



## First Corinthians 1:10-17

### Verse 9– (From Last Week)

If there is one characteristic of God that appears over and over throughout scripture, it is his faithfulness: **God is faithful**. Yet, it is the characteristic of God we most often forget; when we do we worry and become anxious. When we face a trial in life we often forget God's faithfulness and try to solve it on our own. When in fact, God may use that trial as a means to call you into a particular ministry or mission. Sometimes God calls us **by** our trials.

Young's Literal Translation says **through whom ye were called** (not *by whom* as in NKJV, KJV, ESV). Why does it matter? Every believer is called through God, but the way each believer is called may vary.

That means everyone is called. Some are called **by** attending a missionary conference and **by** hearing the witness of a missionary speaker, some are called **by** hearing the word of God taught or **by** reading the word of God, etc. In other words God calls all believers by various means, he doesn't call some and not others. So the call comes through God, but not by God--he uses other instruments to proclaim the Gospel.

### Verse 10 –

The word **beseech** (KJV) is a good one. Paul is not pleading (NKJV), or even appealing (ESV) to the **brethren**. Rather, he is summoning them or calling on them to do something. To plead or appeal conveys a sense of begging. Paul is by no means begging. Whatever it is Paul is beseeching them to do, he means it in a way that he is certain they will do it.

**Brethren**. The Greek word used here for **Brethren** (KJV, NKJV, NASB95) is the word **ἀδελφός** adelphos. The word "adelphos" means "the womb" and the word "a" is a connective particle. The word is literally "of the womb." The Greek word adelphós means brother. If it were "sister" the word would be "adelphē." Paul may mean *brothers and sisters* as is translated in the NIV, NCV, and NLT, but the word he wrote was "brothers." The problem with many modern translations is that they add their own interpretation rather than letting the reader interpret the passage. The worst "translation" is The Message which uses "my friends." I personally think Paul was including all in the church (which is why I like the word Brethren; it sort of seems to encompass the congregation as a whole). But Paul didn't write "brothers and sisters." Let's read the Bible the way it was written.

**By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, Paul is beseeching (summoning) them to **all speak the same thing**. Apparently, there are **divisions** in the church. **Divisions** is the Greek word schisma; we get our word schism from it and it means "to tear or rent", like you would tear a piece of cloth in half. We don't know what the divisions are, but Paul makes it clear that he knows something is going on within the church that is not healthy and is tearing it apart.

Notice how Paul immediately teaches the believers the Godly way to act. There are three ways:

1. **Perfectly joined together.** We use the phrase today, "Let's all get on the same page." or, "Let's make sure everyone is in the loop."
2. **Same mind.** He is not desiring a church with a bunch of "yes men" rather he desires everyone to think things through and keep their minds in tune to spiritual truth.
3. **Same judgment.** In other words make it their resolve to hear the facts of whatever the issue is and use knowledge, the mind, and reason to come together in unity.

A church cannot be made up of individuals who believe whatever they want to believe. There must be a correct interpretation of scripture in order for there to be unity. How can we ever discover a correct interpretation so we can all be on the same page? It comes from studying the word of God and "*rightly dividing the word of truth.*" ([2 Timothy 2:15](#))

### Verse 11 –

There is nothing worse than being in a church where there are **contentions** (heated disagreements). In Corinth, there is trouble in the family of God.

Paul just besought the church to be perfectly joined together, now he lets the cat out of the bag that he knows there are some problems. He has received a report from **Chloe's house**. It is from more than one person. Literally it reads "*by those of Chloe.*" **Chloe** perhaps had a church meeting in her home? There may have been multiple house churches. Paul writes this letter and it is to be read to all the **Brethren**--there's a problem in the church meeting at Chloe's. Paul knows if it's happening there, it may well be happening in other house churches.

And notice that the accusation is not anonymous. It has a name attached to it. Anonymous complaints carry no credibility.

**Contentions.** It means a heated disagreement. It was enough of a problem that someone, or a group of people wrote to Paul to see if he could straighten it out. The word contention is *eris* in the Greek. If a person is *eristic*, he or she is given to debate or argument. The word *eris* means strife.

### Verses 12-17 –

There is division in the church over loyalties to men based on who baptized whom; **Paul, Apollos, Cephas...Is Christ divided?** Paul started the church in Corinth by baptizing **Crispus** (Acts 18:8), **Gaius** (Acts 19:29), and **Stephanas' household** (1 Corinthians 16:15). He may have baptized others, but he doesn't recall as he penned this letter.

**Crispus** was the chief ruler of the synagogue (succeeded Sosthenes? vs. 1). He was not the rabbi. His job was to select the readers and teachers in the synagogue and to ensure the traditions were being upheld. Through Paul's ministry in Corinth, **Crispus** and his entire household became believers in Jesus.

Assuming he is the same **Gaius**, he is mentioned as a traveling companion of Paul and later in Romans 16:23 as Paul's host which we may assume could indicate he had the church of Rome meeting in his home.

**Stephanas' household** is mentioned in 1 Corinthinans 16:15 as being the firstfruits of Achaia, that is, some of the first believers. It would hold then that Paul baptized the household of Stephanas first, and yet in verse 16 he mentions them sort of as an afterthought, deemphasizing the importance of baptism.

Nonetheless, the church members in Corinth were boasting about who baptized them! Paul is straightening them out, **I thank God that I baptized none of you** except... He is not against baptizing others, he simply didn't want anyone attaching his name to their baptism, **Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.**

What does Paul mean by, **For Christ sent me not to baptize...**? This creates a dilemma since Jesus said clearly, "*Go and make disciples...baptizing them...*" (Matthew 28:19)

- John came baptizing (John 1:31,33).
- The twelve were commissioned to go and baptize (Matthew 28:19).
- But, Paul was not sent to baptize (1 Corinthians 1:17).

How do we solve this dilemma? The solution is that there has been a change in dispensations. The dispensation of grace has alleviated the ordinance (Law) of baptism. Baptism is good to do, but it may be that churches today, in the age of grace, put too much emphasis on baptism, at least for the wrong reasons.

This is why we get confused with passages like Mark 16:16 where it says, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*" In the dispensation of the Law, which preceded grace, that was certainly the case. Repentance, Jewish baptism, etc, were all part of the Law that had to be obeyed. But in the dispensation of grace, baptism and evangelism do not go hand in hand. Baptism has a different role in the dispensation of grace, as it can be a wonderful testimony of a believer's desire to show his friends, family, and his church that he wants to live his life for Christ, but is not commanded for the believer today. Salvation is by grace through faith alone.

In a sense Paul is saying **preach the gospel** don't worry about baptism. In other words, evangelism and baptism do not go together.

**Christ sent me not to baptize** >< Christ sent me **to preach the gospel.**

The important thing is the gospel. Yet we are not to preach the gospel in our own wisdom, **not with wisdom of words.** We need to use words in order to preach the gospel, but they must not be manipulative words--they must be the word of the Lord and they must not water down the **cross of Christ** (it cannot be an emotional appeal) because once the emotion is gone our message will be powerless, **of none effect.**

This division over baptism has been ongoing for 2,000 years and continues to this day.

When we read the Bible dispensationally, it all begins to make more sense.