

“A Bride In Rehab!”

I. **INTRO:** (Slide #1)

A. **Baptism Class:**

B. **Pray for:** Jax & Ezekiel.

C. **Picture these Tragedy’s:**

1. **A bride separating from her groom:** only months after their wedding.
2. **Autoimmune Disease:** which occurs when the immune system starts attacking healthy cells in the body. (thinking that they are pathogens/germs)

D. **Its the same for a Church?** - Imagine finding a church *w/o problems*...the perfect church?

1. Of course they say, “if you do find one don’t join it; you’ll ruin it!”
2. This side of heaven, wherever you go, we live in a world *tainted by sin* – the work of holiness is an **ongoing daily project!**

E. I’m encouraged that even if **Paul himself** were to come & pastor CM w/all his apostolic authority, we’d still have problems that we have in our church!

1. I know this for Paul started & ran the Corinth Church for 1 ½ years; **yet** Satan was able to spoil its fruit, only a little while after he left.
2. We’ll run across: “Divisions, difficulties, factions, lawsuits, immorality, questionable practices, abuse of the spiritual gifts, even abuse of the Lords Supper!”

F. **Picture you’re an elder in the 1st century church:** You have no model to follow, no traditions to draw from. **What does your church look like? What problems might you have?**

G. (Slide #2) **How can a church stand in a very pagan society?**

1. In 1st Corinthians we have Hope & a challenge for “**A People in Process!**” or, “**A Bride in Rehab!**”
2. **The Challenge:** To reflect a **perfect Savior** in the way we are living, even though we are **imperfect!**
3. **The Hope** – That one day our struggles will be over & we’ll stand **perfected** in the presence of our Savior!
4. “Paul had planted a **church** in the **city**,...but the **city** had gotten into the **church!**”
 - a) Which explains their problems! “...**do not be conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind.”

H. (Slide #3,4) **Background on Corinth:** (A Roman colony on Grecian soil)

1. **Population:** Estimated 700,000.

2. (Slide #5,6) **Location:** right on an Isthmus, on a landmass (*only 4 miles wide*) connecting central & south Greece.
 - a) This was an **important trade route** (many vessels would save 200 miles of perilous navigation around the peninsula by cutting through Corinth's isthmus).
 - b) It was thus a "**2 port town**" making it the chief commerce center of Greece.
 - c) In this **wealthy city** were opportunities for exotic goods, entertainment, culture, & where sensual pleasures abounded.
 - d) "A bustling hub of world-wide commerce, degraded culture, & idolatrous religion."¹

3. **Their Reputation:** The Greeks had a verb "*to play the Corinthian*", which was synonymous to *Loose Living!*
 - a) "Pleasure Seekers came there to spend money on a holiday from morality."²
 - b) (Slide #7) Corinth had a hill (an Acropolis) which was not only a fortress but also had the famed **Temple of Aphrodite**. In which boasted at least 1000 priestesses of Aphrodite, who were sacred prostitutes.
 - (1) (Slide #8) Aphrodite = Gk. Goddess of Love - Roman equivalent was Venus.
 - (2) Interesting, Paul will speak to them on the grandest passage ever on Love (ch.13)
 - (a) [and the greatest passage on the resurrection in ch.15]

4. (Slide #9, blank) **Church History in Corinth:**
 - a) AD 51, the Apostle Paul steps into this population of paganism.
 - b) Paul started a church here on his **2nd trip** through. He was there for 18 months (Acts 18:11)
 - c) He joined *Pricilla & Aquila* in their Tent-making trade.
 - d) **Silas & Timothy** arrived bringing a monetary gift from Phillipi - Then Paul devoted all his time to preaching the gospel.
 - e) Paul after 18 months **heads to Jerusalem**. Stopping in **Ephesus** where he leaves A & P to tend to a Pneumatology class w/**Apollos**...Who eventually went to Corinth to pastor there.

5. **Problems:** When he left, big problems arose.
 - a) Paul wrote a stern **letter** to them (1 Cor.5:9)...but to no avail.
 - b) Paul had **several correspondences** with Corinth (probably 4). Only 2 our preserved for us. [1 Corinth is prob the 2nd letter]
 - c) While Paul was in Ephesus a delegation from Corinth came w/a letter asking for help regarding specific questions.
 - d) (Slide #10) 1st Corinthians was his response:

¹ Ken Boa & Bruce Wilkinson; *Talk Through The Bible*

² Kennteh Boa & Bruce Wilkinson; *Talk Through The Bible*

- (1) **Ch.'s 1-6** Dealt w/**sin** in the church. (**Rebuke** for sinful conditions)
- (2) **Ch.'s 7-16** Answered the **questions** they'd asked (**Reply** to specific questions)
- e) Let's look at the breaks in **Ch.7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1** "Now concerning..."
 - (1) (7) Marriage – (8-10) Idolatry – (11) Public Worship – (12-14) Sp. Gifts – (15) Resurrection – (16) Special Offering.

II. **A BRIDE IN REHAB!**

- A. Before Paul digs into the different issues he 1st: *Affirms their Calling; Expresses Thanks; & Exalts the Faithfulness of God.*
- B. (Slide #11) **PAUL AFFIRMS THEIR CALLING!** (1-3)
- C. **See called** or **calling** in (vs.2,9,24,26)
- D. (2) Note, "to be" is not in the text, so its "saints by calling"!
- E. (3) **Grace** - that which brings into our lives everything that delights the heart of God
- F. **Peace** - doesn't imply laziness or inactivity. It is movement w/o friction, creating perfect harmony.
 - 1. **These 2 inner powers** God has given to each one of His children.
- G. (Slide #12) **PAUL EXPRESSES THANKS!** (4-8)
- H. (4) Paul was always brought to **prayer** for those he loved!
 - 1. **Which reminds me of a story** of a man who encountered a bit of trouble while flying his little airplane. He called the control tower and said, "Pilot to tower, I'm 300 miles from the airport, 600 feet above the ground, and I'm out of fuel. I am descending rapidly. Please advise. Over." "Tower to pilot," *the dispatcher began*, "Repeat after me: "Our Father Who art in heaven..."
- I. (7) Paul **thanks** God for the *gifts* God has given the Corinthian believers.
 - 1. They received **all** the spiritual gifts.
- J. (8) Paul **thanks** God for the *guarantee* God gave the Corinthian believers.
 - 1. **Confirm you to the end** refers to their **eternal security**.
- K. (Slide #13) **PAUL EXALTS THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD!** (9)
- L. **Gods is faithful...** -
- M. **You were called into the Fellowship of His Son** – *Koinonia, having everything in common.*
We're in partnership w/Him!
 - 1. **Your interests are His** – your **mind** & its thoughts; your **body** & its purity; your **spirit** & its graciousness.

2. His interests are yours - His **glory**, the **wonder** of His person, the **majesty & greatness** of His Power.
3. Alan Redpath said, "All **He has** is at your disposal now. **And** His desire is that all **you have** should be at His disposal now...& always."³

N. (Slide #14) **PAUL ADDRESSES 2 PROBLEMS!** (10-17)

O. Paul addresses **2** of the numerous **Problems** confronting the Corinthian church in (10-31).

1. *They were elevating human **Leaders*** (10-17).
2. *They were elevating human **Wisdom*** (18-31) [we'll look at next week].

P. The **Corinthian** letter exposes the tragedy of *low-level Christian living!* (Redpath)

Q. (Slide #15) **ELEVATING HUMAN LEADERS!** (10-17)

R. Baseball player & manager, **Casey Stengel** said: "It's easy to get good players. Gettin' em to play together, that's the hard part!"

S. **The Individuals & The Issue:** (10-16)

T. (Slide #16) **4 Fan Clubs started:** Paul, Apollos, Simon Peter, Christ (10-12)

1. Christ **died** for us & **lives** to help us be all He has designed us to be; & He must have the preeminence.
2. Paul's asking...**Are you following the man or the message?**
3. Apparently the argument consists mainly of **who** baptized them.

U. (11) Chloe's household wrote to Paul that factions had developed in the church regarding the most important man in the church...was it **Paul** the founder? Or, **Apollos** our pastor?(incredibly intelligent) Or, **Cephas** the #1 apostle? (aka Peter, the Rock on which church was built on)? Or, **Christ**? (Jesus only doctrine. *They receive their teaching directly from Him! Not from a man*)

1. **Let's do a test, what does it sounds like:** "Father, Son & Pauly's Spirit?"...**No!**
2. (Slide #17) **Today** it sounds more like this, "I was saved by **Billie Graham!** Or, in our Calvary circle, "I was baptized by **pastor Chuck**...*in the days of the tent...w/bell-bottoms!*"
 - a) Some are so **proud** of their **denomination**; **others**(like us) have **equal pride** being a **non-denomination!**
 - b) **They were feeling proud** of the teacher they followed.

V. **The Insanity:** (17)

1. **Was I, Paul,** crucified for you? (13a)
2. **Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul?** (13b)

³ Alan Redpath pg.19

3. Christ didn't send me to **baptize**, but to **preach** the Good News (17)
 - a) **Wow!** How can Paul say that if Baptism was required for Salvation? (some bel that!)

W. Paul masterfully turns their attention to **Christ & the Cross!**

1. Paul has taken a stand to constantly bring his hearers back to the cross.
2. (Slide #18) "*Onward, Christian Soldiers*":
Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus going on before.
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
forward into battle see his banners go!
3. (Slide #19) A *parody* of "*Onward, Christian Soldiers*":
Like a halting caravan, Moves the church of Christ;
We are feebly faltering, Toward our timid tryst.
We are all divided, Many bodies we,
Kept apart by doctrine, And lack of charity.
Careful, Christian pilgrims! Walk in doubt and fear,
With the cross of Jesus, Bringing up the rear.
4. (Slide #20, end) Paul is convinced that the answer in each controversy & to every failure, as well as all hope for the future is... "**the word of the cross**. See 1 Cor.2:2!
a) **John Bunyan** said in his immortal **Pilgrim's Progress**, "I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up to the cross, his burden loosed from his shoulders and fell from his back and began to tumble till it came to the mouth of the sepulcher, where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome and said with a merry heart, "He has given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death."

X. **Prayer:** Lord give me power over **myself**; power over **my sin**; power over **what I am by nature!**