction concerning giving to the saints of Jerusalem v. 1-3
- B. Paul's companions - 4-12
- C. Paul's commands 13-18
- D. Paul's close 19-24

Conclusion

what a great book for instruction in how to deal with church problems.