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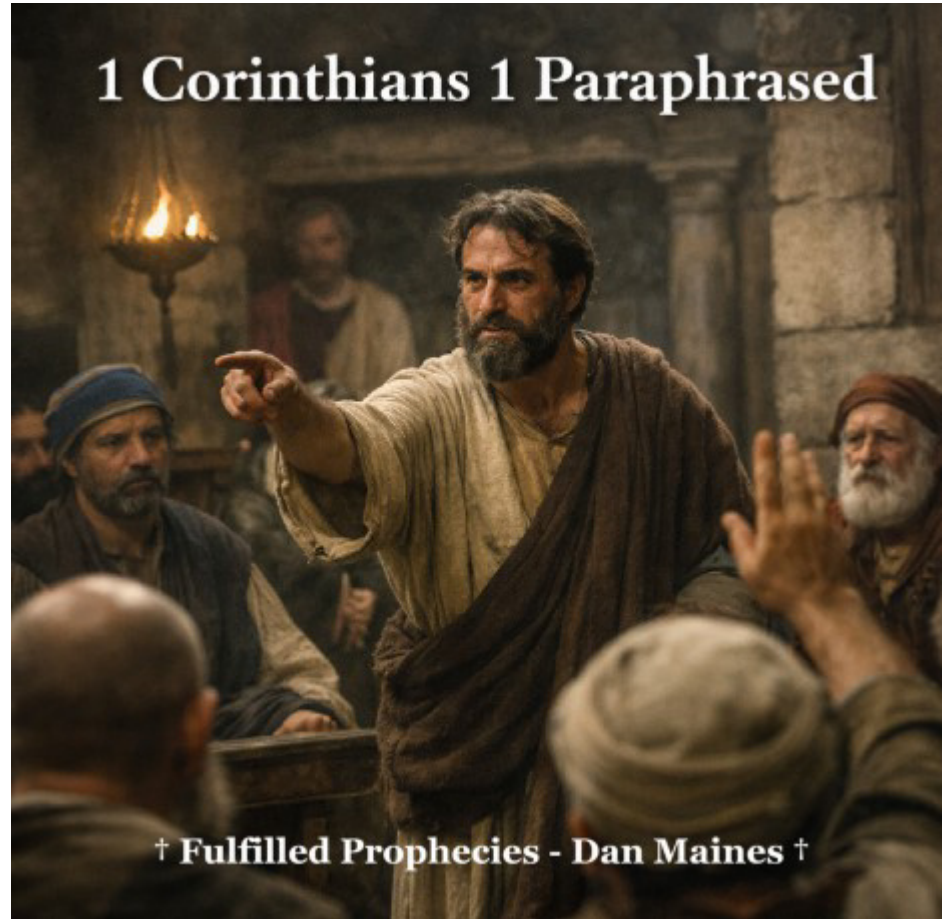
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## 1 Corinthians 1 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## 1 Corinthians 1 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† Paul opens this letter by grounding everything in God's calling, not man's approval, because the church in Corinth had started thinking too highly of men and too lightly of Christ.

† This chapter exposes division, fleshly pride, and confidence in worldly wisdom, and it pulls everything back to the cross of Christ.

† From the fulfilled perspective, this was written in the last days of the Old Covenant age, when the church was being

established as God's holy people before the full judgment that was coming upon Jerusalem in that generation (Matthew 16:27-28).

### **1 Corinthians 1:1**

Paul, called by God's will to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Sosthenes our brother,

† Paul begins by reminding them that his authority came from God, not from human appointment or personal ambition.

† That matters because the Corinthians were already elevating men into parties and factions, something this chapter corrects.

† The calling of an apostle was foundational to the church's establishment in that generation (Ephesians 2:20).

### **1 Corinthians 1:2**

To the assembly of God in Corinth, to those made holy in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours,

† He calls them sanctified and called saints before correcting them, showing that covenant identity comes from Christ, not from perfect performance.

† The church is God's assembly, not man's institution, and all believers share one Lord, which destroys sectarian pride.

† Their holiness was located in Christ, not in temple rituals, ancestry, or old covenant distinctions (Hebrews 10:10).

### **1 Corinthians 1:3**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

† Grace and peace summarize the whole gospel, grace from God, peace through Christ.

† This peace stands in contrast to the strife and party spirit that had begun to infect Corinth.

† What the law couldn't produce, Christ now gives freely to His

people (Romans 5:1).

### **1 Corinthians 1:4**

I always thank my God for you because of the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus,

† Paul starts with thanksgiving, not flattery, because even troubled believers are recipients of God's grace.

† He points to what God gave them in Christ, not to what they achieved by themselves.

† Grace is the ground of all Christian standing and growth, and that leaves no room for boasting (Ephesians 2:8-9).

### **1 Corinthians 1:5**

that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,

† Corinth valued speech and knowledge, but Paul says whatever they truly had came from Christ.

† Spiritual enrichment was real, but gifts were never meant to become tools of pride.

† Knowledge without humility leads to division, which is exactly what happened in Corinth (1 Corinthians 8:1).

### **1 Corinthians 1:6**

just as the testimony about Christ was confirmed in you,

† The gospel had been truly established among them, and their existence as a church proved the power of that testimony.

† This means their later divisions were not caused by a weak gospel, but by a fleshly response to it.

† Christ's testimony was being confirmed in living communities all over the Roman world during that age (Colossians 1:5-6).

### **1 Corinthians 1:7**

so that you aren't lacking in any gift, as you eagerly wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

† The church in that time possessed the gifts needed for its

transition period while awaiting Christ's revealing in judgment and vindication.

† From the fulfilled perspective, this revealing wasn't a far off event thousands of years away, but an approaching reality for that generation.

† The same time frame appears throughout the New Testament, showing expectation within their own lifetime (James 5:8-9).

### **1 Corinthians 1:8**

who will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

† Their endurance depended on Christ's faithfulness, not their own strength.

† The end in view is the consummation of that covenantal age, when the Lord's day of judgment would fully expose and remove the old order.

† Believers were kept secure through that transition because Christ Himself was preserving them (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

### **1 Corinthians 1:9**

God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

† God's faithfulness is the anchor of the entire chapter, especially when men prove unstable and divisive.

† Fellowship with Christ is the true bond of the church, stronger than personality, gifts, or leadership preferences.

† Since God called them into this fellowship, they had no right to fracture it by exalting men.

### **1 Corinthians 1:10**

Now I urge you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

† Paul doesn't ask for shallow uniformity, but for real unity centered in Christ.

† Divisions in the church deny the very name they claim to honor.

† A body joined to one Lord must not tear itself apart over men, methods, or status (Ephesians 4:4-6).

### **1 Corinthians 1:11**

For I've been informed about you, my brothers, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

† Paul deals with real reported sin, not rumor chasing, and he names the issue plainly.

† Quarreling was evidence that fleshly thinking had begun to rule them.

† Churches don't drift into division overnight, it starts with pride, comparison, and loyalty to human personalities.

### **1 Corinthians 1:12**

What I mean is this, each one of you says, I belong to Paul, and I to Apollos, and I to Cephas, and I to Christ.

† Even using Christ's name can be twisted into a party slogan when the heart is proud.

† They were acting like disciples of men instead of one body under one Lord.

† The problem wasn't appreciating teachers, it was turning teachers into banners of division.

### **1 Corinthians 1:13**

Has Christ been divided? Paul wasn't crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?

† Paul's questions destroy sectarianism at the root, Christ is one, and salvation belongs to Him alone.

† No preacher died for the church, so no preacher has the right to own the church.

† Baptism identified believers with Christ, not with human leaders or movements (Romans 6:3-4).

### **1 Corinthians 1:14**

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

† Paul is thankful that few could misuse his role to build a personal following.

† That doesn't diminish baptism, it corrects the abuse of attaching it to human prestige.

† The focus must always stay on Christ's work, not the reputation of the man administering an act.

### **1 Corinthians 1:15**

so that no one may say you were baptized in my name.

† Paul saw the danger of personality cults and refused to feed them.

† This shows how seriously he took even the appearance of man centered religion.

† The church belongs to Christ alone, and any practice that blurs that truth becomes dangerous.

### **1 Corinthians 1:16**

Now I did baptize the household of Stephanas also, beyond that I don't know whether I baptized anyone else.

† Paul's honesty here is plain and unforced, which shows the authenticity of the letter.

† His point remains the same, who performed the baptism was not the center of the gospel.

† Corinth needed to stop measuring significance by connection to famous men.

### **1 Corinthians 1:17**

For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ wouldn't be

emptied of its power.

† Paul isn't belittling baptism, he's putting first things first, the gospel message is central.

† Human eloquence can distract from the offense and power of the cross if it becomes the main attraction.

† The power isn't in polished rhetoric, but in God's saving act through Christ crucified (Romans 1:16).

### **1 Corinthians 1:18**

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

† The same message produces opposite reactions depending on the condition of the hearer.

† The world judges by appearance and status, but God saves through what the world despises.

† Those perishing included unbelieving Israel and the unbelieving world standing under judgment in that age (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

### **1 Corinthians 1:19**

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the intelligent I will bring to nothing.

† Paul cites Isaiah to show that God had long ago declared His opposition to proud human wisdom.

† What men prize most highly often collapses when God acts in judgment and redemption.

† This was especially true for those clinging to old covenant confidence while rejecting Christ (Isaiah 29:14).

### **1 Corinthians 1:20**

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn't God made the wisdom of the world foolish?

† Paul challenges every class of human authority, Greek

thinkers, Jewish scribes, and public debaters.

† None of them could reach God's redemptive wisdom by their own systems.

† The age in view was their present age, the age that was passing away, not our modern world system in general (1 Corinthians 2:6).

### **1 Corinthians 1:21**

Since in God's wisdom the world through its wisdom didn't come to know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

† Human wisdom can investigate many things, but it cannot produce saving knowledge of God.

† God ordained preaching, not philosophy, as the means by which faith would come.

† What men mock as foolish is exactly what God uses to save believers (Romans 10:17).

### **1 Corinthians 1:22**

For Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom,

† Paul summarizes the major demands of the age, Jews wanted outward confirming signs, Greeks wanted intellectual sophistication.

† Both approaches miss Christ when they make human expectation the standard of truth.

† Unbelieving Israel had repeatedly demanded signs even while signs were standing in front of them (Matthew 12:38-39).

### **1 Corinthians 1:23**

but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

† The apostles didn't reshape the message to suit the audience, they preached Christ crucified.

† To Jews expecting triumph and to Gentiles admiring power

and intellect, the cross seemed unacceptable.

† Yet the rejected cross was the very center of God's covenant victory and kingdom triumph.

### **1 Corinthians 1:24**

but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

† Calling makes the difference, those called by God see in Christ what the world cannot see.

† In Him, power and wisdom meet perfectly, not as the world defines them, but as God reveals them.

† The gospel created one new people from Jew and Greek alike, united in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).

### **1 Corinthians 1:25**

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

† Paul speaks this way to expose the absurdity of human pride, even what men mock in God's plan surpasses all human greatness.

† The cross looked weak, but it conquered sin, death, and the old order standing against God's people.

† What appeared to be defeat at Calvary was actually God's triumph in Christ (Colossians 2:14-15).

### **1 Corinthians 1:26**

For consider your calling, brothers, that there weren't many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.

† The Corinthian believers themselves were proof that God doesn't build His kingdom through worldly rank.

† The church was made up largely of ordinary people, not the elite celebrated by society.

† This leaves no room for boasting in status, bloodline, education, or influence.

## **1 Corinthians 1:27**

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong,

† God's choices overturn human values again and again.

† He delights to expose the emptiness of worldly boasting by using what men dismiss.

† That pattern runs throughout Scripture, from Israel's history to the apostolic church (Judges 7:2).

## **1 Corinthians 1:28**

and the lowly things of the world and the despised things God chose, the things that are nothing, so that He might bring to nothing the things that are,

† God doesn't merely ignore worldly pride, He actively tears it down.

† He raises up what men count as nothing so that the glory will plainly belong to Him.

† The old covenant world that boasted in visible standing was being brought to nothing as Christ's people were being revealed.

## **1 Corinthians 1:29**

so that no flesh may boast before God.

† This is the purpose behind God's way of working, all boasting by man is shut out.

† The cross leaves no room for self congratulation, denominational pride, ethnic pride, or intellectual pride.

† Salvation is designed to glorify God, not man (Ephesians 2:9).

## **1 Corinthians 1:30**

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

† Everything the believer needs is found in Christ, not in the law, not in philosophy, not in human achievement.

† Paul gathers the whole salvation reality into Christ Himself, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and deliverance.

† Being in Christ is entirely by God's action, which destroys boasting at the root.

### **1 Corinthians 1:31**

so that, just as it is written, Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

† If boasting is going to happen, it must be boasting in what the Lord has done.

† Every glorying in men is excluded by the gospel.

† Jeremiah said the same thing long before, true glory belongs only in knowing the Lord (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

### **Historical References**

† Clement of Rome, writing near the end of the first century, rebuked the Corinthians for envy and division, showing that the same kinds of problems lingered and had to be corrected by returning to humility and order.

† Irenaeus emphasized that the apostles preached one and the same faith, not competing schools built around personalities, which fits Paul's correction in this chapter.

† Tertullian argued against the pride of human philosophy and defended the sufficiency of the apostolic proclamation, echoing Paul's contrast between worldly wisdom and the cross.

† Eusebius preserved the historical memory of the apostolic age as a period of intense gospel witness before the judgments that closed the old covenant world.

### **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We must not build our identity around preachers, ministries, camps, movements, or personalities, because Christ wasn't

divided then and He isn't divided now.

† We must never treat education, debate skill, or polished speech as the power of God, because the power is still in the truth of Christ.

† We must reject pride in status, background, knowledge, or influence, because God still gives grace to the humble.

† We must boast in the Lord alone, because everything we have in Christ came from Him and not from ourselves.

## **Q&A Appendix**

**Q:** What is the main problem Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 1?

**A:** The main problem is division in the church caused by pride and loyalty to human teachers instead of loyalty to Christ. Paul calls them back to unity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Q:** Why does Paul talk so much about the cross in this chapter?

**A:** Because the cross destroys human boasting and shows that salvation comes by God's power, not by man's wisdom, rank, or eloquence.

**Q:** What does Paul mean when he says they were waiting for the revealing of Jesus Christ?

**A:** From the fulfilled perspective, he was speaking about the coming revelation of Christ in judgment and vindication connected with the end of the Old Covenant age in their generation (Matthew 16:27-28; James 5:8-9).

**Q:** Why does Paul say Christ didn't send him to baptize, but to preach the gospel?

**A:** He isn't rejecting baptism, he's correcting their misuse of human leaders. The gospel is the center, and no man should become the focus of the church.

**Q:** What does it mean that Christ became wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to us?

**A:** It means everything needed for our standing before God is found in Christ. We don't complete ourselves by law, flesh, philosophy, or status. He is our all.

**Q:** Why does God choose the weak and despised things of the world?

**A:** So that no flesh may boast before Him. God works in a way that makes His glory unmistakable.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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### **Source Index**

† 1 Corinthians 1

† Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Tertullian, Prescription Against Heretics

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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