

Sermon Based Small Group Guide

For April 11, 2021 sermon:

1 Corinthians: "The church as a popularity contest"

Warm up: (Questions for discussion)

Who is your favorite "celebrity" and why?

How have you see choosing sides over issues or personalities hurt churches?

You have to choose: A truly loving church or the world's best preacher. Which?

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes)

1. Think about the cultural setting of the church in Corinth. They are living in the Las Vegas of their day...people coming to their city just to be immoral...and much of their economy revolves around them and their needs/desires. How do you live in that sort of moral climate, not get dragged into it, and maybe even make a difference? Look at:

John 17:14-16 1 John 5:3-5 Daniel 3:8-18

2. In Paul's greeting to this church, it is clear that his confidence is NOT in who they are and what they are capable of. He is confident in God and what He HAS done and WILL do in their lives. Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 and point out all the wonderful things available to them because they have been saved by a faithful God.

3. There was a lot of division in the church in Corinth but in chapter 1, Paul gets into the silliest of all reasons for church strife: People preferences! The people had certain personalities that they liked best (Paul, Apollos, Peter, Jesus) and it was straining their relationships with each other. Read the following passages that deal with the importance of unity in our relationship and advice on how to deal with issues that divide Christians:

Ephesians 4:1-5 Romans 14:1-8 Romans 14:12-18 1 Peter 3:8-12

Apply it: (10 minutes)

Focusing on what we have in common is powerful! Have you ever been somewhere far away from home (another state, even another country) and observed that someone had a shirt or hat on that "identified" them as being affiliated with (or at least a fan of) YOUR favorite college, or pro sports team, or geographic location? Think about this- you notice and focus on the "common ground" first. I was on a mission trip in Haiti and I saw someone wearing a piece of clothing with the Cornerstone University name and logo on it. My mind was completely focused on that Cornerstone connection and I needed to talk to them and find out about them and how they were linked to the university I graduated from. In 1 Corinthians, Paul is going to show this struggling church how putting Jesus in the center of every question or struggle will bring them healing clarity. What are you struggling with and have you lost your focus on Jesus? Share your confusion, need or burden and close in prayer for each other.