

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul told the Corinthians that you would sustain them to the end, “guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:8–9). I praise you today as the God who is able to keep me from all sin. Your mighty power protects me through the storms of life, and your grace enables me to resist the temptations of the enemy. I say, ‘Glory to God for the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus!’ Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the first part of Paul’s second letter to the church at Corinth (called 1 Corinthians). Paul wrote this letter to deal with various problems in the church and answer some questions the Corinthians had asked him in a recent letter (1 Cor 7:1). It had been almost two years since Paul left Corinth, and in his absence, the church had been visited by Apollos and Cephas. The Corinthians were greatly influenced by the personalities of these two men, and some began to identify themselves as belonging to Cephas or Apollos (others remained loyal to Paul or Christ). The wisdom and eloquence of Apollos left a lasting impression, and some had evidently become enamored by his background in the Alexandrian school of wisdom (e.g., Philo; Acts 18:24). The Greeks were fascinated by *sophia* (“wisdom”; 1 Cor 1:22), and some believed they had found it in Apollos’ eloquent discourses. ‘Surely,’ they thought, ‘it was best to present the gospel in terms of wisdom and mysteries!’ Paul responded, not by disavowing Apollos or his ministry, but by calling the Corinthians back to the simplicity of the gospel. He began by reminding them that baptism was about following Christ, not about swearing allegiance to the one who had baptized them. This teaches me not to fixate on those who led me to Christ, but rather to follow Jesus with them as brothers in the faith. Paul then urged the Corinthians to anchor their identity in the cross of Christ. The gospel was not some lofty, high-minded “wisdom” which only the wise of the world could comprehend. Instead, it was the message of a crucified Christ—folly to the Gentiles and a stumbling-block to the Jews. The world regarded the gospel as foolishness, but “to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18). This teaches me that the most important part of the gospel is its ability to transform my heart and mind. Passion and rhetoric are useful, but they are not a substitute for the power of the Spirit. Paul then gave the Corinthians a correct understanding of Christian service. He and Apollos and Cephas were servants, fellow-workers together for the sake of the gospel. They were not the ones who caused the Corinthians to grow in grace. They were merely instruments you used to accomplish your will. This reminds me that I’m just a servant in the service of the King. I must be careful not to think of myself or others more highly than I ought. Paul concluded by calling the Corinthians to imitate him, their father in the faith (1 Cor 4:16). He willingly endured the scorn of the world in order to show forth the beauty and glory of Christ. What an inspiring example to me of the simplicity and power of the cross!

Reflection

How easy it is to be caught up in this person’s ministry or that person’s preaching! Have I become so enamored with the servant that I have lost sight of the Savior?

Request

Father, help me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of my faith (Heb 12:2). May I always imitate his example of single-minded service and humble obedience!

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the reminder that those in ministry are “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1). I will not boast in men, but rather in the cross of Jesus Christ!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Near the Cross](#)” – Fanny Crosby.

Meditation Verse: 1 Corinthians 3:6.