



## An Introduction to 1 Corinthians & 10 Key Passages

June 2, 2013

### Intro Text: 1 Cor 15:1-3

- Welcome to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians!
- I've actually been a bit nervous about preaching through this letter (and excited too), which made me want to do it all the more. 😊
- Why nervous and excited? Because of the implications of reformation. Remember why we shifted to a predominately expository church?

### Expository Preaching Distinctives

1. The biblical **Text** drives the sermon; the preacher's ideas aren't the point.
2. As a result, God sets the **agenda** for the church.
3. "What did this mean to them" is the first interpretive question asked.
4. Preaching/Teaching in books instead of bits!
5. Ultimately, God is the subject of the message! Soli Deo Gloria!

### Expository Preaching: Five Whys

1. Expository Preaching expresses exactly the will of God, allowing God to **speak** and not man.
2. Expository Preaching retains the thoughts and intents of the **Holy Spirit**.
3. Expository Preaching frees the preacher to proclaim all the revelation of God, producing a ministry of wholeness and **integrity**.
4. Expository preaching promotes biblical **literacy**, yielding rich knowledge of redemptive truths.
5. Expository preaching transforms the **preacher**, leading to transformed congregations.

### 3 Basic Hermeneutical Rules...yet another Review 😊:

1. Rule 1: A text cannot mean what it **never** could have meant to its author or his or her readers.
  - This rule anchors us into the author's and hearer's context, and gives us a "foundation" from which to interpret and apply the passage we are reading.
2. Rule 2: Whenever we share the same context with the first-century hearers, God's Word to **us** is the same as His Word to **them**.
  - Marriage precepts then apply to married folks now, principles for singles then to those now, handling money then to those who handle money now. 😊
  - In other words, we MUST NOT treat Scripture as if "that was for them, not for us."
3. Rule 3: The **clear** must interpret the **unclear**.
  - So when an issue arises where we need God's guidance, here is the process. Keeping all the rules in mind, we start with the most clear: biblical precepts (commands). Then we move to principles and then patterns. We do this in this order. In the absence of one, we move to the next. We use this order because we are seeking clarity.
  - Precepts then inform principles and patterns and the patterns themselves must be considered in light of both precepts and principles. Therefore, when we have a precept in context, we have God's Word on an issue and other passages must be interpreted in light of what is clearly stated.
  - Harvey Bluedorn has rightly written, "An obscure passage of Scripture is one which does not directly teach on a particular subject with one clear meaning. It is a very fallacious and unsound hermeneutical method to simply choose - with one's one authority, from among the many possible interpretations of an obscure passage - to simply choose one particular interpretation, to anoint it as the true doctrine, and to use this chosen interpretation to invalidate a contrary

teaching found in other clear passages which explicitly teach on the subject. The clear sheds light upon the obscure, not the other way around. To put the obscure passage in control is to stand all methods of understanding on their head. This is a classic method of twisting Scripture.”

### **An Introduction to Corinth and 1 Corinthians**

1. Corinth was situated along a major trade route by land and water, on an isthmus between mainland Greece and the Peloponnesian Peninsula. It was known to be a place of great wealth, trade and a source of information.
2. Unfortunately, Corinth was also infamous for its **corruption** and sexual immorality due to its easy access to travelers.
  - a. After being destroyed by Rome in 146 B.C., it was re-founded as a Roman colony and became the capital of the Roman province of Achaia.
  - b. Therefore it had lots of Romans, Greeks, and enough Jews to have a synagogue (Ac 18:4).
  - c. Religion in the city was dominated for a time by the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of “love”, whose priestess-prostitutes at one time numbered 1000, and whose temple was on the highest mountain peak.
  - d. Prostitution was a driving force of the city’s prosperity. It was so bad, to “Corinthianize” became a way of saying “to practice immorality.”
3. Paul first arrived in Corinth during his 2nd missionary journey in the early 50’s.
4. 1st Corinthians was written some time in 55 A.D. from Ephesus, however, this was not the first letter Paul ever wrote to this new church. *“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—” (1 Corinthians 5:9, ESV)*
5. According to Acts 18, Paul planted this church and nurtured it for 18 months.
6. During this time, Paul was “reasoning” in the synagogues each Sabbath and encountered:
  - a. A rejection of the Gospel from the Jews—so much so that the Lord had to provide encouragement to Paul directly: *“And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”” (Acts 18:9–10, ESV)*
  - b. The Civil leaders and Jews in the city went as far as to bring Paul before a tribunal for his preaching (Acts 18:12)
  - c. However, there was also an acceptance of the Gospel from the Gentiles, hence, the founding of the church of Corinth.
7. Paul’s reasons for writing (Remember, that these letters are “occasional” letters. They should prompt us to ask, “Why is Paul writing in the first place?”):
  - a. The battle Paul faced while planting the church of Corinth was still evident during the time Paul was writing to his fledgling church with a few new issues.
  - b. Paul’s reason for writing is very clear: There was major division in the church due to internal pressures (arrogance within the church and a lack of holiness) AND external pressure (cultural norms that had infiltrated the church).



## Implications for CRCC

1. Friends, we take Scripture in large sections like this ultimately because we want this church and our lives to reform and conform according to the “mind of Christ.” (1 Cor 2:16)
2. 1 Corinthians is at its core a letter of instruction written by the Apostle Paul to a church in the middle of a sexually perverse, pagan, idolatrous, “tolerant,” and **relativistic** culture.
3. Its strategic economic location made it an ideal place to spread the gospel and plant a strong church, as many cultures lived and worked there.
4. But those same cultural dynamics made it a difficult place to minister and maintain any sense of **unity**. In the middle of all that, Paul proclaims a God-given standard in key areas; areas in which we still struggle today.
5. **As we read and study this letter, I expect CRCC will be exhorted by the Spirit of God to reform more and more as we bring ourselves further under apostolic teaching, written by the Spirit of God Himself. (2 Pet 1:21)**

## 10 Key Passages: A Quick Survey of the Issues (Note: I encourage you to read the whole letter several times while we teach through it.)

1. **Dealing with Church **Division**:** *1Co 1:10 ESV - I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*
  - a. Prayer: Lord, may you cause our homes and church to become more unified as we study this letter. May we love one another better, serve together better, and unite around the mind of Christ.
2. **Preaching the True **Gospel**:** *1Co 1:17-18 ESV For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. (18) For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
  - a. Prayer: Lord, may CRCC preach “Christ and Him crucified” regardless of the cost. And may You save many give us victory over our spiritual enemies in the process.
3. **Confronting Arrogance and Administering Church **Discipline**:**
  - *1Co 4:5-6 ESV Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (6) I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.*
  - *1Co 5:4-5 ESV When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, (5) you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*
    - a. Prayer: Lord, humble us under Your hand, and show us how to conform to discipline you have commanded....in love.
4. **Fleeing **Sexual Immorality**:** *1Co 6:18-20 ESV Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. (19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*
  - a. Prayer: Purify us oh Lord!
5. **Building right Views on **Singleness** and Marriage:** *1Co 7:1-2 ESV Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." (2) But because*

of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

- a. Prayer: Protect our homes oh Lord! Push the enemy away from every marriage and single! Give us the strength to walk in love and holiness!
6. **Warnings against Idolatry:** *1Co 10:7-11 ESV Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." (8) We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. (9) We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, (10) nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. (11) Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*
  - a. Prayer: Oh Lord, may this series help us ensure that YOU ALONE receive our worship!
7. **Modesty and Gender Roles:** *1Co 11:2-3 ESV Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. (3) But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*
  - a. Prayer: Father, help us raise up your loving standards for men and women, according to your will and for our good!
8. **Spiritual Gifts and their Purpose:** *1Co 12:5-7 ESV and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; (6) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. (7) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*
  - a. Prayer: Lord, help us incorporated these blessed gifts more into the life of our church, for your glory and the building up of your house!
9. **Order in the Church:**
  - *1Co 14:26-28 ESV What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. (27) If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. (28) But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.*
  - *1Co 14:33-35 ESV For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, (34) the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. (35) If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.*
  - *1Co 14:40 ESV But all things should be done decently and in order.*
    - a. Prayer: Lord, we don't have the right to establish our own order; you've already done that! Help us to learn and conform!
10. **Understanding the Resurrection:** *1Co 15:17-22 ESV And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. (18) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (19) If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (20) But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (21) For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*
  - a. Prayer: Lord, help us to live with the joy of the Resurrection and an eternal perspective!

Amen.