

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Paul ends the section of thanksgiving to God.

Paul begins the body of the letter by introducing the first problem.

First Paul reveals the source of his information, then begins to shift from the problem (divisions over leaders) to establishing a doctrinal foundation upon which to deal with the problem and correct their thinking and actions

1:10

But, Instead... The Contrast...

The word “now” in the NIV is the translation of the Greek word **de** (δε) which is sometimes left untranslated into the English Bibles. The word **de** (δε) is a conjunction of antithesis with an adversative force. It can be translated “but” indicating an antithesis, a contrast or an opposite. If it is translated as “now,” or “moreover” there is a concealed antithesis. In 1:10 Paul begins a contrast to what he had written in verses 1:1-9.

An Authoritative Invitation

“appeal” is παρακαλω (**parakalo**) means “to entreat, to encourage,” and is used as a polite command. “Parakalo” is used in Greek writing from this time with the meaning of writing with authority. It is used 100x in the NT. Paul has apostolic authority and he uses the word “parakalo” that was used to address situations like this with a voice of authority. Paul is combining his apostolic authority with the ideas of exhorting, comforting and encouraging the Corinthians as they struggle with the divisions in the church and the conflicts they are navigating through. Paul is going to tell them where their problem came from, how they can fix it and insist they do so!

First Corinthians 1:10

παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος
I appeal to **But** you brothers through the name

τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ
of the Lord of us Jesus Christ in order that the

αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ἢ ἐν ὑμῖν
same thing you say all and not be in you

σχίσματα, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι
divisions but you may be having been joined together

ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ.
In the same mind and in the same opinion

Note, this is a “request” and not a “command”.

Paul is trusting the grace of God and the understanding of the people to produce change.

Paul is NOT turning to:

1. Law and Rules
2. Love and Tolerance

Paul is trusting the Word and the Spirit

This request formula used by Paul here was common in Paul’s day in a variety of writings. Paul himself had already used it in:

- 1 Thes. 4:1 – “Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, ...Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.”
- 1 Thes. 4:10 – “You do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.”
- 1 Thes. 5:14 – “We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak...”

And, Paul would use it again in:

- 1 Cor. 4:16 – “Therefore I urge you to imitate me.”
- 1 Cor. 16:15 – “I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it.”

1:10 [3870](#) παρακαλώ I appeal to
[1161](#) δε (adversative “but” or continuative “and”, “now”, “for”)
[1473](#) υμᾶς you [80](#) ἀδελφοί brethren [1223](#) διὰ through
[3588](#) του the [3686](#) ὀνόματος name [3588](#) του the
[2962-1473](#) κυρίου ἡμῶν of our Lord Ἰησοῦ Jesus
[5547](#) χριστοῦ Christ [2443](#) ἵνα that [3588](#) το the
[1473](#) αὐτὸ same thing [3004](#) λέγητε you should say
[3956](#) πάντες all [2532](#) και and
[3361-1510.3](#) μη η there should be no
[1722](#) εν among [1473](#) υμῖν you [4978](#) σχίσματα splits
[1510.3-1161](#) ἦτε δε but that you should be
[2675](#) κατηρτισμένοι readying yourselves
[1722](#) εν with [3588](#) τῷ the [1473](#) αὐτῷ same
[3563](#) νοῖ mind [2532](#) και and [1722](#) εν with
[3588](#) τη the [1473](#) αὐτῇ same [1106](#) γνώμῃ opinion.

Brothers...in Our Lord...

The Corinthians are addressed as “brothers” by Paul which is identifying them as those with a similar bond. Paul is telling them he is on their team and a fellow member of their spiritual family. The use of “brothers” combined with “*in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” places them in fellowship with Paul but yet in an official capacity that places Paul as the authority representing Jesus. The phrase “in the name of” will become an issue in a few verses concerning baptism

Paul’s Request

“That” is followed by three verbs:

- a) agree with one another
- b) may be no divisions
- c) may be perfectly united

Literal Greek says:

“in order that the same thing you say all, and not be among you divisions, but you may be having been joined together in the same mind and in the same opinion.”

- They have “divisions” because they “do not say the same thing.”
- They will have “unity” when their “minds” and “opinions” are the same.

Paul is not talking against variations and diversity. Paul is not establishing a system of uniformity.

See:

- 1 Corinthians 12 where the church is described as one body with many parts that can and must function together.
- Galatians 2:1-10 where both Gentile cultures and Jewish cultures were accepted.

All of You Say the Same Thing

“that all of you agree with one another” is literally “In order that all of you say the same thing.”

- ESV says “that all of you agree”
- Darby says “that ye all say the same thing”
- Phillips says “to speak with one voice”
- KJ says “that ye all speak the same thing”
- World English Bible says “that you all speak the same thing”
- NAS says “that you all ^[a]agree” (footnote “a” says, “Literally: *speak the same thing*)

Paul is urging them for:

1. All say the same thing so there are no divisions
2. All be brought back together by putting the same information in minds so you will come to the same conclusion

“Same” is used 3x:

1. Say same thing.....express the same information
2. Have the same mind.....possess the same information in your minds
3. Form the same opinion....come to the same conclusion for theology and application

NOTE: This is NOT saying, “Follow the same rules!” but, know, think, speak, and formulate opinions the same.

This is NOT saying, “Ignorance is bliss!”, but know, think, speak the same.

This is NOT saying personal teachings are acceptable, but instead the unified presentation of the whole Truth.

“Mend” instead of “Plough”

What Paul is talking about is divisions which is the Greek word σχισμα from σχισματα **skismata** and means “split, division and is a picture of destruction of unity through force and was used to refer tearing a garment or a political factions struggling for power.” The word “skismata” was used to describe furrows in dirt fields created by ploughing. This word does not refer to the factions, groups or parties of people, but to the tearing, ripping and ploughing that is occurring among them. This tearing and ploughing is being done by the teachers who are

presenting divided and different information. The **skismata** of verse 10 becomes the ἐριδες (erides) or “quarrels” between people in verse 11.

Examples of **skismata**, “divisions” from lack of information or misunderstanding the facts occurs in 3x in John:

- John 7:40-44 – “Thus the people were divided because of Jesus.”
- John 9:16 – “So they were divided.”
- John 10:19-21 – “At these words the Jews were again divided.”

In contrast to **skismata** or “divisions” that were like ploughing a field into furrows, Paul uses the Greek word translated into English as “perfectly united,” **katertismenoio** (κατηρτισμένοι). This word is translated “knit together” in Mark 1:19 to refer to the mending and restoring of nets. **katertismenoio** (κατηρτισμένοι) comes from **καταρτιζω** (katartizo) which is a word used by Herodotus for uniting a community after civil disorder. It does not mean “perfect”, but “perfectly united” with the prominent idea being “fitting together.” There are two technical uses of **katartismos**:

1. Reconciling political factions. The root is also used to identify the mediator of the resolution for those factions.
2. Surgical term for setting bones that are broken and out of place.

Teaching will ultimately unite believers according to Ephesians 4:11-12 (4:11-16) where the word **katartismos** is also used.

καταρτιζω (katartizo)

1. *perfect*
2. *mend* to make fully ready, to put in full order.
3. *perfect*, to make fully ready, put in full order, perfectly equip, prepare fully.
4. *frame*, to adjust or put in order again; settle by acting as mediator, to reform, restore; involving the idea of positive defects which have to be repaired or adjusted.
5. *prepare*, to make fully ready, prepare, constitute.
6. *restore*, make fully ready, put in full order; especially of what is broken, refit, repair, restore.
7. *fit*, to make fully ready, to put in full order, to make complete, especially of what is broken, hence, to refit, repair.
8. *joined together (be perfectly)*, to make fully ready, to make complete, especially of what is broken, refit, repair, mend; of persons, restore, set right.

If You Know the Same Things, You Will Come to the Same Conclusions!

- “Mind” (νοῖ, **noi**) refers to the general principles and the information that is in the mind. “Mind” is a reference here to the condition of the mind.
- “Thought” or “opinion, judgment” (γνώμη, **gnome**) refers to the special application of the general principles. This refers to the decisions that come from the mind.

The distinction between “mind” and “thought” is not the difference between “theory” and “practical”, but between “understanding the information” and “making a judgment in order to form an opinion.”

If the people were taught the same information then the people would judge the questions they have sent to Paul from the same viewpoint and formulate their opinions.

1:11

Chloe’s household likely refers to her domestic servants (both slave and former slaves called freedmen) and not to the church that met in her house. (Support for this view comes from Rogers Linguistic Key, 1982; Zondervan’s Background Commentary, 2002; Vincent’s Word Studies in Greek, 1886). These servants would have traveled back and forth from Corinth and Ephesus. Chloe may have been from Ephesus in Asia, but had settled in Corinth. Those listed in 1 Cor. 16:15-17 – Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus – are members of the Corinthian church who carried an official letter to Paul. 1 Cor. 16:15 refers to “the household of Stephanas” in Corinth. So, the church of Corinth was having problems settling on the answers to some questions of both doctrine/theology and application/lifestyle. The official letter did not reveal the problem, but “members of Chloe’s household” (servants) who had returned to Ephesus from Corinth had the inside information that revealed WHY the Corinthian church was having so many problems finding answers to their questions and resolutions to their conflicts.

“Quarrels” is the word εριδεις (**erides**) from ερις (**eris**). This word is often used to refer to division in politics. These are quarrels and hot disputes with emotional flares that develop when rivalries become intolerable. It was the nature of this Greek culture (in Corinth) to follow speakers, politicians, philosophers or teachers with great loyalty. This cultural practice carried over into the church in Corinth and people rallied around their speaker/teacher/philosopher instead of Christ and his Word. Speakers would gain a following when they would cater to the crowds who would then follow a particular unique leader and his unique message or political platform. Paul wanted them to follow Jesus and his word, not men and their presentation.

“informed me” is the word εδηλωθη (**edelothe**) from δηλωω (**deloo**) which means “to make clear” and “to make known.” Paul was writing back to the Corinthians to say “it is clear” and “I have been told” and then Paul names the source of his information. He may be saying this because the Corinthian’s official letter to Paul merely asked questions, but did not expose the reason for the difficulties. But, members of the household of Chloe has revealed the problem.

1:12

1:13

1:14

1:15

1:16

1:17

First Corinthians 1:18-25

The division of these verses:

- a) 1:18-25 – the message of the cross (Paul’s text verse – Isaiah 29:14)
- b) 1:26-31 – the people who heard the message (Paul’s text verse – Jeremiah 9:3-24)
- c) 2:1-5 - the person who brought the message
- d) 2:6-16 – what really is spiritual and what really is wisdom? (Paul’s text verse – Isaiah 64:4)

The answer to “**What is really spiritual?**”

- Spiritual here are those with the Holy Spirit or all believers.

The answer to “**What is wisdom?**”

- Wisdom is using the “power” (presence) of the Spirit to see life and the world from the divine perspective.

The APPLICATION of real “spirituality” and real “wisdom”:

- The spiritual person with the wisdom of God will be able to embrace values, morals, future plans, priorities and world views that agree with God’s Word, God’s character and are often different and unrecognizable for the natural man using natural wisdom.

The Avenues that Paul uses to prove his point:

- a. the means was the cross. it was simple 1:18-25
- b. the people were the Corinthians . . . they were simple 1:26-31
- c. the preacher was Paul he was simple 2:1-5

Indeed human wisdom is not greater than God’s wisdom.
But the cross was not even a dispensing of God’s wisdom to men.

The cross does not count on men receiving the wisdom of God and so become wiser.

The cross baffles men. Men do not receive a higher level of wisdom and so be able to say, "Ah, now I have figured it out."

The cross baffles the Jew. The cross baffles the Gentile. The cross runs contrary to the wicked and is not the hope of the self-righteous.

To crucify the messiah or to sacrifice the hope of the world was not a concept in the realm of man.

The Corinthians had tried to move on from the simple message of the cross to something more profound and worthy of their time and reputation.

Imagine in the great philosophical culture of Greece to hold to the gospel message.

It was simple. It was unimaginable. So it was unreasonable to the Greek mind which made the gospel foolish.

The Corinthians had tried to move on from the gospel message as quick as they could and find with in the Christian message something more worthy of their intellect.

1:18

Two groups in Paul's division of people:

- a. those who are perishing
- b. us who are being saved

Previously to the Jew there were two groups:

- a. the Jew
- b. the Gentile

To the Greek there were two groups:

- a. the Greek/Roman
- b. the Barbarians

1:19

Isaiah 29:14 – here in 29:1 Ariel (lit. "altar hearth" referring to temple altar) in Jerusalem are caught up in an endless cycle meaningless religious activities. Their attitude will put them into a stupor. When the words are read they cannot understand so the revelation of God is reduced by men to simply following rules. Men cannot understand God without God's presence.

In Rabbinic style Paul reaches for a text verse to build his argument around.

1:20

Is Paul's open invitation addressed to his now imaginary scholars and wisemen that he will debate?

Wise man = Greeks

Scholar = is "γραμματευσ" which is the Jewish term for the experts in the Law such as the Rabbis and the teachers of the law. This word is not used among the Greeks for their lawyers, etc.

Philosopher = means "debater" and is only used twice in all of Greek writing (here and in Ignatius.) It is a personal word aimed at the Corinthians.

Paul has challenged his opponents:

- a. The Greeks
- b. The Jews
- c. The Corinthians

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the Jews and the Greeks and even the Corinthians?

1:21

Paul begins his argument with a statement all sides can agree on:

"the world did not discover God through a system of wisdom."

Explanation:

Distinguish between knowing God exists (Romans 1) and understanding what God is doing (1 Cor. 1:21)

The world knows God exists that is why all cultures are religious and why false religions develop.

Paul is not saying people do not know of God.

Paul is saying once people recognize God though natural means they cannot simply “know”

God or understand his ways and his plans.

After recognizing God’s existence it is up to man to pursue God for his revelation.

As Romans 2:7 says.

In Romans 1:21-28 men fail to do this. Instead they create gods in their own images from their own imaginations. They make gods who think like men think.

“Foolishness of what was preached” refers to the proclamation of that second step to knowing

God – the proclamation and the hearing of his word.

Those who recognize and accept (“believe”) the revelation from God are saved.

1:22

Jews want to see a sign something they can physically see and trust in. Their Messiah would manifest physically and change the world. Today’s Jew is looking for a natural man who is a political leader to improve their world through a process.

Greeks want to hear something they consider to be wisdom from their own understanding. Herodotus says, “All Greeks were zealous for every kind of learning.” The Greeks had advanced logic and Sophia to the place that the world was abandoning the gods.

But a preacher is going to present God’s revelation. It is neither a physical manifestation nor is it something that agrees with men’s lower, natural reasoning. It is a revelation from God.

Thus, the preacher’s message appears to be and is counted as “foolish”:

- a. This does not mean it is foolish, illogical, anti-reality, senseless, uneducated, fictional, etc.
- b. It means men in their senses and in their thinking cannot find it. They must hear it from God.

1:23

Crucified Messiah was not the sign the Jews were waiting for. The two things, “crucified” and “Messiah” cancel each other out.

The Jews did not crucify for public display but they did stone and then hang the body for public display. (Deut. 21:23)

“Christ crucified” does not fit the Jewish perspective. Thus Paul’s attitude in Gal. 1:13-14 and 3:13.

The Greeks considered Christianity along the same lines as all the other religions that had been dismissed as legends, superstitions. Belief in Jesus was to them as foolish as belief in Zeus or Hercules.

1:24

It seems that God may have made a mistake.

If the Jews want a sign then give them the victorious Messiah

If the Greeks want wisdom then give them some wonderful logic.

But, that would be catering to men’s natural abilities and understanding.

This is the level that idols (satan) meets man.

God is beyond man’s understanding and plans.

Through the cross God has entered the world of man with a greater plan, a greater nature and a greater life.

If man could understand it, then man would have thought of it.

1:25

Conclusion is agreeable to all:

God is better on a bad day than men are on a very, very good day.

Point: The Corinthians need to lose the thought that the gospel message is too simple for them. That attitude simply means they have no idea what they are talking about.

1:26

“Brothers” is the start of a new point in Paul’s writing. It will be a new point but a continuation of his theme. In the eyes of the world and its pursuit of greatness, wisdom and stability the Word of God and the Kingdom of God are not understood.

The world sees all of God and his plan as: Simple message, Simple people, Simple preacher.

Boasting becomes the new theme:

- a. the Corinthians were boasting one leader verse another
- b. Paul goes to Jeremiah 9:23-24 for his text verse in this second point

“Called” is a reference to their point of salvation. When they were “called” to receive the offer of salvation none of them were called because they deserved it.

“Called” is from the word “καλεω”. The root word is “καλ” and so our English word “call”. The word means “to call anyone, to invite, summon”.

Theologically it is used of the Divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption.

It does not mean the call or invitation cannot be rejected.

Throughout scripture men have rejected God’s call.

“Not many” is not exclusive but it is limiting. Meaning there were among them some considered by the world to be wise, influential and noble.

“Human standards” is the word “sarka” or “flesh”. It the first use of this by Paul.

They themselves have nothing to boast about in the natural but yet they are judging Paul by this Human standard. Paul is simply turning it around and applying it to them. Their only strength is the fact that they accepted God’s call.

“Wise” is “Sophia”

“Influential” (“powerful) is the word for power “dunamis”

Both these terms have already been used.

Jeremiah 9:23 uses two of these but Jeremiah uses “rich” as the third word.

Paul instead chooses to use the word “well born” which refers to born into the upper class of wealth.

Many of the Corinthians were probably wealthy, but few were born into the noble class.

Some of the Corinthian believers were of the upper class by birth: Crispus, Gaius, Erastus, Stephanas

Paul’s point was it did not take special qualifications to receive the call to the gospel.

1:27

1:28

“the things that are not” (μη οντα) There is not a more contemptible expression in Greek thinking that was possible for Paul to use. The lack of “being” was the worse it could be.

“nullify” (καταργεο) is an eschatological term. It means “to put out of action, to make inactive, to reduce to nothing”

1:29

1:30

1:31