

Church Member Roger Phipps presents Chapters 1-4 of I Corinthians

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 March 2015

Preacher: Roger Phipps

[0 : 00] In Marv's absence this morning, Roger Phipps is going to be presenting his message this morning. And we thank you that Roger would agree to come to the pulpit this morning.

Roger and his wife Sherry has been coming to Grace for the last several years, and we enjoy their company. So, Roger, come and present your message this morning. Thank you for your graciousness.

A couple of things. As you're turning to 1 Corinthians 1, if you would, please, this is going to be somewhat contextual, so you're responsible for keeping your context.

Okay? Watch out for it. I was reminded this part has nothing to do with the message. I remembered. I started to walk.

This has nothing to do with the message, but I'm reminded the first chorus we sang was worthy is lamb. It pertains to what?

[1 : 13] Help me out here. Who is the lamb? We'll start easy. Who's the lamb? Jesus Christ. And this is reference to what lamb?

It's the time of year. Passover lamb. The Passover lamb. And this has nothing to do with the lamb. And again, I'm just reminded as a church.

The wonderful picture that God gave in this to Israel as they're getting ready to leave. Come on, help me with it.

Egypt. They're getting ready to leave slavery. Right? Right? The church is getting, we have citizenship in heaven. And as I think about the Passover and the slaying of the Passover lamb, I'm reminded that they were commanded when they ate the Passover.

They were to eat it dressed with their coats on, their staves in their hands, their sandals on their feet, because they're going somewhere.

[2 : 34] They're going somewhere. And I'm reminded, that's a beautiful picture of the church, isn't it? We're going somewhere. This isn't the end. This isn't the end.

Well, that was free and it was unplanned. I've been thinking lately, quite often, about a tendency I see.

And this has to do with some people I know. Personally. And are very dear to me. You know people like this. There is a tendency, I think, in the church today to, probably always has been, as we're going to see since we're in 1 Corinthians, right?

To look for explanations of God or God's plan outside of his revelation, outside of his word. I want something more.

I want something more. The word of God isn't quite good enough for me. I want him to talk to me immediately. So, in keeping with that, I've been thinking about this part.

[3 : 52] So, I'm going to give a basic outline for me, for me, of the first four chapters, actually, the first seven verses.

Chapter 1, verse 1, through chapter 4, verse 7 of 1 Corinthians. Now, again, I'm going to ask you for some help here.

What do you know, when you think of the Corinthian church, what do you think of? Carnality. Division. And division.

And that's what I'm thinking of in this outline. I'll give you right away my basic outline. And that is 1 Corinthians.

Again, chapter 1, verses 1 through 17 is division acknowledged. It has to do more than that. But division acknowledged. The divisions caused by worldly wisdom, verses 18 through 2, 5.

[4 : 59] 2, 6 through 16, which finishes out chapter 2. God's plan is revealed. It's not discovered. It's revealed. It's not discovered.

That's going to be kind of my main theme there. And chapter 3, verses 1 through 9, division reveals stunted spiritual growth.

And chapter 3, verses 10 through 4, 7, the answer for the division, stay within my job description. So, verses 1 through 3 tells me that these are Christians indeed.

Let's look at that very quickly, if you would, please. Paul, he announces himself, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by whose will?

By God's will. By the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 19] There are a couple of incidentals here that I'm going to mention. There is a universal church. Those who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a universal church. But Paul always writes to local believers. So, there, I should not, as is said in Hebrews, forget not or forsake not the assembly of the saints, right?

There is, everything written to the church is written to local believers. It gets passed around, but it's written to a body. And so, that's an incidental.

Well, the local assemblies are part of that large church, but we know folks who say, well, I can worship God, you know, here or there or anywhere.

That's true, but you don't come to the gathering just to worship God. You worship God in the setting together because we have a ministry one to another.

[7 : 26] The local assembly is important. Now, we'll keep going because I'm not a good time manager. So, I'll keep rolling.

Verses 4 through 7, God's grace enriched them. We'll see that. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God, which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him.

In all speech, all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I'll go on. Who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? God is faithful. Through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Look how many times He mentions the name of Jesus Christ here. There's going to be a theme that He hammers out in these first four chapters that's going to be important for me to remember because He's going to point out some things.

[8 : 41] But here I find a great comfort, especially in that verse 8. I find a great comfort there. Now, especially when I think about what kind of church to whom He's speaking.

And He said, Jesus will confirm you to the end, blameless. I don't feel so blameless. I'm not so very blameless in myself, am I?

I'm guilty except for the blood of Jesus Christ. Except for Him. And it's only in Him that I can stand at all.

That's why we approach the throne of grace, isn't it? It's through the blood of Christ. So, those are incidentals. The theme keeps recurring here as we see it, Paul speaking.

Starting with verse 10 now. We're still in chapter 1, verse 10. I exhort you now, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

[9 : 58] I'm going to stop here just for a moment. The agree, the word agree there, is not the way I commonly use it.

This literally means to speak the same thing. This is not, the division that's in the church isn't over the color of the wall. And this is not even Paul and Barnabas splitting up over whether John Mark's going to go with them on this trip.

This isn't the division he's talking about. The division is actually a schism that is forming in the church because of doctrine. The doctrine is splitting apart.

And you've already studied this, I know, but in perspective, I want to remember where he's going with this and why he's laying it out as he is.

So, he said, I don't want there to be that kind of a schism in the church. I want you to agree that all of you talk the same thing when it comes to the doctrine.

[11 : 03] Don't keep the main thing the main thing. The minor things the minor things. Now, verse 11.

Because I've been informed of quarrels by Chloe's people, that there are indeed quarrels among you.

So, this is showing up. And he's saying, I know there's a division. And what I mean is this. Verse 12. Now, I mean this.

That each one of you is saying, I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. I of Cephas. And here comes the clinker. I of Christ. See, that's a way to always put down the argument, right?

God told me this. I'm of Christ. Then, Paul here asks three rhetorical questions.

[12 : 11] They are rhetoric. These are three rhetorical questions that show, I think, especially in light of when you read the whole thing there through chapter 4, verse 7.

And the whole thing in perspective, especially where he's going to go from right here. We're going to see that I am of Paul. I'm of Peter.

I'm Paul's man. I'm a Pauline guy. I'm a Petran guy. I'm a Paulist guy. I'm a Christian. These are decoys.

That's not where the division is coming from. He's going to show that. The three rhetorical questions.

The first one. Verse 13. Well, verse 13 gives all three. The first one is, has Christ been divided? The answer is, no.

[13 : 15] Was Paul crucified for you? Who was? Jesus. Jesus. Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

No. And then he goes on to explain, I'm glad I didn't, you know. We'll get to that. They've lost sight that Christianity and their doctrine is rooted in the revelation of Christ and not in their human wisdom.

Not in their own philosophy. Paul delivers those three questions to show that these are, those arguments have been decoys.

They're using I am of Paul or I am of Peter as really a decoy. Peter and Paul weren't split on this. Christ is crucified for my sin.

We'll keep going. Verse 14. He explains that he's glad that he did not baptize anybody except this family and maybe some others.

[14 : 33] Verse 17. For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel. Now, I need to, here comes the, for our study this morning.

Not in cleverness. That is literally, not in the wisdom of the speech. So that the cross of Christ would not be made empty or void.

He's calling for the simple gospel. And I don't mean simplistic. I mean the simple gospel. The see-through. The sincere gospel. The one that when held up to the light, we see right through it. There are no, there's no trick. There's no, well, you get this far, but you have to be really initiated further to really come to God.

And the plan of God is not discovered, it's revealed. We're going to, I need to keep remembering that. And what is this gospel?

[15 : 36] I'm going to just mention these verses you're, almost everyone here is familiar with. And if you're not, ask someone near you, they are. 1 Timothy.

You help me with this. In chapter 1, verses 15 and 16, you've memorized this. But Paul tells Timothy, remember this. This is worthy of full acceptance.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Why did Jesus come? To save sinners.

I will be very surprised if any of us, any of us sitting here, do not know someone.

Who is toying with the idea that Jesus came to do something other than that.

[16 : 38] Jesus came to relieve suffering. Jesus came to heal people. Jesus came to do this or that. All of which may be wonderful things.

But that's not why Christ came. Jesus Christ came to save sinners. Romans chapter 3.

Now, apart from the law. In Romans chapter 3, though, you'll remember, in the first two chapters, in the first part of chapter 3, Paul has laid out that the heathen, the Gentile, is condemned.

The moralist, the moral man is condemned. And even the Jew, who has the law, stands condemned.

All alike are gathered up under sin. We'll see this. Apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested. The righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ for them that believe. [17:52] Because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God being justified. That is, those who believe are justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.

That is, the propitiation you know, means Jesus turned God's wrath from me upon Himself. This is substitutionary atonement. Christ came to be my substitute. Instead of me, who deserved to die, the one who did not, became sin so that I might be righteousness in God. This is what's going to be called the foolishness of the gospel. Because by my thinking, by my thinking, is it right to punish the non-guilty for the guilty? Not by my thinking. I'm thankful that the wisdom of God is wiser than the wisdom of men. In fact, the foolishness of God, he says, is wiser than the wisdom of men.

[19:24] That's a hyperbole he uses of God. And I'm glad for the word in Philippians which he promises that he who has begun, that is, if I have come to Christ, he says that he who has begun the good work in you is faithful to complete it.

Whether I feel like it or not, I'm thankful for that. I am grateful for God's grace. Now, let's keep moving, if you will, with me, and bear with me to verse 18 through 21, he talks about that foolishness.

The divisions caused by worldly wisdom, it's foolishness to the lost world. The cross of Christ, or the word of the cross, is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever. I will set aside. Verse 20, let's be careful, by the way, with these verses.

He's not talking about there's no place for wisdom. But he's going to clarify that in a moment. Where then is the wise man?

[20:43] Where's the scribe? Where's the debater of this age? God has made foolish the wisdom of the world. For since in the wisdom of the world, remember Romans chapter 1, in the wisdom of the world, they did not come to know God.

Right? For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God. God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message to save those who believed. It seems foolishness to a lost world. I can't come to God except through Jesus Christ by way of the cross and the resurrection.

Signs and wisdom. Stumbling blocks and foolishness. Verses 22 through 25. I'm going to remind myself again of the context so that I don't get lost or get trapped or get confused into thinking that I can discover the plan of God for myself.

Or that it's some deep secret thing. Or that some of it may be lost. How do I know that what I'm looking at is true? Maybe it's something else.

[22:18] The simplicity of the gospel. Indeed, Jews ask for signs. This is verse 22 of chapter 1. And Greeks search for wisdom.

But we preach Christ help me crucified to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness. To those who are the called both Jews and Greeks Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. By the way, the Jews had the signs.

Did they not? Jews look for signs. Greeks look for wisdom. The Jews had signs. They had the testimony of the law and the prophets. They had the miracles.

Which are the signs. And what think even of coming out of Egypt. The crossing of the Red Sea it took them three days to complain. Now, of course, I stand here and I say that wouldn't have been me.

[23:28] But it would have been, wouldn't it? The signs themselves don't produce faith. The signs do not necessarily produce faith.

Faith comes by and hearing by that's the theme. That's his theme. This is going to be Paul's theme here. Now, the world that is the Gentile nations in chapter 1 of Romans we see that that the world looked at creation and they became their own God.

They looked for wisdom and they became their own God. The Jews looked at the law and thought because I'm Abraham's descendant in chapter 2 of Romans because I'm Abraham's descendant and because I have the law and the prophets I'm justified before God.

Both are self-justification. Both are looking for a self-righteousness. But righteousness comes through Jesus Christ and him crucified and risen.

Now, it's the message of the grace from a holy, righteous, just God that is the foolishness of the gospel or the foolishness of the cross.

[25 : 01] Let's keep going then if you will please with verses 26-31. Consider your calling. There weren't many wise according to the flesh and not many mighty, not many noble.

Go on down to verse 29. Why? Did God propose salvation through Christ? By grace.

So that no man, verse 29, no man may boast before God. By his doing you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

The word sanctification means made holy or set apart. Righteousness, the set apart or the holiness, the redemption are because of God's work in Christ.

Just as it is written, let him who boasts boast in the Lord. The boasting of men here is a problem.

The boasting of men is a problem.

[26 : 20] Now, he goes on then and he says he's building his case. Let's look at chapter 2 verses 1-5 right now.

Believe God. Note how Paul's writing here because he's going to lay a framework for what's coming especially in chapter 3 so I need to keep it in context.

When I came to you, I did not come with superiority of speech, of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. I determined to know nothing among you except, here we go again, Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling. My message, my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in the demonstration of the spirit and power so that your faith would not rest upon the wisdom of men but upon what?

Okay, you are watching. Good, good. But upon the power of God. Now, he goes on in verse 6 then.

[27 : 35] Now he changes it to the plural. You notice he changes his pronoun to the plural because he's going to roll it up to I have figuratively applied this but we'll get there. We do speak wisdom among the mature.

A wisdom, however, not of this age or the rulers of this age which are passing away. We speak God's wisdom in a mystery. The hidden wisdom which God has predestined, had predestined, or did predestined, before the ages to our glory.

the mystery is that revelation which heretofore had not been revealed but now is revealed.

And it's revealed through the prophets. The Jews, the prophets of old up through Malachi had not this revelation.

The Jews at the time that Jesus walked among them for the three years had not this revelation. And I don't want to...

[28 : 45] This revelation doesn't come until about Antioch sometime. But now it has come. And God has called out that this would be revealed specifically through the Apostle Paul and later the other Apostles are going to join in.

Even the Petra and Epistles, the 1st and 2nd Peter, are very Pauline in their doctrine. So, we see that the mystery isn't a mystical experience.

It simply means that this has not been revealed before. Now it's revealed. The plan of God is not discerned or discovered.

It is revealed. This is going to be important. Or it is important. And this is one of the problems that they were having. Or it is the core root of their problem because I can...

I'm wiser than you are. See? I'm wiser than you are. Therefore, I have this plan.

[29 : 57] It really was a Gnosticism, but I'm not going to go in that direction so much. But, we speak God's wisdom in a mystery.

For to us, verse 10, God revealed them. That is, those things which are for us. God revealed them through the Spirit. Verse 12.

Let's go right to verse 12. We have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God so that we may know those things or the things freely given to us by God.

And we speak those things not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit. And I'll... you'll keep the context, but I'm going to read then verse 16.

Who has known the mind of the Lord that He will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Now, I'd like to back up just a moment here and look at verses 1-16 and I'll just call out some of the things that he's talking about so that we can launch into chapter 3 properly.

[31 : 17] But this is not Paul or God calling us to lack wisdom or common sense. That's not what this part's about.

It is that my wisdom or my understanding needs to be filtered through the revealed Word of God. I must not alter or detract or add to what God said.

It... what He said He delivered to the prophets and the apostles. And it comes to me through His revealed Word. I do not pretend to add to it.

I need to be careful of that, don't I? So, by the way, in Colossians He says that He gives this to the Colossian church as well and He says see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception.

Now, that's not any philosophy. It just means that don't let the world's philosophy captivate you. That's deceptive.

[32 : 40] Rather than according to Christ. for in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and in Him you have been made complete.

And He is the head over and rule. Now, let's look at those verses 1-16.

We're not going to look at all of them but I want to note how He writes it. I came to you I determined to know nothing among you except my message my preaching we do speak wisdom we speak God's wisdom in a mystery to us God revealed them.

Verse 12 if you're following we have received not the spirit of the world and verse 16 we have the mind of Christ. There's a theme here that He is asserting His apostleship here and that's going to be important because there's one as we see right now He in chapter 3 verses 1-4 He says that because of this divisiveness you're acting like you're not saved.

He said I cannot speak to you as spiritual men but as to men of flesh as to infants I gave you milk to drink because you weren't ready for the meat and even now you're not able because He says since there's jealousy and strife among you you're fleshly.

[34 : 33] Now He said basically that just says hey you're behaving like you're not saved don't do that don't do that now they had strayed or at least some of them some of them had strayed from the revelation that God had given through Paul and they had branched out into teachings of their own inventions he's calling them back you see when I came to you I delivered to you my message my instructions the servants in verses 5 through 9 of chapter 3 the servants are not in competition the servants are not in competition in fact I'll just read verse 7 you'll keep it in your context who's Paul is who's Paul neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything but

God who causes the growth it's all about God God so now the answer for their division stay in your job description let's look at verses 10 through 11 if you would please this is Paul's job or if you want to branch it out further than Paul at least it's only the apostolic job but this is Paul's job he claims it for himself and God through Paul has revealed it in other scriptures but Paul's job according to the grace of God which was given to me like a wise master builder by the way the word master builder there is a word we have a cognate of that word the word in

English that sounds like it is architect we understand what that means don't we so like a wise master builder I laid a foundation there's that again and another is building on it each man be careful how he builds on it for no man can lay a foundation other than the one that which is laid which is Jesus Christ now these next verses we I know I have many times you probably have at least sometimes heard them used in another context like be careful how you build your life whether you build with wood hay and stubble that's not the context the context is here be careful what you're teaching but we'll see that the foundation layer the chief builder Paul says was given to me I laid the foundation this is Jesus Christ remember what he purposed Jesus Christ and him crucified how am I saved by faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross if I don't have faith in Christ if I'm looking to save by works if I'm looking for self righteousness or if I'm looking for a mystical experience I've missed it the foundation is Jesus Christ and him crucified and he said no one can relay that now be careful how you build now we get to verses 12 through 15 and we see stay in my job description what's my job or the teacher's job if you will the builder's job is don't mess up the building the foundation has been laid the architect has laid the foundation giving you the instruction

now don't mess it up he said and we see that if any man builds on this foundation with gold silver precious stones wood hay or straw the work will become evident because the day someday it will be shown see the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire and the fire will test the quality of each man's work if if any man's work which he has built on it built on the foundation remains he receives a reward if his works burned up he suffers loss but he himself will be saved yet as through the fire so the point of it is he's saying to the teachers look be careful what you do with this gospel be careful what you do with this he said if you're building with stubble it's going to come to not and if if

I want to avoid divisiveness I need to stay in my job description too I need to realize that it's not for me to relay the foundation the foundation has been laid and there's no other foundation it's the foundation is in Christ the church verses 16 through 17 don't you know that you're the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you if any man destroys the temple of God God will destroy him for the temple of God is holy and that's what you are right now he likens the whole church to the temple of God in chapter 6 of 1 Corinthians he's going to liken the individual Christian body to the temple of that's that context this one just because he switches the metaphor doesn't mean that the meaning goes with the metaphor the metaphor has to be understood in light of the meaning here he's likening the church to the temple of

[40 : 47] God and he's saying be careful the church is holy it's set apart to God if you mess up the church if you're teaching stuff that messes around with the church don't be deceived God is not mocked a man reaps what he sows right so God says you don't don't mess don't mess with the church now the church is holy it's set apart to God verses 18 through 23 appreciate the revelation I use the word appreciate carefully there understand consider it verse 18 let no man deceive himself and many if any man among you thinks he's wise he must become foolish so that he may become wise for the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God let's go to 21 let no one boast in men and

I'll go right into verse 1 through 5 of chapter 4 let a man regard us who who's us now Paul he's figuratively applying it to Paul and Apollos but us is going to refer to the to the doctrine delivered let a man regard us in this manner as servants of Christ and stewards caretakers of the mysteries of God now I need to appreciate both the mystery or the doctrine the revelation and I need to appreciate who the caretaker of the revelation is not for honor's sake so much as to be careful that I don't get out of my job description to remember the foundation is laid no other foundation can be laid so let a man regard us in this manner as servants of

Christ and stewards of the mystery of God and it's required of stewards that they be found trustworthy don't go on passing judgment verses 6 through 7 stay within the revelation verse 6 these things I have figuratively applied for your sakes so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written so that none of you will become arrogant on behalf of one against another who regards you as superior what do you have that you didn't receive and if you received it why do you act like you didn't the scripture is complete and it is sufficient and the job of the church today is to be like what Paul delivered to Timothy when he said be diligent to present yourself unto God a workman that does not need to be ashamed handling accurately or making a right division in the word of truth rightly dividing the word of truth

I want to be careful with that but it really means the workman makes a straight cut I need to be careful how I build and in light of what what I'm tempted to do sometimes which is add to detract from or alter I need to remember don't stray he tells them I'm going to I've applied this so that you will learn what it means not to go beyond the revealed word father thanks very much for this your word I thank you most of all Lord for your grace and mercy that you saw fit to become flesh dwell among men and go to the cross to take my sin so that

I could be righteous in you I don't understand how all that works I'm just very thankful that you have seen fit to stoop to men as the church goes out amongst the world help us to keep the gospel simple to be careful not to try to look for things other than the gospel or the revelation and as we I ask you Lord that as we go through our lives this week that you would present to us opportunities to share that gospel in word and in deed it's in Jesus name that we pray amen and