

Corinth—A Deeper Look

MONDAY 4.25.16 Read 1 Cor. 1:10-18. The word “division” is really “clique.” A clique is defined as a collection of people within some larger group consisting of distinct parties in temporary alliances for some limited purpose. They associate regularly with each other on the basis of shared commitment and common interests and share a sense of identity apart from the larger group. *How can the church promote small group unity without creating in-groups or cliques? How can the church maintain and support the purpose that we all should share?*

TUESDAY 4.26.16 Read Romans 3:9-25. How does Paul’s deeply realized consciousness of sin in Romans shed light on how he is responding to Corinth and the cliques? How does the problem impact Paul’s heart for unity and responsibility for humanity? Paul was a Pharisee and was already wired as one who believed in the Jewish responsibility to be the “divine commonwealth.” Pharisees traveled the sea and land to make converts who were on point with the Jewish message and purpose. It was replicated the same, time and time again, with no room for variance. *How do you stay focused on the greater purposes in your life? How can we see the things we have in common as greater than opinions?*

WEDNESDAY 4.27.16 Read Romans 6:3-4. *Baptism* is the key identity for all Christians. The ritual provides means for new members to pass from the outside into the inside of the group and the new social outcome was fellowship in Christ. Socially, to be “in Christ” was the same as being “in Israel.” And just as one was “in Israel” by birth, you get to be “in Christ” through the rebirth of baptism. This provides a belonging in Christ that cannot be divided, and a shared participation in the effects of Jesus’ crucifixion. In baptism we die to the old way of divisions and put on a new way of living through conflict in unity. *What are some ways we can foster unity to help us during times of conflict?*

THURSDAY 4.28.16 Read 1 Cor. 1:18. When Paul writes that the message of Christianity is not an “eloquent wisdom” but the **word of the cross**, he is reminding us to separate our faith instruction from secular philosophy. Faith doesn’t have to try and adapt itself to compete with the world because only our faith completes us and makes us whole. The world won’t understand it and it simply seems crazy. So to be a real Christian, you have to be a little off-balance. Take a look at other places where Paul lifts up the cross, 2 Cor. 13:4,

Gal. 3:1; 5:11; 6:12, 14; Philippians 2:8; 3:18; Col. 1:20; 2:14. *In what ways do you see the cross of Jesus against the world we live in today? What does the cross represent for you? What did you learn about the “word of the cross” today?*

FRIDAY 4.29.16 Read Acts 18:2. Aquila and his wife, Priscilla (in the epistles she is called “Prisca”) are assimilated Israelites. He was a native of Pontus on the Black Sea, and if custom is correct, their marriage was arranged and she would have been an assimilated Israelite from the same region. They moved to Rome and then came to Corinth at around the year 40 AD because of Emperor Claudius’s edict to remove all Judeans from Rome. The fact that they move suggests Aquila was not a Roman citizen. The story of how someone comes to Christ should be one of our greatest treasures. Here were immigrants that found a home in the “summoned” community of the Church of Corinth. *Who are the people in our community that have immigrated or come from a different culture? How can we welcome them the same way Paul welcomed Aquila and Priscilla?*

SATURDAY 4.30.16 Read 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 11:7. In the ancient Mediterranean world, artisans and craftsmen lived in specific quarters of the city, that’s how you could find them when you needed their trade. So when Paul arrived in a new city, trained in making tents, he found the other tentmakers in the city. What does the scripture you just read tell us about how hard Paul had to work? He spent his Sabbath days in deep discussions in the synagogue with Judean and Greek Israelites about the teachings and death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul worked to exhaustion, was made fun of, and still never stopped sharing the Gospel. *How do you share the Gospel of Jesus to those around you? How do you communicate the love of God through Jesus in word or action?*

Love: How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?
Learn: What have you learned about where Jesus walked that helps you with where you walk?
Share: What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?
Serve: Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

Healing Strength: Darryl Rash, Beverly Kysar, Annette Pitcher, Rex Townsend, Stan Ensch, Lincoln Wallis, Mary Schmidt, Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb’s daughter), Janet Coons (Donna’s daughter)
Homebound: Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman
Military Personnel: Adam Walters, Joseph Roberts, Lucas Lamkin, Adam Clark