

LUCKY LEMONS ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

"Ten Names Before One Fight"

1 Corinthians 1:1-13

Complete 45-Minute Teaching Script

Bowdon Baptist Church | Dr. Bobby Gaines

THE BIG IDEA (on the board before anybody walks in)

A divided church does not have a personality problem. It has a shrunken view of Christ.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Whiteboard or easel pad
- Bibles open the whole hour (ESV readings in Appendix B, three readers)
- Optional video: **BibleProject's "1 Corinthians" overview** (verified, about 8 minutes, bibleproject.com/videos/1-corinthians). It is longer than our usual clip, so if you use it, show only the first 2 to 3 minutes, up through the introduction of the divisions problem, and stop it. Details in Appendix C.
- The Four Slogans card (Appendix D), one per person

TIMING AT A GLANCE

Minutes	Segment
0:00-0:05	The Hook: Guess the Church
0:05-0:17	Section 1: Verses 1-3. The miracle in the address line

0:17-0:27	Section 2: Verses 4-9. The audit that opens with the assets
0:27-0:40	Section 3: Verses 10-13. Torn cloth, mended nets, and three questions
0:40-0:45	The Close and the Invitation

Word-for-word lines are in > **blockquotes**. Everything else is outline, in your own voice.

0:00-0:05 THE HOOK: GUESS THE CHURCH

Do not announce the passage. Do not open a Bible yet.

Before we start, I want to describe a church to you, and I want you to guess which church I am talking about. Real church. You have heard of it.

Here is what is going on in this church.

The members have split into fan clubs behind their favorite preachers, and the fan clubs do not speak kindly of each other.

Two members are suing each other. In court. In front of unbelievers.

There is a sexual scandal in the membership so bad that even the lost people in town are embarrassed by it.

Some folks are showing up to the Lord's Supper drunk, and others are going home from it hungry because the wealthy members ate first.

They are fighting about worship. Fighting about spiritual gifts. Fighting about marriage. And a chunk of the congregation has quietly decided the resurrection might not be real.

Now. What church am I describing?

(Let them guess. Somebody will say something funny about a church down the road. Let it be funny. Then:)

That church is in the Bible. It is the church at Corinth, about twenty-five years after the cross. And a man who loved that church sat down and wrote them a letter, and by God's grace we still have it.

Here is what I want you to watch this morning. Paul knows every single thing on that list when he picks up the pen. Every scandal. Every lawsuit. Every faction.

And I want you to see what he writes **first**. Because how Paul opens this letter might be the finest piece of pastoral leadership in the whole New Testament.

0:05-0:17

SECTION 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-3

“The Miracle in the Address Line”

Reader One reads verses 1-3. Then teach.

Point 1. Set the city, and set it right

First, let me take you to Corinth, because everything in this letter makes more sense once you can see the town.

Corinth sat on a little neck of land about four miles wide, with a sea on each side and a port on each sea. Ships coming from Italy docked on the west. Ships headed to Ephesus and the east docked on the east. And instead of sailing two hundred dangerous miles around the bottom of Greece, they hauled cargo, and sometimes whole small ships, straight across that four-mile neck on a paved stone trackway called the *diolkos*. You can still see stretches of it today.

So picture it. Two ports. One shortcut. Every sailor, merchant, banker, gambler, and con man in the Mediterranean funneling through one town.

Now here is the part almost nobody teaches, and it changes how you read the whole letter.

Corinth was a new city. Rome had burned the old Greek Corinth to the ground in 146 BC and it sat mostly dead for a century. Julius Caesar refounded it in 44 BC as a Roman colony, and he populated it largely with **freedmen**. Freed slaves. People starting from nothing.

Which means when Paul walks in around AD 50, Corinth is only about a hundred years old, and it is full of the great-grandchildren of freed slaves who got rich. **It is a boomtown with no old money.** Everybody is self-made, everybody is climbing, everybody is advertising, and your status is the most important thing you own.

Hold that thought, because in about twenty minutes it is going to explain exactly why this church split into fan clubs.

[PROBABLE, well attested: Strabo, Geography 8.6.20-23 on the ports and diolkos; the 146 BC destruction under Mummius and the 44 BC refounding as a colony of freedmen are standard history. The connection between the self-promotion culture and the church factions is the argument of Bruce Winter's *After Paul Left Corinth* (Eerdmans, 2001). INFERENCE, but a strong one and widely held.]

Point 2. The myth-busting minute

Two corrections, cheerfully, and then we move on.

One. You may have heard preachers say Corinth had a temple to Aphrodite with a thousand temple prostitutes, and that is why the city was so wicked. Here is the honest truth. That claim comes from one line in the geographer Strabo, and he was describing the **old** Greek Corinth, the one Rome destroyed a hundred years before Paul got there. Most scholars today think even that report was exaggerated, and there is no good evidence the thousand-prostitute temple existed in **Paul's** Corinth at all.

Now, was Roman Corinth immoral? Absolutely. It was a double port town full of sailors and quick money. It did not need a special temple to be wicked. It managed fine on its own, the same way port towns and boomtowns always have.

Two. The old Greek verb "to Corinthianize," meaning to live scandalously, is real. But it was coined by a comic playwright about the **old** city, four hundred years before Paul. When we quote it about Paul's Corinth, we are recycling somebody else's ancient joke about a city that no longer existed.

Why do I bother correcting this? Because we do not need to inflate the darkness to make grace look bright. The truth is plenty.

[The Strabo passage is Geography 8.6.20, explicitly about the old city, and he writes in a past tense. The skepticism is standard in modern scholarship, e.g., Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*. Say "most scholars today" and you are on solid ground. The verb *korinthiazesthai* comes from Aristophanes, 5th-4th century BC. TRADITION/OVERSOLD when applied to Paul's city.]

Point 3. Two "did you know" facts to spend here (pick one if time is tight)

The Gallio anchor.

Here is something wonderful. In Acts 18, the Jews haul Paul before the Roman governor of the region, a man named Gallio, who throws the case out of court. Archaeologists found an inscription at Delphi that dates Gallio's term to about AD 51 to 52. That little

stone is one of the anchor dates for the entire New Testament. It is how we know, within about a year, when Paul was standing in Corinth.

And one more layer. Gallio was not a nobody. His brother was **Seneca**, the philosopher, who at that very moment was back in Rome tutoring a teenager named **Nero**. So the judge who dismissed Paul's case was the brother of the man raising the boy who would one day burn Christians in his garden. God writes small ironies into big history.

[The Gallio inscription and the AD 51-52 dating are ESTABLISHED. Gallio as Seneca's brother is ESTABLISHED. The Nero garden persecutions are from Tacitus, Annals 15.44, PROBABLE.]

The Erastus sidewalk.

In Romans 16, written from Corinth, Paul sends greetings from "Erastus, the city treasurer." In 1929, archaeologists digging near the theater in Corinth found a first-century pavement with an inscription: "**Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense.**" Same rare name, same city, same era, a city official wealthy enough to pave a plaza. A lot of scholars think that sidewalk was paid for by a man who is in your Bible. You can stand on it today.

[The inscription is ESTABLISHED. The identification with Paul's Erastus is PROBABLE-BUT-DEBATED. Say "a lot of scholars think" and you are honest.]

Point 4. Sosthenes, and the thread from last week

Now look at verse one, because there is a man standing in the corner of it.

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

Who is Sosthenes? Flip back to Acts 18. When Gallio threw Paul's case out of court in Corinth, the crowd grabbed the ruler of the synagogue and beat him in front of the judgment seat. That man's name was **Sosthenes**.

Now, I cannot prove it is the same man. It is an uncommon name in Corinth, and the early church thought it was the same fellow, but the Bible does not connect the dots for us, so I will not preach it as fact.

But if it is him, then hear this. The synagogue ruler who was publicly beaten in the middle of the Paul controversy in Corinth is now standing next to Paul, co-signing a letter, and Paul calls him "**our brother.**"

Last week a crooked tax collector ended up hosting Jesus for supper. This week a man beaten in the street over the gospel may have ended up helping write part of your New

Testament.

Grace keeps doing this. It keeps putting the wrong people's names in the book.

[TEXT that a Sosthenes was beaten in Acts 18:17 and a Sosthenes co-sends the letter. INFERENCE, widely held but unprovable, that they are the same man. Label it exactly that way in class.]

Point 5. The address line is a miracle

Verse two. "To the **church of God** that is in **Corinth**."

Read that slowly. The church **of God**. In **Corinth**.

That is like addressing a letter to "the holy people of God, in the roughest port town in the Mediterranean." The wonder of this letter starts in the address line. God has a people, and He planted them **there**, on purpose, in the middle of the money and the shipping and the vice.

And then the word that should stop us: "called to be **saints**." *Hagioi*. Holy ones.

Now remember the list from the opening. Lawsuits. Scandal. Drunkenness at the Table. Factions. Paul knows **all of it**, and the first name he calls them is **saints**.

Not because he is flattering them. Because in Christ, that is what they **are**, and Paul is going to spend sixteen chapters telling them to **become what they already are**.

Write this down, because it is the spine of the whole letter:

Paul leads with identity before he touches behavior. Who you are in Christ comes before what you have done in Corinth.

[TEXT. And note for you: this is the same move Jesus made with Zacchaeus. Name first, category never. The two lessons rhyme on purpose.]

[ASK - first discussion question, 3 to 4 minutes.]

Question one: Paul knew everything in chapters five and six was coming, and he still opened with "saints." Why lead with identity instead of the list of charges? What happens to a person when you do it the other way around?

0:17-0:27

SECTION 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9

"The Audit That Opens With the Assets"

Reader Two reads verses 4-9. Then teach.

Point 1. Nine verses before one correction

Y'all know what I did for a living before I taught finance. So let me tell you how a good audit is delivered.

When an examiner walks into a troubled institution, the report does not open with the violations. It opens with the **condition of the assets**. What is sound. What is real. What can be built on. Then, and only then, the findings.

Watch Paul work. This church is a mess, and Paul has the full file. And he spends **nine verses on the assets** before he writes one word about the problem in verse ten.

"I give thanks to my God **always** for you." Verse four.

Nine verses of grace. One verse of confrontation. Some of us run that ratio backwards, and then we wonder why nobody in our house ever hears us.

Point 2. But look closely at WHAT Paul gives thanks for. This is the surgical part.

Now read verse four one more time, carefully, because Paul is doing something so precise it is almost sneaky.

"I give thanks to my God always for you **because of the grace of God that was given you** in Christ Jesus."

Notice what Paul does **not** say. He does not thank God for their love. Read the letter; their love was in short supply. He does not thank God for their behavior. He could not do that with a straight face.

He thanks God for **what God gave them**. Every single item in the thanksgiving is something God did. The grace was **given**. They were **enriched**. The testimony was **confirmed**. He will **sustain** you. God is **faithful**. God **called** you.

Paul found a way to be one hundred percent thankful and zero percent flattering. That is not a writing trick. That is a discipline of the heart, and you can learn it. When you cannot honestly praise what somebody is doing, you can still honestly thank God for what He is

doing in them. Every parent of a teenager in this room just perked up, and you are right to.

[TEXT. The observation that the thanksgiving credits God alone is standard in the commentaries; Gordon Fee's NICNT volume develops it well.]

Point 3. He thanks God for the very gifts they are fighting over

And here is the twist of the knife, gently delivered. Verse five. God enriched you "in all **speech** and all **knowledge**."

Speech and knowledge. Keep those two words in your pocket. Because when you read the rest of this letter, what are the Corinthians proud of? Eloquence and knowledge. What are they using to rank their preachers and rank each other? Eloquence and knowledge.

Paul thanks God for the exact two gifts they have turned into weapons. He is saying: the things you are fighting **with** were **gifts**. You did not earn your ammunition. It was issued to you by grace.

There is not one gift in your life, not your mind, not your money, not your mouth, that you did not receive. And a received gift is a strange thing to be proud of.

Point 4. Verse 8: a courtroom word

Verse eight is where I want to park, because there is a word in it that I spent twenty-seven years around.

"He will sustain you to the end, **guiltless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Greek word is *anenketos*. It is a legal term. It does not just mean innocent-feeling. It means **no charge on the docket**. Nothing to answer for. When the day of the Lord Jesus Christ convenes, and the books are opened, the believer's file comes up **empty of indictments**.

Now hold the two halves of this letter together, because this is the gospel. Paul is about to spend sixteen chapters documenting this church's failures, in writing, preserved for two thousand years. Everybody who has ever read a Bible knows what the Corinthians did wrong.

And verse eight says that on the last day, they stand **anenketos**. Unindictable.

How? Verse nine. "**God is faithful**, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son."

Their standing does not rest on their record. It rests on His faithfulness. The verdict was settled at a cross before the evidence was even gathered.

[TEXT for the word; anenkletos is standard legal vocabulary, used of elders in 1 Tim 3:10 and Titus 1:6-7 as “above reproach.”]

[ASK - second discussion question, 4 minutes.]

Question two: Paul managed to be completely thankful for people he was about to correct, by thanking God for what God was doing in them. Who in your life needs that from you this week? And what would you thank God for in them, honestly, before you ever raised the problem?

0:27-0:40

SECTION 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-13

“Torn Cloth, Mended Nets, and Three Questions”

Reader Three reads verses 10-13. This is the freight section.

Point 1. Ten names before one fight

Write on the board: **10 in 10.**

Before we touch verse ten, I need you to do something. Go back to verse one, and count with me how many times Paul writes the name of Jesus in the first ten verses. Out loud. Count.

Verse 1, Christ Jesus. Verse 2, Christ Jesus, then Jesus Christ our Lord. Verse 3, the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 4, Christ Jesus. Verse 6, Christ. Verse 7, our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 8, our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 9, Jesus Christ our Lord. Verse 10, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ten times in ten verses.

Paul is not being repetitive because he ran out of words. Paul is the most economical writer in the New Testament. He is doing it on purpose.

Before he so much as **mentions** the fight, he makes them read the name of Jesus ten times. He is administering the medicine before he shows them the X-ray. Because the cure for a divided church is not a seating chart and it is not a committee. It is a bigger,

closer, louder view of Christ.

Ten names before one fight. That is the sermon, and everything after it is footnotes.

[TEXT. It is countable, and your class counting it out loud is worth more than you asserting it. Commentators regularly note the density; the count in vv. 1-10 is right there in the ESV.]

Point 2. The two Greek words, and they are both from a fishing boat

Write on the board: **SCHISMATA** and **KATARTIZO**.

Verse ten has two Greek words in it, and once you see them you will never unsee them.

First: "that there be no **divisions** among you." The word is *schismata*. It is where we get the English word schism. And it is not a committee word. It is a **fabric** word. A *schisma* is a **rip**. A tear in cloth. Jesus uses the exact same word in Mark chapter two: nobody sews new cloth on an old garment, or **the tear**, the *schisma*, gets worse.

Paul is saying: church, you are one garment, and you are **ripping**.

Second: "but that you be **united** in the same mind." The word is *katartizo*. And here is the one that gets me. It means to mend, to restore, to put back in working order. And do you know where else that exact verb shows up?

Mark chapter one, verse nineteen. James and John, in the boat with their father, **mending** their nets. *Katartizontas*. Same verb.

It is a **fisherman's word**. It is what you did every single evening, because torn nets catch nothing.

So hold the picture Paul just painted. The church is ripped cloth. And the command is the thing Peter and James and John did with their hands every night of their working lives: sit down together, patiently, and **mend the net**. Not because tears never happen. Tears happen every day you fish. But a crew that will not mend does not eat.

[TEXT for both words and both Gospel parallels: schisma in Mark 2:21, katartizo in Mark 1:19 and Matthew 4:21. This is airtight and it is the best two minutes in the lesson.]

Point 3. Chloe's people, and how to handle a report

Verse eleven. "It has been reported to me by **Chloe's people** that there is quarreling

among you."

Three quick things, and every deacon and committee chair in this room needs all three.

First, Paul **names his source**. He does not write "some have said" or "it has come to my attention." Anonymous accusations are acid in a church, and Paul will not traffic in them. Chloe's household said it, and Chloe's household is willing to be named.

Second, notice **who** the source is. Chloe is a woman, apparently a businesswoman with a household and agents traveling between Ephesus and Corinth. The report that preserved this letter for us came through her house.

Third, notice what Paul does **not** do. He does not write to the faction leaders. He does not take sides. He addresses **everybody**, including, in a minute, the people who claimed they were on **his** team.

[TEXT for the naming; PROBABLE for Chloe as a businesswoman with traveling agents; we know nothing else about her, so stop there.]

Point 4. The four slogans, and the sneaky fourth one

Write the four on the board as you read verse 12:

"I follow PAUL." "I follow APOLLOS." "I follow CEPHAS." "I follow CHRIST."

Four bumper stickers in one small church.

Team Paul. The founder's people. "We were here first. We knew him personally."

Team Apollos. Acts 18 tells us Apollos was an Alexandrian, eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures. He came after Paul and he could flat preach. His crowd liked polish.

Remember the boomtown culture: in Corinth, professional speakers were celebrities, and audiences picked favorites like we pick ball teams. The church did not invent this behavior. **It tracked it in from the street.**

Team Cephas. Peter's people. Maybe the traditionalists, the ones who wanted the fisherman with the calluses instead of the professors.

And then the fourth one. **"I follow Christ."** And you think, well, good, somebody got it right.

No. Read the tone. In context, this is a **faction too**. This is the crowd that used the name of Jesus to look down on everybody else's crowd. "You all follow men. **We** follow Christ." It is spiritual one-upmanship wearing its Sunday clothes, and it is the sneakiest team of the four, because its jersey looks like a robe.

The moment "I follow Christ" is said **against** other believers instead of **under** Christ, even the right words have become the wrong flag.

[TEXT for the four slogans. The reading of the fourth as another faction is the majority view (Fee, Garland, Ciampa and Rosner), though a minority takes it as Paul's own corrective. INFERENCE, and worth saying which reading you take.]

[ASK - the center discussion question. Give it 5 full minutes. Hand out the Four Slogans card here.]

Question three: What are our four slogans?

I will start us off. Team favorite podcast preacher. Team King James. Team traditional service, team contemporary. Team denomination. Team the-way-we-did-it-in-1985. And yes, team political party sitting in the same pew.

Which team have you caught yourself on? And here is the harder half: have you ever used "I just follow the Bible" or "I just follow Jesus" the way the fourth group did, as a way of ranking yourself above other believers?

[TEACHING NOTE: Go first, and confess a real one. If the teacher will not name his team, nobody will. And keep it off individual living preachers by name; categories, not names. We are mending nets this morning, not tearing new ones.]

Point 5. The three questions of verse 13

Then Paul ends the paragraph with three questions, fired in a row, and they are designed so that a child could answer every one of them.

"Is Christ divided?" Can you cut Him in pieces and hand a piece to each team? No.

"Was Paul crucified for you?" And there it is. Paul does not defend his faction. He takes a hammer to it, **his own fan club first**. Paulos hyper hymon estauothe? Was PAUL crucified for you? No.

"Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Whose name went over you in the water? No man's.

Three questions. Three "no" answers. And the middle one is the test I want to send home with you.

Whenever you feel your loyalty to a preacher, a teacher, an author, a channel, a tradition, or a party rising to the level of a flag, run the crucifixion test.

Was he crucified for you?

Then he can be your teacher. He cannot be your banner. There is only one name in your whole life with scars on it, and church, the banner belongs to the name with the scars.

[TEXT. All three questions are verse 13, and the grammar of the second expects the answer no.]

0:40-0:45

THE CLOSE

(Slow down. Last two minutes. Nothing after it but prayer.)

Let me land this where it started.

Paul is sitting in Ephesus with the worst church report in the New Testament in his lap. Factions. Lawsuits. Scandal. A congregation embarrassing the gospel in the hardest town in Greece.

And the first ten verses he writes contain the name of Jesus **ten times**, and the word "saints," and the sentence "God is faithful," and a courtroom promise that on the last day these very people will stand with **no charge on the docket**.

Nine verses of grace. Then one verse of truth. Then sixteen chapters of both, and he never once lets go of either.

Now, I told you about the fabric word. The church at Corinth was tearing, and the church in every generation tears, and if we are honest, cloth has torn in this county, and in this denomination, and in living memory, closer to home than that.

But the last word Paul chooses in verse ten is not the tearing word. It is the fisherman's word. **Katartizo**. Mend the net.

James and John did it every night. Not because they failed at fishing. **Because nets tear**. That is what nets do. The crews that eat are not the crews with perfect nets. There is no such crew. The crews that eat are the crews that sit down in the same boat, at the end of the day, take the torn thing in their hands, and mend it.

So here is what I want you to take out the door.

The answer to a divided church has never been better personalities. Corinth had the best personalities in the movement, Paul, Apollos, and Peter, and it split three ways over them and invented a fourth team out of Jesus Himself.

The answer is ten names before one fight. It is a Christ so big, so near, and so often spoken that the flags look small next to Him.

Because when you stand there on that day, **anenkletos**, no charge on the docket, it will not be because of whose team you were on.

It will be because of the one man on that list of names who was actually crucified for you.

The banner belongs to the name with the scars.

(Pray. Do not preach after the prayer.)

THE INVITATION (while they gather their things)

One more thing before you go.

Next week, Paul says the quiet part out loud. He tells this status-obsessed boomtown church: look around the room. Not many of you were wise. Not many powerful. Not many from important families. God did that **on purpose**.

Next Sunday: why God deliberately built His church out of nobodies, and why that is the best news in Corinth and in Carroll County.

You know somebody who has felt like a nobody at church. That lesson is for them. There's a chair. Bring them to it.

APPENDIX A: LEADER'S CHEAT SHEET

Claim	Status
Corinth: two ports, the diolkos ship-road across the isthmus	ESTABLISHED (Strabo 8.6.20-23; remains visible today)
Old Corinth destroyed 146 BC; refounded by Julius Caesar 44 BC as a Roman colony settled largely by freedmen	ESTABLISHED
"Boomtown with no old money" explains the status-and-celebrity culture behind the factions	INFERENCE , argued by Bruce Winter, <i>After Paul Left Corinth</i> (2001); widely persuasive

1,000 temple prostitutes of Aphrodite in Paul's Corinth	OVERSOLD/FALSE for Paul's era. Strabo 8.6.20 describes the OLD city, past tense, and even that is doubted (Murphy-O'Connor, <i>St. Paul's Corinth</i>). Roman Corinth was rough the ordinary way.
"To Corinthianize" (korinthiazesthai)	Real Greek verb, coined by Aristophanes about the old city, centuries before Paul. TRADITION when applied to Roman Corinth.
Gallio inscription at Delphi dates Paul in Corinth to ~AD 50-52	ESTABLISHED ; an anchor date of NT chronology (Acts 18:12)
Gallio was Seneca's brother; Seneca tutored the young Nero	ESTABLISHED
Erastus pavement inscription = Erastus of Romans 16:23	Inscription ESTABLISHED (found 1929); identification PROBABLE-BUT-DEBATED
Sosthenes of 1 Cor 1:1 = the beaten synagogue ruler of Acts 18:17	INFERENCE , widely held, unprovable. Label it.
Isthmian Games hosted near Corinth every two years; Paul likely present for the AD 51 games; explains athletic imagery in ch. 9	PROBABLE
1 Corinthians written from Ephesus, ~AD 53-55 (1 Cor 16:8)	TEXT + ESTABLISHED
Claudius died Oct AD 54; Nero, about 16, became emperor around the time this letter circulated	ESTABLISHED
Ten occurrences of Jesus' name in vv. 1-10	TEXT. Countable.
Thanksgiving credits God alone, never Corinthian behavior	TEXT (note the passives: given, enriched, confirmed)
<i>Anenkletos</i> (v. 8) = legal "no charge to answer"	TEXT/ESTABLISHED usage
<i>Schisma</i> = tear in cloth; same word Mark 2:21	TEXT
<i>Katartizo</i> = mend/restore; same	

verb for mending nets, Mark 1:19 / Matt 4:21	TEXT
"I follow Christ" as a fourth faction, not a compliment	Majority reading (Fee, Garland, Ciampa-Rosner); a minority reads it as Paul's own slogan. INFERENCE; say which you take.
Chloe: businesswoman with traveling agents	PROBABLE; nothing more is known.
Apollos: Alexandrian, eloquent, mighty in Scriptures	TEXT (Acts 18:24-28)

Commentaries behind this lesson: Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians* (NICNT, rev. 2014); David Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT, 2003); Ciampa & Rosner (PNTC, 2010); Anthony Thiselton (NIGTC, 2000); Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth* (2001); Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth* (3rd ed., 2002).

APPENDIX B: THE THREE SCRIPTURE READINGS (ESV)

READING ONE: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, 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: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen for: *called ... the church of God ... in Corinth ... saints ... their Lord and ours*

READING TWO: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

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

Listen for: *given ... enriched ... speech and knowledge ... guiltless ... God is faithful*

READING THREE: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

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. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. 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." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Listen for: *by the name ... divisions ... united ... Chloe's people ... the four slogans ... the three questions*

[Note on the ESV: verse 10's "united" translates *katartizo*, the mending word. The KJV actually says "perfectly joined together" and the NASB "made complete." If a reader has a different translation, compare out loud. Thirty seconds of translation talk, and the class sees the mending image is really in there.]

APPENDIX C: VERIFIED VIDEO AND STANLEY SOURCES

(Searched and confirmed July 2026.)

VIDEO: CONFIRMED

The Chosen covers the Gospels, so there is no *Chosen* scene for any epistle. The right clip is:

BibleProject, "1 Corinthians" book overview. Animated, well made, and its summary of the book matches our lesson: Paul shows the Corinthians that every problem in life can be seen through the lens of the gospel, and chapters 1-4 address believers becoming groupies around Paul, Apollos, and Peter.

- <https://bibleproject.com/videos/1-corinthians/>

How to use it: it runs about 8 minutes, which is too long for our format. Show roughly the first 2.5 to 3 minutes, through the setup of the divisions problem, then stop it and say:

We will let Paul himself take it from there.

Or skip the video entirely this week and save your minutes for the counting exercise in Section 3. The count is better than any clip.

CHARLES STANLEY: partially confirmed, and here is the honest note

I could not verify a Stanley sermon specifically on 1 Corinthians 1:1-13. I will not invent one. Two confirmed pieces come close and are worth using:

1. "Confronting the Cross" (In Touch, confirmed at intouch.org/watch/sermons/confronting-the-cross). It is on **1 Corinthians 1:18-25**, the very next paragraph, and its summary line fits this week and sets up next week: by human standards the cross looks like weakness and failure, but it is where God's power and wisdom are revealed. Use it in the close if you like, or bank it for next Sunday, where it lands dead center.

2. Stanley's teaching on division in the body from 1 Corinthians 12 (In Touch devotional material, confirmed): God designed the church as one body of many members so that there may be no division in the body, and our differences are something to be celebrated, each person uniquely contributing to God's purpose.

A Stanley-flavored line for Section 3, sourced honestly:

Charles Stanley spent his whole ministry on 1 Corinthians' picture of the church as a body. And In Touch put his point about as plainly as it can be put: God designed every member to serve a role, so that there would be **no division in the body**. A body does not have teams. A body has parts. The hand does not caucus against the foot.

APPENDIX D: THE HANDOUT CARD

(Half sheet. One per person.)

1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-13 | TEN NAMES BEFORE ONE FIGHT

The count: Jesus is named **10 times in 10 verses** before the fight is mentioned once. The cure comes before the diagnosis.

Two fishing-boat words in v. 10:

- **Schisma** = a **tear in cloth** (Mark 2:21)

- **Katartizo = mend the nets** (Mark 1:19) The church is fabric. The command is the fisherman's nightly chore. Nets tear. Crews that eat are crews that mend.

The crucifixion test (v. 13): *Was he crucified for you?* Then he can be your teacher. He cannot be your banner.

The banner belongs to the name with the scars.

This week: run Paul's ratio. Nine parts honest thanks to God for what He is doing in a person, before one part correction.

APPENDIX E: FULL DISCUSSION QUESTION BANK

The three in the script:

1. Paul knew everything in chapters 5-6 was coming and still opened with "saints." Why lead with identity instead of the charge sheet? What happens to a person when you do it the other way around?
2. Paul was completely thankful for people he was about to correct, by thanking God for what God was doing in them. Who needs that from you this week, and what would you honestly thank God for in them first?
3. What are our four slogans? Which team have you caught yourself on? And have you ever used "I just follow the Bible" the way the fourth group did, to rank yourself above other believers?

Held in reserve: 4. Corinth's church did not invent celebrity culture; it tracked it in from the street. What has our church tracked in from our street? 5. Paul thanks God that the Corinthians were enriched in "speech and knowledge," the exact gifts they were weaponizing. What gift of yours is most easily turned into a weapon? 6. The "I follow Christ" faction had the right words and the wrong flag. How can you tell in yourself when right words have become a wrong flag? 7. Chloe's people were willing to be named. What would change in church conflict if nobody was allowed to say "some people are saying"? 8. Verse 8: on the last day the believer stands with no charge on the docket, because God is faithful. If you really believed your file was empty, what would you stop defending this week? 9. Nets tear; that is what nets do. Name a tear in a relationship or a fellowship you have quietly decided is not worth mending. What would sitting down in the boat look like? 10. Unity is not uniformity. Where does our class confuse the two, expecting sameness where Scripture only requires one mind about Christ?

Soli Deo Gloria.