

Charles R. Blaisdell, Senior Pastor
First Christian Church
Colorado Springs, Colorado
January 22, 2017
©2017

Learning from Long Ago: The Corinthian Christians and Us 2. Foolishness

I Corinthians 1:10-18 Adapted from The Message 10 I have a serious concern to bring up with you, my friends, using the authority of Jesus, our Master. I'll put it as urgently as I can: You must get along with each other. You must learn to be considerate of one another, cultivating a life in common. I bring this up because some from Chloe's family brought a most disturbing report to my attention-that you're fighting among yourselves! I'll tell you exactly what I was told: You're all picking sides, going around saying, "I'm on Paul's side," or "I'm for Apollos," or "Peter is my man," or "I'm in the Messiah group." I ask you, "Has the Messiah been chopped up in little pieces so we can each have a relic all our own? Was Paul crucified for you? Was a single one of you baptized in Paul's name?" I was not involved with any of your baptisms-except for Crispus and Gaius-and on getting this report, I'm sure glad I wasn't. At least no one can go around saying he was baptized in my name. (Come to think of it, I also baptized Stephanas's family, but as far as I can recall, that's it.) God didn't send me out to collect a following for myself, but to preach the Message of what he has done, collecting a following for him. And he didn't send me to do it with a lot of fancy rhetoric of my own, lest the powerful action at the center-Christ on the Cross-be trivialized into mere words. The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, and most powerfully as it turns out. It's written, "I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head, I'll expose so-called experts as crackpots." So where can you find someone truly wise, truly educated, truly intelligent in this day and age? Hasn't God exposed it all as pretentious nonsense? Since the world in all its fancy wisdom never had a clue when it came to knowing God, God in his wisdom took delight in using what the world considered foolish-preaching, of all things!-to bring those who trust him into the way of salvation.

Imagine you call your friend's home or cell phone, and you hear this message their voicemail: "Hello. I'm not available right now. We're in the middle of a family fight at the moment. Leave your name and number and whichever one of us wins will call you right back." If you had called the church at Corinth in the year 50 or so, that's the message you might have gotten. If you were here last week, you heard me open this new sermon series on the Corinthian church noting that this was both Paul's favorite church in some ways but also the one that gave him the most grief, as they constantly wrote him about this or that problem. There were at least six such letters, according to

most scholars, and over time, as Paul's responses to their letters were copied and re-copied, they ended up collated, as it were, into what we have now in our Bibles as First and Second Corinthians. Moreover, as I noted, all we have are Paul's responses; we don't have the letters he was responding to so there is inevitably a very large element of interpretation and sometimes even guessing as we read those Biblical books today and ask what Paul's words have to teach us.

It appears, from our scripture this morning, that one of the things that they were fighting over was which faction was to be the most influential, which leader was to be the one most heeded. There apparently were three men, with three different styles, three diff