

“We might also learn from Paul’s opening paragraph something about the practice of giving thanks. Even though the Corinthian church is riddled with problems, Paul offers a word of thanksgiving to God for the very community that he is setting out to correct. Despite all present difficulties, he sees this church as the work of God in the world, and he discerns in their midst gifts for which God is to be thanked.” **Richard B. Hays, 1 Corinthians, 20.**

**LESSON #2:** No matter how \_\_\_\_\_ church problems are, we should never give up on the \_\_\_\_\_.

“If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ. “This applies in a special way to the complaints often heard from pastors and zealous members about their congregations. A pastor should not complain about his congregation, certainly never to other people, but also not to God. A congregation has not been entrusted to him in order that he should become its accuser before God and men...What may appear weak and trifling to us may be great and glorious to God...The more thankful we daily receive what is given to us, the more surely and steadily will fellowship increase and grow from day to day as God pleases.” **Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together, 29-30.**

### **10 REASONS TO NEVER GIVE UP ON CHURCH**

1. The church is the only institution that our Lord promised to build and to bless (Matt. 16:18).
2. The church is the gathering place of true worshippers (Phil. 3:3).
3. The church is the most precious assembly on earth since Christ purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 5:25; Col. 1:20; 1 Pet. 1:18; Rev. 1:5).
4. The church is the earthly expression of the heavenly reality (Matt. 6:10; 18:18).

5. The church will ultimately triumph both universally and locally (Matt. 16:18; Phil. 1:6).
6. The church is the realm of spiritual fellowship (Heb. 10:22-25; 1 John 1:3, 6-7).
7. The church is the proclaimer and protector of divine truth (1 Tim. 3:15; Titus 2:1,15).
8. The church is the chief place for spiritual edification and growth (Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:18).
9. The church is the launching pad for world evangelization (Mark 16:15; Titus 2:11).
10. The church is the environment where strong spiritual leadership develops and matures (2 Tim. 2:2).

**KEY QUESTION:** *Is there ever a time to change churches?*

**LESSON #3:** Church problems are not a \_\_\_\_\_ phenomenon.

**KEY QUESTION:** *Why do churches have problems?*

1. The church consists of \_\_\_\_\_ people saved by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The church consists of people who are at various places of \_\_\_\_\_ (3:1-5).

### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

There is no such thing as a perfect church because the church is made up of imperfect people.

## SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

### Prayer

1. The Apostle Paul often expressed his thankfulness for the church. Look up the following passages to discover what Paul was thankful for: (Rom. 1:8-10; Eph. 1:15-16; Phil. 1:3-6 & 4:10-20; Col. 1:3-7; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:3-4; 1 Tim. 1:12-14; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; Phil.1:4-5.

2. How do the expressions of 'thanksgiving' in the above-mentioned passages differ from Paul's expression of thanks in 1 Corinthians 1:4? Why might this expression of thanks differ from the others?

3. Why did Paul write the Church of Corinth? Take time to review the following passages: 1 Corinthians 1:11; 7:1).

4. When Paul started the Church of Corinth he remained in Corinth for 18 months (Acts 18:11). When he left, he began his correspondence with them through letters. How many letters did Paul actually write to the church according to 1 Corinthians 5:9; 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:1-2; 2:4)? How many letters did the Corinthians write to Paul (1 Corinthians 7:1)?

5. What can we learn from Paul regarding his ongoing 'correspondence' with the Corinthians, especially in light of Sunday's message?

6. Take some time to review the list of "10 Reasons to Never Give Up on Church." As you reflect on these truths, how does this list challenge/change your thinking about commitment to the church?

7. It seems today that some people 'date' the church in that they attend many different churches to try to find one that they want to marry (or be committed to) – take time to talk about this mindset in light of Sunday's message? Is this mindset Biblical or Cultural?

8. What did you think about the "Pastors Top 20 Reason Why People Leave A Church"? When is it time to leave a church? How should a person leave a church?

**Prayer** – Take time to pray for the churches of the Salt Lake Valley that you know by name. Ask God to strengthen His church through the valley.

## SERIES: LIFE IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE

### Today's Message:

#### "The Myth of the Perfect Church"

1 Corinthians 1:4

Pastor Cory Anderson / 10.04.09 / SMC

### INTRODUCTION:

**1 Corinthians 1:4:** "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus."

### 3 LESSONS ABOUT CHURCH LIFE

**LESSON #1:** No matter how \_\_\_\_\_ church problems are, we can always find something to be \_\_\_\_\_ for.

**KEY QUESTION:** *What were the problems facing the Church of Corinth?*

### TOP 10 PROBLEMS IN CORINTH

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (1:10-17; 3:1-5; 11:17-18).

2. Exaltation of man made \_\_\_\_\_ over the gospel (1:18-2:5).

3. \_\_\_\_\_ (3:1-4).

4. \_\_\_\_\_ (5:1-13).

*'...a man has his father's wife.'* 5:1

5. \_\_\_\_\_ (6:1-11).

6. Involvement sexually with \_\_\_\_\_ (6:12-20; 7:2).

7. Causing others to \_\_\_\_\_ in sin (8:1-13).

8. \_\_\_\_\_ at the Lord's Table (11:17-34).

9. Abuse of \_\_\_\_\_ (12-14).

10. Denial of the \_\_\_\_\_ (15).