



PREACHING SERIES | Term 2, 2018

6 May	1 Corinthians 1:1-18	Cross-shaped Calling
13 May	1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:5	Cross-shaped Foolishness
20 May	1 Corinthians 2:6 – 3:4	Cross-shaped Message
27 May	1 Corinthians 3:5-23	Cross-shaped Leadership
3 June	1 Corinthians 4:1-21	Cross-shaped Reach -Out
10 June	1 Corinthians 5:1-13	Cross-shaped Morality
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24 June	1 Corinthians 7	Cross-shaped Marriage
1 July	1 Corinthians 7	Cross-shaped Mindedness

STUDY 1 – 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-17

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

1. How is Paul described in v. 1? How ought this shape the way the letter is read by:
 - a. The Corinthians?

 - b. Us?

2. Who is the letter addressed to? Note the four ways they are described in v. 2 and explore together what each one means.
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.

3. What do you think v. 3 actually means, and what does it show about Paul's relationship with the Corinthians?

4. What does Paul thank God for in v. 4?

5. According to vv. 5-9, how is the grace of God seen in the lives of the Corinthians?

a. Past:

b. Present:

c. Future:

THINKING IT THROUGH:

6. Discuss as a group some of the different ways vv. 1-9 begin to help us thinking about who we are as:

a. Christians

b. Engadine and Heathcote Anglican

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17

7. What appears to be a major issue in the Corinthian church? How does v. 17 suggest the issue might be resolved?

8. Throughout the rest of this letter, we will see that this issue has had a wide spreading impact on the Corinthian church. Very quickly, skim through the rest of 1 Corinthians and notice what some of the issues are. Again, how does v. 17 help us see the way these issues might be resolved?

9. Given the state of the church described in vv. 10-17, what do you find striking about Paul's description of the Corinthians in vv. 1-9?

THINKING IT THROUGH:

10. Discuss as a group some of the different ways vv. 10-17 begin to help us thinking about who we are as:

- a. Christians

- b. Engadine and Heathcote Anglican

STUDY 2 – 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 – 2:5

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 – 2:5

1 Cor 1:18-25

1. v. 18 begins with the word 'for'. Quickly returning to 1 Cor 1:10-17, what is Paul about to explain in 1 Cor 1:18-25?
2. In v. 18 Paul outlines two different views to 'the message of the cross'. What are they? Who holds them?
3. According to vv. 19-25, why are these the two responses people have to the message of the cross? Why do you think God, in his wisdom, has acted this way?
4. If the message of 'Christ crucified' (v. 23) is so foolish, why does Paul continue to preach it? Why would anyone accept it?

1 Cor 1:26-31

5. Paul now used the Corinthians as an example to illustrate his point. Who were they, generally speaking? How did they come to Christ?
6. What do these verses tell us about how God saves people? Why does he do it this way?

STUDY 3 – 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6 – 3:4

1. Recalling from 1 Cor 1:10-17, what is the major issue facing the church in Corinth?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

2. v. 6 begins with 'We do, however, ...'. Looking back to 1 Cor 1:18 – 2:5, what is Paul making a contrast with?

1 Cor 2:6-10a

3. According to vv. 6-10a, what is the message Paul speaks among the mature? Where is it from? Where is it not from?

4. Who do you think is meant by 'we' (vv. 6, 7) and 'us' (v. 10)?

1 Cor 2:10b-16

5. In vv. 10b-13, Paul explains the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing God's wisdom to the Apostles. Draw a diagram to unpack the logic of these verses.

6. The Holy Spirit is not only at work in the Apostles. According to vv. 14-15, what is His work? Add this to your diagram above.

7. What might it mean to be 'not subject to merely human judgments'?

1 Cor 3:1-4

8. What time is Paul referring to in vv. 1-2a? How did he address the Corinthians then? Do you think he appears critical of this or not?

9. How does Paul describe the Corinthians now? What is his tone? What is his evidence? (vv. 2b – 4)

10. What does Paul mean by 'mere human beings'? How can this fit with the description of the Corinthians in 1 Cor 1:2? What is the solution?

THINKING IT THROUGH

11. What have you learnt about the Holy Spirit from this passage?

12. Do you think the Corinthian church would have viewed themselves as Paul describes the in 3:1-4? Where might we be 'blind' to our worldliness? How will we uncover this?

13. How might these verses bring comfort when speaking about Jesus with those who don't yet know him? Especially, when we might feel intimidated by those who we view as intellectually superior to ourselves?

STUDY 4 – 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

1. In this section, Paul addresses the question of Christian leadership. Thinking back over 1 Cor 1 – 2, why does Paul need to do this?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

1 Cor 3:5-9

2. In vv. 5-9, Paul uses the analogy of the church as a garden with servants. Take time to explore how Paul parallels the role of Christian leaders, and God, in growing the church.

– v. 5:

– v. 6:

– v. 7:

– v. 8:

3. How does v. 9 cap off the argument?

1 Cor 3:10-17

4. In v. 9, Paul changes the analogy of the church as a field to the church as a building. According to vv. 10-11, what is the foundation of the building? Who lay it? What implications will this have for anyone seeking to build God's church?

5. In v. 10, Paul warns that ‘each one should build with care.’ The following verses fill this out. How does one build with care, and why is this important?

– vv. 12-15

– vv. 16-17

THINKING IT THROUGH

6. Looking back through vv. 5-17, what have you learnt about how God builds his church?

7. According to v. 18-23, what do you misunderstand when you line up behind certain leaders?

8. What do you look for, and value, in church leaders? How has God’s word challenged your thinking today?

STUDY 5 – 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21

1. Looking back to 1 Cor 3:1-4, how had the Corinthians been viewing Paul and other leaders in the church?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21

1 Cor 4:1-5

2. How is Paul to be regarded, according to v. 1?
3. According to v. 2, what is required in light of this?
4. What will determine whether Paul has been faithful? What won't?
5. How then is 4:1-5 a corrective to how Corinthians viewed Paul and the other leaders in the church correctly?

1 Cor 4:6-13

6. How do the Corinthians seem to view themselves? (v. 7, 8, 10)
7. What 'things' (v. 6) has Paul applied to himself and Apollos as an example for the Corinthians?
8. How will this be for the benefit of the Corinthians? (vv. 6-7)

9. What point does Paul seem to be driving home through the example of his own life in vv. 8-13?

1 Cor 4:14-21

10. In what ways is Paul like a father to the Corinthians?

11. How are the Corinthians, as Paul's children in Christ, to respond?

THINKING IT THROUGH

12. How can you know if the power of God is at work in your life?

13. Where, in your life, has worldly wisdom crept in? How will you be able to spot it? How can you have an attitude like Paul's in your own life?

6. In v. 9 Paul reminds the Corinthians that he has previously written to them 'not to associate with sexually immoral people'. Who exactly did he mean, and who does he now broaden that out to include? Is this not a description of all Christians?

7. How does Paul treat those outside of the church? Why is it different to those inside the church?

THINKING IT THROUGH

8. How is the wisdom of the cross powerful for the life of the church?

9. Every one of us struggles with sin. So how do you decide when to break fellowship with someone? How would we do this? What might it look like?

10. It is unlikely (praise God!) that we would find ourselves being proud of such sin. But can you think of other examples where we could find ourselves complicit in sin? Perhaps not being proud, but turning a blind eye to it?

11. When do we find ourselves judging the world? How will Paul's words here affect the way you relate to the world around you?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

7. In vv. 12-14 we discover why the Corinthians excused their sinful behaviour. In your own words, what are Paul's answers? What issue has he moved on to?

The Corinthians	Paul
"I have the right to do anything."	
"I have the right to do anything."	
"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both."	

8. How does the wisdom of the cross shape:
- a. the way we view our bodies? From the example of the Corinthians in vv. 15-17, why does this impact our sexual behaviour?
 - b. our attitude towards all forms of sexual immorality? (vv. 19)

THINKING IT THROUGH

9. Like in the city of Corinth, the world around us is full of sexual immorality.
- a. How do Paul's words to the Corinthians bring comfort and assurance when we fall short?
 - b. In the struggle to flee sexual immorality (or any sin), where is the place to begin? How does this make you feel?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-24

6. What do you think circumcision and slavery have to do with marriage and singleness?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7:25-40

In this section, Paul returns to giving his counsel for various marital statuses. For each status, a) what is his counsel?; b) how can you see the wisdom of the cross at work?

7. Vv. 25-38: Single Adults, never married (virgins).

8. Vv. 39-40: Wives and widows.

THINKING IT THROUGH

9. 1 Cor 7 raises many questions, and may even leave us feeling uncertain about what to think, or how to act. Take some time to write down here the questions you still have, so that you can investigate them further. You might do this with your Growth Group, Growth Group leader, Congregational Pastor, or another mature Christian – someone you feel comfortable with – as you continue to uncover God’s wisdom on the matter.

