



## 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

*For a background to 1 Corinthians, it is helpful to read Acts 18:1-17. You might find this study is too long to read it during your group time. You could ask group members to read it beforehand.*

*Helpful info: Sosthenes is mentioned in Acts 18:17 as the leader of the synagogue in Corinth. That is, he is a prominent Jew. By the time of Paul writing this letter (or perhaps even in Acts 18:17) he has become a Christian. Most likely he is mentioned in 1 Cor 1:1 because he wrote the letter as Paul dictated it to him.*

### 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. *“Church of God in Corinth”. e.g. church = gathering of God’s people, God’s church is bigger than Corinth, but there is a local gathering in Corinth.*
  - b. *“Sanctified in Christ Jesus”. Sanctified = holy = set apart for a purpose. Notice it is in the past tense. The Corinthian church are perfect in God’s sight. He has set them apart from the world for a purpose.*
  - c. *“Called to be his Holy people”. Holy = sanctified! That is, they are sanctified (past) and are now called to be sanctified (present). This is the purpose to which they were called.*
  - d. *“Together with all those everywhere call on the name of Jesus”. God’s church is bigger than Corinth. ‘Everywhere’ is more literally translated ‘in every place’ – c.f Malachi 1:11 ‘in every place’. The church in Corinth are a part of God’s eschatological people.*
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?

*The grace of God given in Christ Jesus. i.e. it's only in Jesus that you find the grace of God.*

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

a. Past:

*Paul preached the 'testimony' about Christ (grace of God = Paul was sent), they believed it (grace of God). The evidence is seen in that fact that have been enriched in every way with all kinds of speech and all knowledge.*

b. Present:

*They have been enriched (grace) with all kinds of speech and knowledge – verse 7 ties this to the work of the Holy Spirit. Why speech and knowledge? As the letter unfolds, we will see that these are two gifts of the Spirit that the Corinthians especially valued. But work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to these (though we will see that they are central).*

*The Holy Spirit has equipped them for life as they wait for Jesus to return. i.e. it is God's faithfulness v. 10 (grace) that will get them to the end.*

*They have fellowship with the Son (= grace) **already**.*

c. Future:

*God will keep them firm to the end. He is faithful (grace).  
They will be blameless (grace).*

**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?

*They are divided over the issue of who follows who. The issue is not so much disunity, but disunity is the expression of **Christians not following gospel Paul preached. That's the real issue.** Unity in the church is to be unity **in the gospel = the message of Christ crucified.** Not unity for the sake of unity, or just keeping the peace no matter what.*

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?

*i.e. there are lots of issues in the church – money, sex, greed, communion, idolatry, etc. But the root of all of them is a failure to follow Christ faithfully. The solution? The gospel of Christ crucified is **powerful**. That is why Paul longs for unity in the gospel. That is what will transform the church in Corinth.*

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?

*The message is **foolish**: held by those who are perishing. Important to note: it's that these people, currently, **are perishing**, but not yet. There is space for them to accept the message of the cross and be saved.*

*The message is the **power of God**: those who are being saved. Again, 'being'. c.f. 1:2 – sanctified, being sanctified. It's a process, guaranteed by God (1:8-9). The way he saves us from sin, transforms us, gets us to the end, is through the message of the cross.*

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?

*God chose for it to be this way. C.f. Isaiah 29:14, now fulfilled in Christ = v. 20, God has shown the foolishness and limits of human wisdom, triumphing over them at the cross.*

*Jews looked for signs, Greeks/Gentiles for wisdom. The cross is the opposite of both.*

*Why? Displays his power and wisdom, not ours. Without the cross there could be no salvation from sin – God in his wisdom provided the only way that our sin could be forgiven. God has put all people on the same level – it doesn't matter whether you happen to have knowledge, wisdom, privilege, etc. it is only God who can save.*

4. If the message of 'Christ crucified' (v. 23) is so foolish, why does Paul continue to preach it? Why would anyone accept it?

*Because no matter how foolish it sounds to the world, Jesus is the wisdom and power of God, the means by which God **calls** people to himself. Would be good to flesh out in your group what it means in v. 24 that:*

*Jesus = the power of God*

*Jesus = the wisdom of God*

### **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?

*'Not many' is different to none. God still saves wise, influential, and noble people. But the point is simply that's not why they are saved. And especially that is highlighted by the fact that God chooses the foolish, weak, lowly.*

6. What do these verses tell us about how God saves people? Why does he do it this way?  
*God 'calls' people ('God chose'). The message is foolish. It's only by the grace of God that we would come to put our trust in it. Why? V. 29 – so that no one may boast before him.*

### **1 Cor 2:1-5**

7. What does Paul now use as an illustration of his point?

*He calls on the Corinthians to remember how he preached the gospel among them.*

8. How does this continue to make the point of contrast between the world's wisdom and power, and God's wisdom and power?

*The method, or packaging, wasn't anything special! In fact, he was weak, fearful, trembling, unwise, unpersuasive. But he preached Christ crucified and the Holy Spirit did his work (v. 5), the Holy Spirit made weak words powerful and produced faith in the Corinthians. More on the Holy Spirit next week!*

**THINKING IT THROUGH:**

9. In 1 Cor 1:22 Paul writes: 'Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified...'. Then in 1 Cor 2:2: 'I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.'

- a. Do you think our society today is more like the Jews, the Greeks, or something else altogether?

*See what your group comes up with! Whatever it is, it boils down to Jesus **crucified** being a foolish message.*

- b. What could this tempt us to do:

*The temptation then is that we will either water down and/or distort the message of Christ **crucified**. This is a fairly obvious answer. So take time as a group explore different ways of how this might play out:*

- i. Personal evangelism?

- ii. As a church?

- c. What ought we to do? How does this make you feel, in light of all that we have seen in 1 Cor 1:18 – 2:5?

*What we ought to do is preach Christ **crucified** – because that is the message, by which, God (through the work of the Holy Spirit) saves people. For some it might be confronting/embarrassing/daunting to preach such a foolish message. But it's also freeing! God is the one who saves people, my words don't have to be clever or special, because the Spirit is powerful, and it is God who call people to Christ, not me.*

## 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?  
*The major issue is that they are not following Christ.*

### 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?  
*He preaches a message that, to the world, is foolish – Christ crucified (1:18 – 2:5).*

### 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?  
*The mystery kept hidden for ages, God's wisdom – Jesus crucified.  
It comes from God, not from the world (Isaiah 64:4). This mystery has now been made known by the Holy Spirit.*

*Notice: the message he speaks among Christians is the same he speaks among the world – Jesus crucified. For Jesus crucified is the wisdom of God.*

4. Who do you think is meant by 'we' (vv. 6, 7) and 'us' (v. 10)?  
*It is Paul and the Apostles. This is important especially in v. 10. God has revealed the mystery of Christ first to the Apostles, then to you and I through what they have spoken.*

### 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.

*Important to remember that 'we' = the Apostles.*

*Only God can know the thoughts of God (the mystery of God = Jesus Crucified)  
> The Holy Spirit is God*

- > *The Apostles have received the Holy Spirit*
  - > *The Apostles have therefore understood the mystery of God = Jesus Crucified*
    - > *The Apostles then speak to the mature what the Holy Spirit has taught*
      - them = spiritual realities = the wisdom of God.*

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.
- He is also at work in the believer, helping them to 'make judgments' (= enquire about) God's ways that before Christ were hidden. That is, the person with the Holy Spirit can bring their questions and challenges to God by the Spirit and discover how the wisdom of the cross applies to their situation. **These answers will come through what the Apostles have spoken = the Bible!***

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

*Note that v. 16 begins with 'for' = Paul's explanation. The Apostles have the mind of Christ, because they have the Spirit. Which means we have that same mind, because they Spirit enables us to discern their teaching. So, the world may 'judge' you for how you live in light of God's wisdom, but don't be intimidated, for the world doesn't know the mind of Christ!*

**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?

*Addressed as infants in Christ. That is, it was the time of their conversion. He spoke to them as those who have the Spirit and thus a capacity for welcoming spiritual trust and experiencing spiritual growth but as yet having limited experience of it. He's not critical of this at all – like you would never criticise a newborn for only drinking milk! It's what you expect.*

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

*Now highly critical. It's probably been four or five years since they first came to Christ, but they are still not ready for solid food. It would be helpful to remember what Paul writes in 1 Cor 1:2.*

*Evidence = jealousy and quarrelling, disunity.*

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?

*Acting no different to those who don't know God. Remember too, their division had flowed out into other issues: sex, idolatry, greed, etc. Their church was marked by worldliness, that is, they look just like the world around them.*

*1 Cor 1:2 – it's as if Paul has introduced a third category of people – those with the Spirit, who are still worldly. His point is, this cannot be, something needs to change.*

*What they need to do is listen to the teaching of the Apostles, which is Christ crucified. That is wisdom that will transform them.*

### 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?

*See what your group comes up with. It's the message of Christ crucified that will keep uncovering our worldliness. As we keep opening up the Bible together (the Apostles teaching, the mind of Christ), to discover true wisdom, it will show if we are being foolish and lead us to into wisdom.*

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?

*If the Spirit works in us, and we know Christ crucified, then we know already more truth and wisdom than anyone who doesn't know Christ – even if they subject us to their worldly judgements.*

## 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?

*The Corinthians had focused on their leaders, whom they claimed to belong to. In doing so, they had shifted their allegiance from Christ (to whom they really belong) to the leaders. This was the root of the issues in the church.*

### 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?

*The critical thing to remember is that both the church, and it's leaders, belong to God. As mere servants of Christ, Christian leaders must not be accorded an allegiance appropriate to God alone.*

**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?

*Paul laid the foundation (v. 10). The foundation he lay is Christ crucified (v. 11, cf. 2:2).*

*The foundation of their teaching must be Christ. But that foundation is laid in the teaching of the Apostles = New Testament.*

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

*Important to note here that Paul is not talking about all Christians being judged. Neither is he saying that Christian leaders will be judged; rather, it is their work that God will judge. Furthermore, the picture is of a fire that refines.*

*In terms of 1 Corinthians, the work burnt up is that built with human wisdom rather than the wisdom of God. To build carefully is to build by preaching Christ crucified. Note, It is not the builder who will be burnt up, but his work.*

*The reward?*

*- It cannot be salvation, because regardless of the quality of the work, the builder will be saved. 'To suffer loss' means to be deprived of something. So then, it's not about punishment, or hell.*

*- The reward will be revealed on the Day of Christ's return.*

*- It could be similar to Jesus' words in Matt 25:21-23: "well done, good and faithful servant! I'll put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your masters happiness." The reward for faithful service is the master's pleasure and confidence, which leads to a further entrusting of responsibility in the new creation. See also 1 Cor 4:5.*

*- Or, perhaps, it could be the joy of seeing those you have served faithfully, as you build on the foundation of Christ, in the new creation.*

– vv. 16-17

*Paul makes clear what building is being built – the temple of God. The place where he dwells with his people.*

*Note: 'you' is plural. i.e. 'youse'. See too the end of v. 17 – 'you together are the temple'.*

*There is a difference between building with shoddy materials and destroying the temple. At stake here is the builders salvation.*

**THINKING IT THROUGH**

6. Looking back through vv. 5-17, what have you learnt about how God builds his church?  
*Through people, who teach Christ crucified. God cares for his church by holds his leaders accountable.*  
*Remember too from 1 Cor 1:1 – 3:4, that the Holy Spirit is actively at work in all of this!*

7. According to v. 18-23, what do you misunderstand when you line up behind certain leaders?  
*Because in Jesus you have everything! Better than any leader can ever give you. We need to align ourselves with Christ, and Christ is of God.*

8. What do you look for, and value, in church leaders? How has God's word challenged your thinking today?  
*Lots of answers here! See what the group comes up with. Key = a leader faithfully points you to Christ by building on the foundation of Jesus, as revealed in the Bible. They don't need to be impressive, showy, etc., for the Spirit will be at work in them.*

## 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?

*Based on human wisdom, not wisdom of the cross. Followed leaders on how impressive they appeared/status they carried.*

### READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21

#### **1 Cor 4:1-5**

2. How is Paul to be regarded, according to v. 1?

*Servant of Christ. Entrusted with the gospel of Christ crucified.*

3. According to v. 2, what is required in light of this?

*He is a servant entrusted with a task. It is required that he is faithful to that task.*

4. What will determine whether Paul has been faithful? What won't?

*Because he hasn't been given his task by people, but God. So it is only God that he is answerable to.*

*It doesn't matter therefore what others think, or even what he thinks of himself.*

5. How then is 4:1-5 a corrective to how Corinthians viewed Paul and the other leaders in the church correctly?

*Neither Paul or Apollos are great because of what they can do, or because of their status in the church. Simply they are servants of God, entrusted with a task. Everything they have comes from God.*

*They are examples of living out the wisdom of the cross.*

#### **1 Cor 4:6-13**

6. How do the Corinthians seem to view themselves? (v. 7, 8, 10)

*They feel like they have achieved everything there is to achieve in the Christian life, and they have done it by themselves, without God.*

7. What 'things' (v. 6) has Paul applied to himself and Apollos as an example for the Corinthians?

*At least back to 3:5, if not 1:10.*

*That true wisdom is found in the cross. Everything in the Christian life comes from God.*

8. How will this be for the benefit of the Corinthians? (vv. 6-7)  
*They have gone 'beyond what is written' in the Scriptures. That is, they rely on human wisdom, not the wisdom of God. It has led to them becoming puffed up.*

*Paul is using himself as an example to change their thinking, that they might humble themselves under the wisdom of God taught by Paul.*

9. What point does Paul seem to be driving home through the example of his own life in vv. 8-13?  
*The power of the gospel is at work in his life, but it's not at work in the Corinthians. If it were, their life would look more like his.*

**1 Cor 4:14-21**

10. In what ways is Paul like a father to the Corinthians?  
*- Brought them the gospel*  
*- Longs for their Christian growth (not shame, but warn), he loves them*  
*- Prepared to discipline them*

11. How are the Corinthians, as Paul's children in Christ, to respond?  
*Imitate Paul, through Timothy who he is sending. Let the message of Jesus crucified shape their lives.*

**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?

## STUDY 6 – 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

### READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

1. What issue has been reported? How grave is it?  
*Father's wife = step-mother. If it was his biological mother, it would say mother. It appears the woman was not a Christian, because she receives no rebuke from Paul (cf. v. 12).  
So scandalous that even the pagans would not tolerate it.  
Note: it appears to be ongoing, unrepentant, and celebrated.*
  
2. How have the church in Corinth responded to the situation? How could they?  
*They are proud about it! It must boil down to the fact that they are shaped by human wisdom, not God's wisdom.*
  
3. Who is first to be rebuked by Paul? Why does he rebuke them?  
*The first is the church "And you are proud!? Shouldn't you have ...". They are complicit in the sin of this man. Not just turning a blind eye to it, but celebrating it.*
  
4. In vv. 3-5 Paul outlines what needs to take place.
  - a. What does Paul mean by 'I am with you in spirit'?
  
  - b. Why is he able to pass judgment?
  
  - c. What is to be done?  
*Gather, with the authority of Jesus (+ Paul), hand the man over to Satan = remove from fellowship in the church as a sign of what is already true, that he belongs to the world, not Christ.*

- d. What is the goal? How will this be achieved?

*This is really important. The goal in discipline is that the man will be restored to Christ. Notice 2 things: destruction of the flesh (i.e. put off sin), and his spirit saved on the final day.*

5. In the Old Testament, the Jews ate the Passover meal with unleavened bread. How does Paul appropriate this meal to illustrate, in vv. 6-8, why the Corinthian's 'boasting is not good'?
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?

*Some key things to note (probably more!):*

*1) The magnitude and extent of the sinful action. It was unrepentant, ongoing, celebrated. This is the complete opposite to the ongoing, daily confession and repentance, struggle with sin.*

*2) This sin was impacting upon the whole church in Corinth. This will not always be the case.*

*3) the authority for discipline comes from Jesus. That is, as we make judgements it needs to be solely based upon his word in the Bible. To put that another way, in the end we do not make the judgment, but Jesus himself does.*

*4) the purpose must be remembered: it is to see the person restored to Christ. All must be motivated by love, not judgmentalism.*

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?

## STUDY 7 – 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-20

1. The church in Corinth faced many issues. What is the power of God that would transform them?

*The message of the cross (Jesus crucified) is the wisdom and power of God, for the life of the church.*

### READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

2. What is the issue Paul is addressing? (v. 1)

*The Christians in Corinth are using secular law courts to settle disputes with each other. It appears these are civil cases, not criminal.*

3. In vv. 2-4 Paul argues from the greater to the lesser. Try and outline his argument in your own words.

*Judging the world + angels*

*Firstly, not a contradiction to 5:12. 5:12 is talking about the present, this is talking about the future.*

*Both the world and angels will be judged by us in the future, the day of Jesus' return. Must remember John 5:27 – Jesus is the judge – so any judgment we are involved in will be a participation in what he is doing. We will be elevated to a status and a role in the coming ages that surpasses our present nature.*

*Rev 3:21 – we will sit with Jesus on the throne of God.*

*Rev 2:26 – we will be given authority over the nations.*

*2 Tim 2:12 – we will reign with Jesus.*

*Perhaps it could be said that Jesus' rule, authority, judgment, will be expressed through us on the final day? We're not told the specifics, but without a doubt, the Bible is clear that in Christ, and for his glory, we will be exalted incredibly on the final day. That shapes life now, as Paul highlights here.*

*If we have the mind of Christ already (2:16), then we are able to make judgments over trivial matters now.*

4. Why is it to their 'shame' that Paul says these things?

*Because it indicates that there is no one in the Corinthian church mature in the wisdom of God.*

*Notice v. 5 the word 'wise' which connects us back to 1 Cor 1-4.*

*It is also in front of unbelievers, confirming their belief that the message of the cross is foolishness.*

5. In vv. 7-11, Paul shows how the wisdom of the cross is the power of God, for life in the church. Investigate the different ways he shows this:

a. vv. 7-8

They cheat and do wrong = operating on human wisdom, they have been defeated.

Jesus on the cross = wronged and cheated. But there is where he is victorious, the righteous one taking the cost upon himself. "Why not be wronged? Why not be cheated?" Suffer for the sake of Christ. Costly love.

Possible, because what we long for is not this world, but the one to come, v. 9-11.

b. vv. 9-11

It's our inheritance that allows us to let go of this world. But also, these verses are the warning that it is only if we are in Jesus that we will have that inheritance. But the cross has transformed us already, just live it out!

Worth fleshing out: washed (cleansed from sin), sanctified (made perfect, set apart for God, 1 Cor 1:2), justified (declared not guilty of sin, forgiven).

**THINKING IT THROUGH**

6. What is your first reaction when you are wronged by someone in the church? What will it look like if your life is shaped by the cross?

**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?

<b>The Corinthians</b>	<b>Paul</b>
"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?

*If a man who is joined to a wife in marriage ought not to have union with a prostitute (v. 16), it is even more serious for believers who are one with Christ! For through the cross we have been united to Christ. In fact, our unity with him (one spirit) is greater even than between a husband and wife (one flesh).*

- b. our attitude towards all forms of sexual immorality? (vv. 19)

*It is worth wrestling with Paul's observation: 'All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.' Sexual sin is unique from other sins in that it is body joining, and uniquely body defiling. No other sin threatens to put the body under the master of something or someone else.*

*We were bought at a price at the cross, now a temple of the Holy Spirit where God dwells. The cross shapes our life now.*

### 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?

*Don't resolve to do better. Resolve to return to the message of the cross, be captivated by Jesus, for the knowledge of God is powerful and will transform your heart and mind. The union you already enjoy with him is greater and more attractive than any union you will ever find on earth. Be comforted that it is by grace that we are transformed! God is the one who is powerful, rely on Him and His wisdom.*



5. Vv. 12-16: Christian's married to a non-believer.

**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.



