

# 27 GEMS – A Survey through of 1 Corinthians

*Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes*

## **The MESSAGE of 1 Corinthians:**

1 Corinthians is the **20th shortest** book in the New Testament with **6,829** Greek words.

1 Corinthians is the **longest** of Paul's epistles, and is **very practical** for today.

1 Corinthians deals with almost **every major problem** in our churches.

1 Corinthians is what is called a "**Corrective Epistle**", rebuking sinful behavior.

1 Corinthians gives us a great insight into the institution of **Communion**.

1 Corinthians gives us the most in-depth teaching on the **Spiritual Gifts**.

1 Corinthians gives us the longest teaching on **the Resurrection** in the New Testament.

*"This letter is addressed not just to a few people in Corinth, a city that is now in ruins, but to the church of Jesus Christ in any city of the world in any era of history, even the times in which we live." - Alan Redpath*

NOTE: We know from 1 Cor 5:9,11 that there was a previous letter sent to the Corinthian church. It also seems from 2 Cor 2:4 that it was probably the fourth letter to this church. That makes Corinth the only church to which Paul wrote 4 letters!

## **The MEGA-THEME of 1 Corinthians:**

"CHRIST vs. CULTURE"

## **The MEGA-STRUCTURE of 1 Corinthians:**

I. The 7 Corinthian **Problems** (1-6)

II. The 7 Corinthian **Questions** (7-16)

### **I. The 7 Corinthian PROBLEMS: (1-6)**

#### **Problem #1: DIVISIONS! (1:10-17)**

- **1 Cor 1:10-13** - *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the*

same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

- Here, Paul describes for us the divisions that existed in the Corinthian congregation. They were apparently polarizing around various teachers that had taught in their midst. Paul says that this goes against the very nature of the Body of Christ.
- **SOLUTION:** The Corinthians were to be "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." They were to maintain the "...unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace" (Eph 4:1-6) by walking in agape love.

### **Problem #2: PRIDE! (1:26-31)**

- **1 Cor 1:26-29, 31** - "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. ... 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."
- Another problem the Corinthians struggled with was pride and conceit. As the "intellectual offspring" of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the Greek Corinthians were very prideful and thought of themselves very highly.
- **SOLUTION:** The Corinthians were to realize that it is because of God's grace that they'd been chosen at all. He has intentionally chosen things that are weak, despised, and foolish in order to shame the world and its prideful thinking. They were to give all glory to God alone!

### **Problem #3: CARNALITY! (3:1-16)**

- **1 Cor 3:1-4** - "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of

*Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?"*

- Paul here shows us that there were 3 types of Christians in the Corinthian fellowship: babes, spiritual, and carnal. He says that the majority of the Corinthians were carnal and controlled by their flesh, as evidenced by the fact that they were engaging in envy, strife, and divisions, instead of love, peace, and kindness. (Matt 22:37-29)
- **SOLUTION:** They need to stop being contentious and combative with each other. They need to begin to allow the Holy Spirit to control them in daily actions (Eph 5:18) and have the agape love of God poured out in their hearts by Spirit of God (Rom 5:5).

#### **Problem #4: WORLDVIEW! (3:18-22)**

- **1 Cor 3:18-19** - *"Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."*
- The Corinthians, like many Christians today, were allowing themselves to be guided by the "wisdom" of the world, which was really just foolishness and irrationality. They deceived themselves into thinking that they were wise because of this.
- **SOLUTION:** They need to develop a Biblical philosophy of life (Jn 14:6) by having their minds renewed and recreated thru the Word of God (Rom 12:1,2). They needed to adopt, not Greek thinking, but rather, God's way of thinking in every area of living. They weren't to be CULTURAL, but rather BIBLICAL. (Jn 8:31,32; 18:36; Ps. 1; 138:2; 2 Tim 2:15)

#### **Problem #5: IMMORALITY! (5:1-13)**

- **1 Cor 5:1-2, 6-7, 11** - *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. ... 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ... 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person."*
- The Corinthians were allowing habitual, open, and unrepentant sin to run rampant in their congregation, namely the sexual sin of incest!

Rather than mourning over this sad condition, the Corinthians were strangely puffed up over this. They probably thought themselves to be "mature" and very much "loving Christians"...all the while they were displeasing the Lord by condoning this cancerous sin in His church.

- **SOLUTION:** Immediately remove the sinning individual, in hopes that he would perceive his sin, confess, repent, and be restored back into fellowship. It is false to think that biblical "grace" allows such behaviors to openly go on, unchecked by the church leadership. The New Testament clearly teaches otherwise regarding the discipline of people in open/unrepentant sin: Rom 16:17-18; Titus 2:11; 3:10; 2 Thess 3:6-12.

### **Problem #6: LEGALITIES! (6:1-11)**

- **1 Cor 6:1, 5-8** - *"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ... 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!"*
- Yet another area of sin in Corinth was that of being so angry and contentious, that Christians were taking each other to court to sue and damage each other. They were wronging, cheating, and hurting one another in secular courts... in front of unbelievers!
- **SOLUTION:** They were to seek to resolve their problems privately between the two conflicted parties. If this didn't work, then they were to try it with additional witnesses. Finally, if all else failed, they were to take their problems to the local church leadership, who would serve as mediators, and would follow the Scriptures to decide the conflict. (Matt 18:

### **Problem #7: IMPURITY! (6:12-20)**

- **1 Cor 6:12-13, 15, 18-20** - *"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ... 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a*

*harlot? Certainly not! ... 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

- There was a general sense of thinking that sexual impurity wasn't too big a deal to God. The Greek culture was very sinful in this area, and some even taught that it didn't matter what was done with the physical body, only the spirit mattered. The temple prostitutes of Aphrodite descended upon the city every night, seeking out "worshippers" to engage in sexual sin with.
- **SOLUTION:** The Corinthians were to "flee" sexual sin, and remove themselves from it, knowing the body of a believer in Christ has now become the Temple of God, and a part of the Body of Christ. As such, it must be holy and set apart, as God Himself is completely holy and separate from sin. The Lord is very interested in how we use our bodies.

## II. The 7 Corinthian QUESTIONS: (7-16)

### Question #1: **MARRIAGE??** (7:1-24)

- 1 Cor 7:3-5, 8-13 - *"Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ... 8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; 9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. 10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. 12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him."*

- The Corinthians wanted to know how being Christian should affect their marital status: Could the spouses abstain from sex? Could the singles get married? Could a believing spouse leave her non-Christian partner, since they now had Jesus?
- **ANSWER:** A believer is essentially to remain in the state they were in when saved by Christ, and seek to serve Him there faithfully. Married spouses were to minister to each other sexually; unmarried individuals and widows were to remain as they were and focus on serving Christ; believers married to unbelievers weren't to divorce or abandon them, but rather to pray for their salvation and love them faithfully! (2 Pet 3:8; 1 Tim 2:5)

### Question #2: **SINGLES??** (7:25-40)

- **1 Cor 7:25-26, 32-33, 35** - *"Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress--that it is good for a man to remain as he is: ... 32 But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord--how he may please the Lord. 33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world--how he may please his wife. ... 35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction."*
- Apparently, the singles didn't know how they were to behave in light of the fact that they were now Christians, the Lord might return at any moment, there was intense persecution of believers in many cities.
- **ANSWER:** Paul said that they should think about staying in that single state, in order to serve the Lord more effectively and efficiently. The state of singleness has less distractions than the married one, and can serve the Lord in a more unhindered way. Singleness must be redeemed and used for the glory of Christ...who was single, too!

### Question #3: **LIBERTY??** (8-11:1)

- **1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 9, 11-13** - *"Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. ... 4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. ... 7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ... 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ... 11 And because of your*

*knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."*

- The Corinthian Christians were allowing their "Christian Liberty" to harm others spiritually, by doing things without regard for the consciences of others in their church. Some were eating meat that was purchased from pagan temples, knowing that it was just good meat, while others saw it as compromise and sinful for a Christian to do.
- **ANSWER:** The believers engaging in this questionable behavior were to cease from doing it in public, lest it could harm the faith of other believers. Jesus saints are more valuable than meat (or any other "liberty") and should be treated accordingly. Whenever "liberties" become something divisive or damaging, they need to be forsaken in the name of Love, which is the true basis of Christian maturity. (Jn 13:34,35; Rom 14:1-15:3)

#### **Question #4: SUBMISSION?? (11:2-16)**

- **1 Cor 11:3-5, 10, 16** - *"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ... 10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ... 16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God."*
- Some of the women in the Greek culture having recently come to Christ were forsaking the custom of showing outwardly their submission to their husbands, and the Lord, by wearing a head covering. This was stirring up confusion and controversy in Corinth.
- **ANSWER:** Biblically, it is clear that the principle of "submission" applies to all of us, even to Christ Himself (v.3), and so must be respected and obeyed. According to God's order, the head of the home is the husband, and the wife and children are to be in loving, willful submission to him. This is done not forced or done out of fear, but rather from a heart of worship to the Lord. God has a right to order His world, His Church, and the family as He sees fit - our responsibility is to simply obey in love.
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## Question #5: COMMUNION?? (11:17-34)

- **1 Cor 11:20, 23-30** - *"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. ... 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep."*
- The Corinthians were completely out of order in regards to the Lord's Supper. They were coming to Communion drunk, eating out of turn, shaming the poor, and disgracing the poor. They were actually experiencing the Lord's correction for this, but apparently didn't even realize it.
- **ANSWER:** Communion is one of two institutions practiced by the Early Church, and so is very special and vital to a healthy NT church. These Corinthians needed to repent from this attitude of sinful behavior, casual familiarity, and even their despising of the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ. They were to esteem and properly value His offering of Himself for their sins, and receive it with reverence, humility, and thankfulness.

## Question #6: SPIRITUAL GIFTS?? (12-14)

- **1 Cor 12:7-12** - *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 12 For as the body is one and has many*

*members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."*

- Again, the Corinthians were severely out of order in this area of church life. They were "hyper-pentecostal" in their using of the spiritual gifts. Though they were open to the moving of the Spirit in their midst, they were confused and even focusing attention on themselves when they displayed their gifts.
- **ANSWER:** They were to follow the specific instructions given by Paul concerning tongues and prophecy (1 Cor 14), and they needed to exercise these gifts in love (1 Cor 13), recognizing they were only one part of the functioning of the entire Body (1 Cor 12).

### **Question #7: RESURRECTION?? (15:1-58)**

- **1 Cor 15:3-8** - *"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. ...*
- Finally, Paul addresses the Corinthian confusion regarding the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus and the coming Resurrections for the sinners and saints of the ages. Some of them were doubting whether Jesus had really risen at all, and others were confused as to what the nature of the resurrection body would be like in the future for believers.
- Here Paul lays out the **3 essential elements of the Gospel**, or "Good News", that can save a person and give them eternal life thru Christ:
  - JESUS is God in the flesh. (Jn 1:1-3; 14; 8:24,58; 14:6)*
  - JESUS died & was buried for the sins of the world. (Jn 3:16-18; 1 Tim 2:4-5; Heb 10)*
  - JESUS physically rose from the dead, for the sins of the world. (Jn 21; Acts 1)*
- **1 Cor 15:17-20** - *"And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ...*
- Paul explains to the Corinthians what it would mean if, like they feared, Christ hadn't actually physically/historically risen from the dead:

*All believers would still be in their sins!  
Christians who've died would be lost!  
Christians would be utter fools!*

- However, notice that Paul references over 500 people who were eyewitnesses of the Resurrected Christ (v.5-8), and he also asserts very definitely that Jesus is actually risen from the grave - and that Paul himself had seen Him! (v.8)
- **1 Cor 15:51-58** - *"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*
- Lastly, Paul here lays out the progression of the future Resurrection of Christians, at an event that we refer to as the **"Rapture"**, from the Latin word **"rapturis"**, or **"harpazo"** in Greek in 1 Thess 4:17 for **"caught up"**. There will be the sound of a trumpet, and instantaneously, all dead believers will instantly be risen out of the grave, in order, in brand-new resurrection bodies like that of Christ. It will be a glorified body based in incorruption (sinlessness) and immortality (unable to die) as was that of Jesus.
- This will be the final victory over death, the enemy of all humanity since the Fall of Adam. The Resurrection should also motivate them to be zealous, steadfast, and immovable in their service and ministry to Christ. Since they were going to live forever, and enter the Kingdom based upon their labor and service - they should give it 110%. (1 Cor 3; 2 Cor 5)

*"This life we live shall soon be passed, and only what's done for Christ will last!"*