

Christians Gone Wild, week 2
Pastor Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:1–9)
Pastor Mark Driscoll

“God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.”

1 Corinthians 1:9

Once Paul founded the church at Corinth he left to pursue other ministry opportunities in Ephesus. Although the church was likely small, perhaps only fifty people, it quickly turned into a Jerry Springer episode as supposed Christians sprinted into heresy and moral sin.

Some church members were so distressed that they visited Paul to notify him of the mess and seek his counsel. A letter was also delivered from the church to Paul with questions for him to answer. In response Paul wrote four letters to the church, but we only have two, as noted below:

Letter #1 – The First Lost Letter (mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9–11)

Letter #2 – First Corinthians (which is in the Bible)

Letter #3 – The Second Lost Letter (mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:3–4, 9; 7:8, 12)

Letter #4 – Second Corinthians (which is in the Bible)

Paul opens 1 Corinthians 1:1 by declaring his authority as an apostle appointed to lead the church by Jesus Christ. Sadly, this was necessary because the newly converted Corinthians were so proud that they had little, if any, respect for Pastor Paul, who had introduced them to Jesus, founded their church, and served them free of charge for eighteen months.

To correct the arrogance of the church Paul reminds the Corinthians that their church belongs to God and not the church members (1 Cor. 1:2). Also, he reminds them that not only are church leaders like him to live out God’s call on their life, but all Christians are also called by God to live holy lives. This last point would have been hotly debated among the church members who were getting drunk, engaging in innumerable kinds of sexual sin, and basically doing whatever they pleased expecting God to embrace their alternative lifestyles.

In verse three Paul speaks of their need to receive grace from God. God’s grace alone could forgive their ongoing sin and empower them for new lives so that they could have a relationship with God marked by both His discipline and blessing.

Curiously, Paul then compliments the sinful church in verses four through seven. But a closer reading reveals that his commendation is to God and not the people. Simply put, God had been faithful to entrust very gifted and capable people to the church but they needed to grow in their maturity to be of any use to His kingdom. In this we see the divine work of God that enables us to be gifted people, and the human responsibility to cultivate our God-given abilities with maturity and holiness that enables us to be fruitful and effective.

Paul closes the introduction of his letter to the church by boldly stating his confidence that although the Christians were unfaithful to God, God would be faithful to them. In this he is assuring them that because both Christians and their

churches belong to Jesus, He will not permit them to remain in continual sin and heresy but will instead transform both through a relationship with Himself that cannot be broken.

Lastly, the underlying problem with the Corinthian church is that they became so focused on themselves, their sinful desires, and their confused culture that they lost sight of the primacy of Jesus. Therefore, Paul reminds them of Jesus nine times in his opening nine verses because the only hope for their church and every church to survive and thrive is to never deviate from sincere and focused devotion to the living Jesus who leads God's people as their Senior Pastor.