

## A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You I Corinthians

Well, today on "It's a Good Life," we're going to be continuing our study on a "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. Today, our study is going to be on the book of I Corinthians. And let me remind you that you can go to our website, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org), and you can download a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." Or you can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, and I'll be glad to send you free of charge a transcript free of charge of this program.

Well, today, we want to look at I Corinthians. Remember, we're not going in depth in these studies. What I'm trying to do is get us a bird's-eye view, something that will help us to think our way through the New Testament.

Some of the background on this book. The author of this book is Paul the apostle. In I Corinthians chapter 1, verses 1-2, it says, *<sup>1</sup>Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.* Now, it would appear that possibly Sosthenes might have been a scribe whom Paul used to pen down these words. And in verse 2 of I Corinthians chapter 1, it says, *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*

I would remind you that, although this letter was written to the Corinthian believers at Corinth, that verse, chapter 1 and verse 2 talks about to the church of God and to every place that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. And this would point me in the direction of understanding that this book is also written to us, those who call upon the name of our Lord to save us who have been saved who have trusted Jesus as our Savior. So we can look at this book, I Corinthians, as instruction to us, as well.

Now, Paul had originally preached the Gospel in Corinth and converted many of those who received this letter. The date that this was written was approximately 57 A.D.

Now, the setting for this book is that we understand that Paul had received information about the situation in Corinth, according to I Corinthians chapter 1, verses 11-21, and had received a letter from a congregation asking certain questions. Now, he planned to visit these people but wanted them to change some attitudes and relationships before he arrived so he wouldn't have to deal harshly with them. There were a lot of problems here in this church at Corinth; so therefore Paul wanted these things straightened out before he got there.

Now, there's probably several reasons, and, of course, we understand that he wanted this straightened out because these problems, as they would be straightened out, would help these believers to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. It would also free up Paul to go out and win other souls to help this church to grow and help this church within itself to win souls, to bring others in to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

The key verses here, I believe, are I Corinthians chapter 1, verses 29-31. First of all, it says, *<sup>29</sup>That no flesh should glory in his presence. <sup>30</sup>But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: <sup>31</sup>That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* In other words, don't be puffed up, thinking yourself more highly than you should because all things are of the Lord. We should bring honor and glory to the Lord. Remember that as we serve Him.

In I Corinthians chapter 3, verses 1-3, we can look at those as key verses, as well. *<sup>1</sup>And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as*

*unto carnal....*In other words, fleshly, just as someone who has not been saved.... *even as unto babes in Christ...* Those people who have not grown in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They're not paying attention.

Paul goes on to say: <sup>2</sup> *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat....* In other words, "I've babied you along and I haven't given you strong food yet...*for hitherto ye were not able to bear it...* You couldn't absorb it. You don't give a baby a steak. You give that baby milk, and that's what Paul is trying to get across to these people. He says, "I want to be able to feed you with the meat of the Word. I want you to get into the Word, but you haven't been able to bear it as of yet. You can't understand it to the point of taking it in...*neither yet now are ye able*, he says. In verse 3 of I Corinthians chapter 3, it says, *For ye are yet carnal....* There's that word "carnal" again." You're fleshly. You're acting like unsaved people... *for whereas [there is] among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* He says, "Here's proofs that you haven't grown and you're acting just like unsaved people. You're envying, you want something that somebody else has. There's strife, there's arguing and quarreling and divisions. And he says, "Are ye not yet carnal and walk as men, or as the unsaved of this world?"

So that's some of the background on the book, and then we see the purpose of the book. The purpose first of all is to deal with certain problems. And we've already talked about that. There were problems within this church. Paul wanted to deal with some problems that existed in the church, and central to all their problems was their living and glorying in the flesh and not in the Spirit, according to I Corinthians chapter 1, verses 29-31. We've read that. They were walking in the flesh. They were not doing the things of God.

And then we see that another purpose is that, since there were problems needing correction, the

Corinthian believers needed to understand the practical reality of love. They need to be reminded of God, the God of love. In I Corinthians chapter 1, verses 4-9, says, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;* <sup>5</sup>*That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;* <sup>6</sup>*Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you;* <sup>7</sup>*So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:* <sup>8</sup>*Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>9</sup>*God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

God is love; we know that. God loved us so much, He sent His Son to die on the cross for us, according to John 3:16. He sent His Son that we could be saved and go to Heaven. First Corinthians 1:18 says, *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.* I don't think I would be doing any disservice to this verse if I would say that it is the love of God. We're saved by the love of God. Without His love, no one would go to Heaven, but He loves us and He wants all people to come to a saving knowledge.

But notice something about the preachers, as well. Preachers of the Gospel exhibit love. In I Corinthians 2, verses 1-4, it says, <sup>2</sup>*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.* <sup>2</sup>*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* <sup>3</sup>*And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.* <sup>4</sup>*And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power....*in demonstration of the love of God. He was doing this because of love for man.

First of all, Paul was saved by the love of God. We're saved by the love of God by the love of

Christ. And Paul was saying that because he was reminded daily that he was saved by the power of God, the love of God, that he was constrained to preach the Word of God to help others understand that they needed to be saved and that also he did this because, out of love, he loved these people. He loved souls. He loved man.

And then we see that Jesus also.... No greater love has this than a man lay down his life, and Jesus laid down His life. But we read in I Corinthians chapter 5, verses 7-8, it says, <sup>7</sup>*Purge out therefore the old leaven....the old sin.... that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.... without sin.... For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: <sup>8</sup>Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

The Bible says that we are to walk in the Spirit and Truth of God. It says that we are made clean through the Word and that someone asked Christ, "What is truth?" And Christ said, "I am truth." He said that, "I've been here." And the Bible says that Christ is the truth, the way, and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Him. So, it was the love of Christ that helps us, that leads us to the cross, that we see Christ hanging on that cross, and it was love that sent Him there.

There are so many other areas that we could look at here, Paul himself and their hope. They had a hope in God and it's not a hope like, "Well, I hope it happens." It's an expectation that something is going to happen. First Corinthians 15:3 says, *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.* They had a blessed hope, and this is the love.

The reality of love is this, and it's seen in the Lord's Supper as we remember our Lord's death. It's seen in the church as we help one another, and it's seen in giving, the giving first of all of

ourselves to the Lord for His service, and then we give of the substance that God has blessed us with.

Well, there are so many other things that we could look at today, and there are applications that we can look at. First, if we glory in men, ourselves or others, then we have lost the purpose of the Gospel to those who glory in the Lord. We should not glory in ourselves or in other men's actions or women's actions. We should glory in the Lord. We should glory; we should serve God; we should love. And that's what Paul's trying to get across to the people at Corinth.

Do you love Him today? Do you know Jesus as your Savior? If you don't, may I invite you to receive Him right now as your Lord and your Savior. You can pray something like this. Now, my prayer won't save you. But if you'll pray something like this: "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Lord and Savior."

Until this same time next week when I'll be speaking to you again about "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.