

WEEK 3 || *1 CORINTHIANS 1-2*

GOSPEL HUMILITY

As we saw last week, the gospel brings both forgiveness and transformation. So do Christians think they're better than everyone else? Paul says his Gospel message gives a very clear NO! We serve a King who willingly humbled himself and gave up his life for the sins of his people. Why should we be any different?

THE PROBLEM THE GOSPEL ADDRESSES

1. Read **1 Corinthians 1:1-17** and try to understand the situation. What tensions can you see brewing in the church, and why is it ‘counter-gospel’?
2. How can pride lead to divisions like this today?
3. Why was Paul wary of *baptising* people (v13-17)? What point is he making?

THE SOLUTION THE GOSPEL OFFERS

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-25, looking especially for any clues to the definition of Paul’s “gospel message.” (Remember, Paul uses the word “gospel” as the shorthand summary of the good-news message he preaches.)

4. What clues are there in verse 17 about the *content* of Paul’s gospel?

What extra clues do you find when you look back at:

1:6

1:8

1:13 (No, Paul wasn’t! But Jesus was _____)

5. How does Paul (*similarly*) describe his message in 1:18 and 1:23?

6. If Paul's gospel is right, how does it subvert the wisdom of the world?

In what way is this good news for the unimpressive? (Read ahead to verses 26-31)

Who is the news not-so-good for?

THE DIFFERENCE THE GOSPEL MAKES

Here's the problem if you're tempted to be proud. According to Paul's "good news", Jesus, God's anointed one, Israel's Christ/King... is the one who willingly sacrificed himself... for the sins of his people. Anyone who calls on his name will be accepted as guiltless by God on the final day. In the great exchange, his *loss* is our *gain*. The trouble is, it all just looks so unimpressive. We're left serving and honouring a victim. A loser. A crucified and defeated King. **Our King is the one who died for sin!**

7. Read 1:26-2:5. How does the nature of Paul's message shape the nature of his church?
8. How does the nature of Paul's message shape the method of its delivery?
9. How are these gospel realities evident in our church community? In your life and attitudes?
10. If we genuinely knew 'nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,' (2v2) how would it impact the way we approached church, our community, our neighbourhoods, and our engagement with community debate (eg. same sex marriage).

Paul seems pretty happy at this point of the letter to define his gospel as 'nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.' As we'll see in the next study, there's more to the story - but this is the biggest building block!