

Bible Study
1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Opening Question:

What is your understanding of the Mission of the Church? What should it be shaped by?

Discussion Questions

1. What situation in the church was Paul addressing?
 - (a) What behaviour, lifestyles and traits are mentioned?
 - (b) What might this look like in a modern church?
2. What does it mean to be “of the flesh” or “of the world”?
3. What does it mean to be an “infant in Christ”? How is that different from being “spiritual”?
4. What is the difference between “milk” and “solid food”? (v. 2)
 - (a) What are examples of “milk” teaching and “solid food” teaching?
5. Based on Paul’s rebuke, what are the believers in Corinth missing?
6. What does spiritual maturity look like according to Paul?
7. How does Paul’s explanation (v5-9) show us the role of God, leaders, and the church?
 - (a) What did Paul want the Corinthian church to learn and understand from this metaphor?
8. What does it mean to plant and water God’s Word in others?
 - (a) What are some practical ways that you are able to plant and water God’s Word in others?

Thought points:

- The Word made-flesh is God's own wisdom and power graciously revealed for us.
- Understanding your identity as a Christian is key to spiritual growth.
- The church does not belong to culture or the marketplace - it belongs to God.
- The church is called to see, in and through (and sometimes despite) the workers in the church, that God is the one who is bringing growth, maturity, and the full flowering of the seed that has been planted through the preaching and the living of the gospel.
- The Corinthian Church is divided amongst itself - spiritual pride and worldly quarrels had become a stumbling block
- The role of a minister is to be a servant of Christ working as an "under-shepherd" of His flock. The role of the minister is feeding people the word of God, and shepherding them along God's path. They are to put Christ first, others second and self last.
- Divisions within the Church are not healthy or beneficial to the people of God; we must be mature enough to insist that we make the gospel message of the one, crucified Christ our only canon for measuring the church. We must become cross-shaped people.
- The first few chapters of 1 Corinthians lay down a number of challenges for the contemporary church. Are we willing to use the economy of the cross as our measure of the world rather than measuring the people of cross by the economy of the world?

Extra reading:

Romans 7:14-20, Romans 13:11-14, Romans 15:18, Galatians 5:16-21, 1 Peter 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:11, Ephesians 2:3, Ephesians 4:13-14, 1 Corinthians 14:20, Isaiah 61:11, Hebrews 5:12-13

Personal Reflection:

- What can you do if you see signs of division in the church?
- In what ways has God been growing or changing you recently?
- Are you letting the message of the cross dwell deeper in your life?

Leaders Notes:

- Pray to open & close the session seeking openness of heart and mind
- Ask opening questions
- Share the reading of the first passage verse by verse.
- Go through 'Thought Points'
- Read extra reading (particularly Romans, Galatians & Hebrews)
- Work through the questions. If you are stuck go back to the thought points.