

The background of the image is a close-up of a wooden workbench. On the left, a hand saw with a silver blade and a red handle is partially visible. A yellow tape measure is stretched across the workbench, showing measurements from 4 to 11 inches. A claw hammer with a silver head and a wooden handle lies diagonally across the center. In the bottom right corner, there are several pieces of light brown cardboard.

SAINTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

A STUDY OF
1 CORINTHIANS

CLASS SCHEDULE

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. (1 Cor 3:10)

AS WE BUILD...

July 6	1:1-2:5	Our faith must rest in the power of God
July 13	2:6-3:23	There must be no divisions among us
July 20	4:1-21	We must not go beyond what is written
July 27	5:1-13	The church must be kept pure
August 3	6:1-11	We must learn to get along
August 10	6:12-20	We must use our bodies to glorify God
August 17	7:1-40	We must lead the lives that the Lord has assigned
August 24	8:1-13	We must guard against pride
August 31	9:1-27	We must not put obstacles in the way of the gospel
September 7	10:1-33	We must flee from idolatry
September 14	11:1-34	We must respectfully remember our head
September 21	12:1-14:40	We must walk in love
September 28	15:1-16:24	We must abound in the work of the Lord

Could I encourage you to always have a pen and highlighter ready as we watch the class videos together? I'll do my best to draw your attention each week to things worth talking about as a class and remembering for the rest of your life.

Thanks.

- Jason

INTRODUCTION

During his third missionary journey, the apostle Paul wrote *1 Corinthians* from the city of Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8) near the end of a three-year stay (A.D. 53-55; 1 Cor. 16:5-9; Acts 19:1-22) in the Roman province of Asia (1 Cor 16:19).

Corinth was a busy Roman colony situated perfectly for sea traffic, making it a place where many cultures and religions mixed. When Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to Corinth (Acts 18:1-18), he found a Jew named Aquila who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because the Roman Emperor Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. Like Paul, Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers by trade.



And [Paul] reasoned in the

synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks... And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. (Acts 18:4, 8)

Paul spent 18 months in Corinth in the early 50s. After a brief trip to Judea and Syria, he traveled to Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila were already there and, by the time Paul arrived, they had already met an eloquent disciple named Apollos who had also spent time in Corinth, “showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:24-19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12).

Paul settled in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31) and at some point wrote a letter to the Corinthians that we don’t have (1 Cor 5:9). Sometime later, he received a report that the Christians in Corinth were experiencing all sorts of serious problems, including division and sexual immorality (1:10-11; 5:1; 11:18). Around the same time, a letter arrived from these Corinthians that revealed serious confusion about marriage, divorce, how to handle disagreements among themselves, what to think of idols, what ought to be happening in their assemblies, and the resurrection of the dead (7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 15:12, 35).

In response, Paul wrote what we have as *1 Corinthians*, making the case that much of their conduct was out of step with the gospel. At times, he was very stern in this letter (4:18-21; 5:2; 11:17, 22; 15:36) because of the seriousness of their struggles, but Paul was thankful to God for the Corinthians (1:8) and felt a deep love for them (16:24). Because of this love and most importantly for the glory of God (10:31), Paul wanted the Corinthians to become a well-constructed dwelling place for God’s Spirit (3:12, 16) and to be “guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8). They were saints under construction. In many ways, so are we.



AS WE BUILD...

1:1-2:5

OUR FAITH MUST
REST IN THE
POWER OF GOD

¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach

For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ What did Paul mean when he described himself as "an apostle" (1:1)?
- ▶ What did Paul mean what he referred to these people as "saints" (1:2)?
- ▶ What was "the grace of God" that had been given to the Corinthians (1:4)?
- ▶ What do you think Paul meant by reminding them that they were waiting "for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:7)?
- ▶ "God is faithful" (1:9). Why does this really, really matter?
- ▶ In your own words, what is "the word of the cross" and why is it powerful (1:18)?

the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

¹ And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ What do you think Paul means by the questions in **1:20**?
- ▶ In what ways was the message of a crucified Christ “a stumbling block to Jews” (**1:23**)?
- ▶ In what ways was it “folly to Gentiles”?
- ▶ But in what ways does the message of Christ crucified perfectly display “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (**1:24**)?
- ▶ In your own words, what point is Paul making in **1:25-31**?
- ▶ What does it mean to be “in Christ Jesus” (**1:30**) and what can be found there?
- ▶ Let’s think carefully about **2:5**. Why is it so important that our faith “rest” in “the power of God” and not in “the wisdom of men”?
- ▶ We are “saints under construction,” so what do we need to remember from **1:1-2:5**?