

## Why Teach This Book - 1 Corinthians 1:1 - January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014

- Today we begin with a new verse-by-verse study through the book of first Corinthians, having completed our study of the book of Romans.
- There are a number of reasons the Lord led me to this book as the next book to study through, chief amongst them being it's after Romans.
- Actually, I've been sharing with you, as we neared the end of Romans, why it is that I'm really looking forward to what the Lord has for us.

- Namely the practical and even personal application that's woven into the fabric of First Corinthians mainly because of the many similarities.
- More specifically the church in Corinth was dealing with many life issues that we today find ourselves dealing with in this very wicked world.
- This because, the prosperous port city of Corinth was rife with unspeakable sexual immorality vis-à-vis the temple of Aphrodite prostitution.

- Sadly, it was for this reason that the church of Corinth had been so unduly influenced by the carnality of the city of Corinth's corrupt culture.
- I suppose this is as good of a time as any to forewarn you of the graphic nature of some of the passages that we will be studying together.
- While I can assure you that I'll do my best to be tactful in dealing with the delicate subject matter, I don't have permission to water it down.

- The reason being is that the sanctified strength of these passages is necessary when it comes to us dealing with sin, especially sexual sin.
- However, it wasn't so much the sexual immorality and rank carnality within the church it was more the tolerating of all of this by the church.
- Moreover, they even took pride in their tolerance of all of this under the banner of being a loving church hence, the famous chapter on love.

- Be that as it may, this first letter to the Corinthians can be a tremendous source of encouragement in spite of its pages being full of rebuke.
- Let me explain, as we go through this book, what will come leaping off of its pages, will be how good God is in spite of how bad we may be.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that this book is replete with how it is that God can deliver anyone from the sinful depths of depravity.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11 NIV (9)** Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders **(10)** nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **(11)** And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- Enter our text today here in verse one of chapter one where right out of the shoot we see another one of these "some of you were," people.
- His name, Sosthenes, of whom the apostle Paul refers to as one of their brothers, which is interesting because of who this man was before.
- We're first introduced to this man back in Acts chapter eighteen. Let me give you the back-story then read verses sixteen and seventeen.

- It all started when the Apostle Paul was first in Corinth preaching and teaching that Jesus was the Christ to the Jews in their synagogues.
- As you might imagine, there was an opposition in their rejection of Paul's teaching, so much so that we're told the Jews became abusive.
- Paul's response was to shake off his clothing, and tell them their blood was on their own heads, and set out to start preaching to Gentiles.

- We're told he goes right next door to and as a result, Crispus, the synagogue ruler and his entire house believed in Jesus and were saved.
- Then, while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews united under Sosthenes, took Paul to court and brought false charges against him.
- Then, Gallio refuses to judge the case, and in so doing, he ejects this Sosthenes and all who were uniting under him, out of the courtroom.

**Acts 18:16-17 NIV (16)** So he had them ejected from the court. **(17)** Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

- This begs the question of why it is that Sosthenes would go from bringing false allegations against Paul, to being a brother close to Paul.
- I would submit that it's because of how good God is in spite of how bad he was and as such God can deliver and save the worst of sinners.
- Like Sosthenes, it may require we take a beating, as it were, however, if that's what it's going to take for us to repent, bring on the beating.

- Here's where I'm going with all of this, in our study through First Corinthians, we may take a beating under the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- However, this conviction, not condemnation, will beat and break the hard ground of our hearts making it supple for the seed of God's Word.
- When that happens, the seed of God's Word germinates, sprouts and bears much fruit as we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

- This Sosthenes is one of the reasons that I believe the Lord would have us to study verse by verse through this book of First Corinthians.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me, in closing, as I point out just one more reason, as it relates to Paul's mention of Sosthenes here in verse one.
- Here's what I'm thinking, it was Paul's unflinching fearlessness to preach in spite of the Jews abusing him, and Sosthenes accusing him.

**Acts 18:6 NIV** But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

- In other words, I, like the Apostle Paul, must have this same unflinching fearlessness to preach and teach this book. It's my responsibility.
- I am keenly aware that I run the risk of sound a little blunt, but were I to abdicate my responsibility, then your blood would be on my head.
- Lest you think I'm overstating this, consider the Word of the Lord to the prophet Ezekiel, recorded in chapter three, sixteen to twenty-one.

**Ezekiel 3:16-21 NIV** At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me: **(17)** "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. **(18)** When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. **(19)** But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself. **(20)** "Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. **(21)** But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, and you will have saved yourself."