

August 21–27. 1 Corinthians 1–7: “Be Perfectly Joined Together”

Introduction

Knowing Paul’s audience is important to understanding his epistles. The saints in Corinth were spiritual immature and struggling to understand and live the basics of the gospel.

1Cor 3:1-3

1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Unlike the members in Rome, who were prepared for the meat of the gospel - like the inter play between faith, works, and grace.

The Corinthians needed to be nourished by the milk of the gospel – like how to nourish your faith so it will grow

Bruce R. McConkie

"Ancient Corinth was a city of debauchery, lewdness, and evil. Even by pagan standards the Corinthians were notoriously sensual and immoral....

"In this climate of evil, Paul had raised up a congregation of saints who forsook the world that was Corinth and sought for a better life in the Cause of Christ. But these new and in some cases only semi-converted saints soon reeked with troubles."
(DNTC, 2:309)

Pauls response is geared toward the needs of a struggling congregation

No Divisions Among You

It seems that one of the problems the Corinthians were having was that they weren’t united in what they believed. Note that Cephas was Peter and Apollos was another church leader

1Cor 1:10-13

[10] Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

[11] For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

[12] Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

[13] Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name

of Paul?

Why was it clear to Paul that the Church at Corinth was divided?

(there are contentions among you)
(I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ)

D&C 76

98] And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one...

99] For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas.

100] These are they who say they are some of one and some of another—some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch;

101] But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant.

The Church was on a telestial track – not celestial
Picking and choosing what to believe and what to obey

Why is it so important that members of Christ's church "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"?

Show we are true disciples of Christ by being united in doing His work

Brigham Young

"If we were one, we should then prove to heaven, to God our Father, to Jesus Christ our Elder Brother, to the angels, to the good upon the earth, and to all mankind that we are the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are not one, we are not in the true sense of the word the disciples of the Lord Jesus." (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young, pg. 355)

Spencer W. Kimball

"Our challenge today is to be a light unto the world.... If [all the] members of the Church would live the gospel principles, all the errors of the world would evaporate. The world would come to us, and we would change the frustration of the world to the peace of the gospel." (Church News, Feb. 26, 1972)

Paul goes on to say that we can't grow spiritually by picking what to believe and that spiritual growth is a gift from God

1Cor 3:5-10

[5] Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

[6] I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

[7] So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

[8] Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

[9] For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

[10] According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon

This reminds me of Alma's allegory of the seed and Jesus' parable of the sower. A good seed can land in fertile soil but it still must be nourished in order to grow

There are different ways soil can be prepared and a seed planted, but -
What is need in order for a seed to grow and increase?

(but God that giveth the increase)

We can only grow spiritually when we are worth to receive, and earnestly seek, the Spirit of God

Brigham Young

"We can... organize according to the best plans and patterns and system that we can get for the present... but we cannot make a man or a woman yield to the will of God unless they are disposed to. I can plant, I can water, but I cannot give the increase; I cannot cause the wheat and corn to grow. It is true I can break up and prepare the ground and cast the seed therein, but I cannot cause it to grow, that can only be done by the people having willing hearts, ready minds, and a disposition to go forth with a firm determination and a willing hand to build up the kingdom." (JD, 17:154)

In verses 9 & 10 Paul switches metaphors from planting a seed to building a foundation

What do you think Paul means by "every man take heed how he buildeth" on his foundation of faith?

What actions would cause us to not build properly on the foundation of faith?

Pick and choose from the philosophies of men

Holy Ghost is Essential for Spiritual Growth

The wisdom of the world concludes that the doctrine of the resurrection and atonement of Christ is foolishness. So we can't pursue the wisdom of the world for an understanding of gospel principles

1Cor 1:21-24

[21] For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
[22] For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
[23] But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
[24] But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

In what way are we able to grow in our understanding of the gospel?

(unto them which are called... the wisdom of God)

Bruce R. McConkie

"As Paul said of those in his day, that 'in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God' (1 Cor 1:21), so say we of all those in our day who seek God by study and research alone.... God is and can be known only by revelation; the wisdom of the wise does not make him manifest, and all the conjecture and debate as to how this or that ancient name-title should be translated is as naught compared to one plain inspired utterance." (The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ, pg. 100)

Paul tells them that they shouldn't look to the wisdom of the world because God will use the weak things of the world to bring about His work

1Cor 1:25-28

[25] Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

[26] For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

[27] But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty:

[28] And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

What had the Saints in Corinth noticed about those who accepted callings in the church?

(not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble [royal], are called)

Why do you think God uses the weak things of the world to bring about His work?

(foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men
weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty)

Brigham Young,
“We will acknowledge that we are very ignorant, and that the Lord has taken the weak things of the world to confound the wisdom of the wise. He has picked up the poor of the earth and brought them together, because they seek after him; while the hearts of the rich and the proud, the high and the noble, are lifted up, and they cannot hearken to the principles of the Gospel and receive them and obey them. They feel themselves too good; they know too much; while the poor and needy... are the ones who naturally seek after the Lord.” (JD, 14:37)

Paul makes it clear that we can't teach the gospel by any worldly means but only thru the Spirit

1Cor 2:1-5

[1] And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

[2] For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

[3] And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

[4] And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

[5] That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

We know that Paul was very well educated-
Why do you think Paul would say, “I determined not to know any thing... save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”?

That is the only important message

How does Paul describe himself as a teacher?

(not with excellency of speech or of wisdom,
I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling)

He does try to convince anyone by with eloquent speech

Then how is able to teach them about Christ?

(in demonstration of the Spirit and of power)

He is only able to teach the gospel thru the Holy Ghost

Why is it important that our understanding of the gospel comes from the Spirit and not from a “wise” man or woman?

(your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God)

Harold B. Lee

“We must always keep in mind that the greatest weapons that can be forged against any false philosophy are the positive teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“We constantly impress upon all who go out as true ambassadors of the kingdom of God to follow the wise counsel of the apostle Paul, one of the ablest defenders of the faith of all time. In his declaration to the Corinthians he has given us his counsel if we would be as powerful as he in our ministry. This was his secret in combating evil: ‘And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.... That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God’ (1 Cor. 2:1-2,5).

“It is inspired wisdom that our efforts must be spent in teaching truth by the power of Almighty God, and thus we can forge the most powerful of all weapons against the vicious doctrines of Satan.” (CR, April 1972)

We must be humble to receive understanding from the Spirit

1Cor 3:18-20

[18] Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

[19] For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

[20] And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

What is Paul’s admonition to any who “seemeth to be wise in this world”?

(let him become a fool, that he may be wise)

What do you think Paul means when he tells us to “become a fool, that [we] may be wise”?

We become teachable

Richard G. Scott

"Humility is essential to the acquiring of spiritual knowledge. To be humble is to be teachable. Humility permits you to be tutored by the Spirit and to be taught from sources inspired by the Lord, such as the scriptures. The seeds of personal growth and understanding germinate and flourish in the fertile soil of humility. Their fruit is spiritual knowledge to guide you here and hereafter." (CR, Oct 1993)

We recognize our reliance on God

Delbert L. Stapley

"Is man so wise, so vain, and so self-centered that he does not require divine aid? The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. Yet man, in his own considered importance and self-sufficiency, thinks he can successfully get along in life without God's help. We must remember that a man can do nothing for himself unless God directs him in the right way." (CR, April 1970)

Paul makes it clear that the natural man can not receive the things of the Spirit
Not only must we teach by the Spirit but we need the Spirit in order to learn

1Cor 2:10-16

[10] But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

[11] For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

[12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

[13] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

[14] But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

What must be present in order or us to gain an understanding of the things of God?

(God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit
we have received... the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God)

Spencer W. Kimball

"The treasures of both secular and spiritual knowledge are hidden ones-but hidden from those who do not properly search and strive to find them.... Spiritual knowledge is not available merely for the asking; even prayers are not enough. It takes persistence and dedication of one's life.... Of all treasures of knowledge, the most vital is the knowledge of God" (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pg. 389-390)

Why are things of the Spirit considered foolish to the natural man?

(for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.)

Charles W. Penrose

"The Holy Spirit... reveals the things of God. We see natural things by the

light of the sun. We see spiritual things by spiritual light, and he that is spiritual discerneth all things and judgeth all things, and he that is not spiritual cannot comprehend spiritual things. They are foolishness to him. And while the Saints of God, quickened by the spirit which they have obtained through obedience to the Gospel, can comprehend these things of which I am speaking and discern their meaning and signification, those that are wicked and corrupt and obey not the ordinances of God, cannot see these things nor comprehend them as they are, but they are foolishness to them.” (JD, 26:18)

Dieter F. Uchtdorf

“If we remove ourselves from the light of the gospel, our own light begins to dim—not in a day or a week but gradually over time—until we look back and can’t quite understand why we had ever believed the gospel was true. Our previous knowledge might even seem foolish to us because what once was so clear has again become blurred, hazy, and distant.” (CR, Oct. 2014)

Ye Are the Temple of God

In order to receive all of this spiritual understanding that we have been discussing we must be worthy to receive the Holy Ghost

1Cor 3:16-17

[16] Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

[17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

In what way are our bodies like temples?

(the Spirit of God dwelleth in you)

Margaret D. Nadauld

“Women who are grateful to be a daughter of God... understand their stewardship over their bodies and treat them with dignity. They care for their bodies as they would a holy temple. Women who love God would never abuse or deface a temple.... How even more sacred is the body, for it was not made by man. It was formed by God. We are the stewards, the keepers of the cleanliness and purity with which it came from heaven....

“Grateful daughters of God guard their bodies carefully, for they know they are the wellspring of life and they reverence life.” (CR, Oct. 2000)

1Cor 6:17-20

[17] But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

[18] Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that

commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body.

[19] What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

[20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

What do you think Paul means by the statement “ye are not your own”?

(your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you
ye are bought with a price)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"Paul says: 'We were bought with a price'. That price was the blood of Jesus Christ, and we are not our own. Oh, if we could only understand that by the shedding of his blood, he bought us. We belong to him. He has a right to tell us what to do and what not to do, and to command us to keep his commandments; however, we have our agency, and we act for ourselves."
(CR, Oct. 1947)

There are great blessings in store for us if we strive to have the Holy Ghost, develop and strengthen our testimonies, and continue in the Gospel

1Cor 2:9

[9] But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Dieter F. Uchtdorf

“The promises of praise and acceptance by the world are unreliable, untrue, and unsatisfying. God’s promises are sure, true, and joyful—now and forever.

“I invite you to consider religion and faith from a higher perspective. Nothing offered in the great and spacious building can compare with the fruit of living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Indeed, ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.’

“I have learned for myself that the path of discipleship in the gospel of Jesus Christ is the way to joy. It is the way to safety and peace. It is the way to truth.” (General Women’s Session, Oct. 2017)