

Day 01:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:1-3

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,
2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ACTS 9:5-6 AND 15-16

[Paul persecuted God's church until the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus and said], "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.
6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ... 15 "Paul is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

A. KEY WORDS

Christ Jesus: Jesus is the Christ - God's promised king who makes sinners God's holy people - his church.

Sanctified: made holy

Saints: God's holy people

B. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What did God call Paul to be? 1:1, Acts 9:15-16
2. What did God call the Corinthians to be? 1:2
3. Who do all people call on to be made a holy member of God's holy people, the church? 1:2

C. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

Paul had persecuted the church before God called him to be his special representative. God called Paul to tell people that Jesus is the Christ. Three years before writing 1 Corinthians, Paul had gone to Corinth and preached this message.

God called sinful Corinthians to be his holy church in Jesus. Only Jesus can sanctify people - make sinners holy in God's sight.

Those called by God call on the name of Jesus - that is, they rely on Jesus to have paid for their sin and given them his holiness. To call on Jesus' name is to say, 'I belong to Jesus, he is my Lord'.

The Corinthians were no holier than any other person anywhere else who trusts in Christ as their Lord. Only in Christ are we God's holy people.

Day 02:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S
DATE

I'M THANKFUL
TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT
TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:4-9

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

ACTS 18:1, 5-11

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ... 5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. 6 And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshipper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the

Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. 9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." 11 And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does Paul thank God for? 1:4
2. How did the Corinthians come to know Jesus is the Christ? 1 Corinthians 1:6 and Acts 18:1, 5-11
3. In what ways did Jesus enable the Corinthian church to live as God's people? 1 Corinthians 1:5 and 7
4. Why was Paul confident that the Corinthians would remain guiltless until Christ's return? 1 Corinthians 1:8-9

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

God's grace is undeserved kindness to sinners. The Corinthians became God's holy church because of God's grace to them in Christ Jesus. It was Paul who first preached the message of God's grace in Jesus to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, Paul is assuring the church that in Christ, it has all the gifts it needs to live as God's holy people in this world. In Jesus, God's people are kept guiltless before God and so will be his holy people for all eternity. All those who call on the name of Jesus have received God's grace because God is faithful to his promise to establish his kingdom in Jesus. It is all of God, not our achievement.

Day 03:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S
DATE

I'M THANKFUL
TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT
TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:10-17

10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among

you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul", or "I follow Apollos", or "I follow Cephas", or "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one

may say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does Paul appeal to the Corinthian church to do? 1:10
2. What are the Corinthians quarrelling over? 1:11-12, 14-16
3. What is Paul's solution to unite the Corinthians? 1:10, 13 and 17

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

The Corinthians quarrelled as to who was the most holy, the most spiritual, among them. They thought which leader you followed, or who baptised you, made you more spiritual or holier than other believers. Paul pointed them back to Christ and him crucified. In the Christian life we never go beyond the gospel of Christ and him crucified. Christ is the only reason we are God's holy people and are equipped to be God's church both now and eternally. When we remember that we bear Christ's name – that we belong to him – then we will build others up in Christ-like love instead of tearing each other down in arrogant quarrelling.

Day 04:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:1-17

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him

in all speech and all knowledge— 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among

you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul", or "I follow Apollos", or "I follow Cephas", or "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does this passage teach us about Christ Jesus?
2. What does this passage teach us about being God's church?

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

Paul refers to Jesus eleven times in the first nine verses. Paul was commissioned by Jesus to take the gospel to Corinth. The Corinthians who received Paul's testimony became the church of God – those made holy in Christ and called to live holy lives that showed they belong to Jesus. By God's grace in Jesus, they had been given everything they needed to live in holiness both now and eternally when Jesus returns. Therefore, as God's church we need to be what God has made us to be – his people united in Christ who sacrificially love others as Christ loved us in holiness and humility.

Day 05:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:18-25

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,²³ but we preach Christ

crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. How does the world in its wisdom view the cross of Christ? 1:18
2. How does God view the wisdom of the world? 1:19-20
3. How has God made the wisdom of this world foolish? 1:21-23
4. How do those who are being saved by God view the cross of Christ? 1:18, 24-25

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

The cross of Christ divides humanity in two. In this world you are either perishing because you reject the cross as foolish, or you are being saved by God through the cross of Christ because the cross is God's power and wisdom to save sinners.

God will destroy the wisdom of this world. The world's wisdom cannot discern that God saves weak, foolish and sinful people through his king crucified on the cross. For them Christ on the cross is a stumbling block and foolishness. But God's apparent foolishness and weakness is wiser and stronger than anything man can offer.

Day 06:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S
DATE

I'M THANKFUL
TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT
TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:26-31

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised

in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. God confounds the wisdom of this world by saving people through the 'weak and foolish' cross of Christ (1:18-25). In what other way does God confound this wisdom of this age? 1:26-28
2. Why can no human being boast in God's presence? 1:28-29
3. Christ is our wisdom. What does Christ give us? 1:30
4. Who are we to boast in? 1:31

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

God not only saves people through a 'foolish and weak' cross, he saves foolish and weak people. Humans in their wisdom and power are arrogantly opposed to God. But when Christ returns no human will be able to boast in God's presence of themselves or their achievements. But in his mercy God puts weak people in this world's eyes 'in Christ' (1:30). Christ is God's wisdom because he is our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. We are guilty sinners deserving eternal punishment but Christ atoned for our sin and gave us his righteousness. We are sinful and unholy but Christ has made us holy, sanctified so we can stand in God's presence. We were slaves to sin and death but Christ has freed us to live with God forever. How can we not speak of Christ?

Day 07:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S
DATE

I'M THANKFUL
TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT
TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 2:1-5

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much

trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. God's confounds the wisdom of this world by saving people through the 'weak and foolish' cross of Christ (1:18-25) and by saving 'weak and foolish' people (1:26-31). In what other way does God confound this wisdom of this age? 2:1-4
2. What was Paul's message to the Corinthians? 2:2
3. Why does God save people through weak messengers preaching a weak message of 'Jesus Christ and him crucified'? 2:4-5

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

God not only saves foolish and weak people through a foolish and weak cross, he saves them through foolish and weak messengers who speak a foolish and weak sounding message. Paul was weak and afraid when he told the Corinthians about Jesus. Paul deliberately didn't use worldly ways of arguing to persuade the Corinthians that Jesus is the Christ. Instead he spoke of 'Jesus Christ and him crucified'. Paul deliberately did this because he wanted the Corinthians who were attracted by persuasive speakers to trust in God, not in Paul. Paul deliberately did this because he knows it is God by his Spirit who saves people as the message of 'Jesus Christ and him crucified' is spoken.

Day 08:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 1:18-2:5

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the

world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 2 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of

God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 2 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does this passage teach us about Christ Jesus?
2. What does this passage teach us about being God's church?

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

'Jesus Christ and him crucified' is God's wisdom to save foolish and weak people from eternal judgement to stand in his presence as his holy people. The world will always think God's wisdom is weak and foolish but 'Jesus Christ and him crucified' is God's power and wisdom to save foolish and weak people through foolish and weak gospel-sharers who speak of the foolish and weak message of 'Jesus Christ and him crucified'.

The Corinthians were quarrelling over who was the most spiritual. Paul bursts their pretensions by writing to them about Christ and him crucified. The cross of Christ stops our boasting. Our only boast is Christ and him crucified. Pray that as at NCAYouth we will declare 'Christ and him crucified' to each other and to the world knowing that it isn't our abilities that saves people but God saves people by his Spirit as we simply declare 'Christ and him crucified'.

Day 09:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 2:6-9

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we

impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

A. RECAP

Paul did not speak the gospel to the Corinthian church with 'eloquent, plausible words of wisdom' (1:17, 2:4) – that is, Paul didn't use persuasive human wisdom. Instead, Paul preached 'Christ crucified' (1:23) – 'For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (2:2). Human wisdom considers Christ and the word of the cross is foolish but it is God's wisdom and power to save.

Note: This week's passage has the repeated line 'we do impart' (2:6, 7 and 13). 'We' refers to the gospel given by Paul and the other apostles.

B. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What wisdom does Paul impart? 2:6-7
2. How is human wisdom different to God's wisdom? 2:6 and 7
3. What evidence does Paul give to show that human wisdom is unable to discern God's wisdom? (Look at 2:8 & 2:9)

C. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

Paul imparts God's 'secret and hidden wisdom' which human beings are incapable of discerning and thinking up. God's wisdom, his message of salvation in Jesus, can only be known by God revealing it.

Human wisdom is limited by the limited minds of humans who are all death-bound sinners and incapable of everlasting glory. Human wisdom can only discern the things of this world and time; it cannot discern the things of God (2:6-7). This is evident by the fact that when Christ – who is God's wisdom and glory – stood among people they crucified him (2:8). People cannot even recognise God's wisdom and glory because every human faculty – the human eye, ear and heart – is incapable of perceiving the glorious things God has prepared for this people (2:9).

Day 10:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 2:6-13

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" —

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the

spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. Paul and the apostles impart God's secret and hidden wisdom which human wisdom is incapable of discerning. How do Paul and the apostles know God's secret and hidden wisdom? 2:10-12
2. How do Paul and the apostles impart God's wisdom, the gospel of Christ crucified, to us? 2:13a
3. Who can understand Paul and the apostle's teaching? 2:13b

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

Humans cannot discern the wisdom of God. We can only know God through his revelation of himself. God has revealed his secret and hidden wisdom to the apostles through his Spirit. Having received the gospel by the Spirit, God's appointed apostles then impart God's wisdom to us by their words. The words the apostles impart to us are no ordinary words. They are words given them by the Spirit. And we can only understand these words if we have the Spirit. The only authentic gospel is the apostles' gospel.

Scripture testifies to this. Jesus told his apostles that the 'Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.' (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit reminded the apostles of Jesus' words and they passed it on to us. See also: 2 Peter 3:15-16, Ephesians 3:2-5, Galatians 1:11-12, 1 Corinthians 15:3-11

Day 12:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 2:6-16

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” —

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does this passage teach us about Christ Jesus?
2. What does this passage teach us about being God's church?

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

In the apostle's words, recorded in the bible, we have God's wisdom – the mind of Christ. That is, we have the revelation of what God has planned in Christ for those who have received his Spirit and love him.

To be truly spiritual is to hear and obey the apostle's word. The apostles alone have received God's revelation of his 'secret and hidden' wisdom by his Spirit and we are to submit to their word.

A church that submits to the apostle's word will accept the apostle's gospel of 'Christ crucified' and express their love for Christ with cross-shaped love as a humble, united church. There will be no place for bragging that 'I am more spiritual than you because I follow this Christian leader' etc.

Day 13:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 3:1-9

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul", and another, "I follow Apollos", are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labour. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

A. RECAP

In 2:6-16, Paul assured the quarrelling Corinthians that the gospel of 'Christ crucified' was God's wisdom revealed to Paul and the apostles by God's Spirit. It was the apostle's role to impart God's wisdom to us.

B. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. How does Paul describe the Corinthians? 3:1-4
2. How does God grow his church? 3:5-9
3. How are the apostle Paul, and the gospel worker Apollos, the same? How are they different? 3:5-9

C. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

The Corinthians were not maturing in Christ. They were not eating the solid food of the Word of God that is necessary for growth. Because they were not being transformed by the Word of God, their relationships were marked by sinful, human ways with jealousy and strife.

The Corinthians failed to understand that the church is God's - it is God's field, God's building. God alone gives the growth. God alone designates the workers and their tasks. God uses his people, like Paul and Apollos, to do his work but they are only servants doing the different tasks that God has assigned them. All the glory belongs to God.

Day 15:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 3:18-23

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness", 20 and again, "The Lord knows the

thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. How have the Corinthians been deceived? 3:18-19
2. How does God view those who reject his wisdom and follow human wisdom? 3:19-20
3. How will returning to God's 'foolish' wisdom – the gospel of Christ and him crucified – change the Corinthian's human ways of behaving? 3:21
4. Why will the gospel change the Corinthians quarrelling ways? 3:21-23

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

The Corinthians were deceived because they were judging the gospel by worldly wisdom. They were departing from the gospel because by their worldly standards the gospel looked foolish (3:18). They failed to understand that God was opposed to human wisdom (3:19-20).

Because the Corinthians were departing from the gospel of Christ crucified, they were not living in accord with the gospel. They were boasting in men (3:21). They thought following a certain leader, especially one that was a powerful speaker, made them more spiritual than other Christians. They failed to appreciate that they had been given everything they need for salvation by God in Christ (3:21-23). Only the gospel of Christ crucified will humble us to live in unity and love each other with Christ's love.

Day 16:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 3:1-23

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul", and another, "I follow Apollos", are you not being merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants

and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labour. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will

be saved, but only as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness", 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 21 So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does this passage teach us about Christ Jesus?
2. What does this passage teach us about being God's church?

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

Christ is the foundation of God's church. God gives us the privilege of being servants in building his church which will last to eternity. But we must take care to build in the way that God has shown us to build in Paul. We must build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. We will grow in Christ when we live by God's wisdom - his gospel of Jesus and him crucified. This will involve rejecting worldly ways such as boasting in people and their talents. Rather, we will constantly remind each other that we have everything we need in Christ and we will seek to build each other in Christ, in holiness.

Day 17:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 4:1-8

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who

judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgement before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of

you may be puffed up in favour of one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!

A. RECAP

The Corinthian church quarrelled over which leader made them the most spiritual because they were moving away from the gospel of 'Christ crucified'.

_Ch 1: Paul preached 'Christ and him crucified' – God's 'foolish' wisdom is God's power to save. The church must live by God's wisdom not the world's wisdom.

_Ch 2: Paul is the authentic apostle to whom God revealed his 'secret and hidden wisdom' by his Spirit. The church must not move away from Paul's words.

_Ch 3: Paul is the authentic builder of God's church because he builds on the foundation of Jesus Christ. The church must take care to build like Paul.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. The Corinthian church fought about their differing judgements of Paul and Apollos. How should they have regarded Paul and Apollos? 4:1-2
2. The Corinthians were consumed by their own judgements. Whose is the only judgement that matters? 4:3-5
3. The Corinthians had become puffed up as they preferred one leader against another. What had caused the Corinthians to become puffed up? 4:6-8

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

The Corinthians arrogantly fought over which leader they followed because they had moved on from the gospel. They valued the messenger more than the message of the gospel (4:1-2). What is important is to have gospel workers who are trustworthy in relaying the true gospel message and building on the foundation of Jesus, rather than gospel workers with persuasive words. It is Christ's judgement, not the worldly judgements of the Corinthians, that matters (4:2-5).

Like all Christians everywhere, the Corinthians had received every spiritual blessing in Christ by God's grace in the gospel that Paul and other gospel workers preached to them (4:7-8 and 1:4-9). But the Corinthians were moving on from what they had received in Christ. They considered themselves different to other believers – that they had received riches apart from the apostles' message of Christ crucified.

Day 18:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 4:8-13

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ.

We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. 11 To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12 and we labour, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. The Corinthians wanted the lifestyle of kings (4:8). How does the apostle Paul describe his lifestyle? 4:9
2. The Corinthians wanted to be wise, strong and honoured (4:10)? How does the apostle Paul describe his lifestyle? 4:10
3. How else does Paul describe his lifestyle? 4:11-13

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

The Corinthians wanted the blessings of Christ and the things of this world. They wanted the power of kings, to be seen as wise, strong and honourable in this world's eyes. Paul came and preached 'Christ Jesus and him crucified' and modelled the cross-shaped life to the Corinthians. Far from living the life of a king, Paul's life was like a prisoner-of-war under the death sentence of a king (4:9). His life looked foolish, weak and without honour. The Corinthians did not like Paul's food, dress, housing, work and his unjust suffering. The Corinthians wanted the blessings of the cross of Christ without the cross-shaped life that comes with serving King Jesus.

Day 19:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 4:14-21

14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I

teach them everywhere in every church. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. Why has Paul written to the Corinthians? 4:14
2. How does Paul describe his relationship with the Corinthians? 4:14-15
3. What does Paul want the Corinthians to do? 4:16
4. How is Timothy an example to the Corinthians? 4:17
5. What is Paul's hope for the Corinthians as a result of this letter? 4:19-21

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

As a loving father who disciplines his children, Paul admonishes the Corinthians. He wants the Corinthians to imitate him – their father and apostle who models to them what it is to live in light of the gospel of Christ crucified.

Paul wants the Corinthians to be like Timothy who was of one of Paul's children in the Lord and imitated Paul's teaching. The Corinthians are risking their salvation if they do not imitate Paul.

Paul is hopeful that the Corinthians will change their ways and humble themselves so that he can visit them in gentleness and not with the rod of discipline for the sake of their salvation. Paul is confident they will repent because God's power is greater than the seemingly 'powerful' talk of arrogant people.

The message of 1 Corinthians is 'imitate Paul'. How are you going at imitating Paul?

Day 20:

DAILY BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1-4

TODAY'S DATE

I'M THANKFUL TO GOD FOR:

SOMEONE I WANT TO PRAY FOR:

1 COR. 4:1-21

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgement before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favour of

one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. 11 To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12 and we labour, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we entreat. We have become,

and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

A. EXPLORING THE PASSAGE

1. What does this passage teach us about Christ Jesus?
2. What does this passage teach us about being God's church?

...The test is not which persuasive leader you follow – such supposedly 'spiritual' divisions only result in unholy quarrelling in Christ's church.

The world thinks that laying down your life for others in service of Christ is foolish, weak and disreputable. But God spreads his message of salvation as his followers lay down their lives to spread the message of Christ and him crucified.

B. EXPLAINING THE PASSAGE

'Christ and him crucified', is the means of our salvation and the model for living out our salvation. As Christ's servant and apostle, Paul faithfully delivered the gospel and showed us what living for Christ looks like.

The world thinks the message of a crucified saviour is foolish and weak but it is God's wise and powerful means of salvation. The power is in the message and not the messengers. We are not to go beyond the message. The test of being 'spiritual' is 'are you in Christ?'...

As a church the Corinthians were abandoning Paul's message and model in favour of worldly behaviour. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to urge them to imitate him (4:16).

How Corinthian are you? How Corinthian are we at NCAYouth?