

PENINSULA CHRISTIAN F E L L O W S H I P

The Church at Corinth

Why did Paul write to them?

What was Corinth like in Paul's day?

What do you think of when someone mentions Las Vegas?

- Sin City
- Run by The Mob
- "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas"

I've never been there, and have no desire to

- Based on movies & friends who've been there I think of:
- Overwhelmingly bright lights & crowds
- Flashy celebrity entertainment
- Gambling, prostitution, crime & money

Corinth had been a prominent city of ancient Greece until Rome destroyed it in 146 B.C.

- Julius Ceasar rebuilt it 100 years later, 50 years before Christ was born
- Paul showed up about 50 years after Jesus changed the course of history

Roman Corinth had been around for about 100 years when Paul came

- It was on a narrow strip of land between the Aegean & Adriatic Seas, with seaports on both...
- A bustling hub of international commerce, degenerate culture & idolatrous, heathen religion

The most well known house of worship was the Temple of Aphrodite, "goddess of love"

- Serving worshipers with 1,000 temple prostitutes
- A steady source of income. Why leave it to the Pimps?

The city thrived on commerce, entertainment, vice & corruption

- Pleasure seekers came from far & wide for a holiday from morality
- "To act like a Corinthian" was synonymous for debauchery & prostitution

Of the 700,000 people living in Corinth at the time

- Two-thirds or more of them were slaves
- Thousands of non-residents passed through continually

*Let's see how Paul landed there in **Acts 18:1-18a***

What is the nature & reason for this letter from Paul?

- Paul lived in Corinth for 18 months, building the church
- Because of intense Jewish opposition, he moved into the home of Titus Justice
- He financed his ministry by making tents with Aquila & Priscilla
- Though he now worked mainly among the Gentiles, Crispus, the leader of the synagogue and other Jews were won to faith in Christ

About ten years after he left, while he was ministering in Ephesus...

- Men from the Corinthian church came requesting help with quarrels & divisions among them...
- And seeking his counsel in other important issues challenging their lives of faith

I Corinthians is Paul's response to their problems & questions

He has deep relationship & great influence with these people

- How did he approach them in addressing these troubling issues?
- He had real authority (Biblical authority is relational)

Paul writes to them as a devoted, loving parent

- **Keeping Christ at the center of everything**
- He is affirming & personal while correcting & instructing them
- While drawing them out of the Corinthian culture...
- It is challenging keeping the culture out of them

He greets them by reminding them who he is in God's service

- He reminds them who they are in Christ
- He prays blessings for them in God's name

He affirms his thanks to God for His work in them

- He reminds them of God's ultimate purpose in their lives
- Trusting in God's faithfulness to all He has called them to

Then he steps right into the biggest threat against them...

- *Divisions among them because of human definitions*
- **Worst of all! They are dividing who Christ is in them together**

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He then identifies the source of their divisiveness:

- They have confused the gospel message
- Corrupting God's heavenly wisdom with earthly wisdom

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He reminds them of ministry accountability before God

- And that they've lost sight of who he (Paul) is

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He then addresses three active occurrences of sin they are ignoring

- Incest, worldly litigation & sexual immorality

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Paul now begins to offer Biblical counsel for the issues they asked about

- Various concerns surrounding marriage
- Freedom & responsibility in an idolatrous culture
- Conduct & spiritual gifts in public worship
- Realities about the resurrection: Christ's & ours

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Lastly – giving to help persecuted saints in Jerusalem

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He concludes with future plans, encouragements, & exhortations of love for them