

CHAPTER 1



The Holy Apostle Paul begins his epistle by giving his credentials as an apostle, which is important because some Corinthians did not believe him to be one. Verses three and four refer to the grace of God: grace is the great gift of God, and peace is its result. This is reinforced in the following verses, where St. Paul says that God's grace was given to the Corinthians by Jesus Christ (1:4), and they were given the gifts of utterance and knowledge (1:5) - gifts that were particularly prized by the Corinthians - and thus were given peace through having the truth of the Gospel confirmed in them (1:6). St. Jerome explains that - as St. Paul indicates in verses 7-9 - the possession of these gifts do not mean that Christians are perfect: "Although we lack no gift, nevertheless we await the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will then keep us secure in all things and present us unimpeachable when the day of our Lord Jesus Christ comes."

In verses 10-11 St. Paul gets into one of his primary reasons for writing to the Corinthians: their church was being torn apart by dissensions and rivalries between competing groups. Some of the Christians retained a fierce loyalty to St. Paul, their founding Apostle; some were loyal to Apollos, who was known for his great learning (Acts 18:24); and some were loyal to the Holy Apostle Peter (which is a translation of "Cephas," the Aramaic name given to him by Christ (John 1:42)). Some even pretended to take the spiritual "high road" and claimed that they followed only Christ - interestingly, many individuals make the same claim today when they attempt to make Christianity more acceptable to postmodern North Americans by rejecting the teaching (particularly the moral teaching) of St. Paul.

Christians should be very familiar with the point made by St. Paul in the remainder of this chapter: a non-Christian society (and certainly an abjectly pagan one like that of

Corinth) will see the Christian message as mere foolishness, but Christians will experience and know it as the power of God (1:18). St. Paul applies to the first century world (and, by extension, to our world) the words of God in Isaiah 29:14, saying that the wisdom of the world has been destroyed (1:19). This is a very important point, because it strikes at the heart not only of the dissensions in Corinth, but also in the approach that too many people today take toward salvation - it is not possible through man-made philosophies and systems of thought to come to an understanding of Who God is, and how we related to Him; it is only possible to do these things (to the limited extent that humans can) through accepting and living out the "foolish" message of the gospel (1:21).



*Have You Read 1
Corinthians 1 Yet?*

TODAY'S SPECIAL: ARE YOU EMBARRASSED?

It is important to know that many non-Christians will refuse to believe the truth about Jesus Christ, instead believing that your faith is ridiculous. Some of these people will even mock you for being a Christian. St. Paul warns us of this when he says, "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:22-23). The Jews had religious objections to the Gospel of Christ, while the Gentiles simply thought the Gospel to be foolish: people raise the same objections today.

Instead of being discouraged, however, notice what St. Paul says in verses 24-25: "But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." St. Paul is not ashamed of being a Christian, even when scorn is heaped upon him for his preaching, because he knows that the Gospel is God's power to save believers. He is not ashamed to be a Christian: he only regrets that some people will not allow themselves to be transformed by God.

Thus, when you feel ashamed of your faith because others are mocking you, remember that God is wiser and stronger than whatever opinions are being thrown at you, and He will transform and save you through your relationship with Him and His Church.

