

Temple Life

Division at the Christian Assembly

Things were busy at the temple of God in Corinth. The church seemed to have quite a bit of gift in their service for the Lord. The place was exciting. Some famous Christian teachers had made an impression on many there. It was thrilling to see people becoming saved. Some who had been blind pagan idolaters, some local drunks, and even some involved in sexual immorality were now forgiven and clean.

A neighbor observed the change in Rufus' life and asked about his new understanding. Rufus said that when he trusted the gospel, heavenly wisdom was *given* to him in the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Rufus also said the full payment of his sin's debt was *given* to him through Jesus Christ in His redemptive blood sacrifice unto God. In addition to this, Rufus said he was *given* a righteous standing before God Himself in the risen *Lord Jesus*. And besides that, he was also *given* sanctification in *Christ Jesus* – being made a holy saint for service unto God. “Yes,” Rufus said, “all of this was a gospel gift in Christ by grace.” That's why he was baptized in the name of the *Lord Jesus*. Beni said, “Amen.”

But now brother Rufus and brother Beni weren't as close as they once were in the church fellowship. Beni was now impressed with another name beside the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh he still believed in Christ and served Him, but was now calling himself a Peterite. Why? Well, Peter was such a great Jewish leader. And Rufus wasn't without blame either. He was calling himself a Paulinian, for none could doubt Paul's deep knowledge. Beni's wife, Leah, said she was neither, just Messianic. Julia, Rufus's wife, called herself an Apollosist for she had a heart for the unsaved and admired the gifted evangelist, Apollos.

So they found themselves in their own little groups somewhat divided and strained. And mark you, all these gifted leaders were spiritual men. All believed in the Messiah.

One brother challenged them by asking what their reaction would be if their wives took on a name other than theirs. For example, what if Mrs. Rufus, being impressed by the preacher who did their wedding, called herself 'Mrs. Preacher'? Or, what if she called herself 'Mrs. Bath' because she like the new bath basin Rufus gave her? Or if Mrs. Beni enjoyed the new method of transportation in the chariot and so called herself 'Mrs. Chariot'. Or even if she enjoyed being Beni's wife and so decided to go by 'Mrs. Wife'. She would focus on what she is rather than to whom she is united. Wouldn't this new name take away from the husband's glory and authority while wounding his heart?

In fact, a letter from the Lord claimed that such practices show a glorying in man, not in the Lord. This is looking to man's wisdom rather than God's. Why take a new name when they already had the best—the Lord Jesus Christ? Wasn't it the Lord Jesus who was crucified for them? Wasn't it the Lord Jesus who was their sole risen authority as “*Lord of all*”? Their practices did not match the gospel. The gospel freely gave them all in the Lord Jesus' Name alone. If man contributed nothing to this salvation, why glory in man?

Of course, that was the antiquated first century. In modern times we are more advanced.

{Some Scriptures for the Corinthian church problem and God's solution. "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1Cor. 1:29-31 / 1Cor. 1 / 3:19-21 / 4: 6, 7 / Isaiah 42:8 / Eph. 5:20 / Col. 3:17 / Acts 10:36 / 1Cor. 14:37}