

## GREATER THAN: WEEK 3



### WARM-UP:

Name a few of your Christian heroes or people who significantly influenced you as you've been following Jesus. What do you admire about them?

### Outline - from NIV First-century Study Bible by Kent Dobson:

- i. Introduction (1: 1-9)
- ii. Divisions in the church (1: 10-4: 21)
  - A. the fact of the divisions (1: 10-17)
  - B. the causes of the divisions (1: 18-4: 13)
    1. a wrong conception of the Christian message (1: 18-3: 4)
    2. a wrong conception of Christian ministry and ministers (3: 5-4: 5)
    3. a wrong conception of the Christian (4: 6-13)

### READ 1 Corinthians 3 twice:

- The limitation of the English language – same word 'you' for plural and singular. Our individualistic Middle class culture's default is to read and interpret 'you' singular, and we are tempted to think it is about me primarily. The Apostle Paul and 1<sup>st</sup> century culture were much more collective. Most often, Paul used the plural 'you'. Try to overcome our individualism and read, interpret, and apply for us and for the church – local, e.g., CBC and Global.
- Identify the Apostle Paul's concerns and propositions
- Different translations give us a fuller understanding. Read it first in your usual translation, then read N T Wright's NTE - New Testament for Everyone  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+3&version=NTE>

#### 1. We all idealise and idolise someone or something.

Who might that be for you?

Consider your parents, partner, children, pastors, leaders, influencers, 'successful' people, and Christians?

When and how might you be tempted to forget they are mere humans?

How can you regain the perspective that Jesus is greater than any other and that He is the source of the blessings we receive through people?

Spend a few minutes to pause and in silence - give thanks and glory to God for the people who helped you and pray for them to acknowledge God.

#### 2. Pastor Paul said, "when we are sharply divided, everything falls apart."

List what might divide us as God's Church/body/temple/community of faith:

- Local, as CBC
- Baptist Association
- Global.

#### 3. What did the Apostle Paul identify as some core issues that caused the Corinthian division? (e.g., 3:1 –10; 16,17; 21)

**4. Many in the Corinthian church took pride in their wisdom, eloquence, special leaders, and spiritual gifts and that they had attained the 'spiritual' status. They had blind spots.**

- How did the Apostle Paul challenge their presumptions by exposing their faulty thinking and behaviour?
- As a comfortable, mostly independent, and self-sufficient, Middle-class suburban church, what might be CBC's blind spots?
- Consider what and who, we are tempted to take 'pride' in?
- Who might help us and show our blind spots?
- What can we learn from the Global church?

**5. How can we identify and resist the people, forces and faulty thinking and behaviour that might divide us as God's Church – local and global?**

**6. Pastor Paul found four principles to be most helpful to focus on Jesus as greater than any other and to maintain unity in the Church:**

- Faith – invites God to act in our life
- Love - pleases God
- Obedience- delights God
- Justice - stirs God

How might these principles help you?

Mention other principles that you find helpful.