

1 Cor. 1 pt. 3

Context hinges on verses 12-13 of chapter 1 and that holds true all the way through chapter 3:3-4

[1Co 3:3-4 NKJV] 3 For you are still carnal. For where [there are] envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like [mere] men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I [am] of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Throughout Paul's opening he is addressing the issue of division and alignment in the local church and takes this beloved church through some doctrinal terrain to refocus them on the foundation of their faith - Christ.

He has pointed out that the local church ought not be divided or isolated along personalities.

[1Co 1:12-13 NKJV] 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

He then continues to discuss his heart and mission for the church - not baptizing people and racking up a score sheet of baptisms - additionally, as discussed last week the believer undergoing the ordinance of baptism is not baptized into alignment with a personality but into the death of

Christ. It is an unambiguous declaration of alignment with nature and person of Christ and nobody else.

Having gone over that we arrive at verse 17 where Paul declares, “[1Co 1:17 NKJV] 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

We spoke at length regarding baptism last week and one thing we discussed was that “coming into contact with water under a religious pretense does not seal our souls for eternity.” The physical act of baptism doesn’t save us!

If that were the case Paul’s words in verse 17 would be backwards - if the physical act of baptism saved people then he would have most certainly been on a mission to baptize as many as possible (i.e. nacho libre).

But what is his mission? What is his purpose?

TO PREACH THE GOSPEL!

Paul’s sole purpose was to yu-an-ge-le-zo (evangelize!) - to bring good news; to announce glad tidings (as opposed to our news cycles today).

a word of Anglo-Saxon origin, and meaning "God's spell", i.e., word of God, or rather, according to others, "good spell", i.e., good news. It is the rendering of the Greek *evangelion*, i.e., "good message."

What is that good news? Sometimes, after sitting in church so long we become used to some of these terms and forget the glorious nature of our God. This gospel message - which has been applied to so many things today means that God has come to humanity and extended His great grace towards us that we might inherit his eternal blessing.

[Luk 2:10-11 KJV] 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Paul declaring the gospel: he came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.

[Act 13:28-42 NKJV] 28 "And though they found no cause for death [in Him], they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29 "Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took [Him] down from the tree and laid [Him] in a tomb. 30 "But God raised Him from the dead. 31 "He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32 "***And we declare to you glad tidings--that promise which was made to the fathers.*** 33 "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' 34 "And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' 35 "Therefore He also says in another [Psalm]:

'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' 36 "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37 "but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. 38 **"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 "and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.** 40 "Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 41 'Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.' " 42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.

This was Paul's purpose and one that he took seriously. He was not flippant or timid about this good news. Why should we be timid about sharing good news? It's good!

*not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. — no tricks, no gimmicks, straight up truth, declared plainly, allowing room for the message of the cross to do its work without the need for the preacher to extort or deceive the listener into agreement.

v.18-19 - you want to see a division? Here is the division - not within the Body but throughout humanity. You will find yourself on one side or the other. This challenges many believers who still want to have one foot in the world or one hand holding onto the husk of their old self - even if they no better! We've all been there.

[Mat 10:34-36 NKJV] 34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his [own] household.'

[Jas 4:4 NKJV] 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

The dividing line is the gospel! How can such great news be so divisive? Doesn't everybody want to partake in unconditional love?

...the message is foolishness to those who are perishing...they say that's just crazy! how can it be so?!

...to us who are being saved it is the power of God...who having partaken in God's grace and by the instruction of God's holy spirit and His word have come to the conclusion that this is truth and this is powerful. To hear the testimonies of some of these people is just unbelievable.

People are being made new by God's grace.

19-in the institution of the gospel everything we ever thought we knew about justice, and kindness, and love, forgiveness and morality was nuked. The point went from: have your good deeds outweighed your bad deeds (or better yet, do you have a perfect score?) - the normal, and

reasonable expectation for a good life - to ***by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law...***

v.20 - wise - wise, skilled in letters, cultivated, learned - sometimes we say being wise is knowing how to apply knowledge versus just being knowledgeable.

lecturers, writers, and teachers in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, most of whom traveled about the Greek-speaking world giving instruction in a wide range of subjects in return for fees.

scribe - he "scribes" were found originally among the priests and Levites. The priests being the official interpreters of the Law... Their functions regarding the Law were to teach it, develop it, and use it in connection with the Sanhedrin and various local courts. They also occupied themselves with the sacred writings both historical and didactic.

disputer of this age - where the reference is especially to a learned "disputant," a sophist.

*Get as many of these as you can together and see if they can make sense of this and come to an agreement.

God changed the paradigm of how humans relate to God by coming down to us. By an act of his own freewill he decided to take sole responsibility for the relationship between us.

v.21 - no measure of academic study can lead one to salvation - God will not ask for our book list, he doesn't ask for our credentials or our familiarity with philosophy. The reward is to those who believe. Not to dissuade studying.

[2Ti 2:15 NKJV] 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

That knowledge has to travel to your inward being, it can't simply reside in our brains.

"...if you believe with all your heart, you may..." -Acts 8:36 Philip and the Ethiopian from last week

v.22 - Jews seek a sign - the gospels are replete with this "show us a sign"

[Jhn 6:28-30 NKJV] 28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." 30 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?"

Greeks seek after wisdom - greek culture, as you well know, was very focused on enlightenment - man being the measure of all things - how

could we achieve wisdom and knowledge they gave rise to Socrates who taught Plato who taught Aristotle - you know these guys.

We have some pretty smart guys today in our world who come to the ultimate deduction that this is it, there is no God - in all of their wisdom that is their conclusion based on what they have seen and experienced.

A word of caution: [Psa 14:1 NKJV]...The fool has said in his heart, "[There is] no God...

People generally overestimate their competence and intelligence.

(HBR, July 2015)

Yale doctoral candidate Matthew Fisher and his colleagues Mariel Goddu and Frank Keil asked people a series of questions that seemed answerable but were actually difficult. The questions concerned things people assume they know but actually don't—such as why there are phases of the moon and how glass is made. Some people were allowed to look up the answers on the internet, while others were not. Then the researchers asked a second set of questions on unrelated topics. In comparison with the other subjects, the people who'd been allowed to do online searches vastly overestimated their ability to answer the new questions correctly.

We didn't see that people were more confident that they could find answers if they had access to search. We saw that people were more confident that they knew the answers—had the information in their heads—if they had

access to search. It's more like thinking you know how to fix a car if you have access to a mechanic.

Searching the internet is almost effortless, and it's almost always accessible. You never face your ignorance when it's there. Because we're so deeply plugged into it, we misattribute the connection to knowledge to actually having the knowledge ourselves. It becomes an appendage. We like to use the term "cognitive prosthesis."

v.23-25 The nuke that destroyed our wisdom. That turned our world upside down, or rather, right side up.

Many will stumble in this - it is glorious to know that we are sealed because of our belief and not because of our big old noggins- that you are called!

We thought we knew, our old dead selves, we thought we had it all figured it out. But God's wisdom displaced our failing efforts with His son Jesus. Cling to God's wisdom, cling to God's strength.