

Introduction: The summer of 1983, in fact most of that year, was a major turning point in my life. In June, I turned thirty years old, but that made no real difference in my life. More important, in April I began my fifth year of being IN Jesus, reading God's Word first thing every morning and then being aware of God in my life almost every minute of every day. I had read the Bible cover-to-cover five times, and was continuing to do so. This means I had read Jesus' words about taking up my cross and following Him in His death for my sins over thirty times. I was taking this very seriously, and I admit I was afraid to die to myself, my goals and my ambitions; but, I knew I had to obey these words of God's Son. *** The biggest assist God gave me was an Irish punk rock band I fell in love with that summer. Around my birthday I bought their 'War' album, recorded it on a super Dolby cassette tape and played it over and over in my car. The next to last song was titled 'Surrender', and the last line was, 'If I want to live / I've got to die to myself someday'. Then Bono repeated 'surrender' some fifteen times in the two minute instrumental jam that finished the song. *** I kept praying, 'God I am afraid to fully surrender to You, but I know I must, and I have faith that if I do, You will take care of me in everything'. By the end of the year, I had more or less surrendered to God. *** Paul's main point in his letter to the new churches in Corinth was that Messiah Jesus sent him to preach the good news of The Cross so that they would both know and accept that: **Followers of Christ die to themselves in Him**. Let's now look closely at our passages.

I. Paul finds Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, and while he stays with them he persuades Jews and Greeks every Sabbath; he later urges the church to have the same goals and be restored in Messiah. (*Acts 18:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13*)

A. Paul finds Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth and stays with them because they share a trade; and, every Sabbath he was persuading both Jews and Greeks. (*Acts 18:1-4*)

1. After these things, having departed from Athens (uncertainty), he (Paul) came into Corinth (satiated); and, having found a certain Jew named Aquila (eagle), of the people of Pontus (sea), (who) had recently come from Italy (calf-like), and Priscilla (ancient) his wife – because Claudius (lame) had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome (strength) – he came to them. (*Verses 1-2*)

Paul comes to Corinth: Before this, Paul spoke to the philosophers in Athens, explaining that their unknown God was creator of everything and has set a time when He will judge everyone by the Man He appointed (*Acts 17:16-34*). In contrast to Athens, Corinth was a crass 'Navy town' filled with sailors on shore leave.

Meets a husband and wife: They were Jews who were expelled from Rome. Aquila was from northern Turkey bordering on the Black Sea.

2. Because of a shared craft, he was dwelling with them and he was working; because, they were by trade tentmakers. (*Verse 3*)
They bond over a common trade: Notice all three people bonded over the trade of tentmaking. In the first century some women were in male dominated guilds and associations.

3. But, he was discussing in the synagogue, on every Sabbath he was persuading both Jews and Greeks. (*Verse 4*)

Paul's practice: As we also saw in Thessalonica, Paul made a regular practice of being in synagogue every seventh day, week after week.

Persuaded all: He was discussing with all God-seekers (including Hellenists) the good news of Jesus and persuading them to give themselves to Him in faith, by dying to sin and self, as He died for their sins, so they could be forgiven and follow Him, IN Him.

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B. Later, Paul urges the church to have the same speaking, mind and purpose; and, to no longer be divided, but to be restored in Messiah. (*1 Corinthians 1:10-12*)

1. But I am urging you all, brothers, by The Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the same thing you all may be speaking, and not may be in you all divisions; but, you all may be made restored together in the same mind and in the same purpose. (*Verse 10*)

Exhortation: He is exhorting them for their benefit in The Name of the sovereign savior anointed universal king, as brothers and sisters of Christ, and members with him of God's family.

Be restored: His desire is together they be restored to God, in Jesus, to live according to God's purpose and will. The verbs are passive, because God will work in them, if they humbly submit to Him.

Result: When they do this, even in their diversity, they will have the same speaking, mind and purpose.

2. For, it was made clear to me of you all, my brothers, by those of (the household of) Chlōā (green herb), that contentions of you all are being. (*Verse 11*)

Contentions: The reason Paul has to exhort them to unity and sameness in the basics of the Gospel, is that those close to Chlōā, another woman leader, made it known to him that they were quarreling, striving and fighting among themselves.

3. But, this I am saying, that every one of you all is saying: I am indeed being of Paul; but, I of Apollos (against many); but, I of Kāphā (stone); but, I of Christ (Messiah). (*Verse 12*)

Four-way split: Paul names four factions. It would seem those who follow him are the most contentious. Apollos, whose Greek name suggests monotheism, and the apostle Peter are good role models, but nothing more. And the Christ followers were likely following Him without fully surrendering to Him.

II. Paul said Christ sent him to Corinth to preach the good news of The Cross: foolishness or power; Jesus told the 'Twelve' that to be great, a person will be the lowest servant of all. (*1 Corinthians 1:14-18; Mark 9:34-35*)

A. After asking questions about Christ, Paul says Christ sent him to preach the good news of The Cross; foolishness to those perishing, but to those being saved, the power of God. (*1 Corinthians 1:13-18*)

1. Had He been divided, Christ? Not Paul was crucified on behalf of you all? Or, in the name of Paul, you all were baptized? (*Verse 13*)

Rhetorical questions: Paul asks three questions that must be answered no: The Messiah is not divided!
Paul was not crucified for anyone. There is no other saving Name than Jesus (Acts 4:8-12)!

2. I am thanking God that no one of you all I baptized ... (*Verse 14a*)

Follows up on baptism: Paul follows up on the last, and most controversial, faction question.

Starts strong: He says that he did not even baptize anyone: and not in his name, instead of Jesus' Name.

3. ... except ('if not') Crispus (curled) and Gaius (lord); so that not any may say that into my name you all were baptized; but, I baptized also the household (extended family and servants) of Stēphānās (crown); in addition, not I had known if anyone other I baptized. (*Verses 14b-16*)

Pulls back: He is writing to the church in Corinth as a whole; and, it was not his mission or his practice to baptize people. He names two individuals and one household where he baptized all living and working under the roof of the house. That's it. Probably no more than fifteen people in one of the largest cities in southern Greece.

4. For not He sent me, Christ, to baptize; but, to preach Gospel (good news), not in wisdom words so that not it may be deprived of power, The Cross of Christ. (*Verse 17*)

Mission: Paul now clearly lays out the mission Messiah gave him. He is to plainly preach the good news of the power of The Cross of Christ to bring forgiveness to all who will consent to humble themselves to receive His powerful sacrifice of Himself so people may be forgiven and set free from futile efforts to save themselves.

Application: We must all die to ourselves with Jesus on The Cross to be fully in Him; and, to have our sins forgiven and to receive His Life to follow Him.

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5. For the word of The Cross to those indeed perishing, foolishness it is being; but, to those being made saved, to us, power of God it is being. (*Verse 18*)

Perishing: Christians have known that all people not in Christ through His Cross are under (the power, control) of the evil one (1 John 5:19, RSV, NIV); and, therefore, they are perishing in him.

Respond to God's power: Those who respond to the power of God's Holy Spirit working in them to know the power of Christ on His Cross, and surrender to dying with Him, are being made to be saved.

Application: We must all recommit to dying to ourselves with Jesus on The Cross; and, if anyone has not yet done so, this is the time to make that commitment.

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- B. The apostles were silent because of their dispute over who was greatest; but, Jesus said to them: one desiring to be first will be last of all and serve all. (*Mark 9:34-35*)

1. But they were keeping silent ... (*Verse 34a*)

Silent before Jesus: They were silent before their Teacher and Master because they were too embarrassed to confess their inability to humbly take up their crosses in obedience to Him (Mark 8:34).

2. ... because to one another they were made to debate in the way, who (is) greatest. (*Verse 34b*)

Prideful selfishness: Their selfish pride had caused them to dispute with each other over who is the greatest, rather than behaving like men who had surrendered their egos to Jesus.

3. He is saying, 'If anyone is desiring first to be, he will be of all: last, and of all: servant. (*Verse 35*)

Jesus' word: Jesus does not tell them they should not strive to be the best they can be in Him. But, He does tell each one what he will do to have that desire fulfilled: each one will have to be truly showing by his actions he considers himself to be the absolute least of all; and, each one will have to demonstrate by his actions that he is serving everyone.

Application: We must all confess any prideful selfishness that is in us; and, we must ask God to give us power so we will be the servants of all. If we do this, God will give us power to obey what Jesus told the Twelve.

Those willing to serve are empowered

Conclusion: Paul finds Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, and while staying with them, he persuades Jews and Greeks in the synagogue every Sabbath. Later, in a letter, he urged them to have the same goals, and to no longer be divided, but to be restored in Messiah. Then he said Christ sent him to Corinth to preach the good news of The Cross: foolishness to those perishing and the power of God to those being saved. Jesus had told His apostles that to be great a person will be the lowest servant to all people.

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