

## Called to Be Saints

## 1 Corinthians 1:1-17

### **Welcome**

What four words describe you?

### **Worship**

Who You Say I Am - Hillsong Worship

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcC1Bp13n\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcC1Bp13n_4)

Having recognised who we are before God use this time to give thanks for who God is by praying out some of the names of God or the 'I am's' of Jesus

### **Word**

You may wish to start by watching the Bible Project overview

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-1-corinthians/>

Read 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9

Instead of dealing with the questions and problems of the Corinthian church straight away Paul reminds them of who they are and how that was achieved.

Q. How does Paul describe himself? Who called him and who initiated the call? What do you think the impact of this would be on his readers?

Q. What three characteristics does Paul attribute to the church of God in Corinth in v2? Are these universal truths for the church? What are the implications for us? How do they shape our identity?

Q. In this section what else have they received and from whom?

Q. What can they be assured of, and what is the basis for their assurance?

Q. How many times does the term Christ Jesus/Lord Jesus Christ occur in the first nine verses? In view of what is to come why do you think Paul emphasises this? Anything we can learn from this?

Read verses 10-17

Q. What is the issue that Paul is dealing with here? Is it an issue for today's church? How does Paul show that division over leaders is non-sensical?

Q. We may not have division over leaders at a local level. However, there may be other issues or loyalties that may cause division. How do we prevent this from happening?

### **Witness**

In the church it is easy to focus on the weaknesses (apparent or real) that need correction rather than the evidences of God's grace. Following Paul's example use this time to give thanks for our church community and for God's work in the lives of individuals and in the body of the Church. You may also want to pray that each of us may have a greater understanding and assurance of our identity and calling in Christ.

## Wisdom from the Cross

## 1 Cor 1:18-2:16

### **Welcome**

What piece of advice would you have liked to have given yourself as a teenager?

### **Worship**

The Cross Stands – Worship Central

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxWcRX91NWY>

You may wish to read Isaiah 55:6-11 and use that to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with the wisdom of God as we study the passage together.

### **Word**

Read 1 Cor 1:18-31

Q Why is the message of the cross foolishness to those who are perishing?

Q. Why didn't God provide the Jews and Greeks with what they demanded or looked for in a God? What were they given instead? Why is this a stumbling block (scandalon) for Jews and foolishness for Gentiles?

Q. What does today's society look for in their god. What should they be given? What difficulties does this give them?

Q. Why did God choose the foolish, weak and lowly? What does it demonstrate?

Read 1Cor 2:1-5

Q Why did Paul speak as he did when proclaimed the gospel?

Q What hinders you from sharing the gospel?

Q How does Paul's example encourage you?

Q Are there ways in which we, individually or as a church, in danger of using worldly wisdom to present the gospel? What will be the result? How do we guard against it?

Read 1 Cor 2: 6-16

Q What does this passage teach us about the work of the Holy Spirit? Why is this necessary?

Q How does this passage help us to understand why some people don't seem to understand the gospel no matter how we explain it?

Q How should this encourage us?

### **Witness**

Pray for the church – that in all our activities the message of Christ crucified is the priority.

Pray for ourselves – that we will be confident in the Holy Spirit to use what we share to reveal Jesus to others.

## **Building on the Right Foundation**

## **1 Cor 3:1-16**

### **Welcome**

Have you had a DIY or similar disaster? What was it and how did you resolve it?

### **Worship**

The Church's One Foundation

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uz\\_0RQL8Qo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uz_0RQL8Qo)

Use this as an opportunity to praise God for the security that we have in him, for those who have helped lay that foundation in our lives, and for the privilege of being used by him to build his kingdom.

**Word** Read v1-9

Q What does Paul call the Corinthians? What does he present as evidence for that description in this passage (there will be others in later chapters)?

Q Are there areas where we are still infants? Are we content with our childish behaviour – if not how do we become more mature?

Q How does Paul illustrate that their view of leaders was wrong? What is the correct view and how does it show that their argument was childish?

Q What else can we learn from this section about those who are called to leadership? (different roles, working to the same goal, they will be rewarded in accordance with their

labour (not competing against each other (you may find others)).

Q Is there a role that you are possessive of and see as belonging to you rather than to the owner (Jesus)? How can you 'loosen your grip'?

Q How should knowing that God will not be comparing our area of ministry with someone else's change our attitude?

Read v10-23

Q What is the foundation upon which a church must be built?

Q What other foundations might be used – what possible consequences are there for these 'churches'.

Q Why do we need to build carefully? How do we ensure that what is being built will last.

Q How were the Corinthians deceiving themselves? What counsel does Paul give? What would it mean to become a fool from the world's perspective?

Q What are the dangers of idolising or following a particular leader a) for the leader b) for you?

### **Witness**

Pray for our leaders and for all involved in the ministries in the church and The Branch. May all be done for the glory of God and built of quality materials.

## Stewards of God's Mystery

## 1 Cor 4:1-21

### **Welcome**

Have you ever been asked to look after something that was precious to someone else? How did you feel knowing that you would have to account for it later?

### **Worship**

Here I am wholly available – Chris Bowater

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj8SbulkJRk>

Give thanks that he who calls, also equips.

### **Word**      Read v 1-7

Q How does Paul say that he and other leaders should be viewed by others in the church? (The picture here is of a steward – a servant with responsibility for the running of the household).

Q Who are they stewards for?

Q What does Paul say should be the key characteristic of those in leadership?

Q Who are they accountable to?

Q What encouragement do these verses hold for those in leadership

- that judge themselves harshly (self-examination is important but only God can judge us accurately)

- that are/who feel that they are judged by others?

In what way is it also a warning?

Q How would you answer the questions Paul puts to the Corinthians in v7? How does a right response to these put an end to any thoughts of judgementalism?

### Read v8-21

Q What was Paul's purpose in these verses?

Q How does the Corinthians view of the Christian life compare with the realities experienced by Paul and Apollos? Which one is most attractive to those outside the church?

Q What is/are the warnings/challenges presented in these verses to the church today?

Q What does Paul urge the Corinthians to do? How will he help them?

Q What are the practicalities of making this a reality today?

### **Witness**

Pray for Christians in those areas whose lived experience is similar to that of Paul and Apollos. Particularly remember our Goma and GLO mission partners.

Pray also for our leaders that they will serve and steward well.

## Purity and Protection in Community/Your body - God's

### Temple

### 1 Cor 5 and 6:12-20

#### **Welcome**

Were you ever given a detention? What was it for? Did you gain or learn anything as a result?

#### **Worship**

We've fallen short – a song of repentance Hillsong worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE4YYHr2SF8>

Use this to lead into a time to say thank-you recognising that we all fall short of his glory but also to invite him to renew and restore us and the nation.

#### **Word**

Note: It is important that anything that is against the law has to be reported. Presumably the incidents described by Paul here were not illegal in the culture of the day, though shocking.

#### Read chapter 5

Q What are Paul's main concerns in this chapter?

Q How does he suggest that they deal with the immoral brother?

Q Why is this necessary:

- For the sake of the brother?
- For the sake of the Corinthian church?

Q How does Paul address the attitude of the Corinthian church?

Q What are they called to do? Why?

Q Why is it easier to tolerate unrepentant sin in the church than to deal with it?

Q What can we learn from Matthew 18:15-17 about how we might deal with sin within the church community?

Q How can we take sin more seriously in our lives and in the life of the church?

#### Read Chapter 6:12-20

Q The Corinthians seemed to misunderstand what it meant to be free in Christ. What two questions in v12 does Paul suggest should be asked about anything we do?

Q Paul uses a Corinthian saying that summarises their attitude to sexual immorality (sex outside marriage). What was the attitude? Is it seen today?

Q Paul gives three reasons (one for each member of the trinity) to show that their attitude was wrong. What are they?

#### **Witness**

Pray that each individual in the church is salt and light to the community. Pray for a willingness for us all to become more Christlike in both our attitude and behaviour in our relationships. Give thanks for Debra, our Parish Safeguarding Officer. Pray that she is able to give wise counsel and direction to those who seek her advice and support.

## Love that Builds Up

## 1 Cor 8: 1-13

### Welcome

What is your favourite meal? Is there anything you wouldn't eat? Why?

### Worship

Hear the call of the Kingdom – Townend/Getty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eG6DwlqZaUg>

Thank God that he calls us to be like him and uses us to build his kingdom

### Word          Read Chapter 8

Q What is the issue Paul is addressing?

Q Thinking through what we know about the Corinthian church why do you think Paul begins by talking about knowledge and love?

Q In what way does Paul suggest that knowledge and love are similar and how do they differ?

Q How does knowledge on its' own "puff up"?

Q What can be the consequences of this for

- a) the individual
- b) others

Q Why is it insufficient on its own?

Q How did those in favour of eating food sacrificed to idols argue their case (v4)?

Q In what ways were they right? What had they not taken into account?

Q What warning does Paul give in v9 ?

Q Can you identify situations where we need to be careful that this doesn't happen?

Q How does Paul apply this particular situation?

Q How did Jesus model this on the cross?

Q In what ways can/could you sacrifice your freedom/rights for the benefit of others? What are the difficulties? Any rewards?

### Witness

1. Consider one of the activities at either St. Mary's or The Branch. Give thanks to those who volunteer and give up their time for the benefit of others. Pray that they will be good examples and not stumbling blocks to those considering the Christian faith or who have recently come to faith.
2. Think of your mission partner – What are some of the obstacles they might face? Could we inadvertently be part of a stumbling block? What could you do to encourage them?
3. Consider yourselves. Are there areas where we are a stumbling block to others? What do you need to do about.

## Running the Race

## 1 Corinthians 9

### **Welcome**

If you were to compete in a sports competition or a television game show what event or show would it be? What would you sacrifice to win?

### Worship

I want to serve the purpose of God (in my generation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guTDKboFpAM>

Thank God that he wants to use us in building his kingdom. Ask him for the gifts of his Spirit that we might build with silver and gold (1Cor 3:12).

### **Word**

Read Chapter 9 up to verse 18

Q Twelve verses and sixteen rhetorical questions. Is Paul just having a big whinge? Why/why not?

Q Why do you think Paul has done this ? (some argue that Paul is using himself as an example of the principle he was talking about in the previous chapter. Others suggest that he has departed from this and is making a legal defence of his ministry).

Q What rights does Paul suggest he should have? What reason(s) does he give for not taking up these rights?

Q How could forgoing your rights make you more effective in sharing the gospel?

Read to the end of the chapter

Q What does Paul mean when he states he is free but makes himself a slave to everyone?

Q Could lowering your expectations about your standard of living help you to serve God better?

Q How does Paul's attitude build bridges to those outside the church, or to new Christians?

Q What concessions or changes might we need to make to enable others to hear the gospel?

Q What are the qualities needed of a person competing in the games if they are to win the crown? Q How do we develop those qualities?

### **Witness**

We have come to the end of the series in 1 Corinthians.

Some of the themes that have arisen include:

- a) Our identity in Christ
- b) Working together in unity
- c) Godly wisdom
- d) Freedom with responsibility
- e) Evangelism and Discipleship

What area(s) do we most need help with (individual/church)?

Ask the Holy Spirit to show us and equip for the next steps we need to take in this area.