

1 Corinthians 3 pt. 1 v. 1-7

Context review: written probably around 55AD toward the end of Paul's 3 year stay in Ephesus - 275 miles east across the Aegean sea. Paul received word from those of "Chloe's household" of disorder in this new fellowship. *Side note, I pray fervently that our baby church is kept from such disorder, by the grace of our Lord* How much Paul must have anguished learning about the sideways happenings in this body.

He spends a considerable amount of effort correcting error in the church. A dicy proposition for any body. You never know how that's going to turn out after all. May have a church split or hurt feelings, or any number of outcomes. Nevertheless Paul is faithful to instruct God's people faithfully by delivering the truth to them in love.

He initially speaks to them on the issue of division within the church. A common issue, and one no doubt connected with their scholastic heritage, was ascribing to a personality or a teacher. Essentially declaring "I belong to the school of Paul, apollo, cephas, Christ, etc." Or, substitute today's favorite personalities if you wish: spurgeon, tozer, lewis, smith, etc. One thing all of these have in common - a good bible teacher, a good pastor, will always point you to Christ and not to their own self.

We find ourselves in a continuation of that dialogue this morning as Paul rounds out his instruction on division.

v.1-4

v1 could not speak to you...ref. 2:14 “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

SPIRIT V. FLESH - [Gal 5:16-17 NKJV] 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

This is the war, we all fight

[1Pe 2:11 NKJV] 11 Beloved, I beg [you] as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

as to babes...

Paul's challenge is trying to deliver spiritual truth - doctrine - to believers who are still wed to their previous condition, this will become more apparent as we move deeper into this letter. His exhortation to them in 2:16 “we have the mind of Christ” is contingent on the hearer having abandoned their former self in favor of becoming a new creation and growing up in Christ - adopting the mind of Christ, by which we are able to understand holy things. We cannot possibly hope to process the vast treasures of God's wisdom through the lens of our old self - corrupt and polluted as we were before Christ. And, we cannot hope to speak intelligently on these things while we are babies.

v.2 given their condition as babes, Paul feeds them with milk, and not with solid food.

[Heb 5:12-14 NKJV] 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need [someone] to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes [only] of milk [is] unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, [that is], those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

You were not able to receive it...why not? They would choke! A common danger for baby Christians. By way of illustration let's examine the risk and may the holy spirit instruct you in the parallels:

What is a choking hazard?

A choking hazard is any object that could be caught in a child's throat blocking their airway and making it difficult or impossible to breathe.

What different foods are choking hazards for children?

Food is a common choking hazard. Many children do not chew their food well so they try to swallow it whole. Foods that are the most dangerous are round and hard. If your child is 4 years of age or younger either take extra safety measures or don't feed the following foods to your children at all:

- Hot dogs
- Nuts and seeds
- Chunks of meat or cheese

- Whole grapes
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- Popcorn
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw vegetables
- Raisins
- Chewing gum
- Marshmallows

How small should I cut food for my child?

Cut food into pieces no larger than one half-inch; this will make sure that if your child swallows their food whole, it won't get stuck in their throat

My child likes to walk around and eat, is this okay?

No, you need to insist that your child eat at the table. This will ensure that they're eating at an upright position, and they are focusing solely on eating.

Is it okay to feed my kids in the car?

Feeding kids in the car is not a good idea. Kids that eat in the car are at risk for choking and often go unnoticed by the person who is driving.

Is it important for me to supervise my child when they are eating?

Yes, you never know what might happen when you are not looking. If your child chokes on an object, the object stuck in their throat is not allowing oxygen to reach the brain. Within 4 minutes or less brain damage or even death can occur.

My child is just beginning to crawl. Are there other objects I should be aware of for possible choking hazards?

Yes, infants and young children naturally put things in their mouth. When they begin to crawl, small objects that you normally wouldn't notice are key

targets for them to choke on. To ensure a safe environment watch out for these objects or objects similar to these.

- Latex balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Toys with small parts
- Toys that can be compressed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
- Pen or marker caps
- Small balls
- Button batteries
- Medicine syringes
- Hair barrettes and beads

Kids put everything in their mouth! Legos for sure

Peter writes this about Paul's writings:

[2Pe 3:15-16 NKJV] 15 and consider [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable [people] twist to their own destruction, as [they do] also the rest of the Scriptures.

There is the very real danger of choking.

Paul like a loving and diligent father, fed these baby christians with milk, started them off with what they can handle, full of nutrition and vitamins,

and the expectation is that as they mature they begin to naturally grow into consuming meat, solid food. The danger of choking doesn't ever go away but becomes more remote as we practice - and don't we love to practice!

v.3 - you are still carnal - still in the flesh, still clinging to that old man, that wretched condition we were purchased out of through the blood of Jesus.

Paul gives example of this condition:

Envy - an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy, indignation,

"envy," is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others;

[Jas 3:16 KJV] 16 For where envying and strife [is], there [is] confusion and every evil work.

Strife - rivalry, contention, quarrel,

Division - dissension; GR = a standing apart

are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

the answer might well be, well yeah, I'm just human - that answer doesn't appear to be good enough. The implication behind the question is that we are, through Christ, MORE than MERE human beings.

That if we can in fact tell a tree by the fruit that it bears, we find the church in Corinth, woefully apart from what they are called, and set apart for.

Thank God for His graciousness towards His church.

Nevertheless, through this question, Paul isn't just asking for the sake of dialogue, more so he is exhorting them to examine their conduct, not so much in a legalistic fashion but as father - prompting his children to grow into maturity.

v.4 - Paul revisits the root of the issue - picking sides - standing apart - ascribing to the cult of personality instead of being conformed into the image of Christ.

v.5 - who then? the rhetorical question, bringing definition to the character of Paul and Apollos and the nature of their relationship with the church:

they are ministers - de-a-ko-nos - dee - ah - kah - was

VINES: primarily denotes a "servant," whether as doing servile work, or as an attendant rendering free service, without particular reference to its character. The word is probably connected with the verb dioko, "to hasten after, pursue" (perhaps originally said of a runner). "It occurs in the NT of domestic servants, Diakonos is, generally speaking, to be distinguished from doulos, "a bondservant, slave;" diakonos views a servant in relationship to his work; doulos views him in relationship to his master.

Serving the Body, serving people, being faithful in carrying out the commands and work of our Lord as directed by His spirit. So that others might believe unto salvation by faith given each one by Christ.

v.6 - differing ministries - planting, watering, tending, etc. OR all of them at different times and places OR all at once! servants are obedient and listening for the instruction of their Lord.

God gave the increase - the minister, the servant, is blessed with the high honor of being able to witness and have some small part in God's mighty work and we rejoice to see His work done!

[Rom 12:3 KJV] 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Holding the flashlight.

v.7 - be nothing, consider ourselves as nought, especially in light of our previous condition, being disqualified from God's family through wretchedness and disbelief. To be used by God is glorious, but at the end of it all it is God that gives the increase. This lifts a tremendous weight off the shoulders of those threadbare saints who are striving in the flesh for one conversion, or one more disciple, or one more sermon...God gives the increase - this is ALL in HIS hands. We must each fulfill our role - plant, water, tend, whatever. But know that God gives the increase.

[Jhn 15:1 NKJV] 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.
(husbandman, tiller of soil)

God gives the increase. Let that be your heart's song this week.