

Good Morning Saints,

My name is Tshepang Mgoza, I'm part of leadership at Christ Central Soweto.

Today we start a new series on "Leadership"

Before we do so let's seek God's help. (prayer)

In December 2019 our reigning Miss Universe came strongly regarding the importance of Good leadership and this was her response:

"I think the most important thing we should be teaching young girls today is leadership. It is something that has been lacking in young girls and woman for a long time. Not because we don't want to, but because of what society has labelled women to be. I think we are the most powerful beings in the world and that we should be given every opportunity. That is what we should be teaching these young girls. To take up space. Nothing is as important as taking up space in society and cementing yourself."

Last week Thursday President Ramaphosa addressing us on issues relating to the state of Coronavirus. We learned that as a nation we will move to stage 4 lockdown. Today's message is a state of the church in light of what God has called the church to be. It helps us understand the statement that says "A leader is a dealer in hope"

At one point the church in Corinth needed true leadership, one that is way better Than Zozibini's mission and way better than dealing Covert 19, So Paul wrote the book of 1Corinthians to address a divided church. In fact, this book is written to rebuke them. I need to prepare you church for what we are about to embark on.

Chapter 1-4 there are division in the church. The individuals in this church preferred 1 leader more than the other. Paul reminds the church that the leaders in the church are servants of Jesus Christ. The centre of the church is Jesus and the good news of what he has done.

Chapters 5-7 sex issues

Many people sleeping around and one person with his stepmother, some sleeping with prostitutes but some in the church saying this was fine as we are free in Christ.

Chapters 8-10 Food issues

Meat sacrificed in the local temple to Greek and Roman gods. Big question being whether to eat or not eat sacrificed to idols

Chapters 11-14 Gathering

Huge controversy with praying in tongues and Prophecy. Paul brings a concept of the church as a body with many parts.

Chapters 15-16 resurrection issues

Some people in this church did not believe in raising from the dead so Paul concludes that Jesus was risen from the dead

The city of Corinth was a city with a love for things and pleasure. The citizens were looking to advance on the ladder of upward social mobility. The culture of the city was of trade, business, and the pursuit of success. Do you agree that Corinth looks like Johannesburg?

Also, their church looked like the church in Soweto today. So, if you struggle with one or the other stick around and allow God to speak to us. Today we will look at his introduction in **1Corinthians 1:1-9**

The very reason why Paul takes a pen and paper and start writing a letter is to address the church on these issues

His Message is "Remember who you are in Christ"

You Are part of a big story (1:2) lets read together:

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

Notice that Paul does not say that he is merely writing to the church in Corinth. He describes who these Christians are. He says that they are “sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people”. Being sanctified recalls how Israel’s priests were sanctified for service or how the vessels of the tabernacle were sanctified for use. We are set apart as God’s covenant people. Our conduct cannot be out of sync with our calling. We have been sanctified and called to be God’s holy people.

We get into a lot of trouble Bazalwane when we forget who we are. We sin and make many mistakes when we forget what God has called us to be.

In high school I was introduced to SCM. God was at work because even a sinner like me was saved. An encounter with those young people awakened the seriousness of sin and the importance of being right with God.

2 years later harmony and tranquillity went out the window, before we knew it, we were divided. Many were leaders and people started taking sides. We had a group that claimed that they walk the walk and talk the talk and sing the Song. While on the other hand a group that hated this group of people. We were lucky enough that around that time we were introduced to an Organisation called PICO and a lady by the name Makwatsi came and lead us. She worked very hard to point us to Jesus. Oh, what a difference it made. She led us in such a way that she was able to point us to the cross of Jesus Christ.

Forgetting who we are will bring about divisions. In fact, you will notice the apostle Paul calls for these Christians to remember that they are part of a story bigger than themselves. Notice at the end of verse 2, “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.” You belong to a bigger story. You belong to a bigger group of people. You are sanctified and called to be God’s holy people along with everyone else on earth who calls upon the name of the Lord. Our work and our purpose in Christ is far bigger than ourselves and far bigger than what we are experiencing in this church. We have a kingdom work and we belong to the worldwide kingdom of God.

Know What God Is Doing (1:4-9)

Here the apostle Paul prepares these Christians for overcoming divisions by informing them on what God is doing for them so that they will understand their place in God’s plan. **We will see three things that they need to know about what God is doing in their lives so that they are prepared to overcome divisions and maintain harmony.**

(1:4-7) Paul points us to God's Grace.

Paul reminds them of the grace of God that was given to them in Christ so that they are in every way enriched in Christ in all speech and all knowledge. This is a reference to the spiritual gifts that they have been given in Christ

(1:7-8) Paul points us to Hope of day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul prepare us to overcome divisions by having our eyes set on eternity. No matter how much of God's blessings we enjoy in the present, we are still waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus. Our eager longing and anticipation is for the coming of Jesus. We divide and fight because we become short-sighted and loose our vision for eternal goal. Further, Paul says that it is God who is keeping us strong until that day: "...who will sustain you to the end, we do not depend upon ourselves but upon God who strengthens and helps us to the end. How can we fight with each other when we are eagerly longing to be declared justified and blameless on the final day?

(1:9) Paul points us to the fellowship we have with the Son.

Finally, we are prepared to overcome divisions when we understand that God has faithfully called us into fellowship together with his Son Jesus Christ. We have been called into a new family, a new relationship in Christ. How can we fight with each other? How can we quarrel? How can we divide? We are joined in this fellowship of His Son. We are in relationship with each other. Unfortunately, many do not understand this. This is why many choose to only gather with other Christians on Sunday mornings and do not take advantage of the opportunities to get together for Connect Group, take time to check on abazalwane around this lockdown time nge Whatsapp, not dig deep to assist with the running of Mercy ministry. Do you see that we are a family and community in Christ? We have a shared calling to participate in the new family created by God's grace.

Conclusion

Before even bringing up the problem of divisions we can see how Paul is setting up his letter to prepare his hearers to overcome the divisions they are currently experiencing. Remember who you are. You have been sanctified in Christ Jesus and are called to be his holy people. Our conduct must match our calling. Then remember what God has done for you. You are looking forward to eternity and God will sustain us to that goal so that we will be declared guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. You were called into the fellowship of his Son. You have a new family and new community that should changes how we live with one another. Let's pray

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